



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



*We're gearing up for the 2014 Annual Awards Ceremony, a time when we celebrate students like Alba and Lesly, pictured above at last year's event, and all those students, tutors and others who have generously given their time to LVA. Please join us.*

### Literacy Volunteers of America Essex & Passaic Counties

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## *The Insider*

### Annual Awards Ceremony

Once each year in October, Literacy Volunteers of America, Essex & Passaic Counties, advocates and friends of literacy gather for an annual awards ceremony - - an evening celebration of light refreshments, socializing and acknowledgement of all the people who make LVA work.

The meeting provides an opportunity to meet students and their families, tutors, trainers, staff, board members and others associated with our literacy efforts. The highlights of the evening are surely the personal, and often emotional stories, shared by students who have struggled to learn English, and adapt to a new country, and others who have achieved some level of success in basic literacy.

This year's event will be hosted by Sally Rice, President of the Board of Directors of LVA Essex & Passaic Counties. The details are listed below:

**Event:** Annual Awards Ceremony, LVA

**Location:** East Orange Public Library, 21 S. Arlington Ave. 2<sup>nd</sup> fl, East Orange, NJ 07018

**Date:** Tuesday, October 21, 2014

**Time:** 6-8 pm

**RSVP:** Required. Please call 973-566-6200, ext. 217 or 225, as soon as possible to confirm the number of people in your group. We welcome friends and family.

### Tutor Support Workshops

Special thanks to LVA's Nora Devine and the full house of tutors who attended her Sep. 9, 2014 workshop, "Helping English Language Learners With a Focus on Vocabulary." In October, Erik Jacobson will lead a discussion on "The State of Illiteracy and Adult Education in New Jersey." Erik, a Montclair State University professor of literacy education, will focus on the role volunteer tutors play in adult literacy. Please RSVP.

### Basia Jaworski

On behalf of the LVA family, heartfelt condolences were sent to relatives of Basia Jaworski, an LVA Essex County tutor who passed away last month. Basia, of Little Falls, was a tutor at the Montclair Public Library and a frequent attendee of tutor support workshops. She also was a well-known musician, solo singer, choral music conductor and music teacher. A link to her obituary appears below.

<http://obits.nj.com/obituaries/starledger/obituary.aspx?pid=172206763>



Tutor Stephanie Mazzeo-Caputo (center) with students Fernanda (left) and Dayanna

### *In the News*

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

#### **Here's How Foreign Language Speakers Typically Screw Up English**

Despite a somewhat offensive headline, the article describes how researchers developed an algorithm that can determine one's native language by his English mistakes.

The research could unlock new tools for teaching ESL.

<http://www.businessinsider.com.au/common-esl-mistakes-2014-8>

#### **An Untapped Force in the Fight for Literacy**

There's a lot of disagreement among educators on the best and most useful teaching methods for young students. But two things experts often agree on – Early reading is crucial for a child and any reading curriculum works better if children who are struggling, get the chance to work with a tutor, an untapped force in the fight for literacy.

“If I were a principal, I'd spend my money on tutoring,” said Robin Jacob, an assistant research scientist at the University of Michigan's School of Education.

[http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/09/11/an-untapped-force-in-the-fight-for-literacy/?\\_php=true&\\_type=blogs&\\_r=0](http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/09/11/an-untapped-force-in-the-fight-for-literacy/?_php=true&_type=blogs&_r=0)

#### **Adult Education Classes Help Immigrants Adjust to Life in East Harlem**

Union Settlement Association in New York's East Harlem has long been an adult education advocate, providing a place where immigrants can take English courses, study for the GED or take home health aide certification classes.

<http://www.dnainfo.com/new-york/20140908/east-harlem/adult-education-classes-help-immigrants-adjust-life-east-harlem>

### *Getting to Know Us*

#### **Dayanna and Fernanda, LVA students Stephanie Mazzeo-Caputo, tutor**

*A week of tutoring for Stephanie Mazzeo-Caputo and her students, Dayanna and Fernanda, from the Dominican Republic and Colombia, respectively, often involves multiple sessions. She encourages students to borrow English language books from the library, engage library staff in conversation and practice outside of class. Field trips also are on Stephanie's agenda and she describes one below.*

When I arrived at Bloomfield Public Library, I found my beginner English students checking out books at the circulation desk. The librarian quickly deflated my delight by telling me they were checking out books written in Spanish! She suggested that we visit the Children's Library next door. So I abandoned the day's lesson plan and Dayanna, Fernanda and I went on an impromptu trek to see what beginner English books we could find.

At the Children's Library, we were directed to the Picture Books section. Amidst all the juvenile books, something caught the corner of my eye. I picked up “Museum Shapes,” by The Metropolitan Museum of Art. For the shape ‘oval,’ there was a picture of a beautiful young woman holding an oval hand mirror. Fernanda, an art lover, excitedly shared that she was familiar with the painting “Lady Lilith” by Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Conversation revealed that neither student had ever been to the museum. So we decided to take a field trip to see if we could ‘meet’ Lady Lilith in person.

Our field trip to New York City provided infinite learning opportunities. Dayanna and Fernanda were able to practice reading the train schedule, counting money for the train tickets, talking to the conductor and asking for directions in English, reading subway and street signs, ordering food in English as well as practicing vocabulary words for shapes, colors, emotions, objects and numbers. New York City and the museum were their treasure chests.

For my students, our trip breathed life into the words they have been diligently studying. For example, the one-dimensional, three-letter words we studied to illustrate words ending in the consonant ‘N’ (bun, can) came to life when they saw ‘Hot Dog + Bun’ advertised on a food truck and a ‘Use the trash can’ sign in Central Park. They marveled at the mummies in the Egyptian wing and laughed as they practiced short vowel sounds by exclaiming “Is the mummy a mommy?” And they relentlessly looked for shapes in the architecture, paintings and sculptures all around them.

Finally, we asked at the information desk if the Lady Lilith painting was on display. Serendipity smiled on us. The painting is not part of the permanent collection but is on display through October 26<sup>th</sup> as part of a special exhibit.

I will never forget the look of awe on Dayanna's and Fernanda's faces as they gazed at this beautiful work of art painted two centuries ago. But perhaps the most memorable moment was when I asked them what they liked most about the day. Fernanda replied, “We have a new life. We can speak English without being afraid.”

### What Happens in the Brain When You Learn a Language: The Guardian

by Alison Mackey, a professor of linguistics at Georgetown University and Lancaster University.

Learning a foreign language can increase the size of your brain. This is what Swedish scientists discovered when they used brain scans to monitor what happens when someone learns a second language. The study is part of a growing body of research using brain imaging technologies to better understand the cognitive benefits of language learning. Tools like magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and electrophysiology, among others, can now tell us not only whether we need knee surgery or have irregularities with our heartbeat, but reveal what is happening in our brains when we hear, understand and produce second languages.

The Swedish MRI study showed that learning a foreign language has a visible effect on the brain. Young adult military recruits with a flair for languages learned Arabic, Russian or Dari intensively, while a control group of medical and cognitive science students also studied hard, but not at languages. MRI scans showed specific parts of the brains of the language students developed in size whereas the brain structures of the control group remained unchanged. Equally interesting was that learners whose brains grew in the hippocampus and areas of the cerebral cortex related to language learning had better language skills than other learners for whom the motor region of the cerebral cortex developed more.

In other words, the areas of the brain that grew were linked to how easy the learners found languages, and brain development varied according to performance. As the researchers noted, while it is not completely clear what changes after three months of intensive language study mean for the long term, brain growth sounds promising.

Full article: <http://www.theguardian.com/education/2014/sep/04/what-happens-to-the-brain-language-learning>

Swedish MRI study: At the Swedish Armed Forces Interpreter Academy, young recruits learn a new language at a very fast pace. By measuring their brains before and after the language training, a group of researchers has had an almost unique opportunity to observe what happens to the brain when we learn a new language in a short period of time.

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2012/10/121008082953.htm>

### 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.lvanewark.org/donatetolva/> - 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.



*Nora Devine led tutors in a workshop at the Bloomfield Public Library earlier this month - one that focused on vocabulary tools for English learners.*

## 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 focus on the role of tutors in adult literacy.

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 explore lead a roundtable discussion on what techniques work best for tutors and students.

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

### Tutor Training Workshops

Montclair Public Library  
50 South Fullerton Ave, Montclair, NJ 07042  
Saturdays, 12:15-4:45 pm  
September 20, 27, Oct. 11, 18, 2014

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