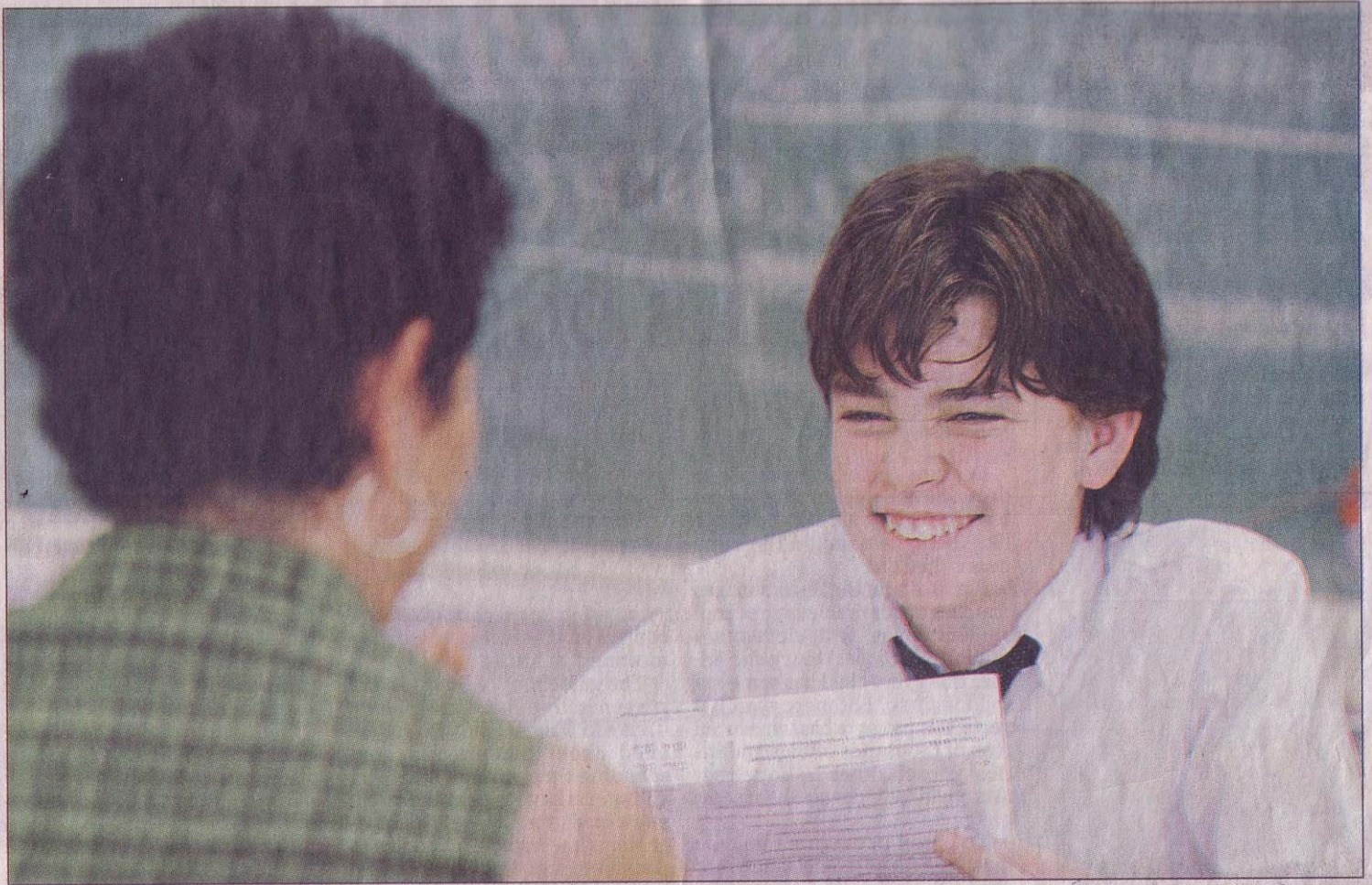


READY TO PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE



Photos by **Darin Oswald** / The Idaho Statesman

Seventh-graders from St. Mary's Parish School on State Street in Boise are helping Idaho immigrants who are seeking U.S. citizenship. Prospective citizens and St. Mary's students held their last naturalization class together Thursday evening.

Above: Joe Cieslak, 12, plays the role of a citizenship interviewer Thursday and asks Maria R. Martinez a list of questions. The practice interview will help Martinez when she presents her application to become a U.S. citizen. It also helps Cieslak, who is learning about U.S. history, government and service to others.

"It's cool to be helping out these people, and it's cool that they want to be citizens," Cieslak said.

Martinez was grateful for the help. "He's really good and he's a smart guy," she said of her young tutor. She said it was good practice to hear the questions from younger voices with different accents.

At right: Robbie Li, 12, helps Juan J. Lopez during a practice interview.

The service project is made possible by a Learn and Serve Idaho grant through the Idaho State Department of Education. It's a partnership between St. Mary's school and Catholic Charities of Idaho Citizenship and Immigration Program.

