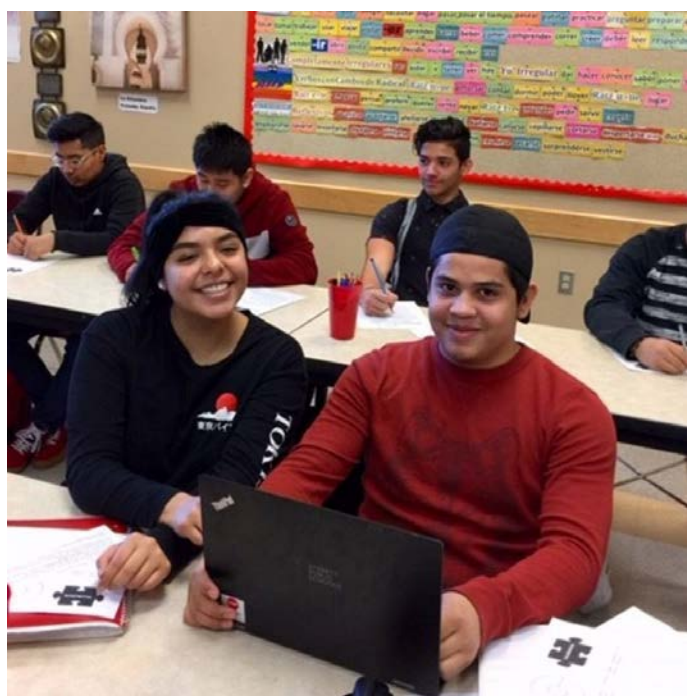


**Cascade students form Multilingual Ambassadors Squad***Speaking languages from all over the world, students build bridges*

*Multilingual ambassador Leslie assists Eduardo who recently joined Cascade High School.*

Everett—When Spanish teacher [Jessica Montalvo-Lopez](#) thought about the many families at Cascade High School who needed help communicating with school staff or students, she realized she couldn't do it alone.

"I have seen many times the difficulty of school communications with parents and students who are not native English speakers. I was one of them 20 years ago. I was able to help sometimes when one of the languages I speak was needed, but there are many other languages that are spoken in today's multicultural society that I cannot help the school with."

Montalvo-Lopez brainstormed ways to help and eventually struck upon a win-win solution. "I was talking with my husband about how important it is for my students to do service hours and how Cascade High School based this year's

educational work on 'building bridges.' I developed this language and cultural service opportunity for students to meet both needs."

The language and cultural service opportunity is called the Multilingual Ambassadors Squad (MAS). It is a student volunteer-led pilot project. Currently, 63 students who are bilingual in English and 16 other languages participate. Their assignments vary. One of the MAS members recently translated an elementary school advertisement for multicultural night into Ukrainian; another led a high school campus tour with a new family. "For our students, it is a unique and exciting opportunity designed to promote cultural pride and increase the academic excellence of their fellow students," shared Montalvo-Lopez.

Sophomore student Esther Martinez translates for Russian speakers as part of MAS. She shared, "Multilingual Squad has helped me realize how important other cultures are and how important it is to show who you are and where you came from. I am so happy to be part of this new group and am so excited to see how each and every one of us who translate can help others who need it. My mother is from Russia and my father is from El Salvador. I am so proud of my heritage."

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Freshman Sofiya Kochubey explained how the MAS experience is influencing her future plans. "I am honored to be able to use my Ukrainian speaking skills to help those who don't speak English and be part of the Multilingual Ambassadors Squad at CHS. Assisting people with translation is something I find pleasure in and I hope I can continue using my translation skills throughout my life."

Leading this effort, but giving students the credit is Montalvo-Lopez, a native of Peru. She has taught for 20 years and this is her second year at Cascade High School. She added she hopes this effort will also "help non-English speaking families feel a deeper sense of respect and connection to the Cascade High School community."

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**For more information:**

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