

2010-11 EL Civics Making a Difference in the Community Awards

A key focus of the California English Literacy and Civics Education (EL Civics) program is for adult students to acquire the language and literacy skills to become citizens, exercise the rights and duties of citizenship, and enrich the communities in which they live. This award recognizes EL Civics programs that teach skills required for citizenship and empower students to make a difference in the community. CASAS, in conjunction with the California Department of Education, identifies programs that make a difference in the community through EL Civics lessons and activities. To be recognized as a Making a Difference Award recipient, agencies must meet specific data collection criteria, document the effectiveness of their project, and show that the project goes beyond the classroom to affect the community in a positive manner. We are pleased to honor the 2010-11 EL Civics Making a Difference in the Community Award recipient:

Rancho Santiago Community College District: Orange Education Center Associated Student Government (ASG) at Orange Education Center

The Associated Student Government at Orange Education Center is the governing body of students that voices concerns, shares ideas, and gets involved and connected in total campus life. The ASG was implemented to provide an opportunity for students to become more involved with their school, learn leadership skills, and improve student persistence through networking and connecting with other students. The program provides pertinent information to students about support services, available opportunities, and school resources available to them. The ASG truly “makes a difference” in the community by carrying out the EL Civics objectives of civic duty and government participation.

The formation of the ASG was completely student-driven and stemmed from the agency's EL Civics program. Students learning about EL Civics Objective #14 (Civic Engagement) were interested in becoming more involved in the civic life of the adult school community, so they decided to form the student government. Working with program staff, the students created the constitution and policies for the ASG, and they set up a student election process for president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. The ASG continues to review and update bylaws, plan all group activities, and promote school events and campaigns. The ASG coordinates all school events including the spring dance and Welcome Week. This gives students an opportunity to plan and promote large-scale activities. The group also has created a number of on-campus clubs, such as a Music Club, Dance Club and Book Club. Another important activity of the ASG is raising money for and distributing scholarships to ten deserving adult education students.

Students participating in the ASG receive valuable mentoring and guidance as they improve their leadership and English language skills. Many former ASG students have gone on to seek job promotions, obtain high school diplomas, and enroll in college courses. Participating in ASG has given them increased confidence, leadership skills, and the support they needed throughout their time at Orange Education Center.