



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



Susan Bogda, second from right, Essex County Tutor of the Year for LVA, Essex and Passaic Counties, with some of her students. Photo by Wanda Martinez

The Insider

Mary O'Connor thought she'd doled out the last of her honors to good teachers when she retired as a school principal years ago. But late last month the LVA trainer again found herself at the podium, this time at our annual awards ceremony, where she recognized the endless efforts of a retired high school science teacher-turned tutor extraordinaire.

Susan Bogda has racked up many hours with her students in the year since Mary trained her. Her first student became a U.S. citizen; her second found full-time employment. Both brought their spouses into the group, doubling its size.

"What an accomplishment," said Mary, as she introduced Susan as LVA's Tutor of the Year for Essex County. "This is what tutors do; they help make the lives of their students successful."

About 180 students, tutors, literacy advocates and guests attended the Annual Awards Ceremony, held at the East Orange Public Library and emceed by Sally Rice, Board President of LVA, Essex and Passaic Counties.

It was a night filled with emotional life experience stories heard from students who have worked hard to learn to speak, read and write English and the tutors who help them overcome the obstacles they face. We've posted a few photos of the night on Page 3 and many more on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/LVAEssexPassaicCounty/>

Merit Scholarships: For the first time we were able to offer scholarships to students who put in the most hours of study and advanced the furthest on tests. Details on Page 4.

Support Workshops: Erik Jacobson, of Montclair State University, gave a fabulous presentation on the use of graphic novels to teach adult literacy. If you are interested in using graphic novels with your students and participating in an online group study on the subject, please contact us.

In the News

To view the following story, copy and paste the highlighted website into an internet search

"Alone and Isolated, the Punishment Piles on for Immigrant Detainees" WNYC Radio.

An investigation by New Jersey Public Radio into how immigrant detainees are disciplined at the largest immigration facility in New Jersey reveals a system of punishment with very little rules. <http://bit.ly/1PkyXeh>

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
cbarcelos@lvaep.org |
| Russell Ben Ali | -Recruitment & Training Coordinator
rbenali@lvaep.org |
| Jorge Chavez | -Data Processing Coordinator
jchavez@lvaep.org |
| Debbie Graham | -Education Coordinator
dgraham@lvaep.org |
| Mary O'Connor | -Trainer & Tutor Support Specialist
moconnor@lvaep.org |
| Marisol Ramirez | -Student Coordinator
mramirez@lvaep.org |



Getting to Know Us

**Wesley, LVA student
Jalaire Craver, tutor**

Wesley, Essex County Student of the Year, moves to the beat of his own drummer. Literally.

A Florida native, Wesley made his way to New Jersey playing drums and piano in jazz and blues bands. Somewhere along the way, he did time in prison. But that did not hold him back from making some life changes, like furthering his education.

"I went to different schools as an adult, but I wasn't so much into it as I am now," Wesley said. He's come a long way since he started his studies in 2013. Wesley and Jalaire Craver, his tutor, use the Laubach method, a step-by-step approach to reading that's ideal for some adult learners. When asked how he felt about learning to read as a middle-aged man, Wesley said, "The big fear that is holding you back is always going to come back to you until you get rid of it. You have to pick it up and fight it."

Stanley Ross, a Family Service Bureau counselor and a mentor to Wesley, described him as a hard worker, someone who is persistent and proud of his achievements in literacy. "He brings his homework and shows me he can read," Stanley said. "He's come a long way."

Wesley introduced Jalaire to jazz and in turn she introduced him to poetry with jazz themes. "I play music by ear, but cannot read music," he said, "I blend street knowledge with book learning. You can read a book but may not completely understand it, but still like it. If I like it, I give it a 'thumbs up.'"

As for being on stage again, this time to be honored at the annual awards ceremony, Wesley said, "Everybody gets a little tense when you are going up on the stage with a microphone. I was proud. Learning to read has opened up a lot of doors. It gets you out of the darkness. You can take off that shield that blocks you. I know I am not the only one who is learning to read as an adult. Maybe I opened the doors for a lot of people."

Wesley, right, Essex County Student of the Year, with his tutor, Jalaire Craver. Photo by Wanda Martinez

Tutor Support Workshops

Please RSVP

"Tips & Techniques for Encouraging New Writers"

with Perrine Robinson-Geller

Bloomfield Public Library

90 Broad St, 2nd fl Boardroom,

Bloomfield, NJ 07003

Tuesday, December 8, 2015, 1:00-2:30 pm

"Grammar Basics for You and Your Student" with Elizabeth Salerno

Bloomfield Public Library

90 Broad St, 2nd fl Boardroom

Bloomfield, NJ 07003

Tuesday, January 19, 2015, 1:00-2:30 pm

Tutor Training Workshops

Please spread the word!

Montclair Public Library

50 South Fullerton Ave

Montclair, NJ 07042

Saturdays, 12:15-4:45 pm

January 30, February 6, 13, 20, 2016

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. You can contribute through our website – <http://www.lvanewark.org/donatetolva/> or by mailing us a check.

LVA Annual Awards Ceremony

Our Annual Awards Ceremony provides an opportunity to meet and learn from students, tutors and their families at one place and time.

Among those who shared their thoughts with us was Jorge Rueda, a student at our program at the Passaic Public Library. *“When we came here to the United States as immigrants, we felt really, really alone,”* he said. *“Today we are not alone. We have an institution that helps us, that keeps us going forward. You open the door for many people who want to learn.”*



Tutor of the Year Susan Bogda (Essex County) described her students like this: *“They come every time full of enthusiasm, full of motivation and dedication, and I’m so proud of them and their accomplishments. It’s their friendliness, their enthusiasm that has made it so rewarding for me.”*

Award winners include Students of the Year Carmen Rodriguez (Passaic County) and Gustavo Alasdiaz (Northern State Prison), and Tutors of the Year Carmen Cruz (Passaic County) and Freddy Gonzalez (Northern State Prison). For a full list of award recipients, visit: <http://www.lvaep.org/lvaawardsandrec/>



LVA Scholarships 2015

For the first time we were able to offer scholarships to students. We selected 10 students from Essex and Passaic Counties who, in the last fiscal year, spent the most hours of study with tutors and advanced the furthest on assessment tests. The scholarship amounted to the equivalent of the annual registration fee, which some students donated back to the organization.

Students	Tutors
<i>Ms. Fernanda Contreras</i>	<i>Ms. Stephanie Mazzeo-Caputo</i>
<i>Ms. Maria Pelcastre</i>	<i>Ms. Maire Crowe</i>
<i>Mr. Juan Carlos Ruiz</i>	<i>Mr. Donald Daborn</i>
<i>Mr. Clifford Henry</i>	<i>Ms. Joan Scher</i>
<i>Mr. Nazih Al-Hajari</i>	<i>Ms. Lynn Lilore</i>
<i>Ms. Mariana Nunez</i>	<i>Ms. Mary O'Connor</i>
<i>Ms. Natasha Wayloo</i>	<i>Ms. Karen Kirk</i>
<i>Ms. Elida Roque</i>	<i>Ms. Diana Naspo</i>
<i>Ms. Monica Aviles</i>	<i>Ms. Laura Kieseewetter</i>
<i>Mr. Samer Khouli</i>	<i>Ms. Andrea Thoms</i>

The names of scholarship recipients and their tutors appear above. Photos follow. ***Congratulations to all!***



Tutors: Word has it that some of our students plan to enter the 2016 NJALL Adult Learner Writing Contest. That's great! We'd love to encourage more students to enter and we need your help. Cash prizes and a chance to get their writing published await. Info at <http://njall.org/>