



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



Once a year, educators from all over the country join with adult learners, community partners, business leaders, legislators, and friends of adult education to amplify their successes! COABE has developed a calendar of activities, resources, and so much more! We cordially invite you to join your colleagues as we celebrate the national Adult Education and Family Literacy Week!

Learn more & Register: <https://bit.ly/45UEXc3>

## *The Insider*

Greetings LVA family!

As we bid farewell to the sunny days of summer and welcome the crisp embrace of fall, our hearts are filled with excitement for the season ahead. It's a time of transformation, not just in the natural world but also within our vibrant literacy community.

The end of summer signifies the return of eager tutors and students who were away, rekindling the spirit of learning and growth. With renewed enthusiasm, we are ready to embark on another chapter of our literacy journey together.

In the spirit of lifelong learning, September brings us National Adult Education and Family Literacy Week. This year, we're thrilled to participate in a conference hosted by COABE (The Coalition on Adult Basic Education), offering us a chance to connect, share knowledge, and bolster our commitment to adult education and family literacy.

In this edition, we delve into a captivating "Getting to Know You" story, shining a spotlight on our dedicated Board President, Sally Rice. Her tireless efforts have been instrumental in advancing our mission and shaping the future of literacy in our community.

We are also thrilled to present an inspiring Student Success Story, highlighting Martha's remarkable journey and progress as she learns English as a Second Language.

Lastly, don't miss our feature article from USA Today, shedding light on the state of literacy rates in the U.S. It's a powerful reminder of the vital work we do and our impact on our society.

As the leaves change colors and the days grow shorter, let's embrace the season of growth and learning. Together, we continue to write the chapters of success, one word at a time.

## *In the News*

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

**"How English learners can benefit from college classes in high school"** Ed Source. <https://bit.ly/46ia39l>

**"How to Identify and Serve English Learners with Disabilities"** Ed Week. <https://bit.ly/48b4h1a>

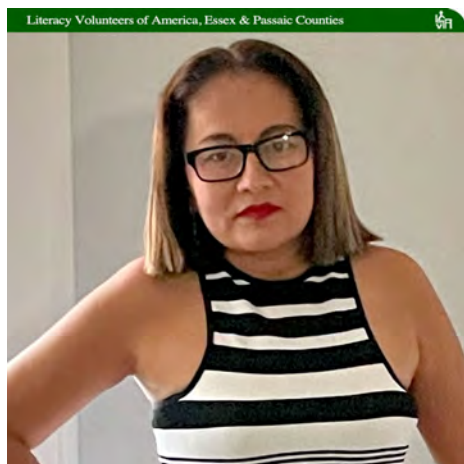
**"What to Read When You Need to Start Over"** The Atlantic. <https://bit.ly/3PlsX3e>

### Literacy Volunteers of America, Essex & Passaic Counties

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## Getting to Know Us

### Martha, LVA student

Originally from Ecuador, Martha's life took a transformative turn when she decided to move to the United States with her husband.

Martha arrived in the United States four years ago, determined to learn English. Some of her struggles stemmed from Spanish being widely spoken in her New Jersey community. "Practicing English was difficult because, in New Jersey, you can often manage with Spanish," she recalls.

Martha, her husband, one-year-old baby girl, and sixteen-year-old son arrived in the United States shortly before the pandemic started. During the pandemic, Martha faced the daunting task of looking after her two children, including her teenage son struggling to adjust to a new country and remote ESL learning. Despite these difficulties, Martha's determination remained unshaken.

Martha's search for English learning resources led her to the Literacy Volunteers of America (LVA) of Essex and Passaic Counties. She enrolled in online classes, completing four courses to date. Her commitment to mastering English is admirable, as she even repeated two sessions to enhance her language skills further and feel more confident about her progress.

With a bachelor's degree in hospitality management and tourism from her home country, Martha brings a wealth of education and professional experience to her new life in the U.S. She is proud of her academic achievements and the joy of being a devoted mother to her two children.

One memorable experience on Martha's English learning journey was helping a friend who lost her passport while visiting the United States. Her newfound language skills allowed her to assist with tasks like filing a police report and navigating the airport, an achievement that filled her with pride.

Martha acknowledges the crucial role of her teachers, Jalaire Craver and Olga Roberts, in her journey. And she provides this simple yet profound advice to new learners: "You must be patient." She emphasizes that learning English is a gradual process that requires practice and persistence to build confidence.

Looking ahead, Martha's goals include applying for citizenship, learning to drive, and eventually securing a part-time job to provide for her children while being present in their lives. Her story inspires all who face challenges while pursuing their dreams, demonstrating that success is within reach with dedication and perseverance.

*Evangelina is committed to her studies and wants to encourage others to pursue their passion as they work to improve their English skills. "The best is yet to come."*

## Tutor Training Workshops

### Online Training, by TBD

Platform: Zoom (sponsored by LNJ)

Wednesdays, 9:30 - 11:30 am

October 4, 11, 18, 25, November 1, & 8, 2023

### Online Training, by TBD

Platform: Zoom (sponsored by LNJ)

Tuesdays, 6 - 8:15 pm

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

## Tutor Support Workshop

### "How Understanding Personality Can Improve Your Tutoring," with, Stephanie Mazzeo-Caputo

Platform: Google Meet

Thursday, September 21, 2023, 11:00 am - 12:30 pm

## Coffee Hour with Tutors

with Cheryl Locastro

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

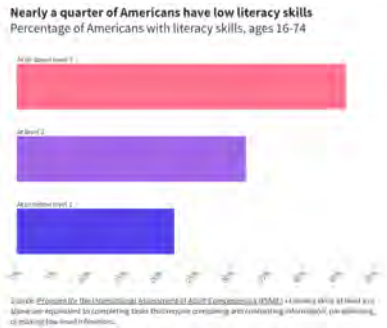
Thursday, January 11, 2024 at 3pm (General online meeting)

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

***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>



### 1 in 5 Americans have low-literacy skills: These charts explain reading levels in the US

USA TODAY

By Sara Chernikoff, September 9, 2023

It's been 57 years since President Lyndon B. Johnson proclaimed September 8, 1966, as International Literacy Day. The celebration of Literacy Day helps raise awareness around global literacy needs and achievements.

#### 130 million Americans read below sixth-grade level

(...) In the U.S., nearly 130 million American adults read below a sixth-grade level — that number represents more than half the adult US population, according to the Department of Education.

American's literacy rates vary: Four in five US adults (79%) have English literacy skills sufficient to "Complete tasks that require comparing and contrasting information, paraphrasing, or making low-level inferences," according to the Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC). This is equivalent to scoring at a level 2 literacy rate or above. At the same time, one in five adults (22%) in the U.S. has difficulty completing these same tasks. (...)

#### Literacy benefits society

Literacy helps level the playing field across systemic societal issues, like race and gender inequality. It also improves access to economic opportunity, according to reporting from Lexia Learning.

A Gallup analysis estimated that increasing literacy proficiency has the potential to generate trillions more in annual income in the U.S. And on the individual level, illiteracy can impact a person's lifetime earning potential by 30-42%.

For the full story, copy and paste the following link into your favorite web browser address bar: <https://bit.ly/3RIEOG9>

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.)

Sally Rice, Past LVAEP Board President

Sally Rice, a dedicated leader in Essex County, New Jersey, has been at the forefront of literacy efforts for nearly four decades. Her journey began in the 1980s when she served as the Supervising Librarian and Coordinator of Adult Services for the East Orange Public Library. Passionate about literacy, she represented the library in the Essex Literacy Consortium, setting the stage for a profound impact.



Sally's commitment to literacy deepened when she joined the Board of Directors of Literacy Volunteers of America (LVA) Essex County. She later became the President, serving from 1995 to 2006 and resuming the role from 2009 to 2022 having added Passaic County to the areas served.

One of her favorite initiatives was the annual awards ceremony, celebrating student and tutor accomplishments. The program showcased tangible results, from students achieving personal goals like obtaining a driver's license or U.S. citizenship to tutors finding fulfillment in their experiences.

When asked about a standout student or moment, Sally emphasized the diverse group tutoring approach LVA, Essex & Passaic Counties adopted. With students seeking assistance for various reasons, it's challenging to pinpoint just one memorable experience. However, Sally highlighted the inspiring work of Ruth Colvin, the founder of LVA in Syracuse, who has earned numerous awards for her contributions to literacy.

For Sally, what sets LVA apart is the flexibility it offers tutors in tailoring their teaching methods to students' unique life experiences, whether helping someone pass a citizenship test or achieve personal goals.

Sally's commitment to literacy is rooted in her lifelong career as a librarian. She recognizes that without literacy, the need for libraries diminishes. She's also an avid traveler who recently returned from a vacation in Cape Cod, a place that has held a special spot in her heart since the 1950s.

Despite shifting funding sources and state grant requirements, Sally remains resolute in her dedication to the program, affirming, "The rewards outweigh the challenges." Her legacy as a champion for literacy continues to illuminate the path forward, reminding us of the transformative power of literacy, one word at a time.