



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



Nora Devine, an LVA tutor and graduate school student who plans to become a reading specialist, shows tutors how to observe, improve and informally assess the reading fluency of adult literacy students. "Fluency and the Adult Basic Literacy Student," a tutor support workshop, was held June 10 at the Bloomfield Public Library.

The Insider

It's been a busy and exciting time at Literacy Volunteers of America, Essex & Passaic Counties.

In the past year we've tried to keep our community connected through a series of startup and enhanced projects, among them *The Insider* e-newsletter, monthly professional development workshops to help support our tutors, an improved website and greater social media presence on sites like Facebook and Twitter.

And there's more coming. As our fiscal year comes to a close at the end of June, we're planning new ventures for the coming year and fine-tuning some that we never got to launch. So if there's something you'd like to see us do, or something you'd like to present to your colleagues, don't be shy. We'd love to hear from you. In the meantime, expect more and better from us in fiscal 2014-15.

State bills introduced to improve vocational education programs

State Assembly Speaker Vincent Prieto (D-Hudson) recently introduced an eight-bill reform package that he said would improve education and New Jersey's economy. Bills in the package would provide greater support for vocational and technical schools as a step to reduce unemployment and prepare a workforce that would attract businesses to the state.

The bills would also require state officials to take a detailed look at adult basic education programs in New Jersey. "That's an important tool, whether it's English as a Second Language or job training," Prieto told *The Star-Ledger*. "Some people who have lost their jobs can go back and get retrained."

According to the state Council of County Vocational-Technical Schools, New Jersey's 21 county vocational-technical schools received 28,160 admission applications for 2013, but could only accept 11,447 students. The schools turned away 17,000 students.

Among the bills is a call for \$50 million in bonds to expand school facilities and establish a grant program to aid vocational-technical schools with enrollment growth greater than 10-percent, *The Star-Ledger* reported. That bill was held for future discussion.

Read the entire story here:

http://www.nj.com/education/2014-05/lawmakers_unveil_8_bills_to_expand_and_improve_nj_vo-tech_programs.html

Literacy Volunteers of America Essex & Passaic Counties

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Margarita Santos, LVA student and new US citizen

In the News

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

Wiping Out Adult Illiteracy

Radio account of a 53-year-old Michigan warehouse worker who went to great lengths to keep his illiteracy a secret. It's a long and detailed story that exposes the problems of illiteracy and covers much of what we do here at LVA.

<https://bit.ly/RYWWEa>

Demand for More Government Aid

Hundreds of NYC demonstrators gathered outside City Hall last week to demand more government aid for adult literacy programs.

<http://bit.ly/1li7LIm>

Common Core, in 9-year-old eyes

Chrispin Alcindor was once a model student, the quickest numbers cruncher in his class. But after the rigorous Common Core curriculum standards were adopted, the Brooklyn 4th-grader failed the state English and Math exams and later found himself at the bottom of his class. The controversial Common Core sets a rigorous education standard meant to help US kids test as well as those in countries like Finland and Singapore. But the gap is great and Common Core's success will depend on whether kids like Chrispin can rise to meet the new demands.

<http://nyti.ms/1kDcrZm>

Getting to Know Us

**Margarita Santos, LVA student,
and Elizabeth Nunez, tutor**

Role play is sometimes overlooked as an educational tool. But over the course of a few months, it proved to be an extremely successful learning method employed by LVA student Margarita Santos and her tutor, Elizabeth Nunez.

In their sessions Margarita appeared as herself, an immigrant from the Dominican Republic and candidate for US citizenship. Elizabeth played the role of the government official who posed challenging citizenship questions to Margarita.

"She gave me the form that she submitted and I pretended to be the immigration officer," said Elizabeth. "And we went over the questions."

The pair began working together in early January 2014. In February, Margarita informed Elizabeth that she'd applied for citizenship and wanted to spend more class time preparing for the test.

Margarita took the test on the morning of April 26. By 2 pm that day she informed her tutor of the results in a text message. She'd aced it.

I was very pleased," Elizabeth said. "But I knew she was going to pass. She knew all the questions. My only concern was that she might get a little nervous in front of the office but I guess that didn't happen."

Margarita who lives in Belleville with her husband and two young children, credited the role play with helping her pass the exam. But not as much as she praised her tutor, Elizabeth, for preparing her.

"If not for her help, I would not have gotten there," Margarita said.

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In Memoriam: Susan J. Barone

We mourn the recent passing of Susan J. Barone, a tutor with Literacy Volunteers of America, Essex and Passaic Counties, for the last two years. Susan passed away suddenly in her Glen Ridge home on June 11; she was 72.

Susan was raised in Newark and graduated from St. Francis College in Loretto, Pa, where she studied history and education. She attended Seton Hall University School of Law at night while teaching social studies at a Newark junior high school during the day. She was a Newark school district teacher for seven years.

In 1973 she was admitted to the New Jersey State Bar. She had a successful private law practice and also served as an assistant county counsel for Essex County, a counsel to the Newark Housing Authority and, for 25 years, as the prosecutor for the Borough of Glen Ridge.

Despite a busy legal career, she found time to volunteer for LVA. She completed training at the Glen Ridge Public Library in March 2012 and was an active and dedicated tutor.

Susan was well-liked and will be greatly missed by the literacy community.

For the Star-Ledger's story on Susan, copy and paste the following link into an internet search. Then click on 'See More' for the full obituary.

<http://obits.nj.com/obituaries/starledger/obituary.aspx?pid=171331705>

UN Study: Cell Phones Can Help Fight Illiteracy

In nations where access to printed materials is scarce, more and more people are using their mobile devices to read, a UN study found.

The study, based on more than 4,000 surveys and interviews from Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Nigeria, Pakistan, Uganda and Zimbabwe, found that one-third of study participants use mobile devices to read to children.

The report found that both men and women read more cumulatively when they start reading on a mobile device, and that lots of semi-literate people search using mobile devices for text that is appropriate to their reading ability.

<http://bit.ly/S4cWFA>

How You Start a Sentence Matters, a 1946 Study Says

And not much has changed, according to the author of this article, particularly when it comes to persuasive writing and use of adjectives.

<http://bit.ly/1px9qPv>

New Urgency Around Adult Education

A group of food service workers on Cape Cod, mostly Brazilian immigrants, participate in an experiment to test new English language-learning video game apps.

<https://www.edsurge.com/n/2014-06-16-new-urgency-around-adult-education>

Here's How Much Your High School Grades Predict Your Future Salary

The effect of a high school diploma on total earnings over the life of a US worker is well-documented. But a new report shows that the slightest increase in a high school student's GPA has a sizeable impact on earnings.

<http://wapo.st/1i0cmYl>

Volunteers Needed

Know someone who might want to help LVA but doesn't have the time to become a tutor? We're always looking for volunteers to help with some of the other duties it takes to make LVA work - - everything from taking photos, posting fliers and making phone calls, to staffing tables at summer fairs or donating bookkeeping and accounting expertise. Please pass on the names of potential volunteers or ask them to contact us in the office. Many thanks, LVA



Elizabeth Salerno, an LVA tutor and college professor, leads a workshop last month on devising student-directed lesson plans.

Upcoming Events

Tutor Support Workshops

Please RSVP

“Reading Across the Curriculum” with Maxine McCormick

Maxine, a McGraw-Hill education specialist, will demonstrate how to apply reading techniques to different academic fields, including civics.

Bloomfield Public Library
90 Broad St, Bloomfield, NJ 07003
Tuesday, July 22, 2014
2nd floor Boardroom
3:00-4:30 and 6:00-7:30 pm

Tutor Training Workshops

Clifton City Hall
900 Clifton Ave, Clifton, NJ 07013
Saturdays, 12-4 pm
September 6, 13, 20, 27, 2014

Bloomfield Public Library
90 Broad Street, Bloomfield, NJ 07003
2nd floor Boardroom
Tuesdays & Thursdays, 1-4 pm
October 2, 7, 9, 14, 16, 21, 2014