



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



*Our students come from all over the world. Consider sharing your knowledge of English, while learning about different cultures, by becoming a tutor. Our training schedule appears on the next page.*

## Literacy Volunteers of America Essex & Passaic Counties

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## *The Insider*

Greetings LVA family!

The pronunciation of past tense verbs can bewilder English language learners, even in regular verbs where the letters “ed” are added to form the past tense. But who knew that Taylor Swift could help?

Well, the Voice of America for one. On its *Learning English* web site, the Voice of America created the “*Learn to Pronounce Past Tense –ed with Taylor Swift*” page which uses her song “*cardigan*” to illustrate the sounds.

The organization also explains the rules for determining when the “ed” past tense verb ending is pronounced “d” as in “Listened”, when it sounds like a “t” as in “Helped”, and when it’s actually pronounced “ed” as in “Waited”. All with the help of a Taylor Swift tune. You can read, and listen, to more here: <https://bit.ly/3vXd6nm>

Immigrants and refugees are the future of the American workforce but they must be given the language skills they need to thrive. That’s the subject of an opinion piece on the website *Real Clear Education* offered by Jane Oates, a former commissioner of the New Jersey Higher Education Commission and former U.S. Department of Labor assistant secretary.

Ms. Oates explains how newcomers to the U.S., who currently make up one-sixth of the nation’s workforce, could solve the problem of shortages in labor sectors like health care and manufacturing, if many weren’t struggling to speak and write English. These shortages were created by Baby Boomer retirements and the “Great Resignation” of workers during the pandemic, she points out.

“But America now can help only about 4% of adults who need to learn English. That’s far too much wasted potential,” writes Ms. Oates, whose piece can be read here: [bit.ly/3SMLVp6](https://bit.ly/3SMLVp6)

## *In the News*

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

“**Learning to read as an adult**”. ABC.com Story Stream (audio). <https://ab.co/3SVKYv0>

“**English need not be a foreign language**”. Khmer Times. <https://bit.ly/3BYzcd0>

**Stop 'Unjust Bussing' Of Migrants, NJ Latino Pastor Group Demands.** Patch.com. <https://bit.ly/3bKr5q1>



*Victor, a student from Lima, Peru, shown with some of his massive collection of Star Wars figurines.*

## Getting to Know Us

### Victor, LVA student

This is how you come fluent: Surround yourself by speakers of your target language and engage them daily. At least that's how Victor, an English student from Peru, is doing it.

"All my neighbors are Americans," explained Victor, who can actually chart his progress by talks with fellow building residents. "When I first rented my apartment, I said to my neighbors just 'Hello' and 'How are you?' and that's it."

But improvements came quickly. They almost had to: Not only are his neighbors native English speakers but so are the clients of the construction company where he works and the Italian restaurant where he delivers food.

"Now I can communicate with them," he said, citing his suburban neighbors. "Now I can talk a lot of things about the building, the amount of the rent, the service. That's so great."

Victor arrived in the U.S. only two years ago. He'd earned a bachelor's degree in economics and a Master's of Business Administration degree in Lima, where he was raised with three siblings and worked as a commercial manager of a construction company.

Here he works as an assistant manager for another construction company, one that installs and refurbishes floors and ceilings. This too requires frequent use of English, both verbal and written. "I do proposals and invoices and mailings to customers, always in English," he explained, adding that he uses Google Translate to check his work.

In his second job, as a deliverer of restaurant food, Victor found himself counting money in English, which surprised even him.

Victor lives in Essex County with his wife and two daughters, ages 8-years and four months. An older daughter and other family members remain in Peru. He said he loves to take long walks in a park near his apartment and has joined the YMCA where he swims with his daughter and works out in the gym.

And he has another passion: He can't resist adding pieces to his already massive collection of Star Wars figures; the Force is too strong.

"Here, I think I have more than 500 pieces. I don't have space for all my pieces," he said with a laugh.

## Tutor Training Workshops

**Online Training**, by Barbara Hathaway

Platform: Zoom

Tuesdays, 6 - 8:15 pm

September 13, 20, 27, October 4 & 11, 2022

**Online Training**, by Barbara Hathaway

Platform: Zoom

Tuesdays, 6 - 8:15 pm

November 1, 8, 15, 29, & December 6, 2022

## Tutor Support Workshop

**"Using The Language Experience Approach,"**

with Darnelle Richardson

Platform: Google Meet

Tuesday, September 20, 2022

11 am - 12:30 pm

**"Teaching Listening Skills,"**

with Carol Cochi, Ph.D.

Platform: Google Meet

Tuesday, October 18, 2022

11 am - 12:30 pm

## Monthly Coffee Hour with Tutors

with Catherine Angus

Thursday, October 6, 2022 at 4 pm

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

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



## **‘While I wasn’t ashamed of him, I knew it as a secret’: The author who taught her father how to read reveals inspirational journey which highlights adult literacy issues**

### **The Daily Mail**

By Cathy Rentzenbrink, August 7, 2022

When I was eight years old my mother used to test my spelling from a big, red book. I loved everything to do with language and flew through the words, asking her to do the next page and the next.

Sometimes my father would join in. Not as the person holding the book, but as the learner.

He was, at the age of 30, trying to learn to read and write. He wasn't as good as I was, but he encouraged my mother to make it into a competition. I always won and he was always proud of me.

'You'll go far,' he would say. 'Education, that's the thing. You don't want to earn your money by going down a mine like I do. You want to get educated and then you won't have to work nightshifts in the dark and cold.'

I always wanted to stay up late reading and wasn't allowed, so night shifts down a Yorkshire mine sounded glamorous to me. When I heard him come in, I'd scamper downstairs in my pajamas for stories of the night before. *(cont.)*

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

<https://bit.ly/3JE8rwq>

*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.)**

### **Bob Bounczek, LVA tutor**

Bob Bounczek has seen dozens of English language learners pass through his weekly conversation group classes over the years, some remaining only until they'd found work while others stayed on.



Student turnover can be frustrating for tutors at times but Bob, who understands the complexity of students' lives, feels positive about helping, no matter how long. And he's been at it a long time.

“So many people that come to class have come to this country for the right reason, they wanted to send money back home,” said Bob, who became a volunteer literacy tutor in November 2004. “They came here because they wanted an opportunity and, to me, I can't explain how that makes me think and how that makes me feel.

Bob, 86, is a retired warehouse boss, a husky 6'2" tall figure of a man who was raised in Newark's Central Ward. At work, he rose to the position of warehouse manager and was responsible for some 40 union laborers and three supervisors.

When he's not tutoring you might find him following another of his passions: horse racing. He is a prolific student of the sport and an experienced gambler. “I think I was 15-years-old when I sent for information on how to handicap,” he said with a laugh. “I put a lot of time into it but I approach it the same way I did my job. I try to understand everything I can about it because I've read everything.”

When it comes to tutoring, he's strictly old school: He favors the use of a physical dictionary for vocabulary work and endorses in-person meetings. When the pandemic forced the closure of the Passaic Public Library, where he'd long led his conversation groups, Bob shunned online options and instead moved his groups to a local Dunkin' Donuts restaurant. Today, his classes meet twice each week at the Bloomfield Public Library, with eight students in total.

He describes himself as being “lucky in life”, someone who's never had to struggle to earn a living, and considers volunteering a good way to aid those who are not as fortunate.

“I will do everything I can within reason to help,” he said. “That's what keeps me coming back. Plus, the fact that I've met some really nice people, honest people, and to me honesty is a big deal.”