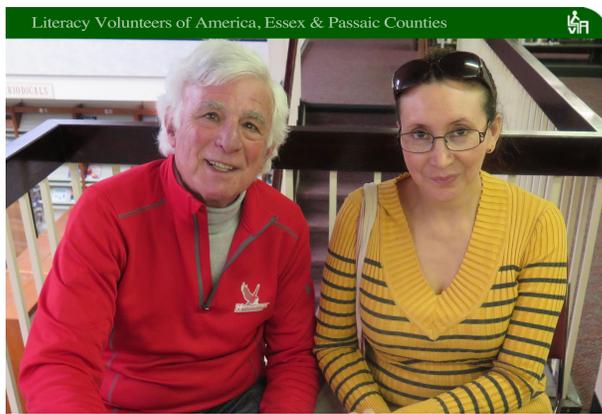




# Annual Report 2016-17



# *LVA's Vision & Mission*

## Vision

*Have a fully literate community.*

## Mission

*We are dedicated to providing literacy instruction for adults enabling them to attain personal, educational, and career goals.*

Dear Friends of Literacy,

This year was very successful in many ways but only after making some difficult and challenging decisions and a lot of hard work by our talented, dedicated staff.

Through the Adult Literacy & Community Library Partnership Pilot Program grants with 4 area libraries, the total number of students served increased by over 24%; Essex County saw a 60% increase. These grants, on top of our Essex and Passaic consortium grants and our Berkeley College Newark contract, resulted in an almost 90% increase in Federal grants and a 97% increase in tutoring hours provided. Very importantly, the average number of tutoring hours for each student rose 55% to over 14 hrs./mo. Many more students advanced in their grade levels and reached their individual goals.

We are very proud of our students who won recognition for their writings in the NJALL writing contest, the ECC publication "Journeys Near and Far...", and Literacy NJ "Student Excellence Award" winner Maritza Chang.

None of these achievements would be possible without the dedicated work of all our volunteers, staff, and teachers. On behalf of the Board and the 934 students served this year, I say 'Thank You' to all of them.

Sally E. Rice  
President, Board of Trustees

Literacy Volunteers of America, Essex & Passaic Counties



Literacy Volunteers of America, Essex & Passaic Counties





# LVA Facts

**934**

Served Students

**250**

Tutors

## Students Geographical Distribution

**537** Essex County

**94** Northern State Prison

**303** Passaic County

## Students by Subject Area

**181** BL (Basic Literacy)

**753** ESOL (English for  
Speakers of Other Languages)

**8** Tutor Workshops

**97** Recruited Tutors

**63** Trained Tutors

**13**

Professional  
Development Sessions

**152**

Participants

**\$417,000+**  
from Federal Grants

**\$55,000+**  
from Special Projects

**\$14,000+**  
from Donations

**Monthly  
Newsletter**

**61,000+**  
Hours of Tutoring

**14+**

Average Hours per  
Month per Student

**Monthly  
Success  
Stories**

# Tutor Training Workshops

Locations	New Tutors
<i>Bloomfield Public Library</i>	13
<i>Maplewood Memorial Library</i>	7
<i>Montclair Public Library</i>	15
<i>Bloomfield Public Library</i>	14
<i>Montclair Public Library</i>	17
<i>Belleville Public Library</i>	8
<i>Maplewood Memorial Library</i>	12
<i>Clifton Pulic Library</i>	11
<i>Total number of New Tutors</i>	97

Our tutor-training program is a comprehensive 18-hour course designed to prepare volunteers to teach essential language skills to adults. We teach volunteers how to assess the life and literacy skills that adult students already have, how to determine which ones they want and need to acquire in order to overcome the obstacles they face, and how to design a plan of study that will help them achieve their goals. Along the way trainees discover how basic language is acquired, how adults learn effectively, and which techniques are most useful in developing listening, speaking, reading and writing skills for students of Basic Literacy and English for Speakers of Other Languages. Our training stresses working with multiple students in small groups in a patient, non-threatening environment in which tutors and students are equals.

## Literacy Volunteers of America, Essex & Passaic Counties



# Tutor Support Workshops

Our tutors complete 18 hours of instruction in a training program considered rigorous and comprehensive. But, for those who feel they could use a little extra help along the way, our education program never really ends. Each month we offer a different professional development seminar, called Tutor Support Workshops, where adult education experts and skilled tutors walk our volunteers through new techniques that have proven successful

in the adult classroom. The themes of the workshop vary: they run from teaching basic grammar, to pronunciation and accent reduction, to use of the graphic novel (similar to comics), to utilizing the lyrics of popular folk songs to teach vocabulary and comprehension, and everything in between. Statistically, the Tutor Support Workshops have helped improve our retention of tutors.

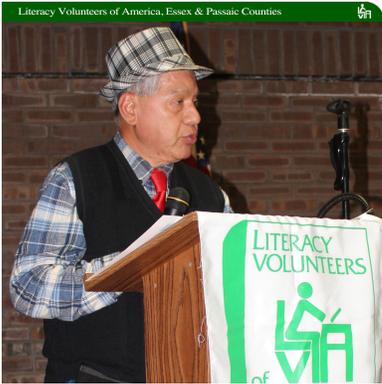
Presenters	Workshops	Participants
<i>Tara Murphy</i>	Learning Together With Stories	5
<i>Cristhian Barcelos</i>	The State of Literacy in New Jersey	24
<i>Stephanie Mazzeo-Caputo</i>	Resume Readiness for the Adult Learner	4
<i>Catherine Mitch</i>	Overcoming the Fear Factor in Writing	4
<i>Mary O'Connor</i>	Getting Started with Tutoring	14
<i>Perrine Robinson-Geller</i>	Strategies for New Readers	15
<i>Cristhian Barcelos</i>	Shaping the Future of Adult Education in NJ	14
<i>Mary O'Connor</i>	Tutor Exchange	15
<i>Margaret Valentine</i>	Using Poetry to Build Languages Skills/Vocab	12
<i>Mary Kao</i>	Teach Vocabulary with Pictures	11
<i>Dayana Cabeza</i>	Job Searching Strategies & Reinvention	7
<i>Perrine Robinson-Geller</i>	Using Age Appropriate Books in Adult Literacy	19
<i>Cristhian Barcelos</i>	The State of Literacy in New Jersey - Part 2	8
<b>Total Number of Participants</b>		<b>152</b>



# 2017 Annual Awards Ceremony

## Literacy Volunteers of America, Essex & Passaic Counties

At our Annual Awards Ceremony at the East Orange Public Library last month, students, tutors, instructors, and teachers were recognized for the time they'd devoted to their sessions and for their personal goals and achievements. Award winners came from programs and libraries in both counties, including programs with our partners at Northern State Prison, Sussex Educational Foundation & Berkeley College, and the NCC-Adult Learning Center.



Abby Kane and Robert Bounczek, were named Tutors of the Year for Essex and Passaic Counties, respectively. Each also received the President's Volunteer Service Award, the first time the U.S. government medal was issued to our tutors. Sausan Mughrabi was named Student of the Year for Passaic County. Julio Ramirez who, at age 73, is one of our oldest ESOL students, was recognized as Student of the Year for Essex County.



"In today's world, we have to do our best to be successful," Julio told the standing-room-only crowd. "I believe everybody can benefit greatly from what all of you do every day to make the community move forward and to achieve higher standards of living. Keep up the good work."



# 2017 Annual Awards Ceremony

## Literacy Volunteers of America, Essex & Passaic Counties

Abby Kane came to the Annual Awards Ceremony last month, in part because she was scheduled to receive recognition as Tutor of the Year for Essex County and the President's Volunteer Service Award, a medal issued by the federal government.



"I know I should be grateful for this award but mostly, I feel silly," Abby said, adding that she felt she'd already been awarded, not by a medal or a certificate, but by the relationships she'd formed with students from all over the world.



"I'm not a very good traveler, so I love getting to explore the world each week as I listen to the stories of my students," Abby added. "I made a list of all the countries I've learned about, through them. Just to make you all jealous, I'm going to read it to you."



And she did. They'd come from more than a dozen countries, from Albania to Vietnam, from five of the world's seven continents.

"Some of the students, I only spent a very short time with," she said. "Others have taught me a great deal more, over a longer time. It is for this wonderful opportunity, that I will be forever grateful."

**Congratulations to all of our students, tutors, instructors, teachers, and affiliate organizations!**

# *Sussex Educational Foundation, Berkeley College, & LVA Essex and Passaic Counties Adult Education Pilot Program*

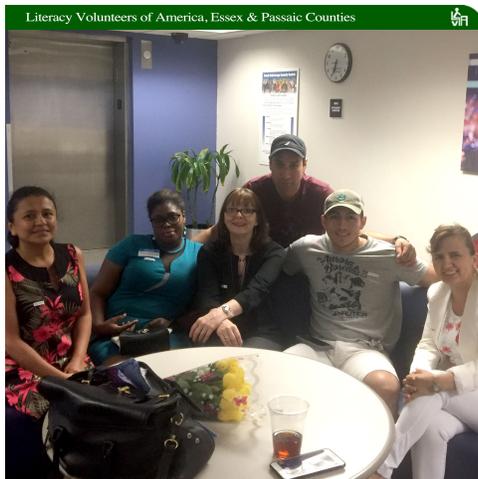
Dozens of students completed ESOL classes last month at Berkeley College in Newark, in a joint program run by the school, the Sussex Educational Foundation, and Literacy Volunteers of America, Essex & Passaic Counties. Adults attended classes for 10 weeks offered at beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels.

They include the former manager of a design magazine in Ecuador, a Peruvian native who started a taxi business, and a sales associate from Senegal who earned a degree in international trade. Here are a few snapshots of Berkeley students provided by their instructors:

Jorge is the eldest of seven brothers raised in a small town in Colombia. He left home at age 16, seeking a job in the fashion industry in Bogota, the nation's capital, and, over time, worked many jobs in the fashion design field. In Ecuador, he landed a position as manager of a design magazine, a job he held until an earthquake led to the magazine's closure. "Jorge came to class every day eager to learn so that he can get a job in the fashion industry," said his teacher, Maureen Cooper.

Roxana moved to the U.S. from Peru at age 18 but, during her years as a housekeeper, a factory worker, a stay-at-home-mom, and, recently, as the co-owner of a taxi company, managed to get by without becoming fluent in English. "Now that her children are older, Roxana has the chance to go after her dreams," said her instructor, Roxanne Peterson. "The first step for her was to learn English."

Nydeye came to the states from Senegal about a year ago. She began taking ESL classes earlier this year in order to better understand English speakers and obtain employment, said her teacher, Darnelle Richardson. She found work as a sales associate at a major Manhattan department store in late August. "As a sales associate, she interacts with shoppers all day long, and has no problem understanding them," Darnelle said. "In class Nydeye portrayed good leadership skills. When the class is given team assignments, she always takes charge and works harmoniously with her team members."



# *Adult Literacy & Community Library Partnership Pilot Program*

It's often a simple accomplishment when navigating a new language that can feel like a triumph to a student and bring a sudden wave of encouragement. For Camila, an ESOL student from Colombia and a working parent, success came on the job and she rushed to recall the experience to her teacher, Jalisa Harris, in her class at the Paterson Public Library. "Teacher, I am speaking to my boss more!" Camila said.

Camila's class was offered through the Adult Literacy and Community Library Partnership, a state pilot grant program that aims to create direct partnerships between local libraries and adult literacy service providers. Together, libraries and literacy organizations provide training or language instruction that help New Jersey residents increase their Adult Basic Education and language proficiency skills in order to enhance their chances of finding employment outside of the low-skilled job market. Funds were granted to 11 libraries throughout the state, including Maplewood, Montclair, Passaic, and Paterson, which work with LVA to offer intensive ESL classes. The program is now in its second year and new classes began this week in Maplewood, Passaic, and Paterson.

"When I came from Turkey, I couldn't understand anyone," said Sema, a student in Grizzly Matias's class at the Passaic Public Library who advanced from a beginner to an intermediate-level class. "It was very frustrating and I knew I had to do something about it," she said. Sema hopes to one day become an English teacher.

Saleh, a 19-year-old student at a Passaic Public Library class, was badly injured in a bombing while playing soccer with friends in war-torn Syria. Three other boys were killed in the bombing. Saleh spent six months in a Turkish hospital, recovering from injuries and undergoing surgeries. He speaks Arabic, Turkish, and Kurdish. "Saleh will undergo another surgery here in the U.S. but, in the meantime, he is hard at work learning English," said his teacher, Susan Bogda.



# New Jersey Association of Lifelong Learning 2017

## Adult Learner Writing Contest

Five of our students won awards for their entries in the 2017 NJALL Learner Writing Contest, in pieces that ranged from escaping the war in Syria to the intricacies of the mind, and several were selected to read their submissions last month at the organization's annual conference. Congratulations to all of our student writers, including these five recognized by NJALL



### Abir Alkousa

In a moving personal story about adjusting to life in the U.S. with two young sons, while filled with worries about her husband, parents, and relatives who remained in war-torn Syria, and the struggle to regain her strength, courage, and confidence, Abir won the first-place memoir prize for "I Would Become My Dreams."

### Esteban Morales

Ever wonder about the things that anger us and how they seem uncontrollable? In "Anger: A Call for Healing," Esteban writes that anger is the result of an event where we suffered emotional pain that's stored away in our minds. His argument, that emotions like anger can be controlled by healing the stored away pain, earned the Peruvian native a second-place award for non-fiction.



### Fernanda Contreras

Her gift for poetry is well-known and her writing stirs up the deepest emotions in readers. For the second-consecutive year, Fernanda took home a poetry award, this time a third-place prize for "I'm Waiting for You," the story of an expectant mother and her dreams for her soon-to-arrive son.

### Jouseth Coba

It was August 2001 and Jouseth, a young doctor assigned to a children's hospital in Ecuador, took up her new post while a physician's strike over low wages raged outside the building. Her gripping account of a night where she and a handful of staff handled a hospital full of emergencies and trauma landed her a third-place memoir-writing award.



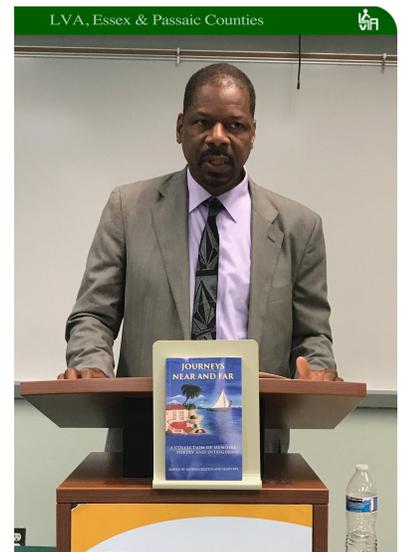
### Maritza Chang:

In the enchanted world of Airam the fairy, only a select few receive an invite to the North Kingdom. But when Airam accepts the invite and relocates, she discovers that not all is good in the North. She loses her fairy power and is muted by her inability to speak the language. Maritza's clever analogy of life for a new immigrant such as she, a former child psychologist from Peru who arrives in the U.S. unable to fully communicate and work in her field, won the first-place award for fiction.



# *Journeys Near and Far* *A Collection of Memoirs, Poetry and Intrigue*

For an aspiring writer, just putting your thoughts to paper can be an achievement. Getting them published can be a game changer, in terms of building a writer's confidence, especially for an ESOL or basic literacy student. Four of our students achieved that honor this year when their works were published in "Journeys Near and Far, A Collection of Memoirs, Poetry, and Intrigue." The book was edited by Judith Celestin and Ellen Ray and produced by Hard Ball Press. The writers are Essex County Consortium students, including LVA's own Barry Batts, author of "Life is Good to Me Now," a memoir about his tough upbringing in New York City; Beralia Briceno, who wrote about her carefree rural Honduras childhood in "My Free Life in Danli"; Fernanda Contreras, author of "A Christmas Letter," a poetic letter to her young daughter in Colombia, from whom she is separated; and Clifford Henry, whose fictional "Confused Young Man," tells of a family that struggles with a son's drug problem and debt to a violent drug dealer. Last month, Clifford and Beralia joined other authors in a public reading of their work at Essex County College. Photos of the event are included here; the book is available through Amazon and [hardballpress.com](http://hardballpress.com)



# *Literacy New Jersey Literacy for Life 2017 Awards*



It's nearly 2 a.m. and there are way better places to unwind than a dining room chair in your apartment, eyes glued to the English textbook in your lap. But, for Maritza Chang, there's no better time or place for an immigrant mom bent on becoming fluent. "The kids are sleeping and there are no interruptions," said Maritza, a child psychologist from Lima, Peru, and now an LVA student. "It's better." The grueling hours of study have done well by her. She went from being lost in everyday English conversation to making a presentation in English at the NJALL annual conference last year, given on the LVA English-Spanish Language Exchange that she coordinates as a volunteer. She was hired to work the front desk at the Bloomfield Public Library, often the first stop for patrons with questions. And she led a delicate but firm negotiation with her town's school district in a campaign to keep her two daughters in their neighborhood school, despite the district's attempt to move them to one designated for ESL students. "The district not only kept the girls in their original school but began a small ESL program there, where the girls quickly became fluent in English," Literacy New Jersey board member Christine D'Agostino said, as she presented Maritza with a Literacy New Jersey "Student Excellence Award," at the organization's Literacy for Life 2017 conference last month.

A second Student Excellence Award was presented to Justin Farro, and the Award for Tutor Excellence was earned by Susan George, both of Literacy Volunteers of Monmouth County. Literacy Volunteers of Salem/Cumberland won the 2017 Alice M. Leppert Award for Outstanding Affiliate Achievement. The Harry Van Houten Award for Lifetime Achievement was presented to Perrine Robinson-Geller, former board president of Literacy New Jersey, a much-in-demand workshop presenter, and a lifelong advocate of adult literacy. Nice work by all!

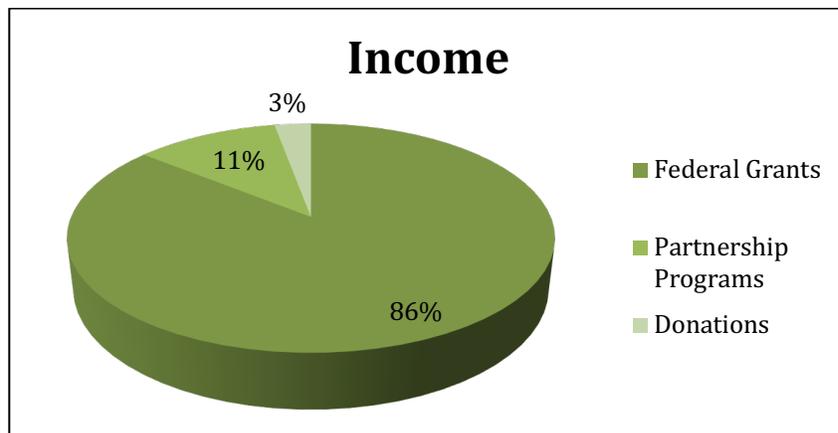
# English-Spanish Language Exchange

The roles of tutors and students are pretty clear in literacy classes: tutors instruct, students learn. We get a chance to turn those roles upside down in our English-Spanish Language Exchange, a pilot program in which students teach Spanish to tutors and tutors teach English to students. It's a weekly conversation group that uses books, newspapers, and songs to exchange information about our different cultures, not just our vocabulary and grammar.

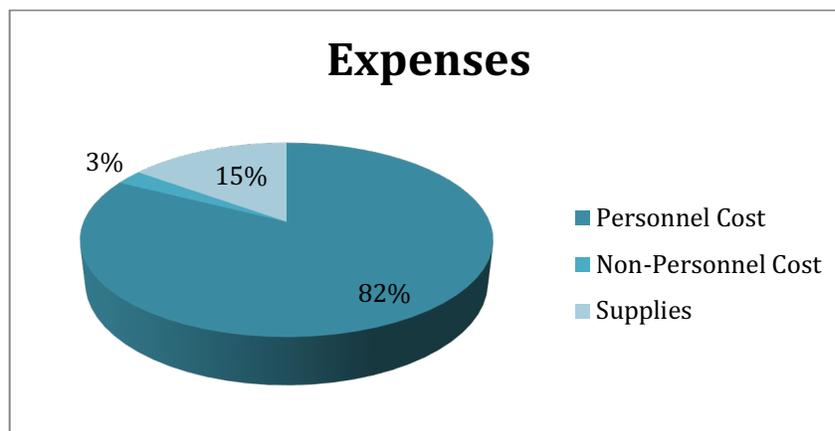


## Financial Overview

LVA, Essex & Passaic Counties total **Income** for the fiscal year ending July 31, 2017, was **\$486,000**.



LVA, Essex & Passaic Counties total **Expenses** for the fiscal year ending July 31, 2017, were **\$370,000**.



# Community Partners

## Essex & Passaic Public Libraries

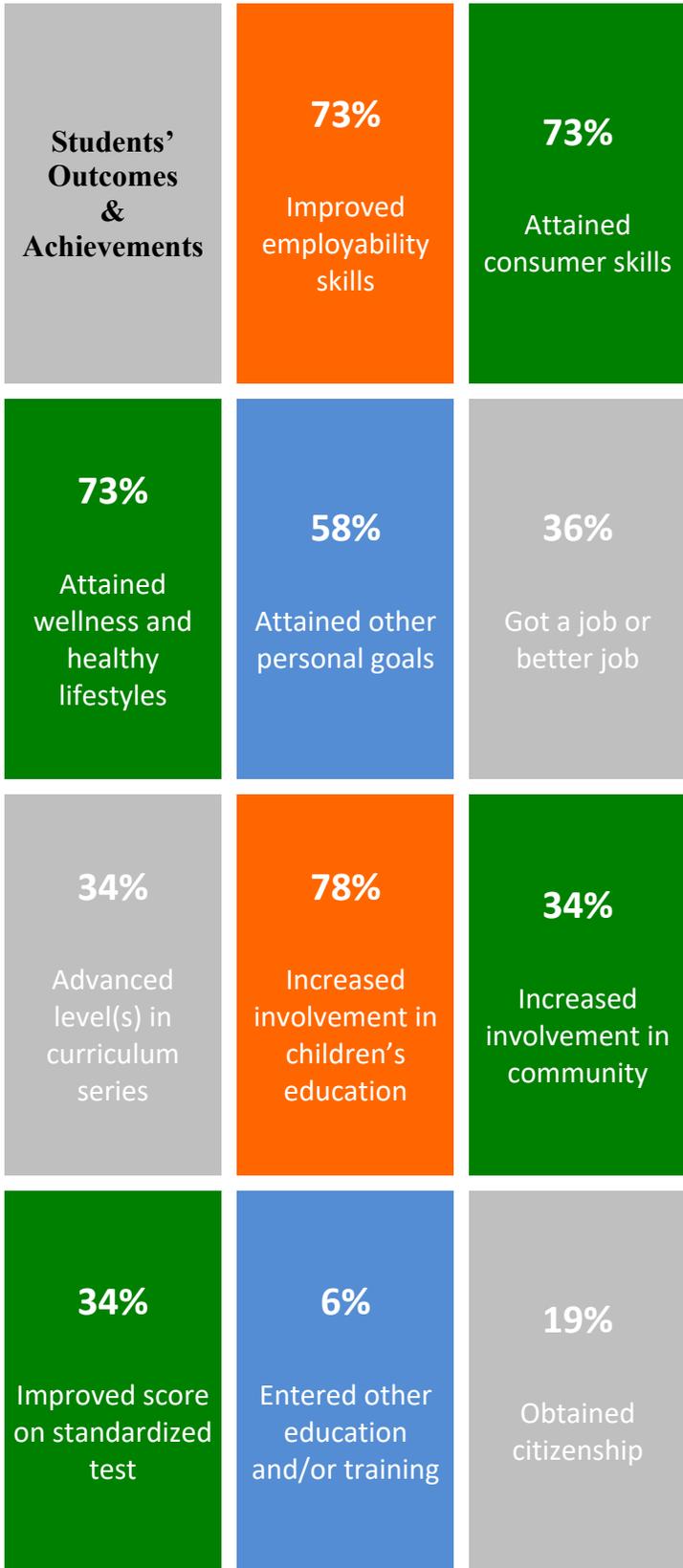
Alfred H. Baumann Free Public Library  
Belleville Public Library  
Bloomfield Public Library  
Bloomingdale Free Public Library  
Caldwell Free Public Library  
Cedar Grove Free Public Library  
Clifton Public Library  
East Orange Public Library  
Fairfield Free Public Library  
Glen Ridge Free Public Library  
Haledon Free Public Library  
Irvington Public Library  
Jefferson Township Public Library  
Little Falls Public Library  
Livingston Free Public Library  
Louis Bay 2nd Library  
Maplewood Memorial Library  
Millburn Free Public Library  
Montclair Public Library  
Newark Public Library  
North Haledon Free Public Library  
Nutley Free Public Library  
Passaic Public Library  
Paterson Free Public Library  
Pompton Lakes Borough Free Public Library  
Ringwood Public Library  
Roseland Free Public Library  
South Orange Public Library  
The Orange Public Library  
Totowa PL - Dwight D. Eisenhower Library  
Verona Free Public Library  
Wanaque Borough Free Public Library  
Wayne Public Library  
West Caldwell Public Library  
West Milford Township Library  
West Orange Free Public Library

## Adult Education Programs

1199 SEIU Education Fund<sup>[1]</sup>East Orange  
Board of Education  
Essex County College - Lead Agency  
Essex County Voc-Tech Schools  
FOCUS  
Hispanic Center for Community Development,  
Inc.  
Ironbound Community Corp.  
Jewish Vocational Services  
La Casa De Don Pedro, Inc.  
NCC-Adult Learning Center  
North Ward/ Newark Business Training  
Institute  
Passaic Board of Education  
Passaic County Community College  
Passaic County Technical Institute  
Paterson Adult & Continuing Education Center  
(PACE) -Lead Agency  
Berkeley College, Clifton  
New Jersey Association for Lifelong Learning

## Literacy Volunteers of New Jersey

Hunterdon Helpline Literacy Services  
Jersey City Library Literacy Program  
Literacy Volunteers of NJ  
LV-Bergenfield<sup>[1]</sup>LV-Bethany  
LV-Burlington County  
LV-Cumberland/Salem Counties  
LV-Englewood Library  
LV-Gloucester County  
LV-Mercer County  
LV-Monmouth County  
LV-Morris County  
LV-Ocean County  
LV-Pascack Valley  
LV-Plainfield Public Library  
LV-Somerset County  
LV-Sussex County  
LV-Union County  
LV-West Hudson  
LVA-Cape Atlantic, Inc.  
LVA-Camden County  
Newark Literacy Campaign  
Project Literacy of Greater Bergen County



# Literacy Volunteers of America, Essex & Passaic Counties, Inc. NJ

## Our Offices

90 Broad Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Bloomfield, NJ 07003  
(973) 566-6200, ext. 217 or 225

195 Gregory Avenue, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Passaic, NJ 07055  
(973) 470-0039

## Our Team

### Staff

- |                    |                                     |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Cristhian Barcelos | -Executive Director                 |
| Russell Ben Ali    | -Recruitment & Training Coordinator |
| Jorge Chavez       | -Data Processing Coordinator        |
| Debbie Graham      | -Education Coordinator              |
| Mary O'Connor      | -Trainer & Tutor Support Specialist |
| Marisol Ramirez    | -Student Coordinator                |

### Board of Directors

- |                      |                  |
|----------------------|------------------|
| Sally Rice           | -Board President |
| Kathy Mollica        | -Vice President  |
| Nancy Tinney         | -Treasury        |
| Christine Malloy     | -Secretary       |
| Birdean Clinton      |                  |
| Jordan Fried         |                  |
| Marleen Grabowsky    |                  |
| Nitty Joseph         |                  |
| Harsh Parikh         |                  |
| Claire von Schilling |                  |

### Trainers

- Thomas Conlon (Master Trainer)
- Mary Kao
- Mary O'Connor
- Nina Peyser (Master Trainer)
- Darnelle Richardson
- Carolyn Van Doren

### Office Volunteers

- |                |                   |
|----------------|-------------------|
| Artie Hymowitz | Gahzala Kanwal    |
| Mary O'Connor  | Carolyn Van Doren |

