

Weekend ESL Classes



2004 BRYAN FELLOW

Stacey Isaac

HOMETOWN: Diego Martin,
Trinidad and Tobago

MAJOR/DEGREE:
Master of Public Administration,
Class of 2005

PROJECT TITLE:
Weekend ESL Classes

FACULTY MENTOR:
Margaret Henderson,
School of Government

COMMUNITY PARTNERS:
Durham Mennonite Church,
El Centro Hispano

PROJECT LOCATION:
Durham County

“I had been trying to find the best way to help the Hispanic community in this area ever since my return from a volunteer assignment in Bolivia. I truly appreciated the help the Bolivians gave me as I tried to learn Spanish and I realized that weekend ESL (English as a Second Language) classes would be a way to meet a need here in NC. The Bryan Fellowship provided the resources and support I needed to do that.”

The Bryan Fellowship Project stemmed from my desire to help the local Hispanic community. When I was an undergraduate, I observed the rising number of Hispanics in the area and I wanted to be able to communicate with them in their own language. As a result, I did a volunteer assignment in Bolivia where I could learn Spanish. Upon return, I looked for ways to get involved in the Hispanic community. I found that many Hispanics wanted to learn English, but due to their busy work schedules they could only attend weekend classes.

The eight-week project involved two-hour ESL classes on Sundays and was designed for those who already spoke at a basic level of English. The curriculum involved “Jobs and Occupations.” Lessons covered types of jobs, places to work, tools and job safety.

Project Goals

- Increase the English language skills of a small group of Hispanics through weekend ESL classes.
- Introduce the group of ESL students to the computer and language software resources available in the Durham Mennonite Church.
- Explore the creation of a partnership between UNC and the church to establish a permanent ESL weekend class.



encountered during the week. They used language software purchased with fellowship funds in addition to textbooks. Students were instructed on the basics of using a computer and how to create and use an email account to communicate with their families in their home countries.

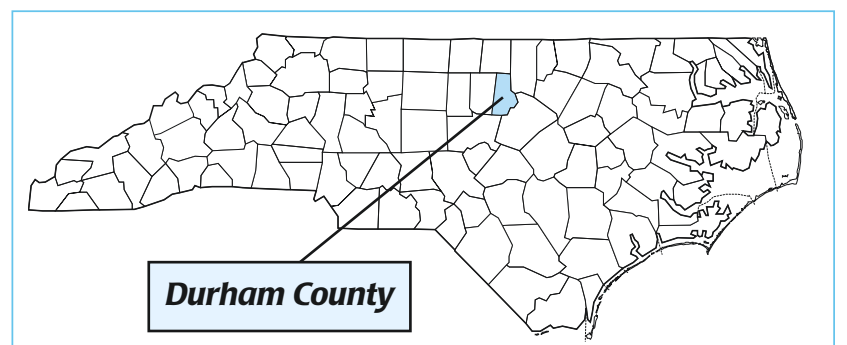
Through teaching these classes, I learned that the local Hispanic community is large and close-knit. People can survive without knowing English and many are not interested in studying the language. Therefore, I developed a true

admiration for the students in my class who saw the value in learning English, took steps to enroll in the class and struggled with the learning process.

The classes have continued and the church is committed to hosting the weekend ESL

class. Several UNC students and local high school students are continuing to work with the class.

It was very rewarding to see the students grab dictionaries before the class started to look up words that they had recently



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