



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



Tutors enjoyed an informative workshop on "Teaching Reading Comprehension Skills Through Effective Questioning," thanks to presenter Catherine Mitch (top row, second from right.)

Literacy Volunteers of America Essex & Passaic Counties

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The Insider

Greetings LVA family!

As COVID-19 infection rates continue to decline in our area, which is great news, and indoor mask mandates begin to relax in some quarters, we hope that you continue to stay healthy and follow safe practices when it comes to meetings of students and tutors. Your wellness is a priority. For state regulations regarding the pandemic, please consult New Jersey's COVID-19 Information Hub: <https://covid19.nj.gov/>

Is literacy declining? Inside Higher Ed tries to determine whether this is myth or fact after a Pew Research survey found that a quarter of U.S. adults said they haven't read a book in whole or in part in the past year, triple the figure reported in 1978. You can read the Inside Higher Ed debate here: <https://bit.ly/3Sgk6tE>

The sixth annual Adult Learner Writing Contest of the New Jersey Association (NJALL) for Lifelong Learning will offer cash prizes in five categories - fiction, nonfiction, memoir, poetry and photography. Winning submissions will be published in the organization's annual magazine and some writers will be invited to read their work at the NJALL annual conference. It's a great opportunity for adult learners and we hope you'll encourage your students to enter. The deadline is March 18, 2022. More information can be found at: <https://bit.ly/3HUp6NW>

Don't forget to save the dates for "Literacy for Life", Literacy New Jersey's annual conference held this year from April 27-30, and the NJALL annual conference, held May 18-21. They offer scores of workshops that will promise to draw your interest, sharpen your skills, and keep you connected to the adult literacy community. For further information:

Literacy New Jersey: <https://literacynj.org/news/literacy-life>
NJALL: <http://www.njall.org/articles/categories/conference>

In the News

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

"Stop asking whether online learning is worth it." Higher Ed Dive. <https://bit.ly/3HBNikE>

"Jay Blades: Learning to read at 51." WhattoWatch. <https://bit.ly/3HNdadp>

"English Songs are an Effective Learning Tool for Learning English Vocabulary." PRNewswire S. Korea <https://prn.to/3nC3k6w>



Yeimy is a student from Costa Rica who has reached her goals of obtaining U.S. citizenship and a state driver's license. She is working to earn a state cosmetology license.

Tutor Training Workshops

Online Training, by Barbara Hathaway
Platform: Zoom
Tuesdays, 6 - 8 pm
March 8, 15, 22, 29, & April 5, 2022

Tutor Support Workshops

"Using Interactive Storytelling in the Classroom,"
with Dr. Erik Jacobson
Platform: Google Meet
Tuesday, February 15, 2022
10 am - 11:30 pm

"Using Images With Your Students,"
with Catherine Angus
Platform: Google Meet
Tuesday, March 15, 2022
11 am - 12:30 pm

Monthly Coffee Hour with Tutors

with Catherine Angus
Thursday, March 10, 2022 at 1 pm

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

Getting to Know Us

Yeimy, LVA student

As a one-hour deadline frantically neared, spine-tingling questions began to tear at Yeimy, a new U.S. citizen who last December rushed from her swearing-in ceremony in Newark to her appointment at a Connecticut passport office.

What if police pulled over her husband for speeding, wondered Yeimy (pronounced "Jaime", a nickname for "Yeiner".) And could she really get a U.S. passport the same day, for an additional fee, in time to fly the following day to her native Heredia, Costa Rica for the holidays? She'd already changed her air ticket once, in order to attend the ceremony, and the cost to do it again would be prohibitive.

"My husband drove like crazy," Yeimy, a literacy student, recalled with some still-nervous laughter.

She and her husband arrived in Connecticut five minutes before her appointment. A couple of hours later, she left with a U.S. passport.

"We didn't even have time to take a photo in Newark," she said. "Later, I saw a building in Connecticut and I told my husband 'I think this is the perfect spot for my picture.' It was a special day."

Yeimy, a former hair stylist who hopes to earn a cosmetology license, passed the citizenship test last November after studying meticulously on her own, with support from her tutor, Mary Kao. "I right away sent Mary a message, saying 'Mary, I did it. I did it!'" Yeimy said.

"That was so exciting," said Mary. "When she wants to get something and she's determined, she'll do it. She's terrific. She really is."

It was the highlight of a tough year for Yeimy, who spent much of it battling cancer. She received chemotherapy treatments and Brachytherapy, a type of internal radiation care, in Costa Rica where doctors eventually declared her cancer to be in remission.

"I was so happy and my family was too because it was a hard time for us. When I started to get my treatment I was very positive, nothing negative," she added. "Never give up."

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>



Mother who couldn't read breaks down at the memory of how she hid books from her children to avoid bedtime stories

Daily Mail

by Jo Tweedy for MailOnline
January 19, 2022

- Sarah Todd, from Shaftesbury, told Woman's Hour that she would hide copies of *Cinderella* and *Sleeping Beauty* in the back of her wardrobe from her children
- Mother-of-three says experiences that were fun for most parents such as trips to the local library were 'a living nightmare' for her

A woman has revealed how she was so ashamed about being unable to read that she hid her children's books in the back of the wardrobe to avoid bedtime stories.

Mother-of-three Sarah Todd, from Shaftesbury, told Woman's Hour on Tuesday that a trip to the library was a 'living nightmare' - and explained how she eventually sought help after breaking down about her low literacy levels during a return to work interview.

Todd told the BBC Radio 4 program that her two eldest daughters, who are twins, didn't know that she couldn't read.

As a single parent at the time, she said it 'broke' her to not be able to read them stories and nursery rhymes. (cont.)

Reprinted from Daily Mail. For full story, paste the following link into your favorite web browser address bar:

<https://bit.ly/3Jb6HZY>

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.lvaen.org/students.html>

Getting to Know Us (cont.)

Kim Fiore, LVA tutor

Kim Fiore's formed an impressive bond with the three women who make up her student group even though, in person, they've never met.



That's not unusual for educators and students today, folks who were forced to make due with online instruction when in-person meetings were discouraged due to the pandemic. And some prefer it that way, even as restrictions on gatherings are beginning to ease.

"Once people get used to doing things online, it makes it a lot easier logistically," said Kim, a literacy tutor for one year. "One of my students, I don't know if she would be able to come if it's in person."

Her students, who hail from Latin America and China, spend their weekly time together discussing the news and language structure, using websites like "All Things Grammar" and "News in Levels", among others - anything that promotes discussion.

"I want them to have the confidence to go out and speak to people, to ask questions, to be able to ask for help," Kim said. "And I tell them all the time, they're a lot better at learning English than I am at their languages."

Kim earned a bachelor's degree from Rutgers University, where she majored in math and computer science, and a master's degree in instructional media from Wilkes University in Pennsylvania. She worked in a corporate IT division and later taught technology at a K-8 private school for a couple of decades.

She retired from teaching just before the start of the pandemic and was looking for an opportunity to volunteer. She'd helped out before at a food pantry and considered doing the same when a tutor friend recommended that she try LVA. She attended a training workshop taught by Catherine Mitch in 2020 and hasn't regretted the decision to tutor.

"It's worked out pretty well," Kim said. "I like the group that I have. I have three women from different backgrounds and we enjoy our time together. I enjoy getting them more confident about speaking."