

Community Dialogues on Adult Learning

By [Kerri Provost](#), March 26, 2012 3:28 pm



“placed in a holding pattern for ten or fifteen years.”

Segarra – who described how at age fifteen, without a diploma, he attended college – was one of several speakers advocating for “Adult Learning as a Pathway to Change,” the theme of the Community Dialogues.



anyone who wishes to become a dialogue facilitator. At last Thursday’s event, participants received some brief experience in sample community dialogue. Twenty minutes talking with strangers showed the level of diversity in the room. One woman gushed about how proud she was of her other group members who had come from Albania, Peru, Russia, and parts of Africa.

As over ninety people filed into the library atrium, they were greeted by the aroma of vegetable pakora, a welcome alternative to the standard satisfying-but-dull sandwiches; a pianist played tunes to create an inviting mood for the Community Dialogue Kick-off Event last week.

“Diversity also means inclusiveness,” Mayor Segarra told the crowd, as he spoke in support for greater access to learning opportunities, especially for immigrants. A part of inclusiveness, he suggested, was making sure that immigrant community is not

Starting the week of April 9th, the Community Dialogues, a series of group discussions among immigrants and the receiving community, will begin. These will occur once per week during April on various days and in different locations based on feedback from those attending last week’s event.

“It’s not talk for talk’s sake,” insisted Carolyne Abdullah, who is with Everyday Democracy, the organizer providing free training to



Estela Morales, a guest speaker, told her story of coming here from Mexico five years ago. She spoke of her struggle to overcome the language barrier; native English speakers may take for granted being able to watch and understand the news, run errands, make a doctor's appointment, apply for work, and make friends — all things Morales found difficult, but eventually was able to handle once she found programs that helped her learn English. Eventually, she made use of the library to study for and earn her U.S. citizenship.

After the speeches and discussion, participants were asked to identify who was “missing from the table.” Younger adults, children, students, politicians, environmentalists, law enforcement, along with the homeless, the arts community, the health industry and the media appeared to be missing, according to participants.

Those who would like to be trained as dialogue facilitators can attend a training on March 31st from 9-3:30 at which lunch will be provided. Dialogues begin after Easter. For more information on either facilitating or participating in other ways, contact 860-695-6294 or email imls@hplct.org