

Over 500 immigrants rallied on Tuesday to “drive local change” in Massachusetts at the 18th annual Immigrants’ Day at the State House. Among those 500 was a student from an ENB-funded program, the Educational Development Group, **Cecilio Eduardo Aguilera’s** story, which he shared at the rally, is a testament to the power of high-quality ESOL classes:

“I am from Mexico. Thank you for listening to my story. I came to the United States when I was 16 years old. I came to help my four brothers and my parents. I worked the night shift in a factory for eight years. During that time, I met the Community of Franciscans of the Primitive Observance. After many visits with them, I discovered that I wanted to become a Franciscan priest. I want to give my life to serving others.

But to become a priest, I had several problems to overcome. For example, I could not speak English at all. Also, I was not able to finish high school in Mexico. I still need my high school diploma. One of the priests from the community decided to help me, and he took me to Educational Development Group. He told me that I could study English there and get my high school diploma. When I started my English classes at EDG, it was not easy because it is hard to learn English! Before I studied English at EDG, I didn’t understand my brothers in my community at all.

Today, I can understand my brothers in my community better, and I can speak better English. I can read the readings of the Mass in front of my community in English.

Without EDG, I could not stand in front of you and speak **today**. Adult education programs like mine are very important to our communities.

I thank EDG, my teachers, and God for giving me the confidence to achieve my goals. In this country, you need to speak English to live a better life. I am on my way.”

Your support of ENB continues to make a world of difference to so many!