As the year 2020 comes to a close, I am reflecting on all that SSTESOL has done in 2020. Despite the unprecedented challenges we faced, we showed resilience and strength, I am most appreciative of the SSTESOL Board who supported with unwavering commitment to hold a Board meeting each month to move SSTESOL’s ambitious agenda forward. We have made strides in positioning our organization as a trusted leader of English language teaching in Florida.

At the start of 2020, the SSTESOL Board established its vision and strategic
goals. We have planned our annual calendar of activities, and we looked forward
to hosting professional learning sessions, a traditional annual conference in-
person, advocacy and policy education training series, and more.

But due to the pandemic, we had to move everything virtually. The obstacles of
2020 did not weaken our resolve, nor did it stop us from achieving noteworthy
successes – a Virtual Awards Program, the launching of the first SSTESOL
ebook, a full-day virtual state conference, Quarterly Chat sessions with SSTESOL
Chapter Presidents, webinars, and Advocacy and Policy Education Training
Series Part I and Part II.

In addition, membership soared by 35%, member engagement improved, the
Awards and Scholarships fund was tremendously funded by Diamond, Gold, and
Silver Sponsors. Our friends, 2020 Conference Exhibitors, accepted our invitation
and came to the 2020 SSTESOL Virtual Conference.

509 educators and 150 session presenters worldwide attended SSTESOL’s First
Ever Virtual Annual Conference. Partnership with other professional
organizations, such as FABES and ESL Library, was one of SSTESOL’s major
focuses in 2020. We engaged SSTESOL and the TESOL communities in social
media, and our web site has been informative and reinvigorated. I challenge you
to explore each tab to find new information and resources for your profession.

Forward to 2021,

As this unprecedented year ends, we and our students could continue to
experience economic and health-related hardships, reflective debates on race
relations, struggles for inclusiveness and unity, emotional, professional and social
turmoil, just to name a few. We are most grateful and appreciative to each of you
for your continuous interest in SSTESOL’s work particularly in effective advocacy,
professional development, research and practice. We are deeply committed to
offer you essential evidence and research-based policy ideas, data, and data
analysis in 2021.

On behalf of the Sunshine State TESOL Board, I wish you and your loved ones a
joyful, healthy and peaceful holiday season from the bottom of my heart. As we
close and say goodbye to the final days of the year 2020, we bring you best
wishes for a prosperous 2021 that brings promises of hope to the world.

Sincerely yours,

Arlene M. Costello, Ed.D.
President, SSTESOL of Florida
News and Inspirations

Happy Holidays! SSTESOL members shared Holiday traditions!

In the November issue of Perspectives, we asked you to share family traditions which you kept and new traditions that you created as a result of the limitations of COVID-19. Read how Kim Hardiman, Lynn Arroyo, Patrick Mannion, Innocent Deland and Amany Habib spend the holiday which are opportunities to be merry despite the challenges we continue to face in this uncertain time.

Multicultural Holiday Traditions

I celebrated Christmas and the New Year with the Community Education Program students online at UCF during 2020. My students and I felt sad that we couldn’t celebrate the holiday face-to-face. However, Zoom has brought the world together! I showed videos of Christmas and New Year celebrations in different countries. We shared multicultural holiday prayers, wishes, food, music, songs, decorations, traditions, and New Year’s resolutions. I hope the teachers, students, and first responders around the world stay healthy during the long COVID-19 quarantine. My Christmas wish to

Puerto Rican Holiday Tradition

As a high school English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teacher, every year I ask my students to share their holiday traditions. I find it to be a fun way to learn about them and their cultures and I share some of my family’s traditions as well. This year, I shared my mother’s tradition which she passed down to me of making coquito, a Puerto Rican beverage made of coconut cream, coconut milk,
Santa Claus is for the world to heal and be happy in 2021!

Kim Hardiman, University of Central Florida

A Shinto Shrine in Kyoto, 2019-2020 New Year Season
Tradition: New Year’s in Japan

I live in Japan, which has a busy year-end holiday season. Many Japanese people celebrate a secular sort of Christmas, but most people become even busier afterwards during the New Year’s celebrations, which are on the Gregorian calendar instead of the lunar calendar. The festivities stretch from late December through early January. On New Year’s Eve, I like to visit a Buddhist temple or Shinto shrine, which are typically crowded, and enjoy the food being sold at outdoor stalls. I also enjoy watching some of the different sporting events on TV, like long-distance relay races, sumo tournaments, and soccer matches.

Patrick Mannion
SSTESOL member, Japan

sweetened condensed milk, evaporated milk, vanilla, cinnamon and rum. I explained how I passed down the tradition to my adult sons by teaching them how to make coquito. It was a familiar family tradition of many of my Puerto Rican and Cuban students.

Lynn Arroyo
MA TESOL
MA Educational Leadership
Hernando County
Central High School
ESOL Lead Teacher

More about Holiday Traditions...

Haitian Holiday Traditions

This season of festivity begins on December 24 and ends on January 6, which is also known as Three Kings’ Day. Christmas is celebrated on December 25 with religious activities and gifts for children from Santa Claus. On New Year’s Eve, Haitians gather for a traditional feast called “Reveillon” and to share traditional tales. Haitians around the world celebrate the New Year, also known as Independence Day, by eating a traditional Haitian pumpkin soup called “Soup Joumou”. This soup symbolizes independence from France because Haitian slaves prepared pumpkin soup for their masters, but were not allowed to drink it.

Deland Innocent, Ed.S.
District Supervisor
Department of Bilingual Education and World Languages
Miami, FL 33132
Dr. Miguel Cardona, Connecticut’s Commissioner of Education, has been tapped by President-elect Joe Biden and Vice-President elect Kamala Harris as the next Secretary of Education.

Dr. Cardona was a fourth-grade public school teacher, union member, and state principal of the year. He is bilingual, bi-cultural and a former English Learner. He plans to focus on the success and opportunity for every student and defend students’ civil rights. He will be instrumental in strengthening public schools, colleges and universities. He will also focus on supporting our students and educators so they can return to classrooms and campuses safely.

**Call to Action:** We have to help him get confirmed. Call or write your U.S. Representative and Senator and solicit their position in the confirmation of Dr. Miguel Cardona as the new Secretary of Education. Or, go to TESOL Advocacy Action Center and send a letter to your US House of Representative and U.S. Senator. The link is here.  

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**Curriculum Resources and Opportunities**

**THE BIG READ**

The National Endowment for the Arts’ (NEA) The Big Read, established in 2016, supports Americans reading and

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Oh, Christmas Trees

Ohhhh, end of the year traditions! I love this time of the year, actually. It all starts soon after all the pies and good food during the Thanksgiving weekend. I was born in Egypt where we did not have a Christmas tree and no chimneys for Santa to come down… As an adult living in the US, I became a big fan of Christmas trees. I love the smell of a real tree so when I go shopping for a tree, I lean over and smell the trees before I decide on one. What? You don’t do that? I decorate my tree with red and gold colors. I have collected a few ornaments from my travels and the others are from Target. During this time of the year, I have to have hot cocoa, ride around and look at other people’s decorations and lights while playing Christmas music.

Even though I am not Italian, I have come to love the tradition of Feast of 7 Fishes on Christmas Eve. We have always loved seafood in my family so this was a great fit. Each year, we plan which kind of seafood we would include in our Feast a couple of weeks before December 25th. So fun!

The funny thing is that I am actually Coptic, and we celebrate Christmas on January 7th, which means that my “season” is longer than the average non-Copt. So, you guessed it - My tree stays up until a few days after Coptic Christmas. My sister makes a nice variety of cookies that she shares with the whole family so we have plenty of good food. I, of course, will go on the usual diet in the middle of January.
discussing a single book within their communities. Local governments, libraries, school districts, colleges and universities, and non-profit organizations are encouraged to apply for one of an estimated 75 grants that will be awarded for programming occurring between September 2021 and June 2022. The application deadline is January 27, 2021.

Besides the grant, communities will receive resources, including reader’s and teacher’s guides and audio guides with commentary from artists, public figures, and educators. Communities will also receive publicity materials.

For this cycle, communities will choose from six titles:

- An American Sunrise, a collection of poems by Joy Harjo;
- Beloved, a novel by Toni Morrison;
- The Best We Could Do: An Illustrated Memoir by Thi Bui;
- The Call of the Wild, White Fang, and Other Stories, a collection of tales by Jack London;
- The Grapes of Wrath, a novel by John Steinbeck; and
- The House on Mango Street, a series of vignettes by Sandra Cisneros

If you celebrate Christmas, have a very Merry Christmas! If you celebrate Hanukkah, Happy Hanukkah! If you do not celebrate any of these, Happy Holiday Season and all the best for a great New Year.

Amany Habib
Professional Learning Committee
SSTESOL

Are you making the most of your SSTESOL membership?

Save the Date: First Virtual SSTESOL Policy and Advocacy Education Training Series Part II, January 9, 2021. For more information, please visit
Take advantage and explore the ESOL Library web site here: https://sunshinestatetesol.wildapricot.org/ As a result of ESL Library Partnership with SSTESOL, you are entitled to a two-month complimentary subscription. Ask for the code by sending an email to sstesol@gmail.com. You will find rich curriculum resources for you and your preservice students.

Thank you for your continued support of SSTESOL's projects and initiatives to carry out our vision and mission.