



The Insider, the monthly newsletter of LVA Essex & Passaic Counties, will keep you in the loop on all of the organization's upcoming events.



Was great to catch up with everyone at LVA's annual membership meeting last month, held virtually, and elect our newest board member, teacher Maria Roman (shown bottom row, center).

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The Insider

Happy New Year, LVA family!

Last year was another challenging one, as the pandemic continued and new variants of the coronavirus emerged. We want to express our deepest gratitude to each and every one of you for doing all that you could to continue our mission of improving adult literacy, despite the obstacles.

And what a job you did! With your support, our students passed state motor vehicle tests to become licensed drivers. They became U.S. permanent residents and citizens. Some found employment and a couple even started their own businesses.

Two students, Georgina and Rosa, had their writing published in INSIGHT 2021, the magazine produced by the New Jersey Association for Lifelong Learning (NJALL), after their non-fiction pieces won first- and second-place awards in the organization's Adult Learner Writing Contest last year.

Our tutors also fared well. One former LVA student, Dof Kuvodu, entered her second year as a tutor for our organization. Another former student is poised to become a tutor. Tutor Randy Budros was named NJALL Teacher of the Year for his outstanding contributions to education. And tutors found a novel way to stay connected through the newly-formed "Monthly Coffee Hour with Tutors," an informal video call hosted by Catherine Angus, our tutor support specialist.

We are so proud to be associated with all of you and look forward to the time we can be together again in person. In the meantime, we hope that you continue to follow recommended practices in order to remain safe and healthy. We wish you a happy and peaceful 2022.

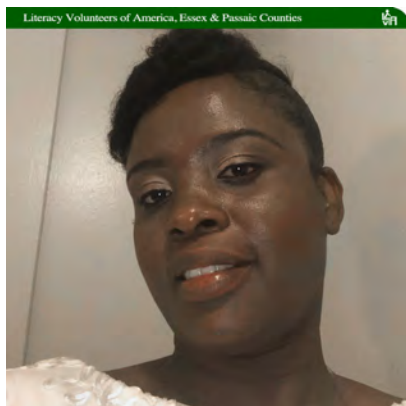
In the News

To view the following story, copy and paste the highlighted website into an internet search bar.

"Two Americas: Resources for ESL students, parents."
kchb.com <https://bit.ly/3qEsAHC>

"Never too late to learn: This Nigerian granny is starting school at age 50." News24.com <https://bit.ly/3nd3YqB>

"They said America was heaven, but now I regret coming."
Mission Local. <https://bit.ly/3rc3FQn>



Marie, a student from Haiti, has earned a reputation as a hard-working student who puts in plenty of hours of study outside of her tutoring sessions.

Tutor Training Workshops

Online Training, by Barbara Hathaway
Platform: Zoom
Tuesdays, 6 - 8 pm
January 11, 18, 25, February 1, & 8, 2022

Tutor Support Workshops

"Teaching Reading Comprehension Skills Through Effective Questioning,"
With Catherine Mitch
Platform: Google Meet
Tuesday, January 18, 2022
12:30 am – 2:00 pm

"Using Interactive Storytelling in the Classroom,"
with Dr. Erik Jacobson
Platform: Google Meet
Tuesday, February 15, 2021
11 am - 12:30 pm

Monthly Coffee Hour with Tutors

with Catherine Angus
Thursday, January 13, 2022 at 4 pm

<http://www.lvaep.org/workshops.html>

Getting to Know Us

Marie, LVA student

Marie would be more than pleased if the new year brought prospects of an office job, putting to use the economics college degree she earned, and sales experience she gained, back in her native Haiti.

Or at least an office job.

For now, the Port-au-Prince native works the night shift as a stock clerk in a furniture warehouse, goes home mornings to prepare her 9-year-old daughter for the day, then often attends a two-hour morning English class.

Foreign-educated individuals who seek employment that utilizes their degrees, talents, and professional experience face certain challenges in the U.S., including recognition of their credentials and obtaining high-level English skills, according to the research center Migration Policy Institute.

But Marie, who has gained a reputation for being a hard-working language student, could land that higher-level position yet, if work ethic and long hours of study mean anything.

"She's a go-getter," said Olga Roberts, one of Marie's tutors. "Her reason for learning English is she wants to get promoted and wants to get a different job. She's big-hearted and she's a hard-worker."

When we first spoke with Marie last month, she was busy preparing for a job interview at her company. She was both excited and nervous.

"I have an interview for a job in administration, working on a computer in the office," she explained. "But I'm scared because of my English."

She'd done her homework. She'd taken group ESOL classes in Maplewood, studied online weekly with two different tutors, and watched hours and hours of television in English. She'd read English language books, chatted with U.S.-born colleagues, and practiced with her daughter.

In the end, unfortunately, she didn't get the job. But she remained upbeat.

"I'm very happy because I tried," Marie said. "When you try for something, sometimes you lose and sometimes you win. At least I tried."

Literacy opens a wide door to life. Help us keep that door open with your donation!

Thanks in large part to you, we are able to aid hundreds of students each year. Please continue your efforts to improve the lives of others by giving the gift of literacy. You can contribute by mailing us a check or through our website @:

<http://www.lvaep.org/donate.html>



'Don't give up': 5 adult learners share advice

Milwaukee Neighborhood News Service

by Ana Martinez-Ortiz
November 15, 2021

Returning to school as an adult can be overwhelming. From finding the right program to the schoolwork itself, it can be hard to know where to begin and how to find the motivation to keep going.

These five students reflect on why they wanted to pursue a general education development or high school equivalency diploma and share advice for fellow learners.

Name: Teresa de la Cruz

Teresa de la Cruz is obtaining her GED for her three daughters. When they're struggling in school, she wants to help them. It's also been a dream of hers to continue her education.

De la Cruz is a student at Journey House, which offers a program for adults looking to obtain their GED.

Upon completing the program, de la Cruz hopes to change careers. She currently works as a cleaner at a school, but her hope is to open a child care center. The program can seem hard in the beginning, but it gets easier.

"You can achieve your dreams," she said. "You think you can't, but you can." *(cont.)*

Reprinted from Milwaukee Neighborhood News Service. For full story, paste the following link into your favorite web browser address bar: <https://bit.ly/3mUzJEv>

Learning a new culture is more than studying a language. Tutoring is more than learning techniques. Our "Resources" webpage covers everything from legal matters, health care, & scholarships for immigrants, to professional development for tutors. Give us a look @: <http://www.lva.org/students.html>

Getting to Know Us (cont.)

Elizabeth Jacobs, LVA tutor

Elizabeth Jacobs recalls the story of an immigrant woman she'd met, an undocumented worker who was in an abusive domestic relationship. The woman, who worked in the bathroom of a city restaurant, first caught the attention of Elizabeth's daughter, a restaurant worker who befriended her.



Together mother and daughter sought resources to assist the woman, who understood some English but wasn't comfortable speaking it. "I realized it really could change this woman's life if she could speak better English," Elizabeth explained.

Sometime later she spotted a recruitment notice for volunteers to train as literacy tutors at a local library. So, with her prior rescue mission in mind, Elizabeth, an art teacher by profession, enrolled and has since helped several students improve their English enough to achieve their goals.

One student, Shagoofa, passed the U.S. citizenship test on her first try, after eight months of studying with Elizabeth. She also launched an Afghan cooking business, with support from her tutor. Along the way, she provided a personal account of the tragedies unfolding in her native Afghanistan.

Another student, Alejandra from Mexico, obtained her state driver's license, with Elizabeth's encouragement, and is now hoping to start a house and office cleaning business.

It's all part of the tutor's strategy to base her English lessons around the lives and goals of her students. "You can teach someone the past participle of this or that but, if it's not relevant to their lives, it's not that important," she explained.

Elizabeth earned a bachelor of fine arts degree from SUNY-Purchase and a master's in art education from NYU. Despite her background in education, she is quick to point out that teaching experience is not required in order to help others learn. "It's important to tell other people that they shouldn't feel the need to have an English degree or totally understand grammar," she said. "Just the desire to want to know about someone's life, and find things you can teach them that are applicable to just helping the quality of their lives. These things can make a huge difference in people's lives."