ARBC Q&A for English Language Ambassadors (ELA)

Why do the teachers meet in the apartments, rather than a church facility?
Accessibility- Many of the refugee women that are being met with do not have cars. If there is not a community or church ESL program nearby, this helps solve a logistical need. Also, a classroom dynamic of 1 teacher to 15 to 20 students loses some personal interaction and conversational English that we are trying to provide for the people we serve.

Relationship Building- The very low student to teacher ratio allows for friendship to develop with students. This is of high value to ELA as we are desiring to love our neighbors as Jesus calls us to do.

Free Services- Our refugee families are already adjusting to the increased cost of living in America. Providing English lessons free of charge, is a way the church can demonstrate the love of Jesus.

Do I need to be background checked to serve with ELA?
Yes, they have their own background check separate from ARBC which costs $10. Paperwork can be filled out once the decision to volunteer is confirmed by ELA leaders.

I'm interested what should I do next?
We encourage potential volunteers to begin praying that the Lord would direct them as they follow the steps below:

Attend ELA Meeting:
Interested volunteers are encouraged to come to a monthly ELA meeting the first Monday or Wednesday of each month. Meetings are from 9:30-11:30 am and are the same meeting on Monday and Wednesday. (Pick which works best for your schedule) You can hear from current teachers regarding their experiences. Contact Danielle Cox at danielle.cox@austinridge.org to get location info.

Shadow a Teacher:
If a continued interest develops, we encourage potential volunteers to shadow during an actual lesson at one of the area apartments.

Meet with Sharon and Millie:
Connect with the leaders of ELA to fill out appropriate paperwork and discuss potential placement with a teacher who is already trained. This can be done during a monthly meeting.

Co-Teach:
New teachers are paired with experienced teachers to become familiar with the Oxford English Dictionary curriculum as well as other ESL materials.

What if I am not trained in beginner ESL?
No worries! Your initial steps are to shadow and be a helper to one of the trained teachers. There is an organization called TEX (Teaching English with Excellence) that offers training courses to be certified in beginner ESL. The ELA utilizes these semi-annual trainings when they are offered in Austin. In the mean time you can be a co-teacher/helper.
I am currently trained in various levels of ESL. Are there students who could still use my abilities?
Yes! We welcome you! As beginner ESL teachers have their students graduate from various levels, more teachers will be needed to be trained in the higher levels. Talk to Sharon and Millie regarding your experience.

What curriculum does ELA use?
ELA primarily uses the Oxford Picture Dictionary Literacy Program which includes teacher lesson plans as well as students worksheets, etc. ISBN numbers can be given upon request. These classes are primarily for beginner English students.

I’m interested in ELA, but not sure I want to teach English. Are there other ways to serve ELA? Yes! Some of the homes have young children and volunteers are needed to care for and play with the children so their mothers can learn English. In addition, ELA recognizes the very important need for prayer and would love to raise up a prayer team for this work.

Have a further questions regarding ELA? Contact Danielle Cox, Austin Ridge Ministry Assistant at danielle.cox@austinridge.org the ARBC liaison for ELA, for more info.