Improving immigrant lives through English education and uniting communities across cultures.

Gratitude Report
For Fiscal Year 7/1/2019 - 6/30/2020

Providing training, resources and English language education to create meaningful connections, build cultural understanding and inspire confidence.

Teaching English
Connecting People

Intercambio.org
By creating accessible, safe ways to connect and learn from each other across cultures, we can reduce bias and build a better world.
Intercambio
Uniting Communities:

**Why** To ignite human potential by cultivating a world where people from different cultural backgrounds connect, communicate and engage.

**What** English language education, resources and training that create meaningful connections, build cultural awareness, and inspire confidence.

**How** We use the power of language learning to help individuals develop new skills and perspectives in a welcoming, encouraging environment that sparks courage, growth, and excitement.

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300 students were trained for online classes in the first six months of COVID-19.

For 90% of them, it was their first-ever online class.
Dear Friends of Intercambio,

I write you this note as we near the end of what has been one of the most tumultuous and unprecedented years in American History. Between a devastating pandemic, a nationwide reckoning with racial injustice, and an important election, it is hard to overstate the significance of 2020. However, through it all, Intercambio has stayed the course and adapted in new and creative ways, ensuring our work continues.

This year is significant for another reason, too: it marks Intercambio’s 20th anniversary! Twenty years of providing high-quality, life-changing experiences to the Boulder County community and beyond.

Here are just a few highlights from 2020, as we:

- Pivoted swiftly to live English classes online that will undoubtedly remain a popular option for students long after the need for social distancing has passed.
- Ramped up our resource referrals, as students came to us for help, many of whom are frontline workers and were furloughed or laid off from their jobs.
- Piloted the transformational program, CC English, a platform to connect English learners and volunteers nationwide, bringing Intercambio into the next decade sustainably.
- Strengthened our national presence as we train other groups to offer classes online and create a network of partners sharing their best practices.
- Advanced the conversation around a more equitable approach to the way people teach and learn in adult education.
- Created brave conversation spaces around race for our students, designed to combat racism as participants dove deeper into social justice issues. Many of our students are hungry to talk and learn about racism in this country and to share their lived experiences.

Significantly, the backdrop to our work this year has been the social upheaval that exposed the ongoing systemic racism in this country. The importance of Intercambio’s purpose became that much clearer and more pressing: to ignite human potential by cultivating a world where people from different cultural backgrounds connect, communicate and engage.

Of course, we could not do this work without your continued support and friendship. We dedicate the 2020 Gratitude Report to YOU – the generous donors, foundations, businesses, local government, students, volunteers, board and staff that are the driving force behind the successes featured inside. Without all of you, our work and its impact would not be possible. So, from the bottom of our hearts, thank you for helping us weather this year and for enabling us to come out the other side even stronger.

With profound gratitude,

Laurie Mittenthal
Intercambio Board Chair
In March, Intercambio halted in-person classes in the last week of the term. As a staff, we jumped into action to address immediate needs, while keeping in mind what actions would still be relevant post-pandemic. The last six months have been filled with gratitude, obstacles, connections, and innovation.

**Gratitude**

Our one fundraiser of the year, Comedy for Cambio, was cancelled. Our board and staff made hundreds of phone calls; the outpouring of support more than covered what we had originally budgeted for the event. It gave us the assurance that we were not forgotten.

The federal PPP loan also gave us a boost as we looked to an uncertain fiscal year.

We are grateful for how Intercambio’s supporters banded together to make it happen.

**Looking Back: Quick Changes, Big Impact**

**Obstacles**

March was emotionally difficult for staff. We made tough decisions to significantly cut expenses and resources knowing that long-term revenue challenges lay ahead. The cuts were painful, but we felt confident that a smaller team would be essential to our financial sustainability in this new normal.

Revenue from national sales of our new Confidence and Connections curriculum had been on pace to double from last year, but few partners adapted quickly to online classes and sales dramatically dropped.

We spoke with hundreds of current and former students, connecting them to the right community resources, regardless of their immigration status, and providing a listening ear and emotional support.

Norma Fuentes
Director of Student Services

**Connections**

Our two decades of building relationships and trust with thousands of immigrants meant that they often turned to our staff first for help. We made hundreds of phone calls to current and former students, to connect them to the right community resources, regardless of their immigration status, and provide a listening ear.
Innovation

We flexed our creative muscles to create new tools for teachers, students and administrators nationwide.

Hundreds of people across the country attended our new live webinars and took advantage of this opportunity to improve teaching and program quality.

We took the first steps toward creating the CCEnglish Platform, which matches volunteers and students around the country for virtual English classes using our curriculum. This platform will foster thousands of new connections and generate new revenue sources for Intercambio.

Together, we adapted quickly to continue teaching English in this "new normal."

Online Classes
in the first 3 months of COVID-19

150
total students

36
students in 1:1 classes

114
students in group classes
Shifting the Power Imbalance: A National Call to Action

By Lee Shainis
Executive Director and Co-Founder

We need to recognize that the current language we use to describe the work and purpose of adult education sets a "dominant culture" social dynamic in place between teacher and student. At Intercambio, we believe it is not about "us and them," or "they need our help."

To anchor adult education in a genuine spirit and experience of equity, we must start with a more equitable approach to the way people teach and learn. This represents a fundamental shift from a one-way "savior helper" mindset to a two-way "mutual learning" mindset, creating a beneficial learning experience for both teacher and student.

At Intercambio, we have found that when we shift the power dynamic, the mutual learning mindset inspires our language learners to talk more often and honestly about their lives and perspectives.

This accelerates language acquisition, amplifies students' voices, and opens doors for teachers to learn more and for students to teach. Our adult students have life experiences and knowledge that we need to learn from. We can make our students feel more welcome here and they can welcome us into their lives, their cultures, their histories, their celebrations, and even their homes.

Reciprocal learning also deepens connections, reduces biases and assumptions, and increases a sense of belonging.

All these changes lead to a more equitable and cohesive society and to increased participation and persistence rates at English programs.

My wife, who is from Colombia, also pointed out to me that English is the language of power. She said that if an English speaker goes to Colombia and does not speak Spanish, people will still view them as well-educated because they speak English. But when a Spanish speaker comes to the United States, if they do not speak English well, they are often perceived as lesser, uneducated; people do not listen to them as much. I realized that I too am guilty, outside of the
Lee Shainis  
Executive Director

Students often come with a set of perspectives and life experiences extremely different from their teacher’s. If they aren’t provided with opportunities to share those, power imbalances continue.

“Students often come with a set of perspectives and life experiences extremely different from their teacher’s. If they aren’t provided with opportunities to share those, power imbalances continue.”

Lee Shainis  
Executive Director
For 20 years, Intercambio has been working in Boulder County, training volunteers to teach English using our dynamic, two-way mutual learning curriculum. Over the last decade, we have made efforts to help other communities to implement our model. Now, we have a thriving network of community programs nationwide that rely on us for resources and curriculum. Curriculum sales support our Boulder County work.

We are still just scratching the surface. 19.2 million people aged 16 to 64 in the U.S. have limited English proficiency. Only 4% are accessing English classes.

COVID-19 spurred us on to our next big innovation. The CCEnglish Platform will be:

- **Accessible:** An English Language Learner from anywhere in the U.S. can take classes with a live teacher. Anyone can teach from the comfort of their home.

- **Structured:** The platform uses our structured curriculum, which spurs culture conversations through listening, writing, and pronunciation activities.

- **Scalable:** The platform will be automated, with online registration and training videos. We expect to have 1,000 participants within a year with minimal staff required.

- **Revenue-generating:** Boulder County is our testing ground for new training programs and resources. This platform will provide revenue to support the local program, making Intercambio less reliant on donations.

Our platform pilot was limited to 60 participants from all around the country. We had participants in 19 states and anticipate reaching every state within two years.

**Innovations for Life: The CCEnglish Platform**
We started with a pilot program, limited to 60 people, working in pairs. They live in 20 different states, with 18 countries of origin represented.

So far, the experience of our participants has been overwhelmingly positive:

“My teacher is great. She is really friendly, and she always provides extra practice to help me individually.” – Manami, student, Texas

“We are both having so much fun with lessons and conversation, so we are getting to know each other very well and I am already starting to feel like her tía. You didn’t warn me I would get so attached!” – Susan, teacher, Colorado

“My student and I are a great match. We are really enjoying the content of the curriculum.” – Regina, teacher, Colorado

There is nothing more valuable than being able to communicate with other people. When I was a child, my family taught me to speak. Now, you are like my family that teaches me to speak again. THANK YOU!

Juan Carlos
Platform pilot participant, Colorado

BACKED BY OUR CURRICULUM

The CCEnglish program is particularly strong because it incorporates our Confidence and Connections English curriculum, which was completed in January 2020.
Conversations About Race for English Learners

Intercambio was built on the foundation of a mutual learning mindset, where cultural differences can be explored. As the fight against racism continues, conversations about race and racism are happening here.

Many immigrants are hungry to talk and learn about racism and to share their experiences, but few opportunities exist to discuss in a safe, structured setting. Few English teachers nationwide have the tools or confidence to bring up these difficult topics in their classes. Intercambio recently hosted online conversations about racism for English learners to dive deeper into race and racial justice.

These necessary conversations can be elevating, educational, painful, and healing.

Now, Intercambio is exploring ways to expand access for English learners and community volunteers who want to participate in these critical conversations. This expansion would make our local effort scalable to a national level.

Diving Deep

In the first conversation on race Intercambio hosted, students shared their experiences with:

**Segregation** and how it shows up in their native countries.

**Police in the U.S.** compared to their native countries.

People who are welcoming in the U.S.

Being told to go back to where they came from.

If you would like to learn more or support these opportunities, contact Lee@intercambio.org.
We’ve Got Family: The New Intercambio Network

For several years, Intercambio has been developing relationships with community groups around the country who are training volunteers and using our curriculum to teach English. With more than 600 partners nationwide, the size of each community group varies. Some groups work with hundreds of adults, while others work with only a handful.

We are now offering a new opportunity for partner groups who want more from Intercambio. The Intercambio Network allows groups access to our resources, supporting them in teaching English in their communities.

The Intercambio Network offers three levels of engagement: Neighbor, Friend and Family. Partners choose their level based on the type of engagement their program needs.

It’s thrilling to have the first nine groups join at the Family Level. They have access to online teacher training, program coaching and/or private Live Online Webinars, an invitation to our annual online conference, and opportunities to connect within this powerful network to share successes and problem-solve challenges.

Family Members will also provide us with a specific set of outcome data on their participants and program. The goal is twofold: to provide them with a structured set of measurements to share with potential funders, and to help us measure our own growing national impact.

We are excited to expand and deepen relationships with our partners across the country, sharing "The Intercambio Way."

The Intercambio Network

Membership Levels

Neighbors - Free
Purchase print materials, program kits, and more.

Friends - $150 annually
All of the above, plus additional resources and events.

Family - $250 - $750 annually
Access to exclusive training, resources, and data.
Before COVID-19: The Data
Celebrating our students' achievements prior to the pandemic.

- Our students came from 55 different countries
- 876 adults enrolled in English Classes
- 70 students attended citizenship classes last year

The Impact of Classes
Students feeling comfortable speaking English outside classes

- Before Classes: 25%
- After Classes: 65%

52% of our students felt well-connected and involved in the community after attending classes

33% of students earn more money after taking class

Intercambio and the Next Generation

1,009 children in Boulder County have a parent learning English with Intercambio

The children of Intercambio’s Latino participants graduate at a much higher rate than their peers

- Intercambio Parents: 91%
- Boulder County*: 78%
- Colorado: 69%
- National Average: 76%

*Boulder County Latino graduation rates based on an average of BVSD and SVVSD.
87% of volunteer participants have friends that are English language learners, compared to 46% of prospective participants.

243 volunteer teachers teaching 2x a week

218 one-time volunteers participated in Community Conversations events
Shawn Camden’s entrepreneurial spirit and outgoing personality are some of the first things people notice about him. Back in 2000, he was studying Spanish at CU Boulder. When Shawn overheard Spanish conversations in the community, he would join in so he could connect with others and deepen the skills he learned while studying in Mexico.

Through those spontaneous conversations, Shawn became close friends with families from Colombia and El Salvador. They shared with him how isolated they felt and the lack of access to affordable English classes. When he offered to teach them English in their homes, they excitedly accepted.

Shawn knew there had to be more people out there feeling the same way. He would share his idea with immigrants he met at his job at a secondhand store, and went door-to-door in neighborhoods with lots of potential English learners to build the first student waitlist.

It All Started with Two Guys in Their Twenties

It was not rocket science, but it took courage. His warm character drew people in, and the waitlist got longer and longer. He thought, “This could be a great idea for a nonprofit.”

Shawn started recruiting friends and other CU Boulder Spanish students to be volunteer teachers. Lee Shainis was one of those recruits.

When Lee heard Shawn’s vision, he was excited. He loved learning from people of different backgrounds and opening doors to connection. He was not particularly drawn to charity work, but rather learning, growing, and having fun that created a positive impact on lives.

Lee was working at the school district and asked for space to use in the evenings at Boulder High School for the first classes. He started researching how to teach English and finding mentors to develop formal training for volunteers.
It is hard to imagine the hole in our lives if there had never been an Intercambio.
When Jose Serna heard that first knock on his door 20 years ago, he did not expect a life changing opportunity. Shawn said, “¿Quieres aprender inglés?” Jose said, “¡Sí!”

“Shawn and Lee became my close friends. We hung out together and did classes in the living room. We went with them to ask the City of Boulder for money the very first time,” Jose recalls when asked about the early days with Intercambio.

After moving to Colorado from Mexico, Jose knew only a handful of people and absolutely no English. He was working at a dry-cleaning company he loved. The employer was wonderful, but the chemicals being used left Jose constantly sick with migraines. He knew something needed to change.

After 3 years of studying English with Intercambio, Jose had the confidence to follow his dream to work in restaurants. “I have always been passionate about food. I grew up helping my mom in the kitchen, so working with food made sense,” he said.

Jose spent just over a decade working in several different restaurants, and in 2019 realized his dream of opening his own Longmont restaurant, Blue Corn Tacos. Through their business, Jose and his wife, Aidee, are able to support their two children, who are in middle and high school. That simple knock on the door 20 years ago gave Jose the tools to create life-changing opportunities for his family.
Growing With Intercambio

We are grateful for Jane and TJ, some of our first donors who have walked the full path with Intercambio.

“We were initially attracted to Intercambio because of Lee’s infectious energy and passion. We loved the idea of a two-way street; using volunteers to teach English and connect to the immigrant population. Right from the beginning, there was this concept of the volunteers getting as much out of it as the students, and the idea of bridging that divide,” Jane said.

"We’ve stayed with the organization because not only is Intercambio doing what it set out to do really well in Boulder, it has taken that model and expanded it nationwide."

Over the years, Jane has been a volunteer teacher, served on the board, and her family continues to give. "I have felt honored to be part of the 20 years Intercambio has been bringing people together, and its model of sustainability and growing national impact inspire us to continue to be engaged,” she said.

An Activist’s Heart

In 2000, Audrey Fishman Franklin was cutting out newspaper articles about local social movements, and one of those articles was about Lee and Shawn gathering people to teach English. Her dear friend Clara Pérez-Méndez also shared the activist’s heart. Clara knew Intercambio and introduced Audrey.

Audrey says immigration has always been part of her story. In 1905, her Jewish grandfather emigrated from Russia and made his home in Vermont.

Before she knew it, Audrey was the chair of the first board of directors, and she continues her leadership by serving on Intercambio's Development Committee. Maybe not one of her biggest feats, but Audrey recalls telling Lee Shainis, “When you go to a meeting with donors, please wear long pants and real shoes!” Thank you, Audrey, for laying a firm foundation for Intercambio by chairing our board and standing alongside us these amazing 20 years.
You: Our Generous Donors

This year’s accomplishments were only possible because of your support. Thank you!

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Hazel’s Beverage World  
KO | Koenig, Oelsner, Taylor, Schoenfeld & Gaddis PC  
Murad & Murad, P.C.  
Premier Mortgage Group  
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Stapp Interstate Toyota  
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