

Spanish helps students aid crash victims

By Tiffany Y. Latta Staff Writer Sunday, November 09, 2008



Greentree Health Science Academy students Emily Ulrich and Emily Anderson pictured Friday, Nov 7, 2008 in Monroe, were instrumental in helping emergency personnel respond to an accident involving Spanish-speaking occupants. The pair witnessed an accident and was able to use the Spanish they learned at the school to translate for the paramedics.

MONROE, OH — It was supposed to be just another school day.

Emily Anderson and Emily Ulrich — as usual — were driving on Ohio 63 to Greentree Health Science Academy at about 8 a.m. Wednesday, Nov. 5, chatting and listening to music. Then, a car in front of them carrying non-English speaking Latinos swerved and slammed into a guardrail.

"We all got out of our car and helped get them out of (their) car," said Anderson, 17, a senior in the medical program at Greentree. "One lady injured her legs and the other injured her arm." Anderson and Ulrich didn't stop there.

The two teens used skills they learned in Workplace Spanish® classes to help emergency crews get the women's vital information. "The EMT asked them (in English) what was hurting, where they were hurting. But they couldn't understand him," Anderson said. "He started touching them and they started freaking out."

Anderson said she and her classmate used their Spanish skills to convey information about the victims and their injuries to emergency crews.

Greentree Assistant Principal Lee Corder commended the actions of his students. "I'm real proud of them," he said. "I'm proud they were able to apply the skills they learned here to help someone else."

Anderson said, as a freshman, she struggled with Spanish and almost stopped taking the course. "I'm glad I did it now," she said. "It's actually a lot of help."

Greentree Spanish teacher, Julie Jestice, was absolutely astounded by her students' heroic actions and use of Spanish during the emergency.

"What they did was amazing. I have always agreed with the Workplace Spanish® theory but what these high school teenagers did really made me a believer." Jestice enthused. "The traditional Spanish classes at their previous schools only confused them. For our high school medical assistant program, I use the Workplace Spanish® book for HealthCare to teach them real life job specific language skills. I also added games like "Simon Says" and used role play conversations to help them practice speaking and to remember vocabulary."

These girls surprised everyone by doing what the EMS and police with years of experience on the job could not do. With the ever increasing Hispanic population this need is only going to increase. This ability in Spanish will give the girls an advantage during job interviews or prevent them from being downsized."

"In my 10 years of teaching Spanish I have seen that the traditional language education that goes on in most high schools is ineffective in teaching practical everyday language skills."

Regularly I meet people who tell me they studied four years of Spanish and they can't carry on even a simple conversation in Spanish.' It breaks my heart and makes me question why many teachers continue to teach ineffectively.

I'm excited to teach my students a real life skill they will use on the job and in daily life. Emily and Emily have proven publicly that Workplace Spanish® is simple and effective for learning Spanish! I'm thrilled to give the students a skill that is so empowering."

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