



Blackstone Valley Prep Mayoral Academy

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BLACKSTONE VALLEY PREP (BVP) MAYORAL ACADEMY PARTNERS WITH PROJECT LEARN TO PROVIDE ADULT ESL CLASSES

Cumberland, RI-- In partnership with Project LEARN Adult & Family Literacy Program Inc., an adult education agency that teaches workplace and language skills, Blackstone Valley Prep (BVP) Mayoral Academy is now hosting free English as a Second Language (ESL) courses for families of scholars that attend BVP and members of the greater community. Each class enrolls close to 20 adult students and covers topics like sounds, dialogues, reading and sentence writing to strengthen their ability to communicate in English. Parents meet twice weekly with a Project LEARN instructor at BVP Elementary School at 291 Broad Street in Cumberland.

“As both a BVP Board Member and as Mayor of a city where there is a great desire for free adult education opportunities, I am grateful that BVP is offering these services. Due to language barriers, our families sometimes struggle with accomplishing basic daily routines, such as paying bills over the phone, attending routine medical visits or helping kids with homework. These classes empower our families to learn the fundamental skills of the English language and show their children the importance of education,” said Central Falls Mayor James A. Diossa.

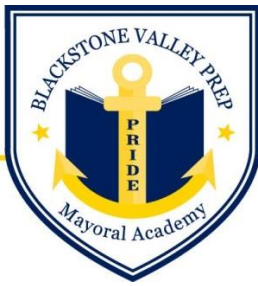
The program has had such a large turnout that a second class was created in order to meet the demand. Even with the addition of the second class, 18 people remain on the waiting list.

“[These classes] are important because a lot of my students have been [in America] for so long, but they lack the communication skills and confidence to communicate with comfort on a daily basis,” said the class instructor, Cheerda Ly. “With confidence and more English skills, they have the opportunity to be more active in their child’s school, attend things like parent meetings, and become part of the community by opening businesses.”

Silvia Leon, a Central Falls resident who is taking the class, said that she has wanted to learn English for some time, but only now has the opportunity because her children are adults.

Maria Pineda from Pawtucket, who is the mother of a BVP scholar in middle school, said that she would like to strengthen her speaking skills so she can become more active in her community.

“My son, he’s speaking Spanish, but he’s speaking English more. For me it’s really important so I can communicate with him. You also really need [English] for jobs, going to the doctor, going to the market and the pharmacy, for everything,” said Pineda. She added that she originally heard about the program through her BVP scholar who encouraged her to attend.



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Project LEARN is a non-profit adult literacy agency, established in 1984. The organization's goal is to provide literacy services for adults with limited reading, writing and conversational English Skills. In addition to ESL, Project LEARN's classes include Family Literacy, Basic Reading instruction, using the Wilson Reading System, Pre-GED and GED classes and Job Readiness Workshops.

“From the beginning this program has been amazing. I had read an article in the newspaper about the BVP students and wondered if their parents might be interested in attending an ESL class. The answer from some 40 parents was a resounding ‘yes,’ ” said Susan Grislis, Executive Director of Project LEARN Adult & Family Literacy Program Inc. **“I think the importance of these classes is twofold. Parents are investing their valuable time to learn English and their children are seeing the importance their parents place on attending class to improve their English skills.”**

It is anticipated that classes will be offered by Project LEARN again beginning in September.

For more information, visit www.projectlearnri.org

About Blackstone Valley Prep Mayoral Academy:

Blackstone Valley Prep (BVP) Mayoral Academy is a network of tuition-free public schools chartered by the Rhode Island Department of Education. As a growing network that is part of the Charter School Growth Fund portfolio, BVP offers a high quality public school choice to the families of Central Falls, Cumberland, Lincoln and Pawtucket and currently serves nearly 1,000 scholars in grades K-8. A member of the Rhode Island Mayoral Academies network, BVP's mission is to prepare every scholar for success in college and the world beyond. More information can be found at www.blackstonevalleyprep.org.

About Rhode Island Mayoral Academies:

The mission of Rhode Island Mayoral Academies (RIMA) is to support the statewide growth of mayoral academies: high-performing, diverse, regional public schools governed by mayor-led school boards. RIMA works towards this mission by recruiting extraordinary school operators and leaders to open mayoral academies; supporting mayoral academies from the application stage through the first years of growth; and cultivating mayors across Rhode Island to become leaders in improving public education.

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