



Everyday English @ Your Library

A Fort Vancouver Regional Library District program made possible by a 2003-2004 "Serving Cultural Diversity Initiative" program administered by the Washington State Library, funded by a Library Services and Technology Act/Institute of Museum and Library Services grant

Reaching out to non-English speakers

According to the 2000 Census, more than 39,000 individuals in the Fort Vancouver Regional Library District describe themselves as speaking a language other than English at home. More than 18,000 of those library district residents reported that they do not speak English well.

To improve library service specifically to Spanish-speaking residents, Fort Vancouver Regional Library District implemented the successful "*¡Bienvenidos! Es Su Biblioteca (Welcome! It's Your Library)*" project in 2002-2003. The program was funded by the Serving Cultural Diversity Initiative of the Washington State Library.

The project provided staff training on cultural communication, purchased additional Spanish-language materials, translated library publications into Spanish and conducted a needs assessment. Through this project, FVRL made great strides in reaching out to the Spanish-speaking residents of the library district. This project has also provided insight into serving other language groups.

During the needs assessment conducted for the first grant program, language barrier was identified as the major obstacle for the Spanish-speaking users in accessing library services and conducting daily business.

Following a Battle Ground model

In early 2003, the Friends of Battle Ground Community Library, in partnership with the Clark College Adult Literacy Program and dedicated volunteers, initiated a literacy tutoring program and weekly English conversation circles to address the emerging needs of non-English speakers in the Battle Ground area.

Assisting with English practice

The library district developed and secured funding for "*Everyday English @ Your Library*" to provide better and more meaningful services to non-English speaking residents in targeted communities where the need was greatest for language assistance. The program was modeled after Battle Ground's very successful volunteer effort.

The program includes:

- Establishing English conversation circles (ECC) in five SW Washington communities: Vancouver, White Salmon, Woodland, Alderdale and Goldendale
- Providing children's activities and cultural and informational programming associated with the ECCs
- Purchasing more English language self-study materials.

A goal of language assimilation

The goals of *Everyday English @ Your Library* are:

- To provide non-English speakers with skills and information to survive and thrive in their communities, and
- To build the library's capacity to meet the most frequently identified needs of the Spanish-speaking and other non-English speaking populations.

Our long-range **vision** is that the non-English speaking population feels comfortable making use of the library and its resources.

For more information about *Everyday English @ Your Library*, please contact Sarah Berkowitz at (360) 699-8884 or sberkowitz@fvrl.org, or call your local library.