



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Immigrants Graduate with Knowledge of Local Government
City of San Mateo and San Mateo Adult School celebrate success of new pilot program**

San Mateo, CA (April 16, 2018) – From breaking down barriers between police and immigrants, to educating new community members about an array of local recreational opportunities, the very first English as a Second Language City Government Academy has proven to be a success. The diverse class of 25 students hailing from 10 countries will join for a graduation ceremony to commemorate the four-month pilot program designed to empower immigrants with a deeper understanding of how to participate in local government.

The City of San Mateo, in partnership with the San Mateo Adult School of the San Mateo Union High School District, launched the program designed specifically for ESL students. The Academy educates immigrants about how to access local services while also increasing civic engagement, leadership and volunteerism.

“This program has been tremendously successful in helping a new segment of our community feel empowered,” said City Manager Larry Patterson, who championed the program’s inception. “It has been a unique forum to directly educate our community about all that is available to them, and to do so in thoughtful way that considered potential cultural as well as language barriers.”

Academy participants have an opportunity to meet with City staff and tour a range of facilities including San Mateo’s Fire Station 23, Beresford Recreation Center, Police Station, Wastewater Treatment Plant and City Hall. They’ve learned skills such as how to operate a fire extinguisher, register for a recreation class, and what not to dump down their drains.

For many participants, the Academy is helping them assimilate further into the local community and changing their perceptions of local government.

“The police here are so different from what I imagined,” said student Grace Jiang. “They’re so friendly and helpful.”

Tim Doyle, director of the San Mateo Adult School, said he’s already noticed a positive impact the Academy is having on the community.

“The students are educating their peers here on campus with their newfound knowledge,” Doyle said. “There’s a huge buzz on campus about this new program, and great interest in seeing it continue.”

The pilot program culminates with a tour of City Hall and graduation ceremony April 19, 2018.

Interview/Photo Opportunity

What: Meet immigrants who are learning about local government.

When: April 19, 2018, 11:30 a.m.

Where: San Mateo City Hall, Council Chambers, 330 W. 20th Ave., San Mateo, CA

MEDIA MUST RSVP to cravi@cityofsanmateo.org (650) 522-7043.

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