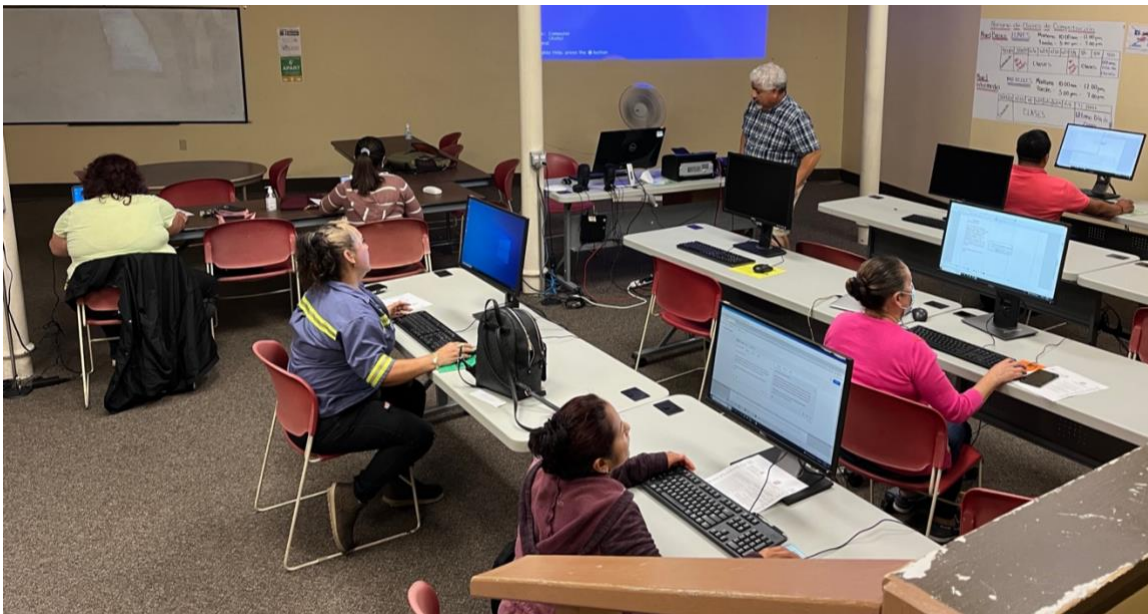


Catalina's enthusiasm and appreciation came to me across the room like a wave. *"¡Tantas gracias por estas clases de computación! Son tan buenas y estoy aprendiendo mucho. ¡No puedo esperar hasta la próxima clase!*

Thank you so much for these computer classes! They are so good and I'm learning so much. I can't wait until the next class!

Catalina, or Cathy, the name she goes by at work, is one of our newest students in our beginner computer class. Every Monday she comes straight from work to RPM's offices where she joins other men and women who are learning basic computer skills. She's motivated by hope of a better future for herself and her family.



RPM's Monday night Beginner Computer class. Catalina is in the blue shirt with yellow stripes.

Juan Carlos is another student new to RPM this summer. He's only been in the United States for six months, and like Catalina, his gratitude for Roosevelt Park Ministries is heart-warming. Juan Carlos is in our first level ESL class working hard to improve his English-speaking skills. I was chatting with him briefly before class and he said his boss at work speaks zero Spanish. When I asked him how much English he knew when he arrived here, he replied, *"de verdad, nada"* (in truth, nothing). So I said, "In that case, on a scale of 1-10, where were you?" He smiled and said, "I was a 1", adding with a laugh, "maybe a 1.5."

He was walking by our offices when a friend told him, *"Hey, they teach English classes there."* A while later he came in and signed up for our evening ESL classes. Several weeks later he's

added key vocabulary and phrases, and the English he speaks is remarkably clear. He told me in Spanish, *“The classes have really helped me, and truly the help and support I’ve been given here has been so good. I’m understanding so much more. It’s really helped me in my work.”* He went on to say, *“This work (RPM) is so important. I hope it continues to grow and expand, because it gives us a chance to develop, and not only helps us communicate, but also have another tool that helps us grow, and at some point, give back, because our ideas are also important.”*

Because of support from people like you, we are sharing help and hope with Catalina and Juan Carlos, and many others like them. They aren’t looking for a handout, just a chance to learn the necessary skills that will allow them to grow, develop, and eventually give back to their families and their communities.



Some of our ESL students, teachers, and volunteers from our Spring 2022 Session

We’ve been helping people in our neighborhood change their lives for the better for over 25 years. We are building bridges across cultures and languages by offering Christ-centered, holistic support to individuals, families, and youth living in and around the Roosevelt Park Community.

Our neighborhood is one of the lowest-income and highest-need areas in Grand Rapids. We urgently need to expand our services and programs to meet the needs of our community.



Thanks to our generous donors, we gave away nearly 700 warm winter coats, plus socks, scarves, hats, and gloves to neighborhood families during last year’s coat drive.



A neighborhood boy eagerly awaits presents for his family.

Consider the following recent statistics: *

- 77% percent of this community are Hispanic
- 28.6% of Roosevelt Park residents “speak English not well or not at all” compared to 4.8% for Grand Rapids as a whole.
- 40% are foreign-born
- 85% percent of our neighbors live in low-income households
- 35.7% are living below poverty
- Over 18% are unemployed.

Together with our partners we’re offering help and hope where it’s needed most.

To better serve our neighbors this Fall we are offering two exciting new programs:

1. ***Café Encuentros/Encounters Café: A Language Café.*** (Friday mornings from 8am–11am) Come to RPM to practice your English or Spanish in a casual, safe, semi-structured atmosphere with others who are also learning. Come for coffee and small-group language encounters that will build confidence and fluency in your new language.
2. ***Encontrando a Jesus/Encountering Jesus: A Community Bible Study.*** Here’s a chance to learn about Jesus from one of his best friends, the gospel writer, John. This study will show how Jesus moved among the people of his day, focusing on what he taught them, what he did for them, how he felt about them. One of the best ways to know Jesus for who he truly is, is by seeing the encounters other people had with him. Watching him love and care for the poor, the oppressed, the marginalized, the rejected, and the hurting, will open the door to your own personal encounter with the life-transforming power and love of Jesus. (Monday evenings, 7 pm – 8 pm)

At RPM we are committed to the value of every person’s worth and dignity

We come alongside families committed to breaking the cycle of poverty and illiteracy so they, their children, and grandchildren are better equipped to give back and help others.



RPM community people attending a workshop on grief and loss

We are excited to see:

- Fathers learning English and computer skills so they can better provide for their families.
- Mothers learning English so they can take their kids to the doctor or communicate better with teachers.
- Men and women exploring the subjects of trauma, loss, and grief for themselves and their children, so they can process their pain and rise above the losses and abuses of the past.
- Young men and women studying and practicing English so they can more competently navigate a new country and culture and contribute their multicultural skills to improve their lives and their communities.



Joe and Raul. Raul is a volunteer Spanish teacher. Joe is learning Spanish to share Jesus better with his Hispanic neighbors.

How do you put a price tag on the transformation of a whole community of people who want a hand-up, way more than they want a handout? How do you evaluate the return on investment when you're offering not just a cup of cold water – but a solution to poverty, illiteracy, and marginalization – in the name of Jesus?

Unlike secular agencies, we get no government support. Therefore, we need individuals and churches that share this dream, this vision, this goal, this endgame. Will you join our growing list of monthly supporters and help us provide essential services for the whole person? Together we can meet the needs of people like Catalina and Juan Carlos, giving them aid in the name of Jesus so they can experience his care and compassion. We long to see this prayer of Jesus fulfilled in our corner of West Michigan: *Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth ... as it is in heaven.*

Working together we can be the answer to that prayer.

Gratefully Yours,

Joel B Groat
Exec Dir for RPM

PS. Please call me or write to me if you'd like to hear more about the difference RPM is making in our community, or if you want to explore joining our growing family of donors and supporters. I'd also love to come and share an encouraging message of God's faithfulness and transformation through the work of RPM with your church, small group, or missions committee.

Joel@rpmns.org (Email)
616.888.1600 (Mobile phone for text or voice)

* <https://www.city-data.com/neighborhood/Roosevelt-Park-Grand-Rapids-MI.html>

All donations to RPM are tax-deductible, received with gratitude, and invested for eternity.