

Dalsaint Lavoire and his wife--both police officers in their native Haiti--came to the U.S. last January after they escaped a violent attack on their lives. Unable to obtain a visa for their daughter in time, they reluctantly left her in the care of relatives in the countryside as they left Haiti.

Far from home, Dalsaint struggled with the language barrier upon his arrival. With his limited English skills, he had trouble finding a job and earning enough money to support his family. Dalsaint took the initiative to enroll in English classes at JVS Hyde Park. He started in a level 2 class and quickly moved to level 3. He never misses class and stands out as one of the most dedicated and inquisitive students. **His progress has been so outstanding that he was nominated for, and won, a Rising Star Student Award at ENB's Raising Our Voices Breakfast this fall.**

"Being an immigrant and English is not your first language, the first challenge you face is communication. My friends encouraged me to go to JVS. Now I'm there and I keep going. Before that, I couldn't talk to people, buy at the store, or ask for services. [Learning English] is not easy, but if you have the will, you'll succeed. Now, English helps me with everything."

While he misses his 10 year-old daughter, Dalsaint doesn't let adversity weaken his resolve. He has already obtained his green card, work permit, and recently earned his Massachusetts driver's license. He dreams of becoming a U.S. citizen. And he hopes to one day pursue a college degree in order to build the brightest future for himself and his family.

Dalsaint's story is just one of many among newcomers to Boston striving to learn English skills and make a better life for themselves and their families.