

FROM THE CLASSROOM TO THE CLASSROOM

ESL classes empower parent to volunteer in her children's school, then land paying job

By Whip Villarreal

During the COVID-19 pandemic shut-downs in 2021, Vandana Sinha spent a lot of time contemplating her desire to improve her ability to speak English. A friend of hers who had already completed English as a second language course at Poway Adult School helped motivate her to enroll at the school herself. She went on to complete advanced ESL classes as well as professional communication and business technologies courses within the span of a year, and has found the education has not only opened her job prospects, but has helped her become more involved in her children's lives.



ESL classes empowered Vandana Sinha to volunteer in her children's school, then landed her a paying job.

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Vandana Sinha, Former Poway Adult School ESL student

“The more and more I attended the classes, the more I was able to learn how to better communicate in English,” Sinha says. “The classes helped me a lot. At the time I was studying English at Poway, I also started to volunteer at my kid's school. This was something I couldn't do before because of my limited English. This gave me confidence and I thought if I could volunteer at a school, I could also find a job at one as well.”

Less than three months after completing her courses at PAS, she was hired as a data

technician at Oak Valley Middle school, and credits the education she received at PAS for obtaining the job.

Sinha is originally from India and received a Masters Degree in computer applications there. While attending classes in her college career, she did learn to read and write in English, but never really learned how to speak the language.

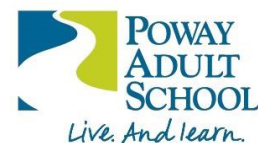
During the pandemic, the classes she attended at PAS were conducted online through Zoom, which she says made learning how to properly form an English sentence and speak it clearly was a challenge at times. However, she says there were some unexpected factors that helped her along the way.

Some of her classmates were from different corners of the world, like Afghanistan, India and Russia. She says that she found it helpful learning how to communicate through English by practicing with others from different cultures and countries. Additionally, she praised the teaching abilities of her ESL teacher.

“My teacher was Jacquie Uriell, who I referred to as Ms. J, and she was so good and helpful to the students,” Sinha explains.

“If she taught me English when I was studying it in India, I would have learned it a long time ago. She is one of the best teachers I have ever had and I have a lot of respect for her.”

Sinha's story is another example of how Poway Adult School can be a critical, life-changing education resource in the community. By providing educational opportunities tailored to the needs of its local adult students the school not only helps fulfill the broader goals of the California education system, but also helps improve the quality of life for locals one person at a time.



Poway Adult School is one of almost 300 adult schools in California that are operated by K-12 school districts. California Adult Schools provide education, training, and support services to ensure that adult learners reach their education and workforce goals. For more information, visit powayadultschool.powayusd.com or call (858) 668-4012.