

# DAILY DOSES THAT CHANGE LIVES

By Joninka Baudet – *La Estrella Magazine*, February 2011.

Adriana Gracia is one of numerous Spanish-speaking women who came to this country and found many obstacles because of the language barrier. Two months ago, while she was with a friend who is a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, she learned about the Daily Dose English Program. She made the decision and joined the program, in spite of fear of the unknown. Today, happy but nervous, she feels glad about this decision she made and because of the progress she has had in her life. *“It’s easy and nice to learn English through this way. I don’t feel uncomfortable if I make a mistake, because nobody is judging me or evaluating me. It’s like a conversation between friends,”* Gracia says.

Hugo Terán thinks the same. He joined this group after he knew about the experience his wife Adriana had learning English. *“At the beginning I didn’t want to participate, because I already have participated in other classes and I haven’t had good results. But I’m happy now. I don’t speak English fluently but it’s easier for me to talk with people in English in specific situations.”*

The experience of this couple goes beyond the issue of speaking in English. For them, this experience has been a blessing. They feel more confident about themselves when they talk with some other people in English. *“We have a son in Junior High and it’s always been a problem when the teacher or the Principal wants to talk to us, because we don’t understand what they say. Our son was so sad that we could not communicate with his teachers and we started having problems because of that situation. We don’t speak perfectly right now and we still have to learn a lot, but the fact that we feel confident is a great step in our lives. We don’t have adequate words to explain what we feel,”* says Terán.

The experience of this couple is shared by many others who attend this program, and also those who participate in it from another perspective. This is the case of Douglas and Arlene Dalton, missionaries in the Daily Dose program, who recently completed their mission in the area north of Salt Lake City, Utah. *“This is a really good program. Families can learn English this way, but they can also have the opportunity to know the Gospel and feel the Spirit of God with them,”* Brother Dalton says. The experience this couple has lived for almost two years has made them grateful in so many ways. They consider that this program has had a huge impact in the church. *“Families feel very comfortable when we go to their houses. It’s true that they have the obligation to talk to us in English, but at the same time they feel confident and relaxed because we are just having a conversation. It’s ok if they don’t speak fluently or if they break a grammar rule when they are talking, they are trying hard and this way they are more confident when they go out and have to keep a conversation going,”* Sister Dalton says.

According to this couple one of the great benefits of the Daily Dose is that it teaches people to express themselves in different situations during their lives with a new language, but also spreads the seeds of the Gospel in the hearts of those who listen to their words.

***Huddles: an experience that increases knowledge and feeds the soul.***

In 2009, Daily Dose Learning Systems, the company who created the Daily Dose English Program conducted a study about the impact of this learning program. The results were quite interesting. According to Adrian R. Escalante, creator of the Daily Dose English Program and current president and CEO of Daily Dose Learning Systems, one of every three persons who becomes a member of the church in Utah are Hispanic: 10% of them were found through the Daily Dose program and 25% of them are active participants in this program. Part of this research also showed, according to Escalante, how the interaction between non-members and members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, has helped to bring these people to the church.

It appears that the big difference comes from this concept called "Huddle" (small groups of people), of which the main objective is to create a unique atmosphere where people find care, support, encouragement, interest, dedication and understanding. The participants learn phrases and vocabulary about different situations they face in real life like visiting the doctor, using public transportation, shopping, attending school meetings, among other things. But they also learn to develop confidence in themselves. *"People love the program. Not only because they have learned English, but also because they feel comfortable, valued and they feel that there are people who care about them. The environment is friendly and it helps to break the language barriers and also the cultural barriers,"* says Susan Escalante, a Vice President at Daily Dose Learning Systems.

*"Many people who come to this country are afraid and sometimes this fear is generated by the language. When we start the classes we always find people who feel embarrassed, insecure and they are unable to look at your face. After they complete the course, the reality is different. We see people happy and confident about themselves. It is a great feeling to see these changes,"* says Adrian R. Escalante.

The Daily Dose program started as a system that taught English in the workplace, training employees in those topics related to workplace safety and job skills, but now the program is not limited to that area. In 2004, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints got the license to use the program. Currently the program used by the Church has four levels of twelve sessions each, for a total of 48 weeks. Starting in 2010, the first twelve lessons are being taught by missionaries in the house of the participants and the rest of the 36 lessons are taught in the chapels designated for that purpose. Today the Daily Dose English Program is used worldwide and the company is creating a new version of this system to offer Spanish lessons to members of the church. *"We never imagined the magnitude that this program would have. We still cannot believe how many people have been touched, not by us but by the many volunteers who work with us and with the church,"* Adrian R. Escalante says. *"We feel that God is in charge of this program and He inspired Adrian to create it. We are only a tool,"* explains Susan Escalante.

Although the future is unpredictable, Adrian R. Escalante is sure about what he wants to do. *"My father taught English in Argentina. He was my inspiration to start this program. A few weeks ago my father died and this made stronger my conviction about what I'm doing. I want to continue helping people, no matter what. I love the idea that I created something that is improving lives. That makes a difference."*