



Learn English At Home

Newsletter No. 3
January 2011

Through language we empower people
to take an active role
in the community.

This edition of the newsletter looks at Family Learning as well as issues concerning pregnant women who have little English.



unsung heroes

The Queen's Award for
Voluntary Service 2008

Patron: Dame
Jacqueline Wilson DBE

LEAH started in Kingston in 1983 and has been working in Richmond since 2007.

LEAH advances the English language and literacy skills of Kingston and Richmond residents from ethnic minorities who are unable to attend Adult Education Classes.

Recruits and trains local residents as volunteer home tutors, with three courses every year.

Runs health and well-being courses for residents who have English as an additional language.



Community Award
Winner 2008
Diversity Award

What is Family Learning?

Put simply, it's learning that benefits both the adult and the child. This type of learning is generally informal and flexible, adapted to local individual and community needs. The longer-term aims of family learning are often to develop a culture of learning within families and to raise aspirations.

LEAH's tutor-supported activities

More than 75% of LEAH learners have pre-school children and many also have children at school. Our volunteer tutors support family learning in a variety of ways, depending on the individual need. It may include activities such as going to register at the local library, reading a timetable of activities at the local children's centre or literature provided by the GP or hospital.

Learners often express an interest in learning to use the internet and the tutors can help to identify sites which have activities such as stories and games for young children. Tutors only visit once a week, so enabling learners to independently access this type of resource is a good way to ensure learning continues throughout the week.

Learners regularly give "helping my children do well at school" as a motivation for learning English, so enabling them to access information about the education system as well as classroom methods is important.

Since English spelling is as difficult for adult learners as it is for children, our tutors are trained to use the Look, Cover, Check, Write technique. As many of our learners have had limited previous education, tutors are also trained to

support reading through phonemic awareness, prediction activities, vocabulary development and reading comprehension strategies. This really helps the mothers in turn to recognize and use the same strategies with their own children.

LEAH's Family Learning Activities

LEAH has regular courses and events where learners can bring their children. This includes drop-ins at local community venues, usually with songs, rhymes and a visiting speaker on child-related topics.

Short health courses, with free crèche facilities, enable learners to take part in activities such as baby massage, preparing nutritious packed lunches, and discussing conditions such as diabetes and depression.



Kingston Museum Visit Sept 2010

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Registered Charity No: 1057008

Pregnant Women with limited English

In September 2010, NICE (the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence) issued new guidance concerning pregnant women with “complex social needs”. One of the categories was:

“recent migrants, asylum seekers and others who may find it difficult to speak or read English, as they may not understand what services are available. (Babies born to black women are more than twice as likely to be stillborn than those born to white women.)” <http://www.nice.org.uk>

When women from this group were asked about their lack of engagement with antenatal care services, they reported a number of barriers, especially:

- ◆ Not understanding the healthcare system and how to access it
- ◆ Misunderstanding dates and times of appointments
- ◆ Not understanding the purpose of antenatal classes and diagnostic tests
- ◆ Lack of social networks

LEAH tutors are well placed to support students in this situation, since many of these barriers can be overcome with tailored language support.

Tutors may teach dates and times or role-play calling the surgery for an appointment. They can help to read letters and fill in forms and base sessions on leaflets from the GP surgery or children’s centre.

However, while the aim of LEAH has always been to support students to become proficient English speakers, we recognise that for situations such as medical appointments, interpreters can be essential, and that relying on other family members such as children or husbands may be inappropriate.

Through our work we have come to realize the patchy knowledge of local interpreting services among both health service providers and user, and are working with local agencies to promote awareness. We have also recently run a well-received tutor training workshop on the subject of access to health services for migrants.

ESOL Cook and Eat course , November 2010



Some Family Learning Case Studies

FR had a lot of health problems. She has a two-year-old son and was very isolated at home, not going out at all. The LEAH co-ordinator contacted her local children’s centre and the Stay and Play Co-ordinator visited her at home to tell her about the range of activities, and took her along to a session. She is now attending regularly and enjoying meeting other mums.

FA has two children, a toddler and a baby. At her first meeting with her tutor, she explained she was worried that her toddler was reluctant to eat. Her tutor also has children, so suggested the three of them made a star chart together. Early indications look good!

YV has a home tutor but also took part in LEAH’s five-week baby massage course at Welcare. She told her tutor that she now massages her daughter every night after her bath, that the little girl has even started massaging her doll.

Leah’s work is possible thanks to our funders:



**Migration
Impact Fund**



**Richmond
Children’s
Fund**



Volunteers Needed



Can you spare a few hours a week to make a difference to someone’s life? Learn English at Home is looking for two types of volunteer.

1:1 volunteers each have one student. The tutor visits their student’s home in Richmond or Kingston once a week for one or two hours. The next course starts at the beginning of February at our offices near Kingston station.

Small group tutors work in community settings in Kingston with 2-5 students. This training takes place at Hillcroft College in Surbiton on Mondays. The next course starts on 31st January.

For some LEAH students the requirement is very basic—shopping, money, doctors, public transport, etc. Others may need help to move into training or employment.

A minimum six-month commitment is required.