

AAUW- National Convention
“Taste of Success” 6-26-09

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Talking with a Purpose!

The AAUW-Arcadia (CA) Branch is on a mission! Specifically, the Arcadia Branch and the Arcadia Public Library co-sponsor a weekly English Conversation Class at the Library for adult residents in the community who can read English but want to improve their speaking ability. The Library helps defray the cost of the textbook *Let's Talk in English* and other reading materials. The class combines large-group instruction with small groups tutored by Branch members and other community volunteers. Membership in the class is generally 100% Chinese/Taiwanese ethnicity, with women making up 80% of the class.

How does the class help the women to break through barriers? As the women become more proficient in speaking English, they are able to express themselves more confidently and correctly at work, at home with their children, and in everyday affairs. Here are two success stories. One woman has become an American citizen, thanks to the help she received from her tutors. Another woman who had been a registered nurse in China was able to pass the California state boards and advance from a low-paying job in a convalescent hospital to an RN's position in a hospital.

The English Conversation Class is a grass-roots effort that promotes diversity and good will. It helps immigrant women to become acculturated and to feel welcome in a new community. That is the Branch's goal. But a bonus feature accrues to the Branch itself. The Branch has gained and still retains about ten university women of Chinese/Taiwanese background who are active members and officers, including two who are EF co-vice presidents.

***In 2008, Arcadia Branch members dedicated
over 1,100 hours to make this community outreach
successful!***
