

Oregon Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Language (ORTESOL)
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ESL Awareness Week is Happening Now

Celebrating What English Learners Bring to Oregon

Portland, Oregon – March 2019

On February 25th, 2019, Governor Brown issued a proclamation designating **March 10-16, 2019** to be **English As a Second Language Awareness Week** in recognition of how English learners enrich our communities by bringing cultural and linguistic diversity to Oregon. “This week is a great opportunity to showcase how welcoming people from other places enriches the lives of everyone in our state. When your housemate is Ugandan, your coworker – French, your teacher - Mexican and your PTA president – Turkish, you see what diversity brings to our state. This is what it is like for English teachers who have the privilege to work with and learn from students from nearly every continent on Earth. It is hard to overstate the impact of a human face-to-face connection to otherwise foreign countries and cultures. For this week, we want to share this experience with all Oregonians,” said Jessie Jimenez, Advocacy Chair for Oregon Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (ORTESOL).

The American Immigration Council reports that “Immigrant-led households in the state paid \$1.7 billion in federal taxes and \$736.6 million in state and local taxes in 2014. Undocumented immigrants in Oregon paid \$80.8 million in state and local taxes in 2014.” A teacher and member of ORTESOL shrugs when considering these numbers, “These are just the obvious assets. There are so many unexpected benefits when people of diverse backgrounds work together.” There is evidence to support this. Richard Freeman, an economics professor from Harvard, found that scientific papers produced by researchers from differing ethnic backgrounds are more likely to have a greater impact on their field, than papers co-authored by people from the same background. Adam Galinski, American social psychologist and professor at Columbia Business School, found a link between significant intercultural relationships and creativity. One English teacher summed it up, “we don’t have to welcome these learners, we *get to* welcome them, and if we don’t, it is as much our loss as theirs.”

The Events Planned for This Week:

- **OSE/COSA English Learners Alliance Conference**
- **ORTESOL partners with Multnomah Libraries** to bring book recommendations to Oregonians who want to “Walk in Someone Else’s Shoes”.
- Portland Parks and Recreation, “Portlanders Stand with Refugees & Immigrants”
Southwest Community Center, 6820 SW 45th Avenue, Portland, Oregon
Friday, March 15 2019, 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM

For more information about ESL Awareness Week, visit <https://ortesol.wildapricot.org/advocacy>