

Meet Katherine Chicas. She came to Boston from the Dominican Republic four years ago in search of a better life for her family.

Today, Katherine lives in East Boston with her young son and husband. She learned English through ENB-funded classes at East Boston Ecumenical Community Council (EBECC), and now she is taking the next steps toward re-starting her career -- she was an attorney in the Dominican Republic.

"I came here because there is more opportunity. I hope to return to my profession. Now, I am taking classes at Bunker Hill and maybe I can be a paralegal."

Outside the classroom, Katherine has really shown what it means to be FULLY engaged as a citizen - attending festivals across the state to register voters as an EBECC representative, and encouraging her fellow classmates to vote.

"Maria [English teacher] encouraged me to get involved with the voter registration with EBECC. I wanted to get more involved because the Latino vote is more important than ever."

Katherine was a strong motivator among her classmates and in talking to other immigrants in the community.

"I tell them that everyone, together, we could make a change. Some people feel like it doesn't matter, but I tell them that it is important because it's the first Democratic step that you can do as a citizen."

English classes, like the one Katherine attended at EBECC, teach grammar and pronunciation, but they also provide a community and a meaningful way to connect in a new country, including civic engagement.

ENB funds high-quality, accessible English classes for over 1,000 Massachusetts immigrants like Katherine every year.