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Language Synergy

Martha Silva (third from left) teaches spanish in her new Language Synergy class at Thistle Landing Office Park on Tuesday, Sept. 10, 2013.



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Posted: Friday, September 13, 2013 6:45 am

By Daniel Ochoa, Ahwatukee Foothills News | 0 comments

Learning a second language can be a beneficial trait for any individual who's interested in finding appreciation from different cultures.

Martha Silva, president of Language Synergy, understands this and has created Spanish courses at her office, 4809 E. Thistle Landing, Suite 100, to assist the Ahwatukee community in learning how to speak and understand the language.

Silva, originally from Baja California Peninsula and instructor of the classes, moved to the United States when she was 19 years old, and has been teaching Spanish-language courses for over six years.

Originally, Silva's background was in computer information systems, but she made the decision to switch her focus to teaching Spanish, taking courses in Mexico on how to be an effective instructor.

She was then approached by some of her friends about the idea of her teaching Spanish to the community of Ahwatukee.

"I started with a group of eight people and I realized I enjoyed doing this," Silva said.

Language Synergy

There are four different course levels Silva teaches, from intermediate to advanced, giving her students the chance to learn at a slow pace in order to absorb the material.

The classes are known as "Conversation Spanish," teaching students how to hold regular conversations in a Spanish dialect.

Classes meet once a week for two hours and private classes are offered for individuals who wish



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to have a more one-on-one setting.

The classes are offered to all age groups interested in learning a second language, and group lessons are about 14 weeks long.

Grades are not a deciding factor when it comes to Silva's classroom; she's interested in having her students learn how to speak the language rather than overly stressing about a letter grade.

With that being said, students enrolled in the course are accountable for learning and using the material they are being taught even if they only know five verbs.

"That gives confidence to students and they can start speaking more as they're learning," Silva said, adding that during the intermediate courses her students learn how to listen/understand Spanish, and the course is intended for individuals who are not familiar with the language or have taken a Spanish course during high school.

Throughout the class students begin to learn how to congregate different verbs, assisting them on how to use the words in present and past tense.

Students who have some familiarity with one tense are encouraged to focus more on what they already know, and in the following Spanish course they can lean towards other tenses they're unfamiliar with.

"If you need to study, you like to study, you are going to study," Silva said, in Spanish.

Learning Spanish in a classroom setting can be one thing, but actually using it in the real world is another type of beast to conquer.

That's why Silva plans different weekend retreats and trips to South America for her students, where they can use what they learned outside the classroom.

In April, Silva traveled to Costa Rica with seven of her students and they were engulfed in a different cultural setting.

The students were able to study abroad in Costa Rica for 10 days, offering a variety of traveling experiences from sightseeing to informal assignments where they spoke to locals in Spanish.

"The entire trip was an opportunity to be really emerged into the culture and it was an excellent learning experience," said Ahwatukee resident and student Jane Pincus.

Pincus has been attending classes at Language Synergy for two years and is at the point where she can carry on conversations in Spanish.

She took basic Spanish courses at South Mountain Community College and decided to further her language immersion by searching for any classes being taught in Ahwatukee.

Pincus has also attended the weekend retreats, an option for Silva's students who may not have the time to take the classes but are interested in learning how to speak and understand Spanish.

The weekend retreats offer a relaxing setting for students to unwind, where they complete informal assignments, cook traditional Mexican platters, and chat among one another, all in Spanish.

"Martha is really good at coming up with creative ways to use our skills," Pincus said. "It's a very effective way to learn the language and the materials are outstanding. The variety that Martha uses really makes learning easy and fun."

For more information about Language Synergy and the courses being taught, visit www.languagesynergy.com.

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