

# If I Were Mayor

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# Story Time

When I was in 7th grade, I had a boy move in to my advisory class who didn't speak very much English at all. I noticed that he had a really hard time communicating and doing the work that we were doing at school. Luckily, my advisory teacher knew some Spanish and so did some of the other students in my class, so they were able to help interpret for him. There are many students in the Forest Grove School District who are in this same situation, or in a place where they speak English, but their parents cannot. Not having parents who speak English can be a big challenge since involved parents are very crucial in a student's education. I feel that as people living in Forest Grove, we should be trying to help each other to succeed and feel more welcome in our community. As we do this, we can gain more respect and understanding for everyone.

# Unifying our Community

My new program

The program I would like to introduce would involve pairing up families, one whose first language is Spanish and the other whose first language is English. They would work together to teach each other their languages and cultures, resulting in both families being able to speak and understand English and Spanish by the end of the program.

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# How would this program work?

To begin, this would be completely volunteer based, where families who want to participate get to sign up and no one is forced into it. Any family can sign up by writing down all their information and what their first language is so we can pair them with another family. With the family you are paired with, you can meet together as often as you want. The hope is that during the times you meet together, you are not only teaching someone another language, but you are also meeting someone new and becoming a bigger part of their life. The end result would be both families being pretty fluent in Spanish and English.

This would be better than a simple workshop or class because it would allow both families to get to know each other on a personal level. Both families would be able to become a bigger part of the community through participating in this program. It would better promote unity among people who might be different, but through sharing something of their own with others, are able to feel more connected. It would also give both English and Spanish speakers an opportunity to become bilingual, since these two languages are some of the most useful to know when living in the United States.

# Why would we want to do this?

I feel motivated to present this program because of the things I have seen in our Forest Grove community. Because we have such a diverse population, it is quite necessary to form some sort of unity in order to create a better environment for everyone to live in. The language barrier between most Caucasians and most Latinos is one of the big things that drives us apart. I notice at school that there seems to be a divide between Latinos and Caucasians. I wish that weren't the case, but sometimes people are scared of things that they don't know, and that includes languages. If we were able to address this problem using the program I've created, our community could become more unified.

Although I have many other ideas for what I would do if I were mayor, this is one of the most important. It would help people get new skills and at the same time, unify the community.

# Community

**Better yourself and your  
people**