

Discovery Language Academy – nearly a century of passion in promoting the Luso-American language and culture

While the term the “Discovery Language Academy” might be a relatively new one to residents of the SouthCoast, the school and their mission to promote Portuguese educational programs, language and culture has been here almost a century.

The earliest mention of such a facility is from 1922, where the “General Portuguese Carmona Club” used an unknown building to promote Luso-American culture. Though short lived, the “Faith and Fatherland Club,” located at 449 Belleville Avenue would open its doors 2 years later and did a professional enough job to be recognized by the Portuguese government.



Over the decades many more schools or organizations which had a mission to promote the Portuguese culture and/or language would pop up. Well known to any history buffs of the city, the Monte Pio Club at the South End's Orchard Street, was a proper Portuguese school from the 1940s onward. The 1970s had a Portuguese school based in the former Clube Fé e Pátria on the premises of the Immaculate Conception, rented to the Diocese of Fall River and there was the formation of a new Massachusetts organization called Portuguese United for Education, Inc. They would eventually relocate onto Coggeshall Street in New Bedford in 1982.

In 2015, the Portuguese United for Education, Inc. would merge with the Escola Oficial Portuguesa Casa da Saudade which had been at the Sister Aurora Avelar Community Center on Crapo St. since 1981 and classes would be held at both campuses.

In 2016, the school moved to the DeMello International Center, and changed its name to what it is known as today, the Discovery Language Academy. Carrying on this long tradition of promotion, education and instruction in Portuguese language and culture, the school is now accepting new registrations for adults and children from Kindergarten to ninth grade. Classes have expanded to add Conversational Portuguese for Adults (Beginners and Intermediate) as well as Conversational Spanish for Adults-(Beginners).

Currently the Portuguese language is not taught in any schools in the area up until grade 6th. The Discovery Language Academy fills this void by teaching Portuguese to children as young as five years old. Which makes a lot of sense since studies show that the best time to learn a second language is before the age of 12.



Executive Director, Leslie Ribeiro Vicente, emphasized this point and elaborated further, “So many cultures and languages have disappeared because they were not preserved through generations. If I want to preserve my Portuguese culture, (and by the way I was born in the USA) I must use methods and tools to do so, in my case, the tool is education. Plus, it is our Credo that all people derive benefit from the acquisition of a second language which enhances their personal and professional opportunities living and working in the global 21st century world.”

Leslie, who has two master degrees, one in teaching and the other in educational leadership, and is currently working on her doctoral degree, also made a point to that not only does the staff at Discovery Language Academy have degrees that range from BA or Masters, but many of the teachers are certified in Portugal and some are certified in both Portugal and the U.S.

When asked about a particularly rewarding experience, she immediately perked up and shared an anecdote about a Mexican

student who was working with the elderly of the Portuguese community in 2015. After falling into a financial hardship in the last trimester and informing her that he could not attend classes. Leslie elaborated "After presenting his situation to our board of directors we agreed that he should continue. He returned in the Fall of 2016; in the Spring of 2017 he applied to the University of Coimbra for a Masters in History and was accepted. We are all very proud of Luis, and wish him all the best."

That sums up the general character of teachers that walk the halls and classrooms at Discovery Language Academy. They have a genuine interest in the welfare and future of the children and adults that attend the school. Passion to pass on the language and culture is an everyday trait.

In addition to the classes offered at the Discovery Language Academy, the school has a number of special events throughout the year to showcase the Portuguese culture: a Fall wine tasting, Winter breakfast, annual Family & Friends Dinner each Spring, soccer clinics, and currently working on developing a student exchange program with the Azores. In addition the teachers participate in monthly professional development workshops provided by Master Urban Educators (MUE).



The Discovery Language Academy has classes from 5:00pm-7:00pm Monday-Thursday and on Saturday from 9:00am-12:00pm. The full schedule can be seen [here](#) and the levels of instruction can be seen [here](#).

Discovery Language Academy will be open for registrations on August 21-24 5:00pm-7:00pm and Saturday August 26th 12:00pm-3:00pm or by appointment. **Classes start Monday, September 11th.** Please call 508-997-8295.

Admissions: Applications may be printed and mailed to the school along with the \$25.00 registration fee. Print out application [here](#). Registration Dates: Please call the school. Copy of a Birth Certificate is needed for children.

Discovery Language Academy

128 Union Street

New Bedford, Massachusetts

Phone: (508) 997-8295

Monday-Thursday: 5:00pm-7:00pm (CLASSES)

Saturday: 9:00am-12:00pm

Friday & Sunday: CLOSED

Website: www.discoverylanguageacademy.org/

Facebook: facebook.com/discoverylanguageacademy.org/

EMail: discoverylanguageacademyschool@gmail.com



The advertisement is a vertical poster with a yellow and red color scheme. At the top left is a small Spanish flag. A large, bold, yellow 'SPANISH' is written diagonally across a red banner. To the right of this banner, the text 'Thursday Adults - 5 PM to 7:30 PM Only \$60 per month' is displayed. Further right is the Discovery Language Academy logo, which is a green circular seal with a red and white crest in the center. Below the banner, a red section contains the text 'Introductory course covers:' followed by two columns of skills: 'Conversational skills' and 'Cultural information' in the first column, and 'Basic grammar' and 'Pronunciation' in the second. Below this, a yellow section states 'Course Duration - 10 Months, Starting Sep 12, 2019'. The bottom red section provides the academy's name and address: 'Discovery Language Academy 128 Union St. New Bedford, MA. 02740'.

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