

# Clinic offers medical care for immigrants

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STAMFORD -- An English class [Teresa Roblero](#) took at Neighbors Link two years ago has helped her become proficient enough in the language for many everyday situations.

The 25-year-old mother of three from Mexico went to Neighbors Link Health Day on Monday to have her teeth cleaned at a mobile dental clinic. Roblero said Neighbors Link also helps her keep steady work cleaning houses and assists in getting her children instruction at the [Childcare Learning Center](#).

"They've helped with so many things," Roblero said in English.

Dozens of adult Latino immigrants from Mexico, Guatemala and other nations came to the second annual Health Day at Neighbors Link at 75 Selleck St., a nonprofit resource center established in 2011 to serve adult immigrants. Two volunteers were also on hand Monday to help a steady stream of men and women complete tax returns.

Held in conjunction with [Community Health Center](#), which runs a health clinic for low-income patients, the mobile dental clinic provided comprehensive cleanings and sealants to prevent cavities, said [Lucy Golding](#), the center's nurse manager. Nurses also offered blood glucose testing, high blood pressure checks, and information on nutrition, diabetes, hypertension and other conditions.

Golding said the daylong event was a chance for immigrants to discuss health concerns, and receive referrals for further assistance at Community Health Center's clinic at 141 Franklin St.

"In many cases, there are people who have not seen a doctor for years," she said.

With great demand for the dental care, the 37 available appointments with three hygienists on hand Monday were raffled off to those who signed up, said [Catalina Horak](#), executive director of Neighbors Link.

Horak said that in addition to English as a Second Language classes and computer instruction, Neighbors Link and its volunteers work as a "point of entry" to link immigrants with social and human service programs, whether it be driving them to Person to Person's Food Pantry or helping them find steady employment.

Opened in June 2011, the center is modeled on Neighbors Link in Mount Kisco, N.Y., which has provided adult education, language tutoring, basic computer instruction and other services for more than a decade, Horak said.

By a good margin, Horak said, the largest number of people seeking assistance are Guatemalan, the fastest growing population in Stamford between 2009 and 2011.

"They are examples of the type of hard working people who are contributing to the economy and are trying to make a better life," Horak said.

[Jamie Lee McIntyre](#), a registered dietician who works for [Grade A Shoprite](#) on West Main Street, distributed leaflets and brochures in Spanish and English containing healthy recipes and tips for cooking and shopping on a budget.

"I'm available there and can help people learn how to cook healthy meals on a budget," McIntyre said. "None of the recipes I have here today are fancy or expensive but they are good for you."

At Neighbors Link, volunteers also teach a weekly class to prepare for the U.S. citizenship exam, Horak said.

[Mary Maarbjerg](#), a Shippan resident and member of the [Neighbors Link board](#), spent the day helping immigrants complete tax returns.

Maarbjerg said she was inspired to get involved in the early stages of starting Neighbors Link when Horak invited her to coffee in 2009 and described the need for services to help the growing immigrant population.

"She made it clear that we couldn't ignore these people," Maarbjerg said. "These families are raising children who are going to be citizens and are going to work and pay for our Social Security."

[Apollnar Sanchez](#), 53, who has lived in the U.S. since the early 1990s, said he comes several times a week to Neighbors Link for English classes or tutoring sessions to improve his pronunciation and fluency, which has enhanced his confidence with others. The center also helps his four children use computers to do homework.

"The hardest thing about coming here for me was the language but I speak much better now," Sanchez said. "It's been a great place."

Read more: <http://www.stamfordadvocate.com/news/article/Clinic-offers-medical-care-for-immigrants-4383411.php#ixzz2RycWFHGq>