Virtual Language Connection Project
Catholic Charities Refugee Families & Albuquerque Community Members

**WHAT:** A cultural exchange project where native English language speakers build a bridge of understanding with English language learners through language connection lessons. Building on an existing Service Learning partnership, this project is focused on encouraging community members from different backgrounds to build cross-cultural connections and further develop their understanding of a foreign language.

Geared for those who are relative newcomers to English, Bosque School students and families will deliver beginner or intermediate vocabulary through WhatsApp or Zoom. These meetings will occur 1-2 times/week for 20-30 minutes to begin and may increase should interest between the paired participants warrant it.

**LANGUAGE EXCHANGE OUTCOME:** Catholic Charities participants come from various countries with Arabic, Dari, Pashto and Swahili being primary languages among them. This program is designed with the goal of a true exchange of language occurring between those involved in the pairings. As much as we want newcomers to learn English, we also hope Bosque students and families will become familiar with some vocabulary and phrases from the languages represented. We aim to create relationships and build community, truly exchanging knowledge rather than only being the recipient or deliverer of information.

**WHEN:** Registration for this program will open April 6th with the program launching April 13th. It will continue through the end of May, then will be evaluated for effectiveness. These virtual meetings will occur 1-2 times/week for 20-30 minutes each session to begin and may increase should interest warrant it. Pairs of language learners will be invited to arrange meetings on their own after the first few lessons with periodic check-ins from Catholic Charities staff to ensure the partnership is working well.

**HOW:** Participants will be able to access lessons using Zoom video/phone conferencing and/or using WhatsApp freeware. With lessons developed by students of Bosque School, Catholic Charities volunteers and other community members, participants will learn through a multi-modality approach to language learning with images, audio and verbal communication.

**WHO:** This project is open to individuals of all ages with interest in learning English and other languages. Middle school students are encouraged to participate together with a committed adult as co-participant. Upper school students can participate individually. To begin, this opportunity will be offered to the 50 students enrolled in Catholic Charities’ Parent Engagement program as well as the 30 students enrolled in the International Club programs at the middle & high school levels (with an estimated participation group of 20-30 members in total).

**WHERE:** Language learning and community connection from the comfort of your own home.

What is needed from Bosque students and community members?
**English vocabulary lessons**

To begin this program, we will start by offering lessons via WhatsApp or Zoom. Those electing to provide lessons will decide upon a theme that is applicable to the real world. Lessons will include:

* 7-10 images
* Vocabulary words to accompany each image
* Definitions or use of words in sentences for Intermediate/ Advanced learners

**THEME: Colors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RED</th>
<th>red</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Red tomatoes" /></td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Red flower" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**LEVEL: Beginning English**

Other themes for each level could include:

**Beginning** – Language learner pairings may be between young people or between adults. Themes for people newly arrived in America with limited exposure to/ experience with English -- colors, shapes, words that start with “Aa” (or other letters of the alphabet), numbers, parts of a building, (basic) kitchen items, snacks, desserts, modes of transportation, school terms, seen in nature…

**Intermediate/ Advanced** – Common words, conversational language, information needed to complete forms, format for writing an email. Adults may be seeking support with more academic terminology supporting participants in preparing for their citizenship test, presenting specific vocabulary for careers, etc.

For registration information, please contact Anna Rutins, Director of Service Learning.