



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 are setting goals and meeting them. Mosammat Akter (right), shown with tutor Laura McLean, is one of the latest LVA students to achieve US citizenship. Read her story next month in **The Insider**.*

The Insider

Greetings LVA family and friends.

Thank you to all who have confirmed their attendance at Literacy Volunteers of America's upcoming **Annual Awards Ceremony**. The event, to be held from 6-8 pm Tuesday, October 21st at the East Orange Public Library, promises to be an evening of enlightening stories from students and tutors. The ceremony includes light refreshments. But the room is filling up so, if you still want in on the excitement, please let us know as soon as possible.

* * *

Don't forget that our tutor support workshop for October will feature Erik Jacobson, a Montclair State University professor and New Jersey Association for Lifelong Learning (NJALL) officer. Erik is the author and principal investigator of the 2013 state report "Investing in New Jersey's Adult Learners." He'll talk to us about the state of illiteracy and adult education in New Jersey and the role we play as tutors. Details on Page 3 of **The Insider**. Please RSVP.

Speaking of NJALL, the organization will present six free webinars this fall - - everything from helping students move forward with the creative process to teaching basic skills by using a wide range of socially relevant themes. Check out a full list and description of webinars at: <http://njall.org/>

* * *

Literacy Volunteers of America expresses its deepest condolences to the family of Patricia McGhee, an LVA tutor since 2005. Patricia, 72, of South Orange, passed away September 25 after a long illness, said her niece, Nicol Bell. Patricia was raised in North Carolina and Newark, NJ. She graduated from Weequahic High School, studied microbiology at the University of New Haven, and worked as a microbiologist for 20 years. But her real passion was education. So Patricia completed the state's alternate route teacher preparation program and taught for years at Louise A. Spencer Elementary School in Newark. Patricia loved to travel, often through international tours arranged by the Newark Museum, where she also volunteered, Nicol said. Despite a disabling illness, Patricia continued her work as an LVA tutor through July 2014. Star-Ledger obituary:

<http://obits.nj.com/obituaries/starledger/obituary.aspx?n=patria-e-mcgee&pid=172629485&fhid=6137>

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
cristhian_barcelos@verizon.net
Russell Ben Ali -Recruitment & Training Coordinator
lvaessex@verizon.net
Monica Celedonio -Student Coordinator
lvpassaic@verizon.net
Jorge Chavez -Data Processing
Debbie Graham -Education Coordinator
lvanewark@verizon.net



Pleasant fall weather made staffing LVA's information table a breeze at HarvestFest in Bloomfield last weekend. Special thanks to tutor Jalaire Craver for an entire day of help.

In the News

To read the stories below, just copy and paste the link into an internet search.

How adult literacy is transforming a village

Adult literacy classes are transforming Waer, a community of 5,000 marginalized members of the Yi minority in south-central China, where 70-percent of women and 45-percent of men cannot read or write. Exhausted from a long day of mountain farming, students nonetheless are enthusiastic about improving their lives through literacy.

http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/craig-and-marc-kielburger/global-literacy_b_5779774.html

20 English words that once meant something different.

Words change meaning all the time. Language historian Anne Curzan examines the phenomenon.

<http://ideas.ted.com/2014/06/18/20-words-that-once-meant-something-very-different/>

Understanding the basics of the common core: An NJ Spotlight webinar.

There are lots of questions about Common Core standards. NJ Spotlight turns to the experts for answers.

<http://bit.ly/1r1rt41>

Mother of Malala Yousafzai, the 17-year-old shot by the Taliban, learns to read and write.

http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/21/world/asia/mother-of-malala-yousafzai-learns-to-read-and-write.html?_r=0

Getting to Know Us

**Arlin, LVA student
Dana Lee Wood, tutor**

This month's "Getting to Know Us" column was written by tutor Dana Lee Wood.

From the beginning, I knew that Arlin was going to be a really special student to tutor. She spent her earliest years in Puerto Rico where her school stressed neither English as a second language nor continuing education for a young girl. But Arlin was determined to get a good education.

As a teenager she moved to New Jersey and was determined to set and meet personal goals, including mastering English.

By the time Arlin entered the LVA program, she was bilingual. She already understood oral and written English, and spoke English very well. However, she needed work on her grammar and written skills so she could pursue an Associate's Degree to enter the medical field.

What first struck me about Arlin was her high motivation. Right from the start she was so conscientious that many weeks we had three 3-hour lessons and she spent as much or more time on homework assignments. No matter how difficult or challenging, Arlin has always met the tasks with her characteristic, "I'll try!"

Because of her intelligence and that motivation, I've seen some really amazing changes in Arlin. When we began in February of this year, she was somewhat shy and reserved. Expressing her opinions and offering suggestions about improving lessons developed as we worked together. We look back on some of her early lessons and homework assignments and see that her progress is nothing short of amazing. Her essays have become well-structured and clear. Now, when we go over them, she is able to self-correct and make notes about the rules for those corrections. I often ask Arlin to write essays based on controversial topics, giving and supporting her own opinion. Although she admits it's difficult for her, she does a great job each time.

I got some insight into Arlin's drive when she described how she trains six days a week in a strenuous Tai Kwon Do program. She is now at the 2 Dan level, meaning she already has two black belts toward a four-belt level, making her a Master. Plus, she runs a household of eight, including an extended family. This fall, she returns to college to pursue her Associate's Degree, with the goal of becoming a Surgical Assistant.

During my tutor training, I learned how important it is to inspire our students. How surprised I always am to find that it is Arlin who inspires me with her dedication and willingness to embark on new learning paths.

We continue our lessons, concentrating on grammar and writing. I know that no matter how difficult the challenges, Arlin will always respond, "I'll try." And she does!

Am I too old to learn a new language? By Mo Costandi, The Guardian

When Adrian Black met his Italian partner 10 years ago, he was determined to learn her home language. Having successively picked up French a decade earlier when he lived in France, he felt the challenge was attainable.

"I was blown away by how hard it was to learn French, but I came back speaking it pretty well," says Black, who is now 50. But getting to grips with Italian has been a much tougher process, he explains: "I feel like French is deep down in my head somewhere, but with Italian it will take a lot more effort for me to get to that level. "I've noticed that my brain isn't as good as it was, and I'm pretty sure I don't retain stuff as well as I used to. It just doesn't all click as easily as it used to."

It's often said that you can't teach an old dog new tricks. Actually this proverb is, for the most part, not true. For much of the history of modern neuroscience, the adult brain was believed to be a fixed structure that, once damaged, could not be repaired. But research published since the 1960s has challenged this assumption, showing that it is actually a highly dynamic structure, which changes itself in response to new experiences, and adapts to injuries – a phenomenon referred to as neuroplasticity.

Collectively, this body of research suggests that one can never be too old to learn something new, but that the older they are, the harder it is for them to do so. This is because neuroplasticity generally decreases as a person gets older, meaning the brain becomes less able to change itself in response to experiences.

Some aspects of language learning become progressively more difficult with age, others may get easier. "Older people have larger vocabularies than younger ones, so the chances are your vocabulary will be as large as a native," says Albert Costa, a professor of neuroscience who studies bilingualism at the Universitat Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona. Picking up a new language's vocabulary is much easier for adults than learning the rules that govern its grammar or syntax.

Full story here:

<http://www.theguardian.com/education/2014/sep/13/am-i-too-old-to-learn-a-language>

About the research:

<http://www.neurology.org/content/early/2013/11/06/01.wnl.0000436620.33155.a4.abstract>



Looking forward to bringing you new and interesting tutor support workshops in the near future. Let us know what themes you'd find helpful. Above: LVA tutor Mary O'Connor, NJALL's 2014 Teacher of the Year, led a recent workshop.

Upcoming Events

Tutor Support Workshops

Please RSVP

"The State of Illiteracy and Adult Education in New Jersey," with Erik Jacobson.

Erik, a Montclair State University professor and secretary of NJALL, will describe in detail the state of illiteracy in NJ and focus on the role of the volunteer tutor.

Bloomfield Public Library
90 Broad St, Bloomfield, NJ 07003,
The Library Theater
Tuesday, Oct. 28, 2014
1:00-2:30 pm

"What Works for You," with Elizabeth Salerno

Elizabeth, a retired school teacher, adjunct college professor and LVA tutor, will lead a roundtable discussion on what techniques work best for tutors and students.

Bloomfield Public Library, 2nd fl Boardroom
Tues. Nov. 4, 2014; 3:00-4:30 pm

Tutor Training Workshops

Bloomfield Public Library
90 Broad Street, Bloomfield, NJ 07003
Tuesdays & Thursdays, 1-4 pm
October 2, 7, 9, 14, 16, 21, 2014
and
Saturdays, 12:15-4:45 pm
Oct. 25, Nov. 8, 15, 22, 2014

Help us fight illiteracy

Thanks in large part to you, we were able to aid hundreds of students last year. Please continue your efforts to improve the lives of others by giving the gift of literacy. You can contribute through our website – <http://www.lyanewark.org/donatotva/> - or by simply sending a check to our address above. All contributions are tax deductible. Thank you for joining us in the fight against illiteracy.