



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



About to graduate: Students from Belitza Lopez's beginning-level ESOL class at the Passaic Public Library will complete their 10-week-long class this week. Congratulations on a job well done!

The Insider

Happy Holidays! As the year comes to a close, we at LVA wish you a joyous and safe holiday season. We appreciate all you do to improve and promote literacy.

The Insider, the monthly e-newsletter of LVA Essex and Passaic Counties, enters its third year with this, our 25th edition. Thanks to all for reading, sending your comments and tips, and otherwise contributing to this monthly effort.

We're proud to announce that LVA Essex-Passaic will offer ESL classes at Berkeley College in Newark, beginning in April 2016. Similar to the program launched earlier this year with Berkeley College in Clifton and the Sussex Educational Foundation, LVA's classes in Newark will be offered at three ESL levels – beginner, intermediate and advanced. They'll meet for 10 weeks, Monday-Thursday, from 6-8 pm, from April 11-June 16, 2016. A second session will run from July 5-September 8, 2016.

LVA is interviewing teachers for the program so please contact us if you know any viable candidates. Fluency in Spanish is particularly helpful for beginning-level teachers but not needed at the intermediate and advanced levels.

The deadline is approaching for the New Jersey Lifelong Learning Association's "2016 Learner Writing Contest." The competition offers cash prizes in five categories as well as an opportunity for a student to see his or her work published. Please encourage your students to enter. Info: www.njall.org

In the News

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

"James Patterson, prolific author, tackles US illiteracy," CNBC

American novelist James Patterson is on a mission. His goal is to get more people to read and to "draw attention" to illiteracy. "People are indifferent and that's crazy," the best-selling author said. "They're not understanding how essential it is, especially reading." <http://cnb.cx/1LZivZC>

"Facing trial for lesser crimes? Try community college" philly.com

Philadelphia District Attorney launches a program that gives people charged with first-time, non-violent felonies an opportunity to go to college rather than jail. Intervention programs offering life and job skills, literacy training and counseling may cost only \$4,000 while a year in prison costs \$40,000. <http://bit.ly/1m7bW2p>

Literacy Volunteers of America Essex & Passaic Counties

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Abir, right, with her tutor, Rick Fairlamb. Abir and her family applied for asylum in the U.S. after fleeing the war in Syria.

Tutor Support Workshops

Please RSVP

“Grammar Basics for You and Your Student”

with Elizabeth Salerno

Bloomfield Public Library

90 Broad St, 2nd floor 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

Free Webinar

Challenger, the adult reading and writing series has gone digital and is now available on your computer.

New Readers Press is offering a free webinar on its use.

Digital Challenger overview: <http://bit.ly/1YUqhNH>

Wednesday, Dec. 9, 2:00-3:00 pm

Register @ <http://bit.ly/1R5ofsO>

Tuesday, December 15, 1:00-2:00 pm

Register @ <http://bit.ly/1LZb308>

Getting to Know Us

Abir, LVA student

Rick Fairlamb, tutor

Abir knew it was time to leave the violence and destruction in her home country of Syria when her seven-year-old son cried, "Please Mom, I don't want to stay here." Outside their window they could see tanks, snipers, and people dying in the streets.

The family's path to the United States began with a move to Lebanon, to live with an aunt, and then to Egypt for a year. When Abir's husband brought their children, then ages eight and four, to the United States for a visit, both children exclaimed, "We want to stay here!" The family applied for asylum and is awaiting a decision. "It takes a long time," Abir said.

The family has lived in New Jersey for more than a year. That is when Abir connected with LVA. Abir and her tutor, Rick, have been working together for more than eight months. They meet in the library so often that our staff lovingly chides them about being charged rent for their frequent meetings and long sessions.

One of Abir's main goals is to connect more with her children's teachers and become familiar with American customs. In October, Rick teased her about becoming fluent in Halloween. "Abir is becoming American very quickly," Rick said.

Abir, a stay at home mom, acknowledges the importance of education. She constantly reads to her children in English to help them build vocabulary. "To be able to freely express yourself is very important," she said. "I am so happy. I like when I can talk to their teachers and their friends." In turn, her children are very proud of their mother's achievements in such a short period of time.

Rick takes his cues for lesson plans from Abir and her current needs. For now, they are working to prepare Abir for the motor vehicle written test. Working towards attaining U.S. citizenship is a future goal. Abir beams with pride when she talks about her tutor. "My teacher supports me a lot," she said. "He stays with me during bad situations. He calls me a superhero. He makes me strong."

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/donate/> or by mailing us a check.

Literacy New Jersey Awards

Outstanding Affiliate

Literacy Volunteers of America, Essex and Passaic Counties has been successfully training tutors for years. They come out of the gate ready to go but many are left wanting more. To further assist our tutors, two years ago we launched a pilot program, our monthly Tutor Support Workshops. Topics range from the state of adult literacy in New Jersey to using the lyrics of folk songs to teach vocabulary and comprehension to adult readers. The workshops provide a forum in which tutors can ask questions of other tutors, teachers, and professionals and receive feedback on techniques used in class. As an extra perk, our workshops evolved into a close-knit support network for our volunteers.

Many tutors said that they found the workshops to be extremely useful and helpful in implementing best practices. Over the past two years, statistics show that student hours with their tutors have increased over 200%; student test scores are up 50%; and student retention for more than a year has increased 20%. Our students are more motivated and better prepared for the workplace, which in turn improves the quality of their lives. This year Literacy New Jersey honored the program with the Alice M. Leppert Award for Outstanding Affiliate Achievement.



Student Excellence

A shy young woman, embarrassed to ask strangers for a bus schedule when she first came to the United States, Peruvian-born Andrea Mego has become a confident individual. "I was brought to the U.S. with my family because I did not want to leave my mother and sister alone in a new country. Now, I am the head of my family. This situation has made me stronger and I know I have to depend on myself." Andrea took it upon herself to assist her mother with everything from filling out forms at the doctor's office to guiding her through the complicated application process that leads to U.S. permanent residence. Since she began this arduous task a year ago, both Andrea and her mother have received their green cards and most recently Andrea attained her driver's permit.

Last June, Andrea began her ESL studies with LVA in our satellite program with Berkeley College. She advanced so quickly that now she has become an LVA office volunteer, is the Spanish language coordinator of the English-Spanish Language Exchange, a pilot project she helped launch for LVA, Essex and Passaic Counties. Recently, Andrea was named "Student of the Year" by Literacy New Jersey and received a standing ovation after her acceptance speech.

Andrea plans to enroll in college and major in journalism. "I see writing as a way to get a positive message out to other immigrants who are trying to find their way in a new country."