

# The REGISTER

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## Learning center caps off food drive



Turley Publications staff photo by Jonah Snowden

Classes from the Ludlow Area Adult Learning Center gather for a photo after completing a successful food drive

**By Jonah Snowden**  
*Staff Writer*

LUDLOW – The Ludlow Area Adult Learning Center recently concluded a month-long food drive, weighing the resulting collection of goods before sending them off to an area food bank.

The total amount of food tipped the scales at 363.99 pounds, and was shipped to the Holyoke Community College Thrive Center Food Bank, where the food will be distributed among families and children in need in the region.

Otherwise known as “LAALC,” the learning center

provides free morning and evening English classes for speakers of other languages who are adults in the Ludlow/Indian Orchard area.

Following the recent U.S. government shutdown which produced interruptions in SNAP benefits, Iptissam Allsheikhisa, a student at the

learning center and an immigrant from Palestine, felt compelled to organize the food drive.

Allsheikhisa was very concerned about the wellbeing of her classmates, and decided she would help by soliciting dona-

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tions from local businesses and fellow students.

"I think this job helps many families," she said. "I know that because of my experiences in my country, because my people in the war need help with food and clothes. I worked a job like this in the last years in my country."

Most of the food, aside of that donated by students, came from the local grocery store Cedars Food Mart and Grill. Items such as canned goods and boxed food were accepted throughout the month of March.

The food drive served two purposes. The drive helped students to bring awareness to food insecurity that individuals and families face not only in Western Massachusetts, but across the world. It also allows students to build a spirit of giving, and receive help from their fellow classmates, lending a hand to indi-

viduals who might be ashamed to speak out about their need for good, nutritious food.

"I was impressed by the initiative taken by a student with limited speaking skills, how much she cares about the community and other students in our school," said Brandon Smith, educational and career advisor of LAALC.

The LAALC program provides more than food. It also supplies academic guidance, and basic computer classes for 100 students at a time. Staff members also provide support to immigrants who wish to transition into college, improve their readiness for the workforce, learn family literacy skills, and accomplish other life goals.

To learn more about the LAALC, as well as the services it provides, visit the organization's website at <http://www.hcc.edu/business-and-community/adult-basic-education/ludlow-center> or call 413-538-7000.