



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



Another wonderful tutor support workshop presented by Dr. Erik Jacobson, who walked us through "Using Interactive Storytelling in the Classroom" last month.

The Insider

Greetings LVA family!

Welcome to the 100th edition of the Insider! We hope it finds you healthy, happy, and looking forward to a spring full of good weather and relaxed pandemic restrictions, as we are.

March is Women's History Month, a federally-declared period to commemorate and study the achievements of women in history. A good website for information, and ways to incorporate the month's theme into your lessons, is the New Jersey Women's History Project, an educational resource for students, teachers, and those interested in learning more about the history of women in New Jersey. <https://njwomenshistory.org/>

The impact of low levels of literacy can have devastating effects on adults, their families, and society. Moving all adults to a sixth-grade reading level would add roughly \$2.2 trillion, or 10% of gross domestic product, to the U.S. economy annually, according to literacy advocates who gathered this week in Austin, TX, for the SXSW EDU Conference & Festival, an annual education industry event. Currently, 54% of U.S. adults read below the equivalent of a sixth-grade level, according to the federal department of education. You can read more about the conference here: <https://prn.to/3W9wOY>

This is possibly the most endearing "It's never too late to learn" story we've ever heard. A 98-year-old Kenyan great-grandmother goes back to primary school, enrolling by using the unused school funds of her granddaughter, who'd dropped out. A former midwife, she attends classes with students more than eight decades her junior, and says she would like to become a doctor. For the video: <https://bit.ly/371ckW>

You can usually count on "Breaking News English" to provide free and easy-to-read, short breaking news stories for ESL students, along with exercises and quizzes, like these items on the war in Ukraine: <https://breakingnewsenglish.com>

In the News

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

"We all agree literacy is critical. But little attention is paid to literacy in adults." The Denver Channel. <https://bit.ly/35CStmE>

"Shockingly, California has the lowest literacy rate of any state." Capital Weekly. <https://bit.ly/3FE9JE9>

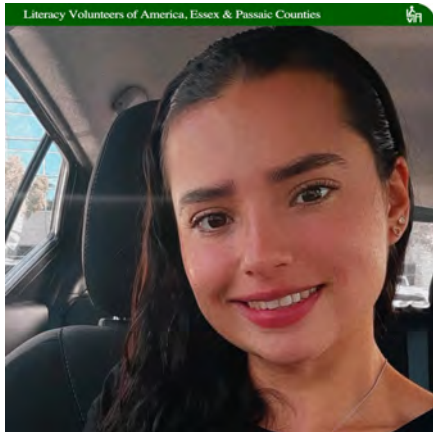
"Learning to speak a new language." Albert Lea Tribune. <https://bit.ly/3sPBRAO>

Literacy Volunteers of America Essex & Passaic Counties

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

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

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| Cristhian Barcelos | -Executive Director
cbarcelos@lvaep.org |
| Catherine Angus | -Tutor Support Specialist
cangus@lvaep.org |
| Russell Ben Ali | -Social Media & Newsletter Coordinator
rbenali@lvaep.org |
| Jorge Chavez | -Data Processing Coordinator
jchavez@lvaep.org |
| Marisol Ramirez | -Student Coordinator
mramirez@lvaep.org |



Lorena, a student from Colombia who works as a medical assistant in a busy Morristown hospital laboratory, hopes to eventually go into nursing.

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

"Taking the Fear out of Speaking,"
with Darnelle Richardson
Platform: Google Meet
Thursday, April 21, 2022
12 pm - 1:30 pm

Monthly Coffee Hour with Tutors

with Catherine Angus
Tuesday, April 12, 2022 at 1 pm

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

Getting to Know Us

Lorena, LVA student

There comes a point during her weekend job, after she's scanned the last entry tickets for customers attending premier Spanish language performances, that Lorena can relax and enjoy the show.

These concerts feature well-known musicians, like Colombian singer Jorge Celedon, winner of the 2007 Latin Grammy Award for best Cumbia/Vallenato Album, who played before Pres. George W. Bush at the White House. And Marisela, the Mexican-American singer whose "Ya No" song peaked at number-one on the Billboard Latin Songs chart.

But Lorena rarely stays longer than needed; she'd rather go home and rest. After all, she has a day job too.

And it's one that the Colombian native labored to get - - as a medical assistant at Morristown Medical Center. There she assists doctors, nurses, and technicians in blood work, echocardiograms and other procedures in a busy hospital laboratory. To get to this point, she poured over technical books and materials until she'd earned several certifications.

"I studied for one year and passed the tests," Lorena said, when asked about her journey. "Oh my God, I was so blessed. And so grateful. I didn't feel that I fully spoke English, not fluently, but I did it. I did it!"

And she's not done. Lorena, who studied information technology at a Colombian university, wants to enter the nursing field, starting as a certified nursing assistant. She also plans to become a U.S. citizen like her husband, Jaime, who lived on her street in her native Santuario, Colombia. Lofty goals, maybe, but, if you know Lorena, you know she's capable.

In the three-and-a-half years since she arrived in the states, Lorena has obtained a driver's license, permanent residence, and the hospital lab job.

And, to be frank, she's reached a pretty amazing level of English fluency, having studied the language at Berkeley College, then with our tutors, and on her own. But don't tell her that.

"That's not enough," Lorena insists. "I need to study more."

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>



Meet Deidra, the entrepreneur breaking down barriers for functionally illiterate adults.

inspiremore.com

By Kelsey Bjork, January 26, 2022

“I never truly fixed my literacy problems. Instead, I found ways to work around them in order to spare myself the embarrassment and shame that I already felt daily,” she said. “This caused me to live a life of fear, limitations, and hopelessness.”

Growing up, Deidra Mayberry and her six siblings were constantly moving because they had a military parent. Always being the new kids at school wasn't easy, but when Deidra discovered she struggled with reading, it was even more difficult.

Being temporarily placed in special ed classes helped, but rejoining her classmates after three years left her feeling more isolated than ever. They hadn't been learning the same curriculum, so Deidra felt unworthy of being in lessons with her peers.

The shame she felt led her to continue hiding her struggle to avoid being mocked by her classmates and anyone else who might judge her, although she still faced harsh critics.

“I remember sharing that I wanted to be a psychologist and a school official directed me to rethink that because I was not smart enough. That day my imagination to dream died,” Deidra said. “All the desire to do great things disappeared as I no longer felt equipped or worthy of more.” (cont.)

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

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

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.)

Abby Kane, LVA tutor

Abby Kane's conversation groups are known as a safe space for students. Even when the world outside isn't.

When a Colombian student described the degrading treatment she suffered on the job, the group held a frank conversation about a tough subject: racism.



Then there was an important exchange on the September 11th attacks, which took an unexpected turn while discussing the terrorists.

“A student from Nigeria stopped us and said ‘I just want to make sure you understand that this is not what it's about to be a Muslim’,” recalled Abby, an LVA tutor of the year who has helped students from 23 countries improve their English over the last decade.

“And what she said was profound, and the fact that she cared so much about it that she stopped the group and said, ‘No, I have to make sure you understand’,” Abby added. “I had already started crying, while remembering what it was like that day. It was quite a class.”

No matter how sensitive, news topics are welcomed by this Queens native, who enrolled as a literacy volunteer after her retirement as the Director of Psychological Counseling at Bloomfield College or, as she puts it, “the school shrink”.

But there is one rule: Don't pretend you understand if you don't. She'll spot you in a NY minute.

Her rules are very clear,” said Barbara, a French journalist and current student. “She said, ‘If you don't understand me, stop me’. And we do it.”

Maritza, a former student from Peru, said Abby makes students “feel valued” as they navigate the difficulties of a new language and culture. “Her enthusiasm made us participate and in that way we were part of the class,” Maritza said.

Abby's current group of six students include two adults from the Dominican Republic, and one each from Ecuador, France, Jamaica, and Nigeria. “By the time they get to my class they mostly need confidence, but they know a lot,” she said. “I tell them all the time, how much more impressive they are than I am” when it comes to foreign languages.