

Good Evening Everyone Gathered Here for this Momentous Event!

I, Fran Miller, feel deeply honored to be here to share my innermost feelings with you. I have very deep emotions of thankfulness and gratitude to have been given the gift to serve the Epworth United Methodist Church and the Ana A. Brito Foundation community for this entire year. As you all probably realize, communication skills are definitely critical for positive and rewarding survival of all of us humans. I have been handed the task, the super positive task, or should I say, the honor, of assisting our immigrant students in their quest to improve their communication skills in order to form a bridge, to activate a light shining to their everyday lives in the United States. This has been an honor for me and for all of us instructors here this evening. Truly, I do know, that this is not a task, neither for me nor for my fellow instructors here this evening, but a true gift. No matter the weather outdoors, Tuesdays and Wednesdays, Mondays and Fridays are filled with sunshine, as all of our instructors are looking forward to celebrating being with our amazing students, whose varied needs and varied levels of English and computer skills are being carefully addressed.

World peace is a critically important goal for all of us. World peace, no matter our nationality, nor our personal identity. By having the gift of being here, we teachers are contributing to that important goal. We are used to experiencing, to seeing, just as we all might do here now with each other and in our classes, instructors observing their students sitting around a table, next to students from countries with whom their native country might be at war, or in an unfortunate state of continued hatred. By communicating better in English, our students here at the Foundation, learn to accept and care for one another. To truly understand others, all human beings must be able to properly communicate, both by giving and by receiving words: not just words of wisdom, but also words of love. Here at the Ana A. Brito Foundation, our students learn to express even their deepest thoughts that will hopefully be correctly understood by those around them on an everyday, on a daily basis, Our subject matter, the English Language, also has the purpose to assist our students in their everyday functioning. It is so important

that they are understood on a daily basis, everywhere they go- at their work places, when they shop in the local stores, when they are at meetings and at all parties and at all social activities. As some of you who are gathered here tonight have experienced, being misunderstood at work can cause huge problems, unfortunately, even punishment. For unmarried students, the possibility of successful romantic relationships can be broken due to a misunderstanding, caused mainly by our students' use of the wrong words or even incorrect intonation within sentences. Surprisingly, many examples even of physicians misunderstanding our English as a second language student's needs have been reported. Actually, even more surprisingly, the very opposite is possible for even physicians and medical researchers, some of whom I taught at many renowned Government Agencies for many decades. These are very well educated, non-native speakers of English, who were my English as a Second Language students. Unfortunately, they sometimes initially used incorrect grammar, intonation or vocabulary and their patients/colleagues could have been misled.

Here, at Anna A. Brito Foundation, we instructors help develop a support system that our students can share with each other. We want our students to reach a higher level of self-actualization to bring out their true personality and to be accepted by their fellow Americans. To do this, they must be able to communicate in English effectively, whether they are in person, on the phone or on the computer.

I, certainly, and all of us teachers here tonight, feel and give that understanding every time we enter this hallowed building.

We are all so blessed to have the opportunity and the ability to alleviate the stress and pain our students unfortunately feel when they are not being properly understood by our fellow Americans, when there is miscommunication in English, which can get them into unforeseen trouble with their work colleagues, with their neighbors and with many others. Good communication is critically important, and, so therefore, it is our role here, at the Epworth Ana A. Brito Foundation, as instructors, to improve their English communication skills. This is critically important.

I personally thank God for bestowing upon me the ability to contribute to the betterment of our world. Thank you from the bottom of my heart, and from that of all our instructors here tonight, to Derek Harps, to our entire Board of Directors, to Rev. Mele, to Rev. Jen, to Pastor Yolanda, and to everyone gathered here for this beautiful gift.

May the Lord continue to bless all of us.

Thank you.