

Marshall Independent

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By Karin Elton, Marshall Independent

Mixing it up

MARSHALL - Marshall area seniors asked what was cooking Thursday evening as they walked into the senior dining room at the Adult Community Center. It wasn't their usual fare.

Adult Basic Education participants were preparing sambusa, a fried pastry with a savory filling, which is a popular appetizer from Somalia and Ethiopia.

"They made it for the community meal in August and were asked back to make it again," said Paulette Hanson, the Learning thru Sharing program coordinator.

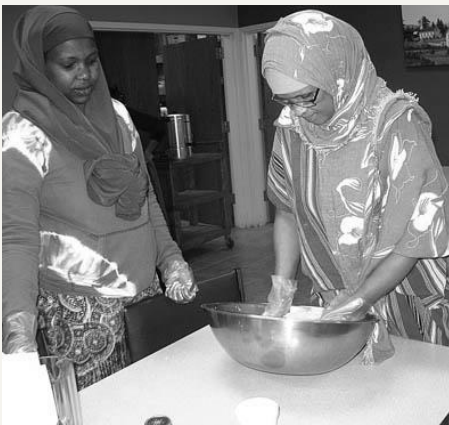


Photo by Karin Elton

Adult Basic Education and Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council are partners in a MN Civics Grant for two years starting June 30, 2015, and ending July 1, 2017. Learning thru Sharing is a program that is part of this grant.

The goals of the program include offering volunteer opportunities

outside of the classroom, practicing English skills and procuring future employment.

In addition to spending time at the Adult Community Center - "they have treated us well here," said Pat Thomas, ABE coordinator -the participants partner with Advance Opportunities.

Advance Opportunities, which provides employment opportunities and vocational training to individuals with developmental, physical and other disabilities, has a T-shirt recycling program, Green Tee. ABE participants help with the cutting portion of the program, which makes rags from T-shirts. Participants also "are learning how to make the jewelry/gift items that Advance Opportunities' clients make for sale to the public," said Hanson.

Participants meet Friday mornings at the Adult Community Center to work with Advance Opportunities clients and also are brought together with PIC clients for a "learning and sharing" time, said Hanson. "They can only speak English."

Adult Basic Education and Workforce have common customers, said Thomas, "therefore it is to each agency's advantage to work together."

"There is a crossover," said Terry Sullivan, a job training specialist with SW MN PIC.

Sullivan said the Learning thru Sharing project "varies from week to week."

The projects are community oriented and involve volunteering and involving the participants so they are more integrated with the community, Sullivan said.

Along with the teacher, Hanson, there will be a "couple languages, helping each other, laughing," Sullivan said. "The teacher is there to help guide, keep things focused, on track."

In addition to the volunteering task and learning English, the participants are building connections and networking which is helpful in finding jobs.

Hanson said they are looking for "more venues for program participants to experience a one-time volunteer work opportunity or a scheduled volunteer work opportunity with Marshall agencies, organizations or businesses." They are also looking for more sewing projects to do for community service projects.

For more information, call ABE at 537-7046.