



Center for New Americans

A Community-Based Education and Resource Center for
Immigrants and Refugees in Western Massachusetts



Poetry is Power!

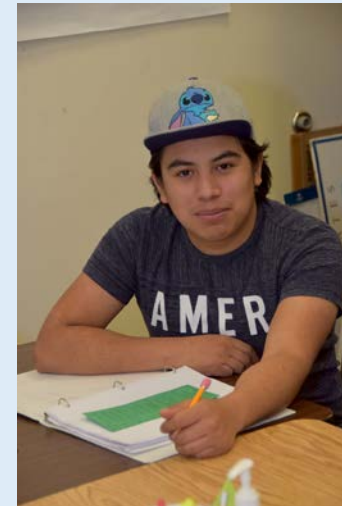
Teaching English literacy for
English language learners through poetry.



Center for New Americans

A Community-Based Education and Resource Center for Immigrants and Refugees in Western Massachusetts

We have been welcoming and serving immigrants since 1992.



What We Offer

Free classes in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL),
face-to-face and online



What We Offer

Our face to face classes are offered in two counties - Franklin and Hampshire - in three sites: Greenfield, Amherst, and Northampton

Amherst class at the Survival Center



Greenfield class at the Historical Society



What We Offer

- Career counseling and training



- Support services such as referrals to housing and healthcare



What We Offer

Citizenship and immigration legal services



Our constituents:

- Immigrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers from Ecuador, Cambodia, Tibet, Cape Verde, Morocco, Moldova, Ukraine, Russia, China, Haiti, Mexico, Guatemala, the Democratic Republic of Congo and many more places
- About 130 students annually



What We Offer

- Free classes in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), face-to-face and online
- Career counseling and other support services (referrals to housing, healthcare, etc)
- Immigration and citizenship services.
- 3 locations - Amherst, Greenfield, and Northampton - in 2 counties, Hampshire and Franklin



We have a tradition of Poetry!

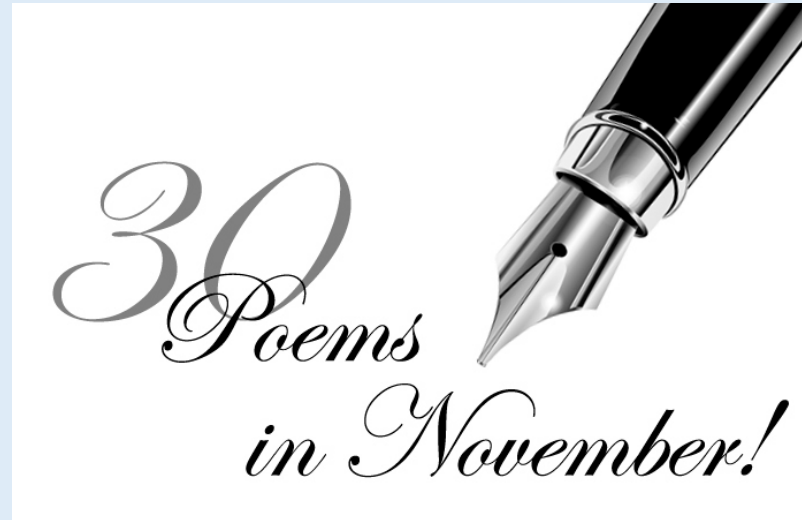
Join us for the 11th annual

*30
Poems*

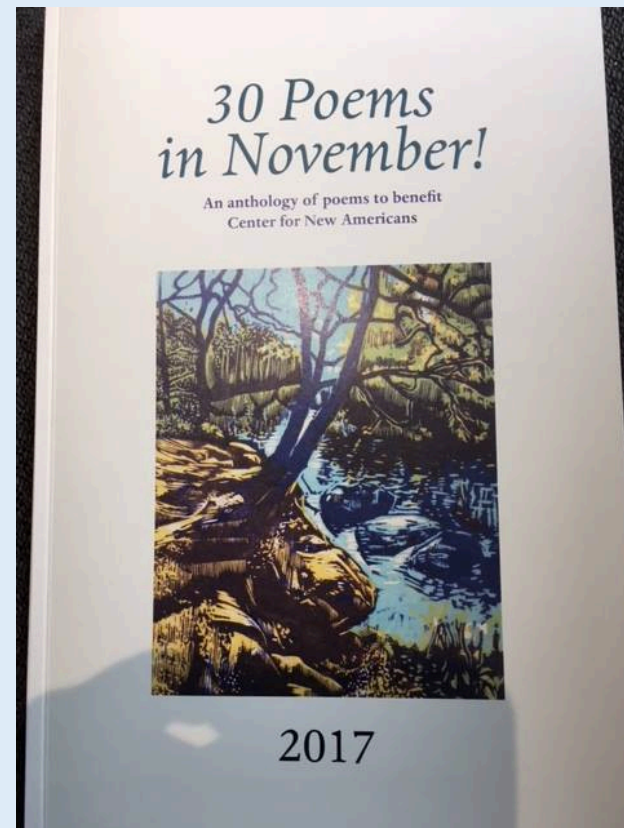
in November!



For 10 years, community members, board members, teachers, and volunteers have been writing and raising to support literacy classes for our students



Every year we celebrate the success of this fundraiser with a Reading at Smith College and the production of a poetry anthology



Teachers who write and raise join community members and other published authors in reading

Sometimes students who have written in class read as well

Teacher, Linda Neas



Student, Manuel



Our Project: Poetry is Power!

- Introduce poetry to teachers as a tool for teaching literacy
- Introduce poetry to students at all levels



Project Goals

- Increase English literacy through poetry
- Give students an additional vehicle to express themselves
- Offer students the opportunity to share their work



Introducing Poetry in Class (November)

- Lead teacher (Linda) created a folder of lesson plans at all levels for teachers



Introducing Poetry in Class (November)

- Teachers introduce poetry to students
- Vehicle for self-expression



Community Reading at Smith College (December)

- Reading and Celebration at the Smith College Poetry Center
- Students meet well-known authors (such as Jane Yolen)
- Students have the opportunity to read their own poetry



Community Reading at Smith College

- Reading and Celebration at the Smith College Poetry Center
- Students meet well-known authors (such as Jane Yolen)
- Students have the opportunity to read their own poetry



Students Continue to Write Poetry (January-February)



Level 1- Matching Emotions

angry	bored	confused
happy	in love	miserable
nervous	sad	scared
shocked	surprised	tired

www.eslflashcards.com



Level 1- Graphic Organizer

Emotions Poem - Level One

Example:

I feel happy.
I am writing a letter.

I feel sad.
I am walking in the rain.

I feel loved.
I have children.

I feel lonely.
I have an empty room.

I feel _____

I am _____

I feel _____

I have _____

Level 2

Emotions/Feeling Poem

Level Two

Example:

I feel excited,
Because my friends are coming over.

I feel delighted,
Because I have many gifts.

I feel sad,
Because there is no school.

I feel mad,
Because the bus is late, again.

—

Level 3

grief	joyful
afraid	peaceful
regret	happy
angry	satisfied
worried	confident
jealous	satisfied

insecure	self-confident
pessimistic	optimistic
anxious	hopeful
selfish	grateful
disgusted	loved
unfeeling	compassionate

Level 3- Poetry Example

Emotions/Feelings Poem

Level Three

Example:

How I Feel

When the snow is deep,
I feel lost.

When the sun shines,
I feel warm.

If I eat chocolate,
I feel satisfied.

If I run a race,
I feel strong.

Some Students Read their Poetry at *Immigrant Voices* (April)



Center for New Americans Compiles a Student Poetry Anthology (May)

School
responsible, sparkly
studying, learning, helping
it will make you smart
learning room



Joseph Tavares - Cape Verde

You are the gold sun shining.
You are the sound of a slow running river.
You are from a place that tastes like a cup of fresh, cold
water on a hot summer day.
You are the feeling of fire - hot but never too much.
You are the touch of the soft wind in the morning.

~ Tigran - Yeravan, Armenia

I am the color of purple worship.
I am the sound of beautiful songs.
I am from a place that tastes like water from the lake.
I am the smell of bananas.
I am the feeling of love for my family.
I am the touch of a very beautiful lake.

~ Lydia - Congo

Measuring Success

- Teachers collected writing samples monthly
- Students and teachers compared students' writing samples pre and post-project
- Students reflected on the project in their writing journals



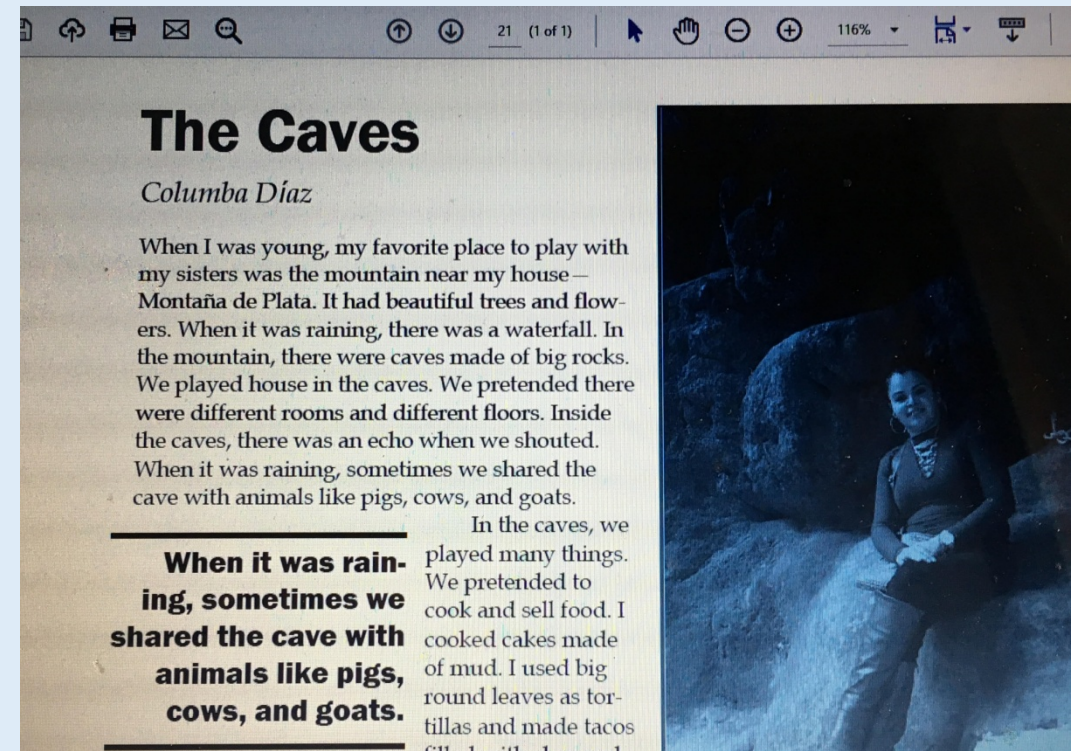
2019 and Beyond...

- The project helped to encourage more writing
- Teachers are working with students to create writing rubrics
- Increasingly, students edit their own and their classmates' writing



2019 and Beyond...

- One teacher who participated encouraged students to write about their memories of play
- They submitted their essays to *The Change Agent*
- One essay was published last month!



Challenges

- Reversing the assumption that low-literacy students cannot write poetry
- Reversing the assumption that unless you are a Creative Writing Scholar with a degree, you cannot teach poetry
- Sustaining the habit of teaching English using poetry!

Questions?

