

# The Conversation - August 2023



## Greetings, Friends of Welcoming the Stranger!

We hope you all had a super summer 2023 and are looking forward to a fabulous fall. This edition of “The Conversation” is full of good news made possible by your partnership and support. Thank you!

## News from the Office

Welcoming the Stranger rolls into fall with exciting momentum from the summer. Our Fall term gets underway on September 11 and runs until November 22, 2023. To enroll in our classes please click [Classes](#).

Thanks to an anonymous donor, we were able to provide refurbished laptops to five very grateful WTS students.



*Three of the five students who received the donated laptops.*

In July, Executive Director Patricia Lorenz was selected to be honored by **Bucks County YWCA's 2023 Salute to Women in the category of "Advocacy & Civic Engagement."** This annual honor recognizes women in Bucks County who are making exceptional contributions to their organizations and their communities. Its purpose is to highlight the impact and contributions of those advancing the YWCA mission of eliminating racism and empowering women, as well as the various ways the mission can be embodied. Patricia is one of only 16 honorees across six categories, all of whom will be feted at a gala dinner on October 19th at Spring Mill Manor in Ivyland, PA. **Felicitades, Patricia!**



July also brought us a new Board Member: Robert Ferrante. A member of the Marketing and Development Committee, Robert brings to WTS his dedication to our mission, as well as his personal tenacity, leadership and people skills. **Welcome, Robert, to the Welcoming the Stranger Community!**



**Thank you to our most recent donors** - Genuardi Foundation, William Penn Bank Community Foundation, Cabun Advanced Electronic Systems (CAES), and Doylestown Rotary Club! We look forward to carrying out the work this funding will make possible and pledge to spend it wisely, providing key services to the immigrants and refugees in the communities we serve.

## Volunteer Spotlight: The Doctor Will Teach You Now



*Sergi (Left), Bill (Middle), Irena (Right)*

After 46 years in internal medicine and radiology, Dr. William Ross was eager to find a worthwhile volunteer activity in his local community of Washington Crossing, PA. A friend who tutored with WTS suggested he try assisting with ESL classes, which he enjoyed. Then Bill found his true calling as a teacher: citizenship preparation.

In the six years that he has been teaching citizenship preparation for WTS, Bill has familiarized himself with all aspects of the process, from the initial green card application to the achievement of American citizenship (usually a 4-5 year undertaking).

During COVID-19, Bill discovered that he prefers to conduct classes virtually. “Teaching online gives me and my students greater flexibility with scheduling,” he said. “You don’t have to drive to participate.”

Bill divides each class between teaching the civics and history information needed to pass the U.S. naturalization test and practicing conversations useful in everyday life in America.

One of Bill’s students felt bad that she could not converse with other mothers at the school bus stop for her children. Bill encouraged her to talk to one of them and invite her for tea. Now, they get together regularly so the student can practice her English.

Two of his star students are a Russian couple named Irena and Sergi. Having no immediate family in Russia, Irena and Sergi decided to stay in America while visiting their daughter, son-in-law, and infant grandchild. “Our home is here now, close to our family,” they say. “We want to be part of this country and vote, so we applied for our citizenship.”

One aspect of Bill’s classes that Sergi and Irena really enjoy is conversation. “We think in Russian, but we need to speak and answer the questions in English,” they said.

Sergi and Irena attended their Naturalization Ceremony on August 10th. All members of their family were there for this proud day. So was Bill.



Said Bill, “We all have our ups and downs, and my students learn from different starting places. The one thing all my students have in common is that they are so grateful and don’t take anything for granted in their new country.”

What advice do Sergi and Irena have for other immigrants? “Set up deadlines and don’t delay your studies. Do something every single day and have a plan. Find your weak spots and work on them extra. And ask other people to talk to you, so you can understand different accents. This is a frustrating journey, and we were old when we started it, but it is so good to be members of U.S. society and U.S. citizens! And to have Bill as a member of our family now!”

**To volunteer with us, click [here!](#)**

**To make a donation, please click below. Thank you!**

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