

March 25, 2026

Testimony from Rachel Mello Smith of Saint Albans, VT
Vermont Adult Learning student

Hello. Thank you for having me.

My name is Rachel Mello Smith.

I live in St. Albans and study English at Vermont Adult Learning.

I come from Brazil and I don't speak English.

I came to the United States because a friend told me there was better work here. In Brazil I was a professional cook at a German restaurant.

The job here was not good. I came and lived with my Brazilian friend. She wanted me to care for her child with autism. The work only paid 100 dollars a week.

I needed to leave.

I eventually got married to an American. He was very abusive. I came to a women's shelter in Vermont to escape. I learned about English at Vermont Adult Learning. I wanted to learn English.

Today I take English with my teacher.

I want to learn English for different reasons:

#1, I need a job to pay my bills.

#2, I need friends to speak with.

#3, I want to study maybe in medicine – like radiology.

#4. I want to write a book in English and Portuguese about overcoming obstacles and believing in yourself.

Some problems I have with English now are:

- Transportation to class. I like to walk but I have problems with the bus. I also need transportation for work. I do not drive.

- I have no internet. I cannot afford internet right now. I cannot take the online class my teacher wants me to.

- I want and need more classes. Right now it is very limited. I hope that Vermont Adult Learning can help me more in the future to learn more English to drive and to get a good job.

Thank you very much for helping Vermont Adult Learning help me to get back to work and communicate so much better.