

Regular Board Meeting – July 21, 2009

**SUBJECT:    ELL PARENT CENTER END-OF-YEAR REPORT**

**Overview**

In July, 2008, the Niles Township Schools ELL Parent Center was launched one month ahead of schedule by hosting an ESL class sponsored by Oakton Community College. By June, 2009, a variety of 48 free adult education programs were offered to support ELL parents in conjunction with their public schools across the township. Programs were categorized into three major areas: Literacy, Parent Education, and Community Resources. Throughout the school year, parent participation across all programs increased steadily.

Ongoing outreach and marketing efforts by Director Corrie Wallace, building administrators, and ELL teachers along with word-of-mouth referrals throughout the immigrant and ELL community were successful in reaching parents in need of various assimilation supports.

Through the generous donations of furniture and office equipment from sponsoring township school districts, the Center site, which is housed at the south end of the District 68 Educational Service Center, was transformed into a dignified adult learning center including a networked computer lab and childcare classroom. A part-time clerical assistant as well as community and high school student volunteers provided additional support. Township school districts also provided bus transportation for specific school-based programming offered at the Center.

A three-year intergovernmental agreement among eight Niles Township school districts will allow the Center to continue to grow. Additionally, a federal grant awarded this past spring through the office of Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky will support the Center beyond 2011 without an increase in the annual per-capita cost per school district.

**Annual Program Evaluation**

Dr. Carol Scheidenhelm, Director of the Office of Learning Technologies and Assessment at Loyola University Chicago, and members of her staff conducted a program audit and external evaluation of the Niles Township ELL Parent Center in June, 2009. Their findings are reported in Appendix A.

Corrie Wallace, Niles Township ELL Parent Center Director, completed an internal evaluation report summarizing programs and participant feedback throughout the 2008-2009 school year. Her findings are reported in Appendix B.

### **Conclusion**

The growth and success of the Niles Township ELL Parent Center during its first year of operation has exceeded the high expectations held for such a unique community-based organization. Additional funding sources from township municipalities, local businesses, charitable foundations, faith-based organizations, and federal, state, and private grants will continue to be pursued in order to support the ongoing growth of Center programs.

The Center will reopen in August, 2009, with a full slate of adult education programs, including English conversation classes, citizenship counseling, computer instruction, adolescent parenting skills workshops, and ELL family storytime events. Additionally, a Health Fair has been scheduled at the Center in mid August to provide ELL parents with convenient access and affordable (or free) health services for their children in preparation for the opening of the 2009-2010 school year. Health services will include state-required immunizations, general school physical exams, sports physicals, and dental services.

Dr. Carol Scheidenhelm from Loyola University will continue to provide pro-bono assistance to the Center in regard to ongoing data collection on participant usage, participant feedback, and the generalization of parents' newly acquired skills to the school community. Her team will also conduct a program audit and external evaluation at the close of the 2009-2010 school year.

It is evident that the Niles Township ELL Parent Center has been quite successful in meeting its stated goals during its first year of operation. Participation by ELL parents across the township is expected to grow as the Center becomes known throughout Niles Township as a vital resource for immigrant integration support.



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*Preparing people to lead extraordinary lives*

**Loyola University Chicago Reviewer's Report  
Niles Township Schools ELL Parent Center**

**Spring 2009**

External Review Committee:

Carol L. Scheidenhelm, Director  
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Loyola University Chicago

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Instructional Technologies  
Office of Learning Technologies and Assessment  
Loyola University Chicago

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Niles Township Schools ELL Parent Center  
Loyola University Chicago Reviewer's Report  
Spring 2009

As outside observers coming in near the end of the first year, we have looked over the documentation that identified the need for the ELL Parent Center and offer a few observations about the Center's response to the established purpose and goals outlined in those defining documents. Let us begin with the observation that, for a fledgling program, the Parent Center has an impressive record of presenting a wide variety of programs to a particularly diverse body of participants. Response to programs appears to be positive, the number of participants is growing and the Center is thriving. These factors indicate that the establishing document correctly identified both the need for and the function of the Center.

Center director, Corrie Wallace, was especially helpful in putting together information to share with us for purposes of our review. It is apparent that Wallace has a clear vision of what the Center needs and the energy to keep it moving forward. Her report covers specifics about each program block, including goals and outcomes, so we will not address that topic. She has asked us for suggestions for improving the collection and reporting of data. Our report will attempt to address her query and provide additional observations about the Center and its operation.

**Scope:**

The Niles Township proposal identified a growing need to assist families attempting to assimilate into American culture, particularly the environment surrounding the school system. That identified need sounds, on the surface, simple enough. In reality, however, the cultural, linguistic and regional differences represented by the Center's clientele combine to make this mission markedly complex. Looking at the number of countries and languages represented at any given program illustrates this complexity (see distribution graphs in Director's report).

Scanning the Center's calendar of activities, an observer can immediately identify how the scope of activities has expanded over the first year. In August and September, the programs focused primarily on literacy; by November, a number of programs introducing community resources were instituted (Library Night, Citizenship Information, Study Skills). As needs were identified, programs were added.

The Director's report outlines steps taken to ensure the Center was effective in its outreach efforts, checking with local organizations to establish areas of need and also identify potential clients. Reliance on volunteers for translation, child care, interpreting

and marketing has served the Center well; additionally, volunteerism has drawn a wider range of people into the Center, making its mission known outside the immigrant community. There is the potential to increase this relationship through the local high schools and colleges, perhaps providing “internships” in the Center for students taking advanced language courses: English-speaking students working with and learning from non-English speaking parents.

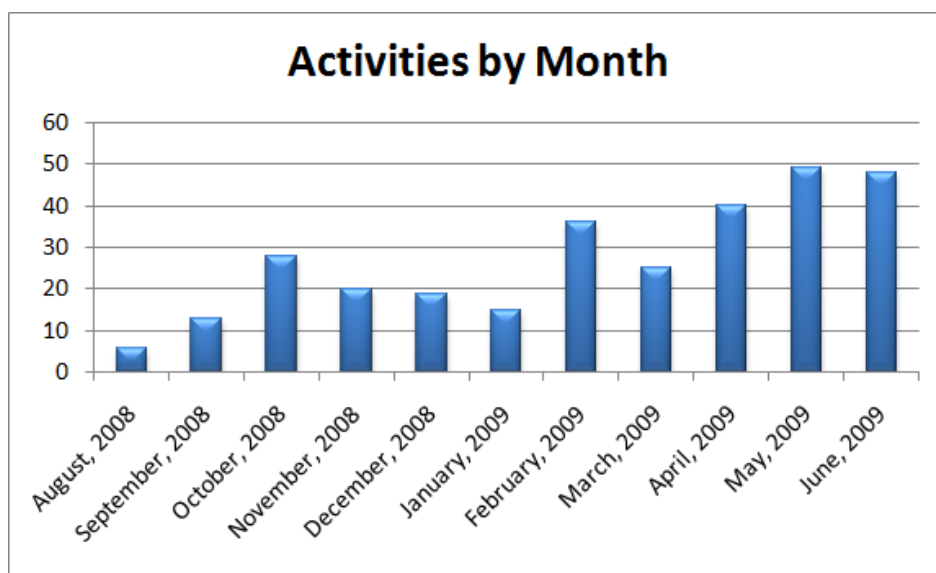
**Planning:**

In order to directly address the purpose and goals outlined in the proposal for the ELL Parent Center, the Center personnel divided the programming into three categories: (1) Literacy (Family Literacy, ESL, Dine and Dialogue, Tea-n-Talk), (2) Parent Education (Family Field Trips, C4 Parenting Workshop) and (3) Community Resources (Computer Classes, Library Information, Citizenship Information).

The Director’s report addresses these initiatives individually. Resident in each category are the goals established for the Center. We stress the need to continue to assess programming in view of the Center’s stated goals and plan future programs based on the assessment results. Such planning will ensure that the Center’s purpose will continue to be considered.

**Programming:**

In August, 2008, the Center offered six programs in family literacy. As the bar graph below illustrates, that number has grown steadily, culminating in June with a record 48 activities offered. Impressively, these activities span the three categories of activities the Center strives to cover. We reiterate that programs need to reflect the needs of the participants based on the Center’s goals and purpose. There is every indication that this is currently occurring, as programming is expanding over all three categories.



### **Data Collection:**

Attempting to maintain records of relevant information has proven to be burdensome. I have suggested to the Director that we work with her to identify what information is relevant to the governing board and determine the best way to collect and report that data.

Currently, people participating in Center activities are recorded in a spreadsheet. This information is searchable and can be sorted in many different and useful ways. Going to a formal database seems unnecessary at this time (unless someone has extensive knowledge with Access and is willing to enter the data).

The version of the spreadsheet we reviewed was ordered according to participants' primary language. For some types of data reporting, this format is useful. Practically speaking, however, a more direct and focused search is possible when using an alphabetical listing by last name. Since a spreadsheet can have multiple sheets in one document, we suggest copying the initial list into two or three additional sheets. Organize one by last name, one by school district, perhaps one by country of origin. It takes little effort to do these subsequent formats and may save considerable time in the future. Again, while a formalized database is helpful, the spreadsheet can work well for the Center's needs.

The Center is currently soliciting feedback from program participants using session evaluation forms. This type of indirect assessment is important for determining participants' attitudes and perceptions of programming. The vast majority of participants indicate they see great value in the programming and have been made to feel comfortable at the sessions they have attended. We suggest that evaluation forms need more focus and an improved design to reflect the goals for the activity. (See attached sample)

It would also be useful to get more formalized feedback from presenters to determine their ideas for improving the programming. This could be as simple as an interview with the Director. Frequently, the presenter's observations about the participants and their reactions add an important layer to program evaluation.

Finally, the Center should consider ways to more directly assess their programming success. What indications are evident that people are learning more English? That they are more comfortable in situations outside the Center? This type of information might be gathered in surveys filled out by clientele. While, again, this is individually-reported data, it could be designed to assess improving levels of competency with language skills.

### **Recommendations:**

There are several steps we recommend the Center take to make assessment and reporting of their services and progress more clear and direct. These are easier to identify a year into the project than when the Center began, as there is now information and data to assess and organize.

1. For the first several years, review the Center objectives to determine whether they are still representative of the target clientele's needs and emend goals as appropriate. Once the goals are constant for a few years, the review can be done every two or three years rather than annually.
2. Have a standard session evaluation form for each event or series of events. This will allow the evaluators to more easily tie the purpose of the activity to the Center's stated goals. The attached sample evaluation form could be adapted for various events. The crucial factor is to ensure that questions asked are really garnering the type of information you need. The current forms occasionally mix interest in a session with whether it was helpful (mixed categories in one question).
3. Investigate methods for more directly measuring the progress of Center clientele.
4. Continue to develop partnerships with local agencies and schools, with the goal of making the Center's immigrant population function as teachers of their own languages and cultures (to volunteers and others) as well as assimilators.
5. Collect and report data consistently. Now that there is a year's worth of information collected, determine what data are needed to address the Center's mission and what data are secondary.
6. Since the Center has a substantial amount of information collected, make electronic back-ups of the data on a regular basis. It would be advisable to have disk back-ups and perhaps an external hard drive that would store information in the event of computer failure.

### **Website Review**

- The title, contact information, and short tagline are clearly visible from the main page. This is beneficial in that it tells your visitors who you are and how they can contact you.
- The overall look of the page is pleasant, and there is plenty of whitespace so information stands out.
- Navigation topics on the left side of the page seem organized and clearly thought out; this is a good start as far as organizing your content into sections goes.
- Your entire site is quite accessible for visitors with disabilities; the navigation is all created with plain text and images are only used where they are appropriate (to show the logo and an image of the Center). The text size is adjustable for those who might want to make the text larger, and the color contrasts enough that people shouldn't have difficulty reading the text. I would suggest adding alt tags to the images so that those who cannot see them will find a descriptor of what the image shows.

Possible areas of improvement:

- While you do have a short tagline in the banner saying what your goal is, it would be a good idea for you to put a more thorough description in the main text area of the homepage so that people can understand at a glance your purpose. If you have a mission statement or a more detailed explanation of what the Center is about, this front page is the perfect place to display that copy.
- The majority of the links in both the left navigation bar and the top navigation bar do not work. Also, having two separate navigation bars might be confusing to site visitors; most of the links at the top are important external resources. Would it make sense to create a “resources” tab in the left navigation bar and include these links there?
- In the main text area, there currently are additional links to volunteer opportunities, success stories, the calendar, etc. It would be more appropriate to fit these links into the left navigation structure rather than have them be the main focus of the page.
- When one clicks on the links that work, the secondary pages have a totally different look from the main page. Try using the main page as a template, and add the information for each individual page in the main content area so that all of the pages have a consistent look and navigation scheme. This will make things less confusing for visitors as they’ll know what to expect on each page. Additionally, the standardized navigation will allow access among pages, which is now difficult.
- Search engines are not finding the site readily. Consider putting in additional search terms (metadata) so the website is easy to find. Such keywords as ELL, newcomers’ center, Niles Township, immigrant parents’ center, etc. would bring this site more visibility.

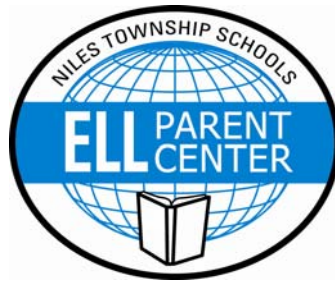
**Summary:**

We anticipate that, over the next several years, the scope of the Center will continue to evolve as populations change and shift. This fluidity is key to the success of the Center and currently appears to be adequately addressed. From the evidence we have reviewed, it appears that the Center is meeting its stated goals and objectives and is moving in a positive direction. We encourage the Director to continue working with community agencies to evaluate the changing needs of immigrant populations and to build relationships with schools and agencies to continue expanding opportunities that will benefit both volunteers and Center clientele.

Niles Township Schools ELL Parent Center Presentation Evaluation					
For statements 1-4, please select Strongly Agree (SA) , Agree (A), Disagree (D) or Strongly Disagree (SD)					
		SA	A	D	SD
1	I understood the presentation.				
2	The information presented was helpful.				
3	The presenter made me feel comfortable.				
4	The presentation helped me better understand the resources available at the Parent Center.				
For questions 5-7, please select Yes, Maybe or No					
		Yes	Maybe	No	
5	Before this presentation, were you planning to go to Parent Teacher Conferences?				
6	After this presentation, do you plan on going to Parent Teacher Conferences?				
7	Will you go to the next workshop on [date]?				

**Year 1 Internal Evaluation Report  
July 2008-June 2009**

**Niles Township Schools ELL Parent Center**



**Helping Parents Help Their Children**

**Corrie Wallace  
Director**

## **Overview**

As the culmination of the new Niles Township Schools ELL Parent Center's first year approaches, it is important to reflect on all that has transpired in order to move forward and prepare for year two. What follows is an update on the overall infrastructure of the opening of the Center along with details on the primary focus areas of literacy, parent education, and community resources. In order to best serve the largest growing population of immigrants and refugees outside of Chicago, a variety of strategies including language-specific outreach and non-traditional business hours have been used to make meaningful connections with parents and their families.

## **ELL Parent Center Infrastructure**

### *A. Logo*

A logo was created to represent the diversity and international flavor of the Niles Township community, the importance of education and literacy, and the school-home connection. This logo serves as an icon for English Language Learners and to ultimately guide them toward the Center itself, which was designed as a welcoming, respectful environment for those new to Niles Township.

### *B. Community Outreach*

Visits to participating schools provided an opportunity to meet the educational leaders, identify the top ethnic groups in each building, and assess the needs of English Language Learners in order to tailor programs and services accordingly. These meetings led to the development of ELL Family Field Trips and presentations about the new Center to staff and school boards.

Meetings with local municipalities, libraries, clergy, ethnic associations, and various organizations led to collaborative programming and partnerships. Parents were encouraged to become active community members and most importantly to feel comfortable as advocates on behalf of their children's education. These meetings also served as an opportunity to better understand the services and resources available throughout the township. Meetings with PTA/O leaders shed light upon the parental perspective on the needs of ELL parents and offered an opportunity to share the challenges they had experienced along with the activities which proved successful in their schools. As a result of the initial outreach, a portable display was created for use at school and community venues to promote the new Center.

### *C. Client Intake Forms*

A one-page form was created to gather basic demographic information such as name, contact information, country of origin, home languages spoken, number and gender of children, along with a simple interest and availability survey. The information led to the creation of a database and provided guidance for the types of programs in which parents were interested, such as English classes, computer instruction, parent education, health resources, as well as the best time to schedule programs.

#### D. *Database*

A database of Center program participants was created. It has helped to provide demographic information and will serve in the future as a means to distribute mailings about upcoming programs.

#### E. *Website*

A website was developed with the support of a District 68 Webmaster in order to present an online overview of the center. Elements include a calendar of activities and links to helpful community-based resources. The website also has translator capability, although the quality of the translation itself is somewhat questionable.

#### F. *Volunteers*

High school student volunteers, primarily from Niles North, along with adult community volunteers were instrumental to the implementation of various programs. The student volunteers provided babysitting for parents with young children who otherwise would not have been able to participate due to lack of childcare. Community volunteers assisted with English language acquisition during the Saturday ESL class, conversation classes, and occasionally offered one-on-one support. Volunteers are some of the Center's most valuable assets.

#### G. *Translated Materials and Interpreters*

Flyers advertising Center programs were translated as often as possible into various languages including, but not limited to: Spanish, Polish, Russian, Korean, Urdu, and Gujarati. Translations were done by volunteer teachers, staff, and ELL tutors from participating district schools. Occasionally, translated flyers were posted in ethnic grocery stores. Ethnic media also helped to promote programs and activities. It should be noted that written translation of documents can be extremely time-consuming and costly. Determining the quality of translation is critical because it's important to clearly communicate content. That being said, assessing the literacy of non-English speakers would help to provide insight as to the effectiveness of translated materials.

Interpreters were available upon request for various programs and on special occasions, such as parent-teacher conferences and IEP meetings. The need to have a cadre of trained interpreters in multiple languages determined by demographics would prove extremely useful as the population of ELL parents continues to grow throughout township schools. The long-term benefits of such an investment would lead to improved communication between schools and parents, ultimately encouraging parental involvement and increasing student achievement.

### **Literacy Programs**

Various literacy programs proved to be the most popular and became the foundation upon which the Center developed when opening its doors in mid-July, 2008. Through a partnership with Oakton Community College (OCC), families from six schools across three districts benefited from a unique

family literacy class which integrated traditional English language acquisition with the *Parents as Educational Partners* curriculum.

OCC was extremely accommodating in thinking creatively to incorporate essential support elements as the classes grew. For example, after the first 2008 summer session, computers were incorporated into the Family Literacy class to provide differentiated instruction. During the winter session, an evening class was added to accommodate parent schedules. The Saturday morning ESL class incorporated technology as well as a babysitter for those parents who otherwise would have been unable to participate. Volunteers were used to support the range of English Language Learners during the Saturday morning ESL class.

The following literacy programs were offered this past year:

A. *Family Literacy*

*Program objectives:* To provide parents with English instruction and relevant school information.

*Description:* Participants met for two hours twice weekly; one hour on the computer doing differentiated English lessons and one hour engaged with the *Parents as Educational Partners* curriculum.

*Response:* The integration of English language acquisition combined with important school and health information was very well-received by participants.

*Activity Evaluation:* Based on positive feedback from participants, consistent attendance patterns, and growing attendance, the family literacy classes should continue and expand.

B. *ESL*

*Program objectives:* To provide parents with beginning-level English instruction.

*Description:* Participants met Saturday mornings from 9:15 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Childcare was initially provided by high school student volunteers who assisted the paid multilingual (Arabic, Assyrian, Greek, English) babysitter provided by Oakton Community College. A computer component was later added based on the family literacy model. Volunteer tutors supported a range of beginning to intermediate level learners.

*Response:* The support by Oakton Community College to provide computer instruction, childcare, and tutors has contributed to the overwhelming success of this program, which has been the most popular class serving up to 35 weekly participants.

*Activity Evaluation:* Based on participant feedback, this course should continue and expand into evening hours to accommodate parent schedules.

C. *Dine & Dialogue\**

*Program objectives:* To provide parents with a relaxed environment to practice speaking English.

*Description:* An ESL teacher from Evanston Township High School led theme-based discussions which included holidays, friendship, and favorite books. Refreshments were provided and childcare was provided.

*Response:* Participant feedback was positive and there was a consistent desire to meet more frequently than once a month.

*Activity Evaluation:* Initially, this program was scheduled monthly in the evenings. Due to sporadic attendance, the spring session was scheduled to meet weekly for a month. Both formats drew a small but consistent number of participants. Going forward, a weekly format scheduled each season may improve overall participation in this class.

#### D. *Tea-n-Talk\**

*Program objectives:* To provide parents with a relaxed environment to practice speaking English.

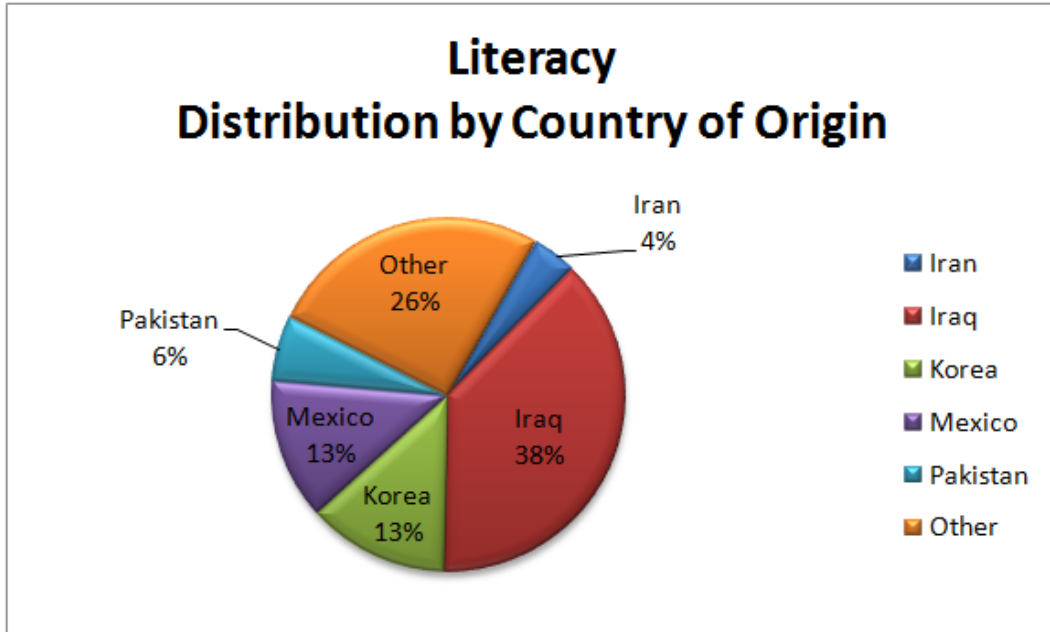
*Description:* The ELL Parent Center Director along with community volunteers led weekly conversation classes which included current events and occasionally grammar lessons. Guest speakers from PACE, Interfaith Housing, and the Skokie Police Department made presentations. Refreshments were provided as well as occasional childcare.

*Response:* Parents thoroughly enjoyed this program with consistent attendance of approximately eight per class. There were several grandparents and extended family members who participated as well.

*Activity Evaluation:* The weekly meetings provided consistency and allowed for the development of relationships. Participants often brought friends or family with them who then participated in other Center programs. Parents were comfortable expressing their concerns and asking questions related to their children, families, and daily lives. This allowed for parents to more actively participate and engage in their child's school and the community at large.

\*Both conversation classes turned into "survival language" courses with the incorporation of guest speakers on relevant topics such as public transportation, citizenship information, and understanding local laws. Developing a survival-based literacy program around the conversation classes may prove beneficial.

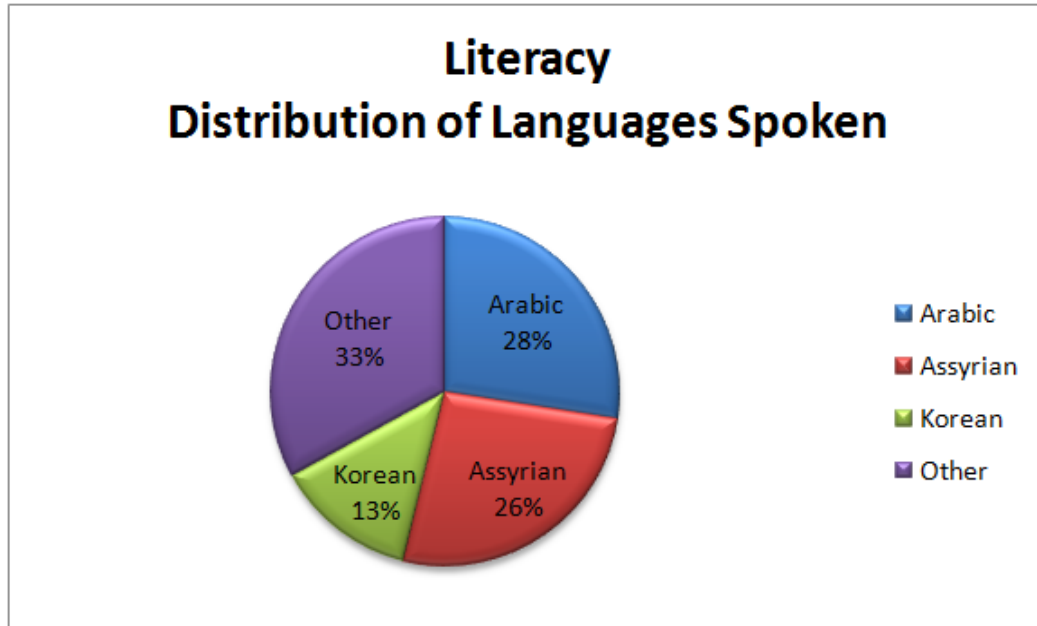
## Programs



\*Others

Afghanistan	1%
Bosnia	2%
Bulgaria	3%
Chile	1%
China	1%
El Salvador	2%
Greece	1%
Haiti	1%
Hong Kong	1%
India	3%
Lebanon	1%
Mongolia	1%
Peru	1%
Russia	3%
Syria	4%

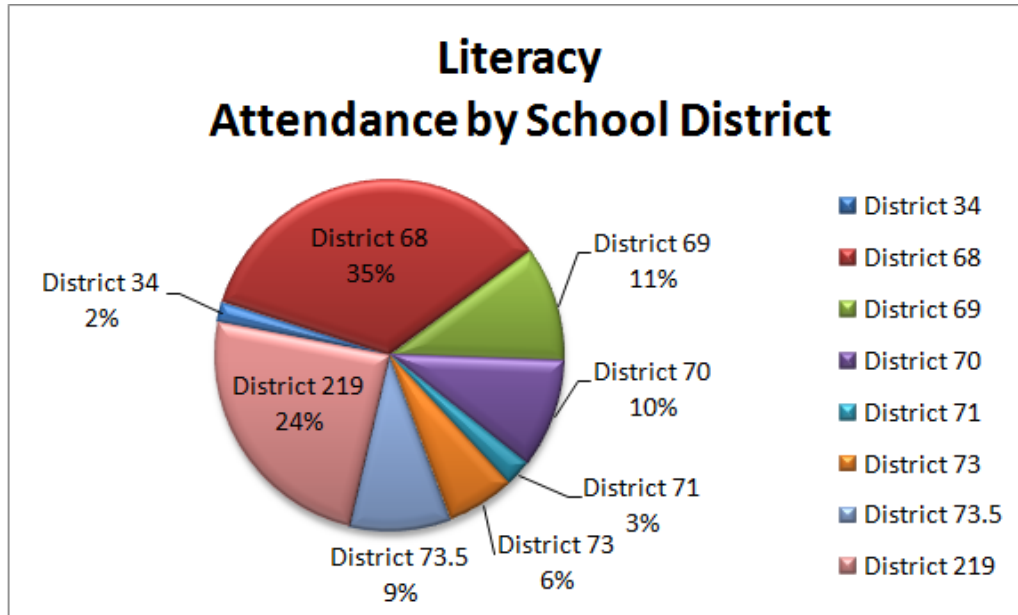
## Programs



**\*Others**

Bosnian	2%
Bulgarian	2%
Chinese	1%
Farsi/Persian	3%
French	1%
French Creole/Haitian	.5%
German	1%
Greek	1%
Hindi	2%
Japanese	.5%
Kurdish	.5%
Malayalam	1%
Mongolian	.5%
Pashto	2%
Polish	1%
Punjabi	1%
Russian	2%
Spanish	9%
Urdu	2%

## Programs



\*Schools Per District

68	Devonshire	8%
	OOJH	3%
	Highland	8%
	Stenson	2%
69	Edison	6%
	Madison	6%
	Lincoln Jr.	1%
70	Park View	8%
71	Culver	3%
73	EPS	4%
73½	Meyer	2%
	Middleton	7%
	McCracken	2%
74	Lincoln Hall	5%
	Rutledge	3%
219	North	7%
	West	23%
◆	34 Glenview	2%
	Non-Township District	

## Parent Education

A variety of parent education programs were offered. Topics were determined by school as principals, teachers, and social workers expressed what they felt was most important for parents to know about their child's school. The Community Counseling Centers of Chicago was contracted to provide a Parenting Workshop targeting caregivers of children twelve and older. District 219 requested that the workshop be conducted in multiple languages (English, Spanish, and Assyrian) to address needs according to ethnic and language demographics. Thus, parent education was addressed explicitly in addition to being incorporated into other Center programs such as Family Field Trips, the Mother-Daughter group, the Family Literacy classes, and the Study Skills workshops.

### A. *Mother-Daughter Group*

*Program objectives:* To pilot a workshop addressing the needs of mothers whose daughters are growing up as "American teenagers" and who live in culturally non-American households in order to support healthy mother-daughter relationships, have an opportunity to share frustrations, and overcome obstacles using practical problem-solving and conflict-resolution skills.

*Description:* Participants met weekly for a month where they had an opportunity to build a rapport with the facilitator and among themselves, express their perspectives and concerns, and discuss issues specific to growing up as an American teenage girl.

*Response:* This pilot was extremely successful. Outreach to the Assyrian community in the areas of interpreting and helping to coordinate transportation through carpooling resulted in solid participation. Attendance ranged from 8-16 per class session. Participants were disappointed to see the class end.

*Activity Evaluation:* The facilitator from National Louis University and I will explore the possibility of expanding this exchange for the 2009-10 school year along with pursuing a grant through the Open Meadows Foundation, which funds projects led by and benefiting women and girls. Transportation would be a helpful addition to this program. Consideration should be given to attracting participation by other ethnic groups as well.

### B. *Positive Parenting-Community Counseling Centers of Chicago (C4)*

*Program objectives:* To provide parents with children twelve and older an opportunity to learn effective parenting skills to improve family relationships and encourage their children to lead fulfilling and productive lives.

*Description:* Participants met eight times in the spring. The class was facilitated in Assyrian, English, and Spanish per the request of District 219. Topics included learning how to improve communication with children, building their child's self-esteem, substance abuse, teen sexuality awareness, and other relevant issues. Home visits were available as well as follow up counseling by C4 as needed. Babysitting and refreshments were also provided.

*Response:* This class was originally scheduled as an evening class during the winter. Due to a scheduling conflict which led to less than three participants, the class was postponed and rescheduled during the day in the spring. (The conflict also resulted in an Assyrian Parent

outreach meeting). Participants seemed to enjoy the class and learned many helpful tips. They were very open in sharing their experiences and the dynamic was particularly interesting due to the mix of Mexican, Assyrian, American-born, and Indian parents. Attendance ranged from 1 to 6 per class.

*Activity Evaluation:* This program provided an essential service to parents who are faced with the challenges of raising teenagers in today's fast-paced, high-tech, global world. Due to the cost of the program, scheduling, marketing, and transportation should be considered in planning for the 2009-10 school year.

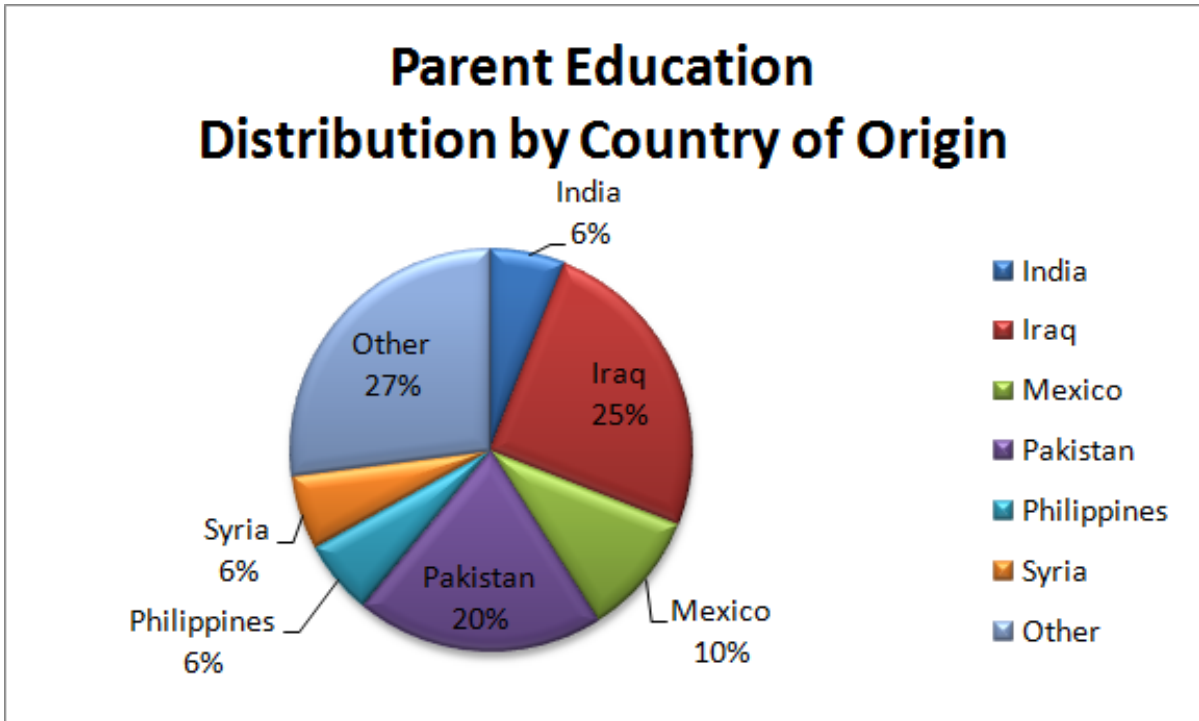
### C. *District 219 Study Skills Workshop*

*Program objectives:* To provide parents of high school students with an opportunity to learn how to help their children become better students and learn about the resources available at Niles West's Literacy Center and The Point at Niles North.

*Description:* Andrew Jeter (Literacy Center) & Scott Bramley (The Point) facilitated a meeting to share practical information to support student achievement. They shared tips on using the daily planner, how students can utilize and access the resource centers, and the important role of parent-teacher conferences in American schools. Flyers were translated into Gujarati and Urdu. Interpreting through headsets provided by D. 219 was done in Urdu and Assyrian to accommodate participants' needs. Refreshments and childcare was provided as well.

*Response:* This program was very successful. Several families from Niles West rode the bus to the Center with their ELL teacher; others drove on their own. Parents expressed a desire for similar opportunities in the future.

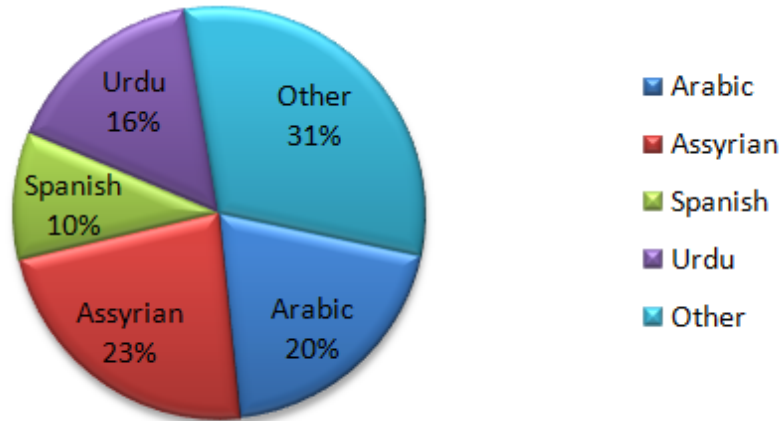
*Activity Evaluation:* This program could be expanded into a series and/or offered in targeted languages to empower parents and provide them with concrete tools to support their children's academic achievement.



\*Others

Albania	1%
Bangladesh	2%
Cambodia	2%
Chile	1%
Colombia	1%
Ecuador	1%
Iran	3%
Korea	2%
Lebanon	2%
Nigeria	1%
Puerto Rico	2%
Romania	1%
Serbia	1%
Thailand	1%
Turkey	1%
Ukraine	1%
Vietnam	3%
Yugoslavia	1%

## Parent Education Distribution of Languages Spoken



*Others	
Albanian	1%
Armenian	1%
Bengali	1%
Bosnian	1%
Cambodian	1%
English	3%
Farsi/Persian	1%
Greek	1%
Gujarati	1%
Hindi	3%
Korean	1%
Kurdish	1%
Malayalam	2%
Pashto	1%
Punjabi	1%
Romanian	1%
Serbo-Croatian	1%
Tagalog	3%
Teluga	1%
Thai	1%
Turkish	1%
Vietnamese	2%
Yoruba	1%

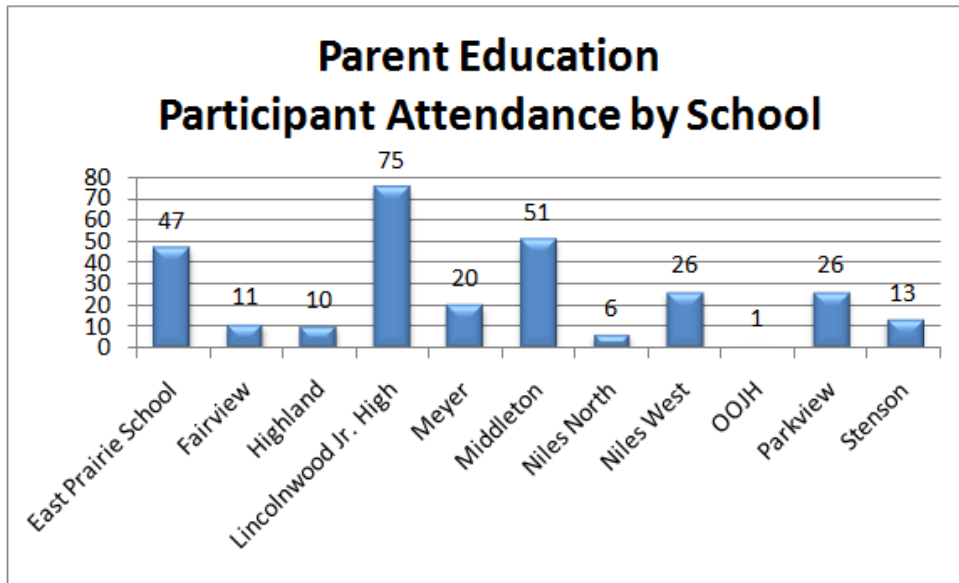
#### D. *Family Field Trips*

*Program objectives:* To provide parents with a personalized introduction to the new ELL Parent Center, their child's school, and community resources as a means of fostering increased parental involvement and participation.

*Description:* Parents, families, and teachers met in the evening at the ELL Parent Center for informational meetings. Childcare and transportation were provided along with refreshments. Interpreters were also available upon request. A representative from the local library shared an overview of library resources and made library card applications available. Computer demonstrations of various websites and programs, such as Live Homework Help (tutor.com,) their child's school website, multi-lingual literacy resources, and other relevant topics were shared. An overview of ELL Parent Center programs and activities, local Park District information, and public transportation services were also presented. New hardcover books provided through the Donation Station of National Louis University's Center for Teaching through Children's Books were given to each participant. Each family field trip was tailored to meet the specific needs of the visiting school through collaboration with the ELL teachers, principals, and other interested school staff.

*Response:* Thirteen schools across the township (Devonshire, East Prairie School, Fairview, Highland, Lincoln Hall, Meyer, Middleton, Niles North, Niles West, Park View, Rutledge, Stenson, and Todd Hall) participated in family field trips. There was overwhelmingly positive feedback by participating parents and families. Many parents returned on their own and/or brought family members and friends to participate in programs and activities at the Center.

*Activity Evaluation:* In planning for the 2009-10 school year, it would be helpful to incorporate a simple display of student work and/or achievements to attract parents and increase attendance and participation. The most successful field trips were those where staff made phone calls, personally reaching out to parents and families in addition to sending home flyers and reminders.



\*\*Actual numbers of Family Field Trip Participants

Schools Per District

68	Devonshire	1
	OOJH	1
	Highland	10
	Stenson	13
70	Park View	26
72	Fairview	11
73	EPS	47
73½	Meyer	20
	Middleton	51
74	Lincolnwood	75
219	North	6
	West	26

## Community Resources

A variety of community resources in the areas of technology, health, and citizenship, were presented throughout the school year. Township libraries were instrumental in sharing their links through websites and providing services such as small group computer demonstrations and tutorials. The Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), one of the oldest organizations working on behalf of immigrant and refugee rights, provided several services to parents through workshops, meetings, and class offerings. Accessing community resources to support children's academic achievement was the foundation for such programming.

### A. Community Workshops

*Program objectives:* To provide parents with a range of relevant informational sessions about community resources.

*Description:* A variety of topics were presented including citizenship information, public transportation, mental health awareness, computer demonstrations and classes, library information, and learning about the law through a conversation with Officer Friendly. Workshops were presented during the day and evening. Refreshments and childcare were provided along with interpreters who were available upon request.

*Response:* Parent response was favorable. The personalized attention and ability to ask questions was appreciated. Parents felt comfortable and respected during the presentations and expressed a desire for similar programming in the future.

*Activity Evaluation:* To increase participation, theme-based workshops should be incorporated into the weekly conversation classes during the day and in the evenings through guest speakers. Doing so should provide a consistent audience and make it easier to gauge participant attendance and secure interpreters as needed.

### B. Upwardly Global

*Program objectives:* To present individuals who have professional degrees from their home country and who have been in the USA less than 5 years with the opportunity to learn how to use their foreign degree in America.

*Description:* Monthly workshops were held to provide participants with practical ways that their foreign degree could be used in the United States. Resume writing tips, mock interviews, and the opportunity to network were a few of the areas covered.

*Response:* These workshops were very well received. For many participants, the first step in gainful employment is English language acquisition, resulting in enrollment in many of the existing literacy programs offered at the Center.

*Activity Evaluation:* As participants become familiarized with the services offered through Upwardly Global, they will be able to take steps to potentially improve their employment circumstances which should have a positive impact on their home and family. Continued collaboration with this organization is essential.

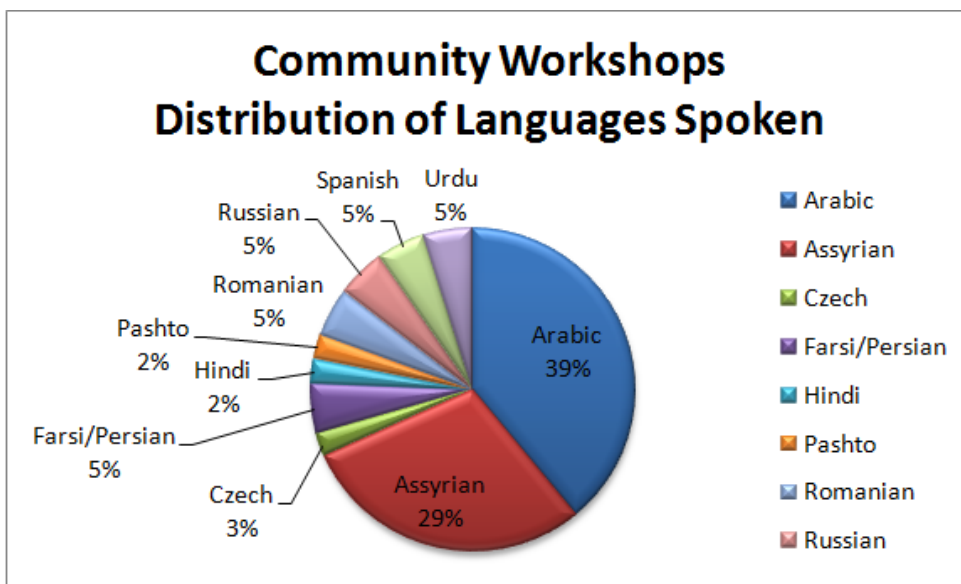
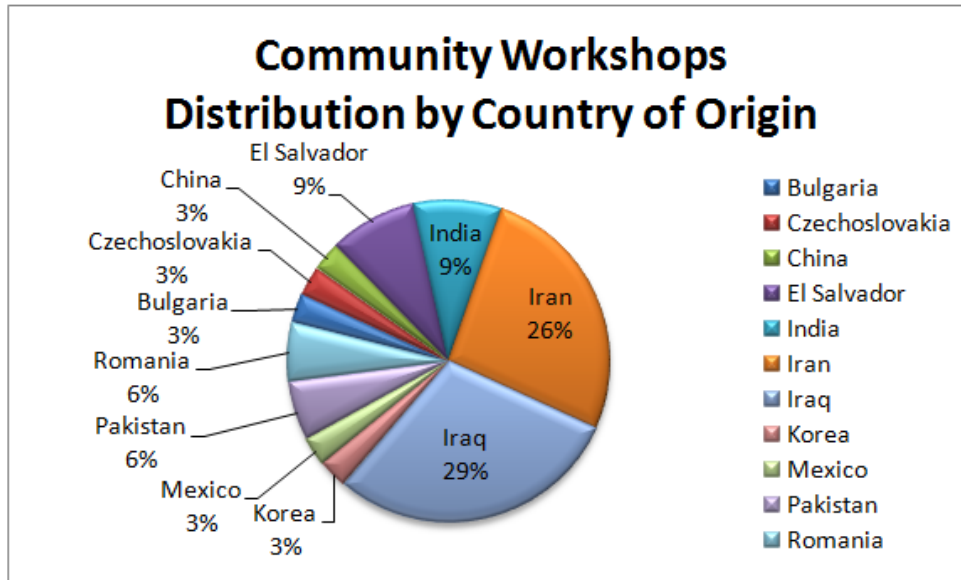
### C. Basic Computer Class

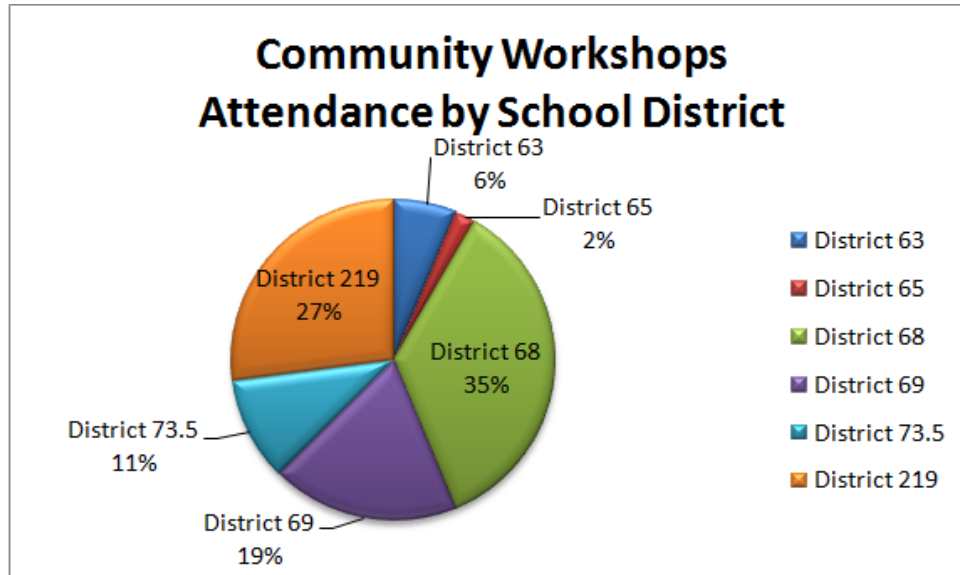
*Program objectives:* To familiarize participants with the fundamentals of using a computer.

*Description:* Through weekly two-hour sessions, participants were introduced to the basics of computer usage. Manipulation of the mouse, familiarity with word processing, and internet exploration were among the topics covered.

*Response:* This class proved to be extremely well-received. Minimal advertising consistently resulted in a waitlist.

*Activity Evaluation:* The interest in practical technology has been a recurrent theme since opening last summer. Hopefully, funding will continue to provide this class more frequently in the fall.





\*Schools Per District

◆ 63	Mark Twain	3
	Melzer	2
◆ 65	Dewey	2
	Washington	3
68	Devonshire	9
	OOJH	7
	Highland	9
	Stenson	9
69	Edison	14
	Lincoln	7
	Madison	5
73½	Middleton	7
	McCracken	2
219	North	12
	West	9

◆ Non-Township Districts

## **Summary**

In summary, the first year of the ELL Parent Center has been a tremendous success, primarily due to partnerships throughout the township and the positive support and enthusiasm of the educational leaders. Oakton Community College has provided the foundation for literacy classes among other relevant interest areas which meet the needs of busy working parents. Volunteers have been instrumental in supporting the Center's programs and the unique needs of the diverse clientele. ELL parents often need basic support systems as they begin to navigate the United States school system, learn English, and complete seemingly simple tasks, such as park district registration forms. A focus on health-related resources and public transportation would be beneficial as the Center moves to its second year. Targeted language-specific publicity in ethnic grocery stores and accessing ethnic media would also be helpful marketing strategies as the Center grows. Incorporating social workers or case managers and expanding the multilingual staff would also be beneficial.