

New ESL classes will be offered in Sunbury for area residents

By Cindy O. Herman
For The Daily Item

SUNBURY — It's pretty tough to find employment — or talk to a child's teacher, or understand landlord's questions, or ask for help at the grocery store — if residents can't speak the language of the country.

Through a partnership between the CSIU, the Degenstein Community Library and the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Office of the City of Sunbury, English as a Second Language (ESL) classes will be offered starting Monday.

An open house to learn more about the program and register for classes will take Monday, from 9 to 11 a.m., at the Sunbury Municipal Building on 225 Market St.

Classes will be offered Mondays from 9 to 11 a.m. at the Municipal Building,

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and Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to noon at the Degenstein Library, 40 South Fifth St. An online Zoom option will also be available.

Andres Manresa, director of the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Office, reached out to the CSIU to help the city's growing population of ethnic backgrounds.

"The city is becoming more diverse, little by little," he said. "People have a hard time communicating when they come in to pay their taxes or talk with the code officer or their children's

schools. One of my main goals as diversity director is to try to break that communication barrier."

Heather Haynos, adult ESL instructor at the CSIU, said their adult ed classes help students achieve their personal and professional goals.

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Manresa reached out to the CSIU for that very reason, the agency's ability to help people, not only with ESL instruction but also with GED classes, citizenship classes and employment applications. So far, the ESL classes have had interest from people from Haiti, Santo Domingo, Central America and Puerto Rico.

"The CSIU offers a lot of education, all free of charge," Manresa said. "That's one of the reasons I partnered with them, because they offer all of these classes."

Some residents might have specific education or degrees from their home country but can't apply that knowledge until they learn English. The CSIU is able to guide them in translating their skills and knowledge into finding better opportunities for employment, Manresa said.

"Everyone is welcome," Haynos said. "If people cannot make it to the open house and have questions, they may call me at the CSIU, 570-523-1155, ext. 2309. Messages may be left in Spanish."

People may also email Manresa at amanresa@sunburypa.org or call the Sunbury Municipal Building at 570-286-7820.

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