



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



ProLiteracy Joins Conversation on AI in Adult Literacy Education Research Journal

"As AI-powered tools have made headlines in the past year, and the world is increasingly exposed to new technology in everyday tasks, ProLiteracy believes it's important to respond to the field on the issue and publish trusted findings about the impact it has on adult education."

Learn more: <https://bit.ly/45Cd5nY>

The Insider

Greetings LVA family!

As the leaves change and the air gets cooler, we welcome you to the fall season with open arms. This newsletter has some exciting stories to share by the fire.

In our "Getting to Know You" section, we highlight Anabel, an ESL student working hard to learn English to validate her degree in Veterinary Medicine and obtain her credentials to practice in the United States. She acknowledges the difficulty in learning a new language but advises new students to show up.

You will also find John's story, a dedicated LVA tutor with a love for languages whose family's immigrant story inspires him to give back. It turns out that a friend from his church is also a volunteer (she was in a photo he found on the LVA website), and she encouraged him.

As you may know, many of our students' literacy journey is only the beginning. Adult learners have long-term goals, including obtaining their GED, passing a citizenship test, and moving toward new employment and educational opportunities. These doors are open because of their hard work and the love and dedication of our tutors. We wanted to share a relevant story on "How are NJ and its colleges helping more residents earn degrees?" In this article by NJBIZ, we learn more about various initiatives that can support and encourage our students.

We want to remind the LVA community of the upcoming **Annual Award Ceremony** on Wednesday, October 25th, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at Bloomfield High School's Auditorium (160 Broad Street, Bloomfield, NJ 07003). Please join us and invite your friends and family!

If you haven't done so, RSVP by emailing us at info@lvaep.org or calling (973) 566-6200 x225 with your name and the number of guests you plan to bring. It's an excellent opportunity to celebrate our achievements and recognize the hard work of our students and volunteers.

In the News

Copy and paste the highlighted website into an internet search bar to view the following stories.

"What to Read for Banned Books Week" The University of Chicago Press. <https://bit.ly/46OkdOZ>

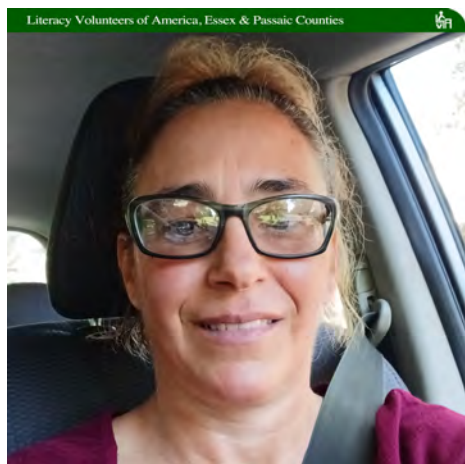
"Alliance for Adult Education Announces Commitment to Action at the Clinton Global Initiative 2023 Meeting" Alliance for Adult Education. <https://bit.ly/3MpX5in>

Literacy Volunteers of America, Essex & Passaic Counties

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Anabel has a degree in Veterinary Medicine from Cuba. She is looking forward to making enough progress in her English skills to take a high-school equivalency exam that will demonstrate her English proficiency and enable her to take the next steps in being able to practice her career here.

Tutor Training Workshops

Online Training, by TBD

Platform: Zoom (sponsored by LNJ)

Tuesdays, 6 - 8:15 pm

November 7, 14, 21, 28, December 5, & 12, 2023

Online Training, by TBD

Platform: Zoom (sponsored by LNJ)

Tuesdays, 6 to 8 pm

January 16, 23, 30, February 6, 13, & 20, 2024

Tutor Support Workshop

" Grammar Instruction that Works: Looking at Lessons." with Catherine Mitch

Platform: Google Meet

Thursday, October 19, 2023, 11:00 am – 12:30 pm

Coffee Hour with Tutors

with Cheryl Locastro

Thursday, November 16, 2023 at 3pm (Themed in-person meeting)

Thursday, January 11, 2024 at 3pm (General online meeting)

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

Getting to Know Us

Anabel, LVA student

Originally from Cuba, Anabel embarked on her journey of learning English when she arrived in the United States in 2019. Armed with her native language, Spanish, Anabel recognized the importance of mastering English in her adopted country. She sees it as a stepping stone to securing better job opportunities.

For 2.5 years, Anabel has been working hard on honing her English skills. Anabel shared, "I try to study more and improve every day. I take English classes, try to speak better, and practice every day." Anabel immerses herself in English by listening to the radio, watching movies with closed captions, and reading books in English.

Anabel loves to read. She shared two of her favorite books: Les Misérables and The Iliad of Homer, which she read in Spanish.

In her home country, Anabel earned a degree in veterinary medicine. Her long-term goal and biggest motivation is to have her credentials recognized in the United States so she can practice her profession. English fluency is an essential step on that path.

Learning English has already begun to transform Anabel's life. She's seen improvements in her job and feels a newfound confidence. Despite the challenges, she's grateful for the progress she's making. Anabel acknowledges the role of her teachers, John and Howard, and her support system at work and home. Their encouragement and assistance have been crucial in her English language journey.

Anabel is most proud of her children and considers them her greatest accomplishment.

When asked about advice for other aspiring learners, Anabel emphasized the importance of starting. She acknowledges everyone's journey is different, but her message to newcomers is clear: "You need to come to class and start."

Anabel's future plans are both ambitious and inspiring. She's committed to validating her credentials to practice her profession here and has been researching all the steps she needs to take, which include having her university degree recognized and taking tests with the national accrediting organization for veterinary medicine. This includes proving her English proficiency; we can't wait to see her achieve her goals!

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.

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



How are NJ and its colleges helping more residents earn degrees?

NJBIZ

Written by Matthew Fazelpoor, September 18, 2023

Since taking the helm as the state's secretary of higher education in November 2020, Brian Bridges has been tackling myriad issues – which of course started with taking on the pandemic.

In the cabinet level role, Bridges serves as the governor's primary adviser on higher education initiatives and is responsible for policy development and coordination of New Jersey's higher education activities, with a focus on affordability and helping encourage residents who have some college credit – but left school – to complete their degrees.

Bridges recently spoke to NJBIZ, saying that after nearly three years in the job, he is still passionate about the opportunity to effect change in New Jersey and leave higher education in the state better than he found it.

“There's always room for improvement,” Bridges said. “I think the initiatives that we've been able to implement here over the last few years under my administration of OSHE [Office of the Secretary of Higher Education], in concert with the governor's vision, allows us to make college more affordable, more accessible, and drive student success at the same time. I'm happy about the direction that we're going in. There's still more work to be done to engage adult students – for instance – to help the state reach its attainment goal of 65% of working adults having a post-high school credential by 2025.”

At the center of that effort is the Some College, No Degree initiative, which has been gaining funding and momentum in recent months. The pilot program received an initial \$3 million in the Fiscal Year 2023 budget and an additional \$8 million in the FY 2024 budget enacted this summer.

For the full story, copy and paste the following link into your favorite web browser address bar: <https://bit.ly/3rQBmJg>

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.lvaep.org/students.html>

Getting to Know Us (cont.)

John Weckenmann, LVA Tutor

John Weckenmann, a tutor at Literacy Volunteers of America of Essex and Passaic Counties, has been teaching with LVA for just over a year. He holds an English literature degree from New York University with a minor in linguistics. Even after retiring from his public relations career, he continues to freelance for his former company.



His love for languages and reading drew him to become a literacy volunteer after his retirement. He discovered LVA while researching literacy organizations in the area and thought it had a worthwhile and compelling mission. It turns out that a friend from his church is also a volunteer (she was in a photo he found on the LVA website), and she encouraged him.

John has worked with five students during his time at LVA. One of them recently left the program to prepare for a high school equivalency exam, marking a significant moment in her educational journey.

John shared stories of some students who stood out for various reasons. Evangelina, a highly motivated student, has been with him from the beginning, striving to improve her English language skills for a career in HR training. Another student, a young man from Guatemala, had to leave due to work schedule changes and the need to make extra money to send back home. “He was a very faithful and hardworking student (and a lot of fun), and I was very sorry to see him go. It just reinforced for me the challenges that some of our students face and how important this work is. I hope he has an opportunity to return to the program someday,” – John shared.

John's grandparents were immigrants on his mother's side, and he stated his grandmother never learned to speak English well. A familiar story to many of our students: when she wanted to go shopping in the department stores downtown, his mother would accompany her to translate and serve as an intermediary with the sales staff. He didn't know his grandmother, as she passed away when he was quite young, but he thinks of her often, and her memory keeps him motivated.

At LVA, dedicated tutors like John are crucial in helping students improve their literacy skills and achieve their goals. John's passion for languages and reading makes him an invaluable asset to the organization, and we are fortunate to have such committed individuals supporting our mission.