



PEACE AND JUSTICE NETWORK

Presbytery of Grand Canyon

Helping Refugees Connect with their Community

April 27, 2023

Helping refugees connect with the community by learning English. This is the mission of Abounding Service, a local non-profit, founded by Gary De Velder about 12 years ago. Abounding Service teaches English to people from all over the world. After hearing about their work through the George Brooks award to Michael Gallagher in 2022, I visited their location at North Central Baptist Church (Central Avenue and Bethany Home Road in Phoenix) and quickly agreed to volunteer on a regular basis.

On any given day, the classroom welcomes students from Africa, Europe, Asia, and Central & South America. A variety of teaching tools are employed, the central tool being Rosetta Stone. The class begins with individual conversation between the student and an “Encourager”. This discussion includes vocabulary expansion and learning for the U.S. Citizenship test. Students and Encouragers then spend at least 45 minutes doing individualized work with Rosetta Stone. The class wraps up with group discussion.

The Encouragers are central to the success of Abounding Service methods. Gary trains volunteers to help the students using the various tools and coaches them to ensure sound practices are followed. The exchanges between students and Encouragers promote not only language learning, but also deeper understandings of cultural differences. The relationships that develop are rich with laughter and meaningful conversation.

What Can You Do?

Congregations and individuals can contribute through funding or volunteering their time.

Want More Information?

www.aboundingservice.org

Contact the Author of This Article

phebepacker@gmail.com