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Tacoma Community House to Reinstate English Classes in East Tacoma, Thanks to Support from KeyBank and the Norcliffe Foundation

TACOMA, WA — Because of the generosity of the KeyBank and Norcliffe Foundations, Tacoma Community House (TCH) will reinstate English Language classes on the East Side of Tacoma starting in 2019. According to Cassandra Mitchell, Vice President, Corporate Responsibility Officer for Washington who presented the KeyBank check to TCH on September 25th, “You guys – TCH – are doing such important work.”

A recent needs assessment commissioned by the City of Tacoma for the Portland Community Center listed English classes as a top 10 need identified by community members who use the Center. While this study was specific to the Portland Community Center, it spoke directly to the needs of East Side residents. Because of TCH’s long history of successfully serving English learners, the Salishan Community Association approached TCH to ask the agency to reinstate English classes on the East Side of Tacoma (classes were offered by TCH between 1990 and 2010, but economic factors led to their elimination).

The East Side (zip codes 98404, 98418 and 98443) is home to over 49,000 residents. The demographics are predominately low-income and the area is home to many non-English speakers. According to census data, 23% of the population speaks a language other than English and half of these individuals do not speak the English language well. This is a significant barrier to employment and realizing overall economic health for families.

Classes will start in January of 2019 with two sessions – simultaneous morning classes for high- and low-level learners. Tacoma Community House is now looking for a location on the East Side that will best serve students.

Offering classes on the East Side will provide accessibility to classes to a much larger population of new students while greatly reducing the commuting time and stress on our current students by providing access closer to home. English classes on the East Side will also bring technology *to* students by way of Chromebooks, which are fast becoming the standard in English language instruction at TCH.

“We are very pleased to be able to bring English classes back to the East Side. This is a vibrant community that deserves easily accessible services,” says Liz Dunbar, Tacoma Community House’s Executive Director.

The impact of individuals learning the English language cannot be overstated. It is critical to their success in all facets of building self-sufficiency and economic stability in their lives.

We thank KeyBank and the Norcliffe Foundation for making these classes possible and for standing with immigrants and refugees in our communities.



About Tacoma Community House

As one of the longest, continuously operating social service agencies in Washington State, TCH has improved the lives of generations of immigrants, refugees, and other (predominantly low-income) community members through the four cornerstones of *Education, Employment, Immigration* and *Advocacy*.

Founded by Methodist women in 1910 in the small room of a private home in Tacoma's Hilltop neighborhood, TCH originally served a couple dozen neighborhood children. Today, TCH is a nationally respected, community-based multiservice center providing 3,800 program services to 3,500 adults and youth from the U.S. and over 100 other countries.

TCH's service area of Pierce, South King, Kitsap, Thurston, and Mason counties represents a growing population of 1.7 million individuals, 11% of whom are immigrants. TCH is the only organization that provides a full range of services to immigrants and refugees between Portland and Seattle.

Learn more at www.TacomaCommunityHouse.org

Tacoma Community House | (253) 383-3951 | www.TacomaCommunityHouse.org

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“Tacoma Community House creates opportunities for immigrants and other community members in the Puget Sound region through comprehensive services focused on self-sufficiency, inclusion and advocacy.”