



The Amherst-Regional Public Schools

English Language Education Program Newsletter

Vol. 1 No. 1 October 1, 2008

*Tell Me*

*Why should it be my loneliness,  
Why should it be my song,  
Why should it be my dream  
deferred  
overlong?*

*By Langston Hughes*

*“I would like to dedicate our first newsletter to the great ELE teachers working in our district for their hard work and devotion to all of our children”.*

*Dr. Marta Guevara*

**From the Editor:**

**It is an honor for us, teachers and staff, to work with children and teenagers from many parts of the world, to get to know their life stories and their families, their cultures and their dreams, and to teach them, of course, our language(s) and culture(s). Many of the teachers and support staff in this department have lived a life in which our mission to connect with people, and especially young people from many cultures from around the world, is very pronounced. Most of us are living a life through which we are trying to bring more understanding and unity to the divided world. And our children teach us that every day... Renata S. Pienkawa**

Each month a different school or program will be featured in addition to the current news and points of interests. In the month of October, we have the latest update and some students' work from the Amherst Regional High School. Below is the list of the featured schools or programs for the school year 2008-09:

October: Amherst Regional High School; November: Wildwood; December: Middle School;

January: Fort River; February: Crocker Farm; March: OPEN

April: SEI Trainings Update; May: Mark's Meadow; June: Recap and Future (Marta Guevara)



## **From the Desk of the Director:**

**The sound of rain falling on the small ac unit outside my office this morning transported me back to a rainy, dark morning in my grandmother's house in my native Puerto Rico. My grandmother, Mama Virginia, was an early riser because, by the time her mother, Mama Lupe, woke me up to get me ready for school, she had gotten things started in her big kitchen, gone to 6:00 o'clock mass and sewn me a dress I would wear that afternoon to mass with both of them. These memories are special and wonderful to me and they evoke very powerful feelings, with very little prompting.**

**People in my life know I am someone who derives strength from my family, particularly the strong and wise women who raised me. Thanks to my great grandmother, my grandmothers, my aunts and, of course, my mother, endless stories are alive and present in my thoughts constantly. It is because of their strength, care, example and great stories that my love for children and their education developed early in life.**

**I watched as the teachers in my family wrote lesson plans by quinqués (oil lamps), made beautiful charts to keep track of the readers in their classes, learned songs to teach complex grammatical structures, sewed costumes from crepe paper for school performances, made coconut treats for their students, visited homes when they were concerned about any of "their kids" or "their families" and countless other amazing things. It's no surprise teachers played the role of "second mothers" in our lives and parents/guardians reminded us they could do "whatever they need to do to us" so we would behave and learn.**

**As I describe the educational setting of my formative years four decades ago, when I first attended school, I can't help but compare it to my present setting. Although very different from my childhood years, my present work among teachers, learning from them, teaching them, supervising and evaluating them, still inspires me because of the love and commitment to children we all share. Although this is manifested in different ways, yet at its core, it is accompanied with compassion and the necessary, complex skills that facilitate learning for all students.**

**The love and respect I learned to have for my teachers, relatives or not, were the best preparation for the work I have chosen to do now. I continue to be inspired by the work our teachers do daily, often with our neediest students and often unrecognized. I would like to dedicate our first newsletter to the great ELE teachers working in our district for their hard work and devotion to all of our children. Thank you for your dedication to the children assigned to you and for the pride you take in supporting them achieve at high levels. It is your work and the future of our kids that keeps me going through the hardest of times. ¡GRACIAS!**

**Dr. Marta Guevara, ELE Program Director**

## **FALL 2008 MEPA TIMELINE from the Mass. Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education**

MEPA Calendar of Events  
Fall 2008

### **2008 MEPA-R/W Field Test**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>
September 29	Deadline for schools to receive 2008 MEPA-R/W Field Test materials
October 2	Deadline for schools to complete the "Materials Received" section of the PCPA, to report packing discrepancies, and to order additional 2008 MEPA-R/W Field Test materials
October 6-10	Administration period for the 2008 MEPA-R/W Field Test (Field test for all enrolled LEP students in grades 1-12)
October 14	Deadline to complete sections 3 and 4 of the PCPA and to schedule UPS pickup of 2008 MEPA-R/W Field Test materials
October 15	Deadline for UPS pickup of 2008 MEPA-R/W Field Test materials

### **Fall 2008 MEPA**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>
October 1-29	Administration period for MELA-O (Baseline assessment for newly enrolled LEP students in grades K-12)
October 14	Deadline 2008 MEPA-R/W materials for schools to receive Fall
October 16	Deadline for schools to complete the "Materials Received" section of the PCPA, to report packing discrepancies, and to order additional Fall 2008 MEPA-R/W materials
October 20-29	Administration period for the Fall 2008 MEPA-R/W (Baseline assessment for newly enrolled LEP students in grades 3-12)
October 30	Deadline to complete sections 3 and 4 of the PCPA and to schedule UPS pickup of Fall 2008 MEPA-R/W material
October 31	Deadline for UPS pickup of Fall 2008 MEPA-R/W materials

**Tutor Support :** Our tutors perform a crucial job , making school work comprehensible to our students and connecting them to the school community. To support our tutors in their important work, we will have monthly support/training meetings for them on Wednesdays at 2:30-3:30. Location: Professional Development Center, Amherst-Regional Middle School. Marta Guevara and Renata Pienkawa will lead these workshops. Please contact Mildred Martinez at 362-1781 if you have any questions. Your comments and requests are welcome and please direct them to Renata Pienkawa at e-mail address: [pienkawar@arps.org](mailto:pienkawar@arps.org)

### **ATTENTION STAFF!**

We need the information regarding placement of tutors and the exact times when they are assigned to students as soon as possible! Students are assigned by the ELE Office. Tutors should not begin to work without a CORI or an official placement from the office. Please let everyone in the community know that we still need bilingual tutors in the following languages:

Hebrew, Turkish, Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Moldovan/Romanian. Thanks for your help!

Dates for Meetings with Tutors:



Oct. 22  
Nov. 19  
Dec. 10  
Jan. 14  
Feb. 11  
March 18  
April 8  
May 13  
June 10 (make-up date)

## **SEI (Sheltered English Instruction) Trainings :**

Training of our colleagues, who are content teachers, both elementary and secondary, who have one or more English language learner(s) in their classrooms, is state mandated. It is also a great opportunity for us to connect with our colleagues and exchange our fields of knowledge in a professional development situation. There are four categories of training:

Category I	Second Language Learning and Teaching (10-15 contact hours)
Category II	Sheltering Content Instruction (30-40 contact hours)
Category III	Assessment of Speaking and Listening (10 contact hours)
Category IV	Reading and Writing and Sheltered Content Classroom (15-20 contact hours)

The Amherst-Regional Public Schools System has hired two in-house trainers:

### **Victoria "Torie" Weed, an SEI Trainer for ARPS**

**Torie Weed** has been a teacher at the secondary and elementary levels in Amherst, MA for 25 years, teaching in Special Education, Title I, and ESL programs. For 18 years, she has taught ELL students and worked with their families at Fort River School. During her time at Fort River, she has been committed to improving the educational outcomes for students from Amherst's Cambodian refugee community. She has presented and facilitated numerous professional development workshops on effective practice with ELLs and is now honored to serve as an SEI trainer for the Amherst District. In addition to teaching ELL at Fort River, Torie is one of the two SEI trainers for the district. Torie's vast knowledge and experience in the field of education, special Ed, and ELL make her a very effective SEI trainer for the district.

### **Renata S. Pienkawa, an SEI Trainer and Liaison for ARPS**

**Renata S. Pienkawa**, in addition to being a 40% ELL teacher at the ARHS, and a member of the dedicated ELE HS team, is wearing two hats: She is one of the two SEI trainers for the district. Together with Torie, Renata trains teachers on how to "shelter" instruction for English language learners. She is also a liaison for our program. In that role, she helps the ELE Director train and support tutors and new teachers, and helps with communication within and outside of the ELE department, as well as with the Mass. Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education. Renata, an immigrant herself, received her M.A. in TESOL from Teachers college, Columbia University in 1986, and then has continued her education at UMASS. Her 25 years of experience in the field of TESOL (out of which 22 years were spent in Amherst, teaching both at the elementary and secondary levels), in combination with the 12 years of experience in training teachers, make Renata an effective trainer and liaison for our program.

***Both trainers are very committed to make the trainings as interactive and learner-centered as possible. The trainings have to make a difference in each teacher's classroom, and in essence, in his or her students' lives. In their design of the trainings, both presenters model the use of SEI as much as possible and try to nurture each teacher's desire to help their students, their thirst for knowledge and problem-solving strategies while respecting the incredible time constraints that each and everyone, but especially classroom teachers, are facing these days.***

You can contact our SEI trainers at [weedv@arps.org](mailto:weedv@arps.org) and [pjenkawar@arps.org](mailto:pjenkawar@arps.org)

**We have the following schedule of SEI (Sheltered English Instruction) training for 2008-09:**

**Category II**

- a. Secondary (7-12) Dates: Oct. 10, Dec. 19, Feb. 6, April 10.**
- b. Elementary (PreK-6) Dates: Oct. 24, Nov. 7, Nov. 14, Dec.5**

**Category IV (pending approval)**

- a. Secondary (7-12) Dates: Jan. 9, Feb. 27, May 15.**
- b. Elementary (PreK-6) Dates: March 27, April 17, May 1.**

Most of the training sessions will take place in the Professional Development Center, which is located in the Amherst Regional Middle School. Only three trainings will take place at Wildwood (in the Conference Room): on February 27, March 27, and May 1.

We are planning to offer more categories during next school year.

**ELE Dept. Meetings:**

During this school year, the entire ELE Staff will meet at least three times during our professional days and half-days, not counting any shorter meetings or events.

September 15, 2008 – We had a full day MELA-O retraining for the ELE teachers. (Professional Development Center, Middle School). The entire staff was retrained as the newly qualified MELA-O assessors, as required by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (formerly DOE). We are now awaiting our scores on the qualifying tests.

Besides some community-building conversations, we also had a delicious Puerto Rican lunch provided by Marta Guevara. Others brought tasty breakfast treats.

January 23, 2008 – Hours to be determined. Wildwood School

March 13, 2008 – Hours to be determined. PDC, MS

**School Updates: in October we feature the latest news from the ARHS—**

**Joan Snowdon, ELE Dept. Head:**

***Amherst Regional High School  
English Language Education Program News  
September-October 2008***

***September and October are busy months here at the high school. Students from many countries have joined our community – from Mexico, South Korea, Moldova, Cape Verde, Taiwan, Mongolia, Turkey, Taiwan, Israel and China. The teaching staff, Susan Abdow, Renata Pienkawa, and Joan Snowdon are engaged in teaching five of the eight courses we offer for the 37 beginners, intermediate, and transitioning level students in our classroom – Room 172. In addition, we are keeping our eyes on the 28 excited English Language Learners who are testing their linguistic wings in academic classes with no ELE support. We welcome Susana Brena to our department this year as an instructional paraprofessional. She is working closely with the math and science departments to help deliver instruction to the ELLs in their classes. Lila Feingold is working part-time with our department this year, assisting in ELL classes and serving as an advisor with the International Students Club that meets every Thursday from 2:30 – 3:30 in 172.***



***Mark your calendars with these important dates:***

***October 2 Open House at the High School – all parents are welcome. Students are invited to accompany their parents. 6:45-8:45pm***

***October 6-8 MEPA testing for all students in the ELE Program***

***October 20-29 MEPA R/W testing for all newcomers in the ELE program***

***November 12 ELE Parents Meeting (Grades 7-12) 7:00-8:15 p***

***Amherst Regional High School Library***

***Translation, childcare, and snacks – provided -- everybody welcome!***

## **Community Thanksgiving Celebration**

a well-loved tradition

On Thursday, November 7<sup>th</sup>, from 6:00 to 8:30 PM, the entire community is invited a major potluck dinner party in the festively decorated cafeteria. The Community Thanksgiving Celebration has been an annual project of the ARHS International Students Club for the past thirteen years.

People from different parts of our school community don't always get to meet each other. Our Thanksgiving Celebration gives us a chance to share a festive meal together and

enjoy the wonderful diversity of performances put together by our friends and neighbors. All are invited to participate by bringing a festive dish from your own family's traditions to share. The event is free and open to all.

For more information, please contact Lila Feingold, ISC Club Advisor, at 413/665-2111 (home) or feingoll@arps.org.

### **Poems to inspire us:**

**(Please send us your favorite Immigration-related poems)**

*You, Whoever You Are*

You, whoever you are!...

All you continentals of Asia, Africa, Europe, Australia, indifferent of place!  
All you on the numberless islands of the archipelagoes of the sea!  
All you of centuries hence when you listen to me!  
All you each and everywhere whom I specify not, but include just the same!  
Health to you! good will to you all, from me and America sent!  
Each of us is inevitable,  
Each of us is limitless—each of us with his or her right upon the earth,  
Each of us allow'd the eternal purperts of the earth,  
Each of us here as divinely as any is here. By Walt Whitman



### **Dreams**

**By Langston Hughes**

*Hold fast to dreams*

*For if dreams die*

*Life is a broken-winged bird*

*That cannot fly.*

*Hold fast to dreams*

*For when dreams go*

*Life is a barren field with snow.*

## **A Few Samples of High School ELL Students' Work:**

### **DREAMS - - (written in Ms. Snowdon's class)**

***I want** to meet God.*

*I want the world to have peace.*

*In the future, I want to have a dog.*

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***In the future,** I want to have a home.*

*I want to visit El Salvador.*

*I want to work as a nurse.*

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***In the future,** I want to have a nice life.*

*And after more years, I want to be happy when I look back.*

*I want to be happy with all I did in my life.*

*I want to meet a new person who needs help.*

*I want the world to end all wars.*

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***I want** to work as an art teacher.*

*I want the world to have peace.*

*I want to eat a lot of Chinese food.*

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***In the future**, I want to have a nice car, like a Ferrari.*

*I want to work as a doctor.*

*I want the world to live in peace.*

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***In the future** I want to have good health.*

*I want to work as a police officer.*

*I want to visit my family in El Salvador.*

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***I want** to visit Australia.*

*I want to meet Nelson Mandela.*

*I want the world to have clean water*

*and clean air for everybody.*

\*\*\*\*\*

***In the future** I want have my own company*

*I want to visit around the world*

*I want to work as boss.*

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***In the future** I want to have a great family, a great wife and job.*

*I want to visit China, Hawaii and Russia.*

*I want to work as a musician.*

*I want the world to listen to my songs, and end war.*

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*Below is a newly written eulogy for Karen Feller, our colleague, who passed away nearly four years ago. This tribute was written by Karen's former ESL student from Mark's Meadow, Kenny. Presently Kenny attends the ARHS; this paper was written for his Oral Communication English class and we are placing it here without any additional editing.*

### **A Eulogy: Ms. Feller**

**From the moment of birth, we are surrounded by teachers who try their best to pass on their knowledge to us, the very same knowledge that had been passed on to them by their own teachers. This process has been apparent for many years, and through this system we learn what is the old, and discover the new, reaching again and again what was perceived to be the impossible. We owe much thanks to the Educators, who take a critical role in the advances that mankind has made today.**

**Because our society is surrounded by so many of these everyday scholars, we often take them for granted and forget what a beautiful and amazing position they have taken in our lives. We also forget that they have different sides of themselves outside of school, where inside, they are expected to behave appropriately as role models. With only getting to partially know these educators, learners often gossip, judge and label teachers based on how they behave in school, without truly knowing who these people are and what they do outside of their classrooms. This can be proven by the fact that many of us remain oblivious to the most obvious bonds that some teachers hold with each other in school. I know that I am guilty of this myself.**

**My ELL teacher, Karen Wynnell Feller, passed away almost 4 years ago in January of 2005, at the age of 65. It turns out that I only knew barely a quarter of who she really was in the 6 years that I knew her. I give much thanks to those teachers who devoted their time in helping me fill the large gaps that I didn't have a clue about of Ms. Feller's life, even though many of them found it to be extremely difficult to talk about their dear friend and colleague.**

**Ms. Feller taught at the Amherst schools for over thirty years, and she taught at my old elementary school for around twenty years, taking many different roles as a teacher. When I met Ms. Feller she was the ELL teacher, she taught me for two years. Other than teaching me how to speak better English, Ms. Feller taught me many other things, whether it was to always be kind and loving towards another, or the secrets of pronouncing "S" in a word that so many English learners seems to have such a hard time pronouncing. She was truly a great teacher, and above all, a loving friend, who had suddenly been snatched away**

from so many of us. When we lost her, we lost many things, but most noticeably, we lost a rare open mind that saw the world as a whole than just mere nations and countries.

Ms. Feller had the clearest and smoothest skin. Even when she reached the age of sixty; she still had the clearest skin, almost wrinkle free, as that of a young woman in her twenties. She had a mix of white and brown hair that represented more of an accent of style, rather than a sign of aging. She wore thick glasses that failed to cover up her sparkling blue eyes and her look of curiosity. Ms. Feller often wore bright pink lipsticks that went nicely with her shining eyes. Her perfect white teeth gave them that extra glow and would make some people think, where did she get that lipstick? In some cultures a gap between two teeth is considered to be a mark of beauty. This was surely the case for Ms. Feller, who had this gap and showed it to others with such confidence when she smiled. All these features added up to her luminous smile, where people would first notice her flawless teeth, then the gap, and the last but not least, how warm it made you feel. As a kid I always saw her as a giant, but it turned out that she was only 5ft 6in with a plump figure. This didn't represent chubbiness or obesity of any sort, but it represented her genuine love for life, how she was anything but shy and enjoyed life by taking on the excitement that new had to offer. She wore skirts, blouses and often a beautiful sweater or shawl. She wore anything that was bright, fitting well with her bright personality.

Ms. Feller had many favorable qualities about her, which includes her funny sense of humor that seemed to have brightened the day of many teachers that she worked with, something that I could never have guessed having her as a teacher. Since she had so many fine qualities about her, it is difficult to pinpoint one single quality, but if I had to choose, I would choose her forever lasting kindness.

In my old elementary school it was required for the ELL students to leave couple of times during the school day to go to a separate class. Due to this, some kids and I missed out on some class activities. I hated this because it made me feel inferior to my peers. One day when our class was about to engage in a fun class activity, the ELL students were asked to leave to go to our separate class. I didn't want to leave before this activity so I fussed over it and refused to leave. I was eventually forced by my classroom teacher to depart, so I reluctantly stormed out of the classroom full of tears. I soon found myself in the soft arms of Ms. Feller. I still remember to this day how peaceful and comforting her big arms were, I felt as if nothing could get to me in those arms. She whispered softly into my ear, "it's okay Kenny, stop crying, you are smart enough to join those kids in no time." They were simple words, and yet it meant so much to me, hearing that from someone who understood my frustration. Despite my childish attitude toward everything she suggested we do to make me feel better, she still set aside her whole lesson plan for that day and played my favorite board

game. Before I knew, it I lost myself in excitement and forgot about being upset. I didn't realize until later what a truly amazing thing that she had done for me that day.

Her act of kindness wasn't limited to school days. Ms. Feller was a selfless woman that allowed her weekends to always be booked for the purpose of serving others. Whether it was helping out a new foreign family get around in town, or spending her weekend home preparing for the annual Mark's Meadow's cultural traditional fair, she was always on the job. No one forced her to do these things, but she felt as if it was her duty to make sure that the new foreign families felt like they fit into our community, and she always got her job done. Take this from a member of a family who themselves experienced the true kindness that she always had to offer. What was truly amazing about her efforts were that she didn't see her service as a favor that she was doing, but saw it as an opportunity to learn something new. She was always ready to be the student rather than the teacher. Ultimately she simply "hung out" with these families, becoming close, respected and love by many. It wouldn't be surprising at all to have found Ms. Feller at some kind of museum of cultural arts or history with a foreign family explaining to her what the cultural symbols meant.

Thirty long years were spent by Ms. Feller sharing her love for knowledge with students, and a year finally came where she had decided to retire. On the year that she had planned for her retirement she started having severe stomach problems, she had this before and haven't even thought about it once being anything near serious. Regardless of this, for safety, she visited her doctor about her stomach problem. No one could have guessed what lay in front of her.

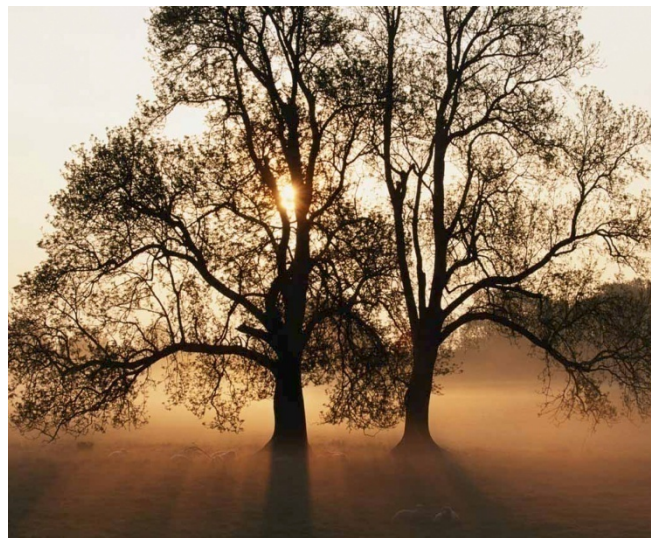
On that same day Ms. Feller had decided to visit her doctor, the elementary schools were one by one being released from the last day of school. In Mark's Meadow there is a tradition where on the final day of the school year, all the teachers line up outside in front of the main entrance and cheer for the kids who are leaving school and heading towards summer vacation. Ms. Feller had been part of this tradition for more than twenty years, but that particular year, she was nowhere to be found, because at that certain moment of time she found herself at her doctor's office being told her diagnosis of pancreatic disease, that she had should be expecting only couple of months to live.

Of course she was devastated, it would be a lie to say that she was ready to face death, no it was the opposite, she was scared and didn't want to leave this world yet. The true sadness of this was that Ms. Feller was a woman of endless curiosity. She was always seeking out knowledge and trying to find out the meaning of life. She had planned to see and enjoy many things after her retirement but failed to do any of them, and was only cheated by life.

Although scared, she felt bitterer about the things that she wouldn't be able to do that facing death, like seeing her own grandchildren. If she thought it was unfair how things turned out she never showed it, how could she? She was too kind to point any fingers out, not even towards death, even though she had been stabbed in the back by life. Although she physically got tired easily, she was her own self with her friendly smiles and kindness. Even with the weight of her last days approaching, she acted as if she was going to live for another five thousand years.

It seems just like yesterday that I walked into her classroom, a classroom that never seemed to lose its warmth, with the 1000 cranes strung together and hung on the roof next to the entrance. Each crane easily representing the act of kindness she showed others. It feels like just yesterday that I ran out her room out of total frustration of not being able to pronounce the word, "plural," only to return back to her room holding her big, soft hand with a lollipop in my mouth, with salty tears that were slowly drying away. Sadly, it has not been a day, but 3 long years since Karen Feller's death. A day doesn't go by where some of us don't think about Karen Feller and miss her warm smile that always seemed to make the day a little bit brighter. Karen Feller will always remain in our hearts and the tables of many, where a picture of her smiling lay. Ms. Feller, you are greatly missed by many. Many of us are in your debt for eternity for you teaching us what it really means to have a big heart. You will truly never be forgotten and I hope that you found your rightful place in heaven.

By your student, KENNY



## **OCTOBER HOLIDAYS:**

October 2008 - Cultural Observances

### **Gandhi's Birthday (International Day of Non-Violence) October 2nd**

Born in India as Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi in 1869, Mahatma Gandhi was one of the great spiritual and political leaders of the 20th century. His nonviolent protests and commitment to peaceful civil disobedience inspired many of the world's greatest civil rights leaders, including Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. In his native India his birthday is a national holiday—Gandhi Jayanti. On June 15, 2007 the United Nations General Assembly decided to observe the International Day of Non-Violence each year on October 2nd in commemoration of his global impact.

### **Durga Puja October 7th**

Durga Puja is a religious festival celebrated in India, particularly West Bengal, and it honors the Goddess Durga. In Sanskrit, puja means “worship” and Durga means “she who is difficult to reach”. Devotees of Durga observe a nine day fast—which begins at the beginning of Navratri—in honor of the nine manifestations of Durga. The purpose of observing the fast is to appease Durga Ma and seek her divine blessings.

### **Yom Kippur October 9th**

Yom Kippur is the Jewish Day of Atonement and holiest day of the year. Moreover, it is considered the most widely observed holiday on the Jewish calendar. For roughly 26 hours believers abstain from food, drink, and marital relations; they do not wash or anoint their bodies; and they do not wear leather shoes. Yom Kippur begins at sunset on October 8th and ends at nightfall on October 9th.

### **National Coming Out Day October 11th**

The first National Coming Out Day was celebrated in 1988—one year after the 1987 March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights. On This day members of the LGBT community are encouraged to wear pink triangles, rainbow pins and flags. According to the Human Rights Campaign, National Coming Out Day is “a way of continuing the spirit of openness, honesty and visibility that the march and the AIDS Quilt presentation inspired.”

**Sukkot**  
**October 14th**

Also known as the Feast of Tabernacles, Sukkot is a seven day festival commemorating the Israelites 40 years in the wilderness before entering the Holy Land. The holiday's name is derived from sukkah, the temporary housing or "hut" used by the Israelites after leaving Egypt. Jews eat, entertain guests, and sleep in sukkahs during this time.

**Diwali**  
**(Deepawali)**  
**October 28th**

Diwali is huge festival celebrated by Hindus, Sikhs, and Jains alike. It is a "Festival of Lights" and people generally light lamps and candles around their homes and light fireworks outside. To Hindus darkness represent ignorance and evil so the lights signify the destruction of ignorance through knowledge and goodness. Diwali is also a time for buying and exchanging gifts.

**Samhain**  
**October 31st - November 2nd**

Samhain is one of the most important calendar festivals of the Celtic year, and is a high holy day on the Pagan calendar. It is the final harvest festival and a time for Pagans to honor ancestors, their heritage, and the recently dearly departed. Ancient Celts believed that spirits walked among the living on this day because the veil between this world and the Otherworld was at its thinnest. Hence, the tradition of wearing costumes—animal heads and skins—began.

**Disability Employment Awareness Month**  
**October 1st – October 31st**

This cultural observance month recognizes the achievements of men and women with disabilities. More specifically, it honors those Americans with disabilities whose work and talent have helped create a powerful country.



Let's not forget the following special holidays and occasions:

- Eid ul Fitr -- end of Ramadan (Sept. 30-Oct. 1<sup>st</sup>)
- Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15 - October 15)
- Polish-American Heritage Month
- Columbus Day – second Monday of the month
- Halloween Safety Month
- Halloween (October 31<sup>st</sup>)
- National Breast Cancer Awareness Month
- National Mammography Day (Oct. 17)
- International Brain Tumor Awareness Week (Oct. 26 - Nov. 1)
- Lupus Awareness Month
- Dictionary Day (Oct.16<sup>th</sup>)
- Domestic Violence Awareness Month
- Fire Prevention Week ( week 2)
- And many, many more – Please let us know the holidays that matter to you and we will post them...

***We need each school's important ELL community-related dates. Please e-mail them to us. These ELE newsletter pages are maintained by Renata S. Pienkawa with the gracious support by Jerry Champagne. Any questions of comments, please direct to Renata at [pienkawr@arps.org](mailto:pienkawr@arps.org) THANKS!***