Roosevelt Park MINISTRIES

Building bridges across cultures & languages

30 Years of Ministry 1996-2026

Classes Cost Us $600 – Our Students pay $80 How does that work?

Ministry Report for Summer/Fall 2026

Wow, it seems our Spring semester just ended, and here we are preparing flyers and enrolling people for the Fall. Last semester our building was full of people learning English, acquiring computer skills, and learning Spanish as a second language. Plus, we **demolished** a building (see the previous ministry report for details).

We love celebrating the hard work and persistence of our students, and it's encouraging to now have them, and many new people, excited about starting classes again.



ESL Students and Instructors Celebrating a Successful Spring Semester

Anica* stopped by a few weeks ago to register for English classes. She's from the Dominican Republic and has only been here one month. A friend told her about RPM, and Anica immediately came to sign up. She told me she knows she must speak and understand English if she wants to get a decent job.

Like so many of our students she's making personal sacrifices and working hard to get the language skills necessary to build a stable, secure life. She doesn't have a job yet, but she gratefully paid the $80 for her membership and her materials for this semester.

It costs RPM about $600 per student per semester to provide in-person classes with free childcare. So how can we offer them to someone like Anica for only $80?

Three key components make that possible.

1) Volunteers *2) Foundations/Corporations* *3) Individuals and Churches*

1) Volunteers Our volunteers work with us to provide three levels of high-quality, culturally sensitive, in-person classes to our students at a fraction of the actual cost. These instructors and tutors donate their time and abilities. They give from their hearts to educate and empower adult learners who come from over a dozen different countries. In return, they get to see life transformation happen in real time for their students:

- a better job for Jorge
- more confidence for Elsa when talking to her child's teacher
- Pablo feeling less nervous at his doctor appointment
- Narisa getting her GED
- Marta and Rafael using English to ask for something at a store instead of just pointing
- Sofia passing her citizenship test



The ever-energetic Bill VanTol (at right) has volunteered in a variety of ways since he retired from work in Mexico in 2007. At 85 years of age, he is one of our oldest volunteers adding wisdom and experience to the youthful, dynamic energy of Nate, a university student who has volunteered for several semesters (pictured below).



We need more volunteers and would love to have you in the mix. Whether teaching English or Spanish classes, organizing coats for our coat drive, loving on kids in childcare, or helping in the office, you can make a difference that starts now and ripples out into eternity. Just call our office or send me an email. Our contact info is at the end of this update. it's an easy first step to joining our volunteer family.

2) Foundations We are grateful for the support of multiple foundations and corporations who care for our community and value RPM's literacy and family services work. Recent grants from several large West Michigan foundations, along with those of nearly a dozen other groups, help keep our programs strong, relevant and affordable to our neighbors in the Roosevelt Park and surrounding communities. We are honored and humbled by their trust, and grateful for their generous investment in the people we serve. We pray God blesses their work, their benevolence, and their compassionate heart for our neighbors.

3) Individuals and Churches There are so many of you who care, who pray for us, who donate what you can when you can, who read our stories and cheer on our students and staff. This includes churches who care about some of our region's most underserved people. You take special offerings, collect coats and other winter wear, and you invite us to speak and encourage your congregations with stories of life transformation. Thanks for being our ministry partners. Write me at joel@rpmins.org if you'd like me to come and share a fresh, exciting update sometime this Fall.

Challenging Numbers

We enrolled 39 students during our Spring semester. Then we provided free access to the Rosetta Stone language platform over the summer to 21 ESL students. Now we have around 60 students enrolled in literacy classes for this Fall semester with more being added as you read this. At $600+ per student per semester that's over $72,000 this year so far, which doesn't include the cost of the *ESL Program Coordinator* we want to hire this fall.



Carl (volunteer) with Level 2 ESL Students

Let's Make it Happen!

To keep low-cost literacy classes available for the rest of the year to people like Anica, Jorge, and Marta and Rafael, we're going to need help. Here's a strategic breakdown on how together we can make that happen.

Churches: We would be hugely encouraged if **10 new churches** would support 2 students each for this semester. $1,200.00 per church. That will cover 20 students. *Send me the name and email of your church's missions person and I'll gladly connect with them.*

Individuals: We would love it if **40 individuals** would pledge to donate $300 between now and December 15th to support a literacy student. It can be a one-time gift, or a series of monthly gifts. That would cover an additional 20 students for this semester.

That leaves about 20 students still needing support from individuals or groups that could donate any amount, either monthly or as a 1-time gift.

I don't know where you fit in. I do know that giving is good for our souls - no matter what we give. So however the Spirit tugs at your heart or nudges your soul, you can take your next step now. Send a check (envelope included) or go to our website to donate. Or simply scan

the QR code with your phone or tablet -- it will take you directly to our donation page which also has our volunteer form.

We are excited to see what God will do and anticipate great things for the remainder of this, our 30th year as a ministry,

On behalf of all of us here at RPM -

Muchas gracias, Asante sana, Thank you!

Joel

Joel B Groat, Exe. Dir.



P.S. I had some extra space, so here is a note for **those who give from annuities, donate shares of stocks, or make necessary withdrawals from their IRA t**o avoid tax penalties.

RPM is a 501.c.3 organization, and as such qualifies to receive donated shares of stocks and financial gifts considered QCDs (a qualified charitable distribution). By contributing to RPM directly from an IRA account, you can both support our work and avoid the tax burden of paying on the withdrawal amount. This may also potentially reduce Medicare premiums.

If you would like to donate in this way or learn more about it, please give me a call at our office: (616) 475-5881, or send me an email: joel@irr.org. We have a person willing to donate their time to help us manage these gifts.

It's exciting to think that we can take earthly treasure and use it for eternal purposes, transforming lives in the here and now. It's what Jesus called *"laying up treasures in heaven."* He knew that making eternal investments would keep our hearts soft toward God and loyal to His kingdom, because *"where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."* (Matthew 6:19-21)

Thank you again for caring, sharing, and reading to the end. 😊

With love and gratitude,

Joel

Roosevelt Park Ministries is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization, Federal Tax ID# 38-3305940

All gifts are tax-deductible, received with grateful hearts, and used to share God's love.

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