



Reaching Out to the Advanced Placement Classroom: ATA's School Outreach In Action

By Birgit Vosseler-Brehmer

This year's ATA School Outreach Award went to Jenny Stillo, a Spanish interpreter and translator based in Crested Butte, Colorado. Jenny's winning photo highlighted her May School Outreach presentation to an advanced placement Spanish class at Crested Butte Community School.

Keeping It Active

In the first part of her presentation, Jenny talked about translation and interpreting and explained that both careers require not just bilingual language skills but adequate training. She highlighted the importance of foreign languages for future jobs.

To demonstrate her point, she prepared various interactive activities for the students. In a translation exercise, she reenacted a real-life situation she had encountered a few weeks earlier in a hotel where a housekeeping man-

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ager had translated the hotel's rules regarding cell phones using Google Translate. As a result of this exercise, the students learned that Google Translate does not deliver adequate translation results.

In another exercise, Jenny had two students pretend to be skiers—one from Mexico, one from Crested Butte—who wanted to ski together. The skiers did not speak the same language, so they enlisted a passerby, Jenny, to interpret for them so they could set a time and place to meet. However, since Jenny did such a

poor job, interpreting everything literally, the two skiers never met. For Jenny, this exercise served to get the message across that translating and interpreting is all about bridging the linguistic and cultural gap and giving a voice to those who do not speak the language of the culture in which they live. This is something Jenny feels very passionate about.

The last part of Jenny's visit was pure fun for the students. Two teams of three students competed against each other in a game of Family Feud, where they had to explain ➡

idiomatic expressions. To motivate the students, Jenny promised a prize to the winning team: a fashion calendar from Honduras. "The students loved this game," Jenny reports.

Community Connections

Jenny, a native Honduran, is a frequent visitor to Crested Butte Community School. The Spanish teacher invites her on a regular basis to talk to the advanced placement Spanish class so that the students get the opportunity to listen to a native Spanish speaker. However, this was the first time that Jenny talked about translation and interpreting.

The students were very excited to learn that Jenny had won ATA's School Outreach Contest. Although none of them are currently planning a career in translation or interpreting, several of the students have continued to study Spanish. Jenny is proud to be a role model for the students and continues to pass on the message that foreign languages not only broaden their horizons, but are also important for future jobs as well.

Promoting Professionalism

Jenny was born in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, and grew up in Tegucigalpa, where she attended the American School of Tegucigalpa. She came to the U.S. to pursue a degree in business administration. She soon became a part of the Crested Butte community by joining in what everybody does in Crested Butte: skiing, biking, hiking, and enjoying the great outdoors.

As one of the few educated bilingual people in the community, Jenny was asked to translate and interpret for this popular winter sports resort town before actually having formal schooling in it. She soon realized, however, that she needed professional training and, following two years of graduate work, earned a translation certificate from Arizona State University.

Jenny now interprets and translates for various medical clinics, health centers, schools, and hotels in



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Gunnison County. As the Hispanic population grows in the area, so does the demand for her interpreting services. She taught Spanish at the Crested Butte Ski and Snowboard Academy and has translated for the Crested Butte Mountain Resort. Her specialization is tightly connected with the mountain area and ski resort: sports and recreation, travel and tourism, and business and marketing. Jenny hopes to expand her translation business and to work more with agencies.

Planting the Seeds Early

Jenny's advice to fellow translators and interpreters: reach out to your local youth and talk about our profession. With the demand for professional language services increasing, informing students about this fascinating career option is becoming more and more important. "We need to plant the seeds early!" Jenny says.

Join the School Outreach Effort

The 2014-2015 School Outreach Contest is now open! The winner

will receive free registration to ATA's 56th Annual Conference in Miami, Florida, November 4-7, 2015. For more information, visit www.atanet.org/ata_school/school_outreach_contest.php.

Tell us your story! Please share your past and present School Outreach experiences with us! Whether you decide to enter the contest or not, ATA's School Outreach team would love to hear from you. Please contact Meghan McCallum at mccallum@gmail.com with a description of when and where you presented and let us know about your memorable School Outreach experience. ■

2014-2015 ATA School Outreach Contest

Visit ATA's School Outreach Resource Center at www.atanet.org/ata_school/school_outreach_contest.php and click on Presentation Resource Materials.