



English Talk Time: Alumni Spotlight!

Each participant of our English Talk Time program is a valued member of our community – whether they are currently taking classes or have moved on to a new phase of their life! This month, we are happy to shine a spotlight on Talk Time “Alum”, Pinky Chakraborty.

Srirupa “Pinky” Chakraborty, a former participant of Talk Time and current friendly face at the library



Pinky Chakraborty is a woman with quite a journey, both with literacy and in her life. With time in India, Louisiana, Pennsylvania, and now here in Quincy, she started attending Talk Time classes in 2010 and has taken the lessons and connections along with her, up to her current role as a Senior Library Assistant here at the Thomas Crane Public Library.

Native to India, Pinky studied English in school starting in Kindergarten, but only reading and writing - never speaking. Since India is a British colony, this was also all in a British dialect. One of her biggest surprises with learning American English was when she and her husband first moved to New Orleans for his neuroscience studies in 2005. They went to a restaurant and Pinky was excited to see that there was a “restroom.” In India, “restroom” meant a waiting room that you might take a nap in, not a bathroom, and she was tired!

When Hurricane Katrina hit later that year, the family was forced to move a few times before landing in Quincy. Luckily, this is when Pinky found the Talk Time Program, available for free - perfect for a student family’s limited budget! She spent over a year in Talk Time before her husband’s work took them to Philadelphia, where she started her own English practice program at the Lansdowne Library called “Let’s Speak English” when she couldn’t find one already active.





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Although Pinky did some of her schooling in English (including her degree in chemistry), she says that first coming to America she “became a baby again” in this native English-speaking environment. She felt embarrassed being unable to communicate around her husband and his fellow students; where they needed to speak in English daily, she lacked the resources to practice as well.



Joining Talk Time introduced her to others in similar situations, including an eye doctor who couldn’t speak to her grandchild, and Pinky wanted to keep opening doors for everyone else like Mary, Molly, and the libraries did for her. Now she is doing so from behind the desk here at TCPL! She loves being able to help patrons access opportunities they couldn’t quite reach on their own, especially if it’s something she usually takes for granted. If you see her around the library, feel free to say hi - she always appreciates a little extra English practice and the chance to help out. (For adult English learners, be sure to check out the ESOL book display managed by Pinky on the library’s first floor.)

- Pinky’s Spotlight Story was written by Rebekka Fryman



English Talk Time is the library’s ESOL conversation-group program for adults. Participants come together once a week (online or in-person) to practice their English and meet new people. Groups are led by trained volunteer teachers. English Talk Time is a great place for people to gain confidence speaking English and build a stronger connection to their community!

For more information, please fill out a pre-registration form on our library’s website:
<https://thomascranellibrary.org/esl-citizenship-class-pre-registration>