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Notebook Online

Make a Home Fire Escape Plan and Get Out Alive!

by Katie Schisa, ProLiteracy

Purpose
To help adult learners understand how and why to create and practice a home fire escape plan; to help adult learners practice reading and comprehension skills.

Rationale
Explain to students that home fires can happen at any time, and smoke and fire move fast. If a fire happens in their home, everyone needs to get outside quickly. Most of the time there are only two to three minutes to get out safely after a smoke alarm sounds. In the United States, almost 3,000 people die in home fires every year. Making an escape plan and practicing it at least two times every year will help students and their family members know how to get out alive if there is a fire. It is important to know two ways out of each room (if possible) in case one of the paths out is blocked by fire or smoke.

The Basic Activity
Have students read pp. 4–5, which show an excerpt from the story Rashan’s Escape Plan, and answer the questions that follow it. Then, review the Sample Escape Plan, and help students prepare to make a plan for their own home by completing Activities 1 and 2 on page 6.

Before reading the story, go over the Words to Review section at the top of page 4. As a pre-reading activity, ask students to think about what would happen if a fire occurred in their home. Use the questions below to start talking about how having smoke alarms and a plan to get out of the home safely could save their lives and the lives of others.

• Do you have smoke alarms in your home?
• Do you test the smoke alarms regularly to make sure they will work in a fire emergency?
• Do you have an escape plan for your home?
• Do you talk about the plan with everyone who lives in your home (including children) to make sure they know how to get out if there is a fire?
• Do you practice the plan with fire drills?
• Is at least one practice at night when people are sleeping?

Expansion Activity
Have your students read the full version of Rashan’s Escape Plan from the Home Safety Literacy Project (HSLP) kit. Complete the discussions and recommended activities for each chapter suggested on pp. 34–51 of the HSLP Teacher’s Manual. Visit the Resources section of the Keys to Safety website, www.proliteracy.org/keystosafety, to download the A and B (easier level) versions of the story and the Teacher’s Manual and other HSLP kit materials at no cost.

References

This lesson is adapted from materials that are part of ProLiteracy’s new Keys to Safety campaign. See p. 14 of this issue for more information.
Mattie and Rashan sit at the table. Rashan has a book from the Fire Department. He got it at school. The book tells how to make an escape plan. Rashan reads it aloud.

He reads Step 1.
“Step 1: Test the smoke alarms.”
Mattie says, “Get the broom. It will help you push the button.” Rashan pushes the test button.
BEEEEEP! BEEEEEP! BEEEEEP!... BEEEEEP! BEEEEEP! BEEEEEP!...

“Good,” says Mattie.
“That smoke alarm works. Let’s test the others.”

After that, Rashan reads the next step.
“Step 2: Draw a floor plan of your home.”

Rashan says, “That means we have to draw the rooms on each floor of our house. The book has paper for the floor plan. We can draw our rooms on the paper.”

Rashan takes the paper out of the book. Mattie gets two pencils. Rashan draws the first floor. The living room and the kitchen are on the first floor.
Rashan reads Step 3.
“Step 3: Draw your escape plan.”

He says, “We have to use arrows. And we have to show two ways out of every room.”

He draws an arrow in the living room. The arrow points out the front door. Mattie says, “The front door is good. But what if the fire is near the door? We need another way out.”

Mattie draws another arrow. The arrow points to the kitchen. Mattie says, “We can go out the back door.”

“Look at the kitchen,” says Rashan. “If we are in the kitchen, we can go out the back door. Or we can go into the living room. Then we can go out the front door.”

“If we can’t get to a door…,” Mattie starts to say. Rashan finishes Mattie’s idea. “We can go out the windows!” He draws two more arrows.

“The first floor is done,” says Mattie. “Now let’s do the second floor.”

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**Answer questions about the story.**

1. Where did Rashan get the book about how to make the escape plan?
2. What did Mattie and Rashan do before they made the floor plan?
3. How many ways out of each room did they show on the plan?
4. What will Mattie and Rashan do after they make the plan for the first floor?

**Discuss.**

1. Why do you think it is important to make and practice a home escape plan?
2. Where else do you or your family members practice escape plans in case of a fire?
More Information

Find out more to help students be safe from fire on the following websites:

Keys to Safety Fire Safety Literacy Project
www.proliteracy.org/keystosafety
This site provides access to Rashan’s Escape Plan, the accompanying Teacher’s Manual, and many other free home and fire safety related instructional materials and ideas for using them with adult learners.

Two Ways Out: A Family Fire Drill
http://bit.ly/9zRf7r
This illustrated easy-to-read story shows how the García family creates an escape plan for their home and practices it together.

Sparkles the Fire Safety Dog’s Fire Safety Tips
Basic fire safety tips from Sparklès aNd Fireffightér Dáýnà. Suitable for children and adults.

Plan and Practice a Home Fire Drill
This is a one-page illustrated summary of important home fire escape tips for adults from the Home Safety Council.

National Fire Protection Association Escape Planning Tips
This site contains additional background on escape planning for teachers and tutors.

Sample Escape Plan

The Sample Escape Plan on page 7 for a home with one floor will give you ideas for making an escape plan for your home.

The escape plan includes:

- all the rooms, hallways, doors, and windows in the home
- two paths out of each room marked by arrows
- smoke alarms marked with ↗
- a safe outdoor meeting place in front of the home where everyone can meet

After going over the Sample Escape Plan, use the following two activities with your students.

Activity 1: Make an Escape Plan

Follow the instructions below to make an escape plan for your home. Use the example as a model. You can find a blank grid to draw a plan on the Keys to Safety website (www.proliteracy.org/keystosafety) for students to use. If you do not have Internet access, you can still draw the grid on a blank piece of paper.

If you live with other people, ask them to help. Use a pencil to draw the plan in case you need to make a change. Then go over it with a pen or marker so it will be easy to see.

Hang the plan up in a place where everyone can see it (on the refrigerator, for example). Practice the plan with a fire drill at least two times every year!

1. Draw the floor plan of your home on the grid. Include all rooms, halls, and stairs.
2. Draw all the doors, windows, and fire escapes.
3. Draw two paths out of every room. Use arrows to show the way out.
4. Pick an outdoor meeting place across the street or down the road. Everyone will meet there after they get out of the home. Draw the meeting place on the plan.
5. Mark each smoke alarm in your home on the grid with ↗ (see the Sample Escape Plan for this symbol).

Activity 2: Have a Practice Fire Drill

Have a practice fire drill. Before the fire drill, make an escape plan, and talk about the plan with everyone who lives in your home. Make sure everyone knows how to get outside and where to meet when they get out.

Two times each year, practice your plan. Do one practice at night while people are sleeping. (If you live in an apartment, ask the landlord or manager for instructions about what to do if there is a fire or if the alarm goes off.) Follow these steps:

- Push the smoke alarm button to start the fire drill.
- Get outside fast.
- Go to your outside meeting place.
- In a real fire, get outside first, and then call 9-1-1 for help.
Sample Escape Plan

Bedroom 1  Bedroom 2  Bathroom  Living Room  Kitchen

Meet Here!

S = smoke alarm
Getting Students to Their Goals

More Information

Here are a few more places you and your students can learn about goal setting for adults.

Helping Students Identify Their Reading Goals
This site includes background for teachers and worksheets for students on how to set reading goals.

Developing Goals
http://adultstudent.com/student/goals.html
Although this site is geared toward first-year college students, it can easily be adapted for adult literacy students. In addition to information on how to set goals and how to divide goal-setting plans into manageable chunks, this site also includes information on what makes a useful goal, how to stay motivated to achieve goals, and how to make a to-do list.

Goal Setting
http://ncbsonline.net/Goal%20Setting.htm
http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeadult/download/pdf/GoalsToolkitR.pdf
From the Office of North Carolina Basic Skills, the first site contains a toolkit with a variety of information and activities related to goal setting.

Purpose
To help students set and reach their goals.

Rationale
Goal setting with students can serve two important purposes: 1) It helps students focus on what they want to get out of their classroom learning (or life in general), and 2) It helps teachers determine what they need to teach so students can reach those goals.

There are some challenges with goal setting in the adult classroom, however. Many times, the goals that students talk about initially are vague (e.g., “I want to learn English,” “I want to learn to read”). Other times, a goal might seem so far-reaching that students can become discouraged.

The Basic Activity
You’ll find with this article on page 10 a worksheet that can help students identify their goals. Aim to use this worksheet with each new student. You will also find on Notebook Online two goal worksheets to help students note the steps they need to take to reach a specific goal and to mark the progress they have made toward reaching that goal. Read the sidebar on page 2 of this issue for instructions on how ProLiteracy members can access Notebook Online.

Using the goals worksheet on page 10, prompt students to consider goals in each of the categories listed. Encourage students to include goals that go beyond what you will cover in class, as this provides a good opportunity for student self-reflection. Their academic goals could fall under “Self” or even one of the other categories (e.g., someone learning English to help their children in school might write that goal under “Family & Home”; someone learning to read to obtain a better job may write that goal under “Work”). Explain to students that by setting specific goals, you can teach them material relevant to their needs.

If students have trouble deciding on specific goals or if you find the goals they are writing are not specific enough, share with them the list of Possible Goals on page 9. However, remind them that they are not limited to these goals.

You will likely find that some goals are long term and require a good deal of effort and time. For this kind of goal, discuss with students how to break the goal into manageable steps. Then, have them write down those steps. Encourage students to include steps that require follow-up outside of the classroom so they take responsibility for their goals. Here’s what a student who wants to obtain a GED might write:

Continued on next page
My dream is to get my GED. I will:

1. Start my GED class.
2. Study at home three times a week.
3. Take a practice test.
4. Get my GED.

On Notebook Online, you will find a page from Voyager: Reading & Writing for Today’s Adults, published by New Readers Press, which will help students lay out their step-by-step plan for achieving a goal, similar to the format above.

Students can then use the second Goal Worksheet found on Notebook Online to mark their progress toward reaching their goals. For example, students who are learning English to help a child in school might note when they learn to read a report card. They would then note that their next step in the goal process is participating in a parent/teacher conference.

### Possible Goals

#### Work

- Fill out a job application.
- Write a résumé.
- Speak in English in a job interview.
- Write a report.
- Find a new job.
- Ask my manager for a raise.

#### Family & Home

- Help my children in school.
- Read a book in English to my children.
- Make a family budget.
- Save money for a family vacation.
- Buy a house.
- Plan healthy meals for my family.

#### Self

- Fill out forms.
- Open an e-mail account.
- Read a book.
- Get my driver’s license.
- Learn how to type.
- Get my GED.

#### Community

- Vote in a local election.
- Read local street signs and names.
- Participate in my local civic organization.
- Get and use a library card.
- Volunteer at my local homeless shelter.
- Learn the local history of my community.

More Information

Continued from previous page

setting. The second site contains links to individual goal-setting activities that appear in the toolkit. One activity that might help students better understand goal setting is the Basketball Goal Activity. This activity uses different sized balls and a basket to help students understand the value of setting appropriate and attainable goals.
Goals Worksheet

Family & Home

What goals do you want to reach?
What do you want to learn or be able to do?

Work

Self

Community

GOALS

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The Basics on Budgeting

Purpose
To teach students how to create a monthly budget and compare budgeted amounts with actual amounts spent.

The Basic Activity

Rationale
Many students have suffered from the economic downturn that has resulted in layoffs, unemployment, and underemployment. Teaching them how to make a budget can help them to control expenses and better manage their money.

1. Introduce students to the concept of budgeting. Ask if they know anyone who keeps a budget. Ask what happens when someone does not follow a budget. This could lead into a brief discussion about bounced checks, banking overdraft fees, or simply not having the money to pay bills. Discuss with students the value of keeping a budget, such as not spending more money than you have and trying to save money for important future goals.

2. Share with students the budget worksheet on page 13. Make sure students are familiar with the following terms before using the worksheet: income, wages, interest income, expenses, subtotal, utilities, donations, miscellaneous, and net income. Other terms on the sheet that students might already know—depending on their proficiency level—include: actual amount, taxes, rent/mortgage, groceries/food, clothing, shopping, entertainment, transportation, and savings.

3. Have students decide the window of time for which they are making a budget (a full calendar month versus another designated amount of time). Then ask them to write their income beside the line for Wages/Income under Budget Amount. They should write any interest income they may have (for example, money earned from savings accounts or certificates of deposit) in the appropriate area. Both of those areas should be added together to obtain an Income Subtotal.

4. Have students write down their projected monthly expenses. If students are not sure how much they spend under certain categories, encourage them to find answers. For example, they can look at electric bills from the past few months to determine an average spent on electricity, which would fall under Utilities. (Some bills may show

More Information
Here are a few websites to help students learn about money management.

Printable Budget Worksheets
http://www.moneyinstructor.com/wsp/budgetworksheets.asp
You’ll find printable budget worksheets for teaching budgeting or for personal use. Although you need to register to view materials on Money Instructor (www.moneyinstructor.com), limited membership is free and provides access to a wealth of printable money management worksheets, lesson plans, and interactive lessons that teachers can use.

360 Degrees of Financial Literacy
http://www.360financialliteracy.org
Sponsored by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, this site is a free program to help people understand personal finances. The site divides information into various categories, including the employed, the military and reserves, small business owners, college students, and tweens/teens.

Continued on next page
the cost per month over the previous 12-month period, so students can consider monthly fluctuations due to weather. Alternately, students could call their utility company to find out their average monthly cost and yearly highs and lows.) If students have annual expenses, they should divide that expense by 12 to determine the monthly expense. Ask students to write down and add any other expense categories as they see fit.

Remind students of the value of long-term versus emergency savings, which both appear on the worksheet. A common goal for building up emergency savings is three to six months of living expenses. Long-term savings are for things such as higher education, retirement, buying a house, or other large purchases. They should total all expenses together to obtain an Expenses Subtotal.

5. Prompt students to track their money. Students can keep track of money spent on bills and other items using a small notebook, their checkbook, or even a computer-based program, if they feel comfortable using that technology. At the end of the month, have students add up the items and put them in the appropriate budget categories. They should compare the actual amounts they have written in with the budgeted amount to track the difference, which should be written into the final column. Students can use that information at the end of the month to determine whether they need to better control expenses. If you work with a group of students versus one-to-one tutoring, you can have them exchange ideas on how to control expenses.

Students can calculate the final item on the worksheet, Net Income, by subtracting expenses from income. They should aim for this final amount to be a zero or greater (a negative amount would indicate that they are spending more than they earn).
## BUDGET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Budget Amount</th>
<th>Actual Amount</th>
<th>Difference</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>INCOME:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wages/Income</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interest Income</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INCOME SUBTOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EXPENSES:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rent/Mortgage</td>
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<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Groceries/Food</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Clothing</td>
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<td>Shopping</td>
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<td>Entertainment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Long-Term Savings</td>
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<td>Emergency Savings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Donations</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous/Other</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EXPENSES SUBTOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NET INCOME</strong></td>
<td>(Income minus Expenses)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Exploring Resources

**Keys to Safety Campaign**

http://www.proliteracy.org/keystosafety

Through May 2011, ProLiteracy is leading the *Keys to Safety* campaign, a national effort to promote fire prevention and safety education through local organizations that serve adults with low English literacy. ProLiteracy is providing free materials and support to help programs organize *Keys to Safety* activities in their communities—indepedently or in collaboration with area fire departments. Free fire safety materials for teachers and tutors to use with adult learners in instructional settings are also available through the campaign. These materials include the Home Safety Council’s Home Safety Literacy Project (HSLP) kit, which can be used to reinforce literacy skills in the context of fire safety and disaster preparedness and additional materials that can be used independently or as a supplement to the HSLP kit. Among the topics covered are: home fire prevention tips; the role of firefighters in the community; and ways to be prepared, including escape plans and smoke alarm installation and maintenance.

The *Keys to Safety* website includes ideas for getting involved, a link to request free print copies of the *Keys to Safety* materials and the HSLP kit, free downloadable versions of all materials, and links to other relevant resources. The *Keys to Safety* blog, a feature of the website, highlights success stories and best practices from participants, relevant articles, and bonus student activities. Programs have the flexibility to decide how and when they will participate but are encouraged to get involved by April 2011 to ensure print materials will still be available and to provide ProLiteracy with the opportunity to recognize their efforts. After the campaign ends in May 2011, the website will remain online as a free resource for programs interested in sharing fire safety and prevention messages with their adult learners.

*Keys to Safety* was made possible with funding provided through DHS/FEMA’s Grant Program Directorate for Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program—Fire Prevention and Safety Grants. For more information, contact Katie Schisa at firesafety@proliteracy.org or 315-422-9121, ext. 250.

**GED Teacher Resource Center**

http://www.newreaderspress.com/ged

If you’re working with GED students or those getting ready to start GED classes, check out the new—and free—online GED Teacher Resource Center. You can engage with other GED practitioners through an interactive discussion board, access up-to-date GED information for teachers and programs, and find classroom support with free downloadable classroom activities each week.
Online Vocabulary Activities for Adult Learners
http://literacynetwork.verizon.org/tln/content/us-culture-and-customs-vocabulary-activities
ProLiteracy has launched a series of online activities to help adult learners review important vocabulary associated with U.S. customs, laws, and behaviors. Vocabulary topics include using doctor and hospital services, using money, and navigating the community. The activities are based on material in Living in America, a teacher resource series published by New Readers Press. Additional activities are planned for the website in the coming months. The activities are part of the growing collection of free online materials that ProLiteracy and other national partners are developing for Verizon Thinkfinity.

Women’s Health Resources
http://www.floridaliteracy.org/literacy_resources__teacher_tutor__health_literacy.html
The Florida Literacy Coalition recently published two new health literacy student resource books, each with a corresponding teacher’s guide. These publications, made possible with support from the Florida Department of Education, complement the “Staying Healthy” curriculum also designed by the Florida Literacy Coalition. Women’s Health covers topics such as menstruation, menopause, pregnancy, childbirth, breast and reproductive cancer, sexually transmitted infections, and domestic abuse. Coping with Stress covers stress, the effects of stress on the body, and healthy ways to manage one’s stress.

The Change Agent Newsletter
http://www.nelrc.org/changeagent
Published by the New England Literacy Resource Center, The Change Agent is a social justice newspaper for adult educators and learners published twice a year. The Change Agent provides resources to teach social issues, showcases powerful student writing, and features many ready-to-use multilevel lesson plans. Recent issue topics have included “Fashion: The Power, The Peril and The Passion” and “Health: The Big Picture.” Electronic subscriptions are free but you will be invited to make a voluntary donation when you sign up for a subscription. A one-year paper subscription is $10.

Online Tutor Training
http://adultliteracytutor.blogspot.com/
The Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center (VALRC) offers a 14-hour free online tutor training that covers topics ranging from adult literacy basics to effective reading and writing instruction to learner-centered learning. The training, which is sponsored by VALRC, the Virginia Literacy Foundation, and Verizon, includes a number of links and tools to help users become more familiar with online learning.

Wonderopolis
http://www.wonderopolis.org
Wonderopolis is sponsored by the National Center for Family Literacy and is designed to help parents support their children’s education. Each day a parent will see a new “wonder of the day” on the site. Each wonder opens with a question and a short video for parents and children to watch together. The parent can then use or adapt the short lesson plan that follows. The following are examples of questions addressed in past wonders: What would you pack for a trip to outer space? Why does Jell-O jiggle? Can you train a goldfish? Wonderopolis is part of the family of Verizon Thinkfinity sites supported by the Verizon Foundation.

Online Lesson Plans for ABE Instructors
http://literacy.kent.edu/eureka/agora.html
Called Eureka! Agora (Assemblage of Great Online Resources for Adults), this website has a searchable database for adult basic education instructors to find lesson plans and other resources. The database includes resources for planning instruction, standards-based lesson plans, trade books, websites, and teaching strategies. Eureka! is maintained by the Ohio Literacy Resource Center.

Free downloadable teaching worksheets
http://www.freeology.com
Although at first glance Freeology may seem appropriate only for K–12 teachers, the site actually contains free downloadable worksheets commonly used in the adult classroom. Sample materials found on Freeology include alphabet and number worksheets, worksheets to help tell time, calendar pages, and graphic organizers. The site also includes games to help students practice skills. Material on the site can help instructors teach reading, writing, and math.
Student Profile
Tibetan Refugee Finds Refuge in English Program, New Life in the U.S.
by Vanessa Caceres

Adult learners always seem to have interesting life stories to share, and Tashi Chodan of Amherst, Massachusetts, is no exception.

Chodan, a Tibetan refugee, came to the United States from Nepal a little over a year ago with her husband and four children. While only Chodan's husband was born in Tibet, the Tibetan Uprising of 1959 led both of their families to flee to India. After they were married, her family moved to Nepal. A distant relative led Chodan and her family to the United States, where they could have a permanent place to live and eventually gain citizenship.

“We want a better education and a better life,” Chodan says. The U.S. government provided her family with green cards, Social Security numbers, and funding for eight months.

Chodan began to take English classes at the ESL program at Jones Library in Amherst. Director Lynne Weintraub paired her with tutor Betsy Mullins, who realized that Chodan needed support not only in survival English but also with literacy issues. Chodan never completed a formal education, and she could not recognize her children's names in written English. Her oral English was limited to some names of household items. Mullins and Chodan meet twice a week for an hour a session, and Chodan’s children, who range from high school to adult age, also help her. “I think her goal is to learn more English so she can be independent in the community,” Mullins said. For example, learning English will help Chodan get a driver’s license.

Chodan says she enjoys learning English, although she finds it difficult. Learning new words and discriminating between sounds in words that sound alike, such as can and can’t, is challenging, she adds. She finds the reading practice that Mullins gives her particularly helpful.

“She’s very hard working, and she practices every night,” says Chodan’s adult daughter Nangsel.

Chodan also is learning English to help her communicate at her job working in a propagation lab at a large berry farm in western Massachusetts.

Chodan and her family have had to adjust to the different weather and culture in the United States. Although her native food is a mix of Chinese and Indian dishes, Chodan says that she enjoys pizza. She also finds people in the United States to be particularly friendly, even with strangers.

Mullins says she will continue to help Chodan with English speaking and reading and also help her better understand the complexities of high school in the United States, which Chodan’s youngest daughter attends.