

Elder Care Employment and Civics Education Program, Adult Academic Program of Robbinsdale Area Schools, Theresa Zingery, [Theresa.Zingery@rdale.org](mailto:Theresa.Zingery@rdale.org)

*The Elder Care Employment and Civics Education Program* partnered with: two retirement homes (Covenant Village and The Heathers); HIRED (to provide job search and soft-skill training); and Hennepin Technical College (to offer healthcare pathway classes.) Together, we implemented a program for immigrant students to introduce them to the high-demand career field of elder care while at the same time familiarizing them with U.S. history through the collection of seniors' oral histories and introducing them to civic participation through community service.

Through the program students acquired the skills and knowledge they will need to become active and informed workers and community members, specifically in the areas of language skills, employability skills, technical skills, cultural understanding, and historical understanding in the context of the elder care field. This was seen in the work they produced and pre-post measures (see attached Key Findings charts). In this program we saw strong student persistence indicating that students enjoyed the program and found it valuable -- 91% of participants reached/exceeded 40 hours vs. 51.1% for the Adult Academic Program (AAP) overall. 69% of participants made an NRS level gain on CASAS or TABE; while for overall AAP participants the percentage making a level gain was 41%

Cross cultural and intergenerational understanding was increased in the community. Students and elders shared information each would otherwise not have access to, thereby contributing to a stronger sense of community. Elders learned about students' different cultures, backgrounds, and academic goals, while students found out about the lives of people who lived through significant events.

All participating students gained a better understanding of how elders are treated in the U.S. and what roles (e.g., volunteer, friend, or employee in an elder care career) they can play to enhance the lives of elders here. As a result of this class, AAP teachers have seen more confident and connected students, elders, families, and communities.

The community also benefited from service learning projects students and seniors did together: made fleece-tied blankets that were donated to a shelter for battered women; made cat and dog toys that were donated to the Humane Society; and ran a toiletry and food drive where donations were given to local food shelves.