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SENIOR PROFILE

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Job# 7834 School Littleton High School 4/1/21 3:20 PM

UV Gloss Page submitted with acknowledged preflight check issue(s): Embedded Image

Black Ink

Includes Spot Color(s)

Process 4 Color (CMYK)

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# NOW hear this...

## ANNELISE CHRISTIAN

### volunteers to teach immigrants english

**Miller:** How did you get started in becoming an English teacher for immigrants?

**Christian:** My mom is an immigrant. She moved to America without speaking a lot of English, and I saw the challenges of that. Also, I have many cousins in Taiwan who are trying to learn English, so I have seen first hand how hard it is if you do not have the support or resources. In my freshman year, I took Spanish and French. I have taken German at ACC and an Indonesian class. I started to really dive into learning languages. This all gave me the experience to effectively learn a language. I decided to apply that to my own community by volunteering at the Littleton immigrant resource center as an English partner.

**Miller:** How did you get assigned to teach an immigrant? What does that process look like?

**Christian:** They present you a list of immigrants looking for an English partner and as the English partner, you contact them. It is a one on one learning experience. You want to form a relationship with them to just talk and help them practice their skills. You as the teacher don't get help from the workers at the center. You schedule the meetings, plan the lessons, create a curriculum, give them tests, and etc. There is a lot of freedom in it.

**Miller:** Who do you teach?

**Christian:** My partner is from South Korea. His name is Jun, and he is here for business for a year. He is a pretty advanced English speaker because he does business in English. Normally, we will just have conversations about cultural differences from Korea and the United States, and current events. We decided that that is the best way for him to learn because they are realistic conversations he would have. We meet once a week, usually over video call for an hour to an hour and a half.

**Miller:** You said that you made your own curriculum, what is that curriculum? Is it more school based or conversational?

**Christian:** Right now, with Jun, he hates writing and grammar. Therefore, I don't give him tests but I will give him a goal. For example, "make sure that you work on your pronunciation of..." or "make sure you say the word before the noun." The main way that I assess him is to have him practice these critiques and then we will converse. Through that, I will hear if he improves. The resource center gives you a packet to help you come up with your own curriculum. They want you to help guide them to becoming intermediate learners. If we were not in COVID times, we might go into a more public setting like taking the bus or ordering food at a restaurant. It is really nice, though, that you can make your own curriculum and adjust it to the partner.

**Miller:** Would you recommend this program? Do you have any tips for students who are interested in becoming English partners?

**Christian:** I would totally recommend it. You make international friends and learn about different cultures. These students are adults so you must have the drive and experience necessary to teach them. You have to keep the respect and organization of a teacher. It is really helpful to have my language learning course experience. This varied learning experience helps you become fluent in a language. For example, in my Spanish class, we have a lot of experience with speaking. In contrast, my ACC class taught me more about grammar and the technicalities of a language. I grew up with many non-English speakers, so, I have learned the importance of being attentive, good at reading people, and actively trying to understand them. The biggest thing is being supportive. You must correct their mistakes in a supportive and subtle way, just support them and be dedicated to them.

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