



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



Maria Yunga (right) with her tutor, Granvilette Kestenbaum, at the Bloomfield Public Library. Maria has achieved the American dream: She owns her home and works as a Newark light rail train driver. Read her story soon, and others like hers, in the "Students' and Tutors' Corner" section of our website.

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The Insider

Greetings LVA family and friends.

Thank you to all the students, tutors and other volunteers who are braving the snow and frigid temperatures this month in order to help us to reduce illiteracy. Your efforts are appreciated and they're working!

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It's a pleasure to welcome Greg Johnson, a retired photojournalist, to our crew of LVA Essex & Passaic Counties volunteers. Greg will interview students and tutors for our growing participation in social media. So if you see him wandering the library with a camera pack as he looks to capture the dynamic of working students and tutors, please introduce yourself and share your story.

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We're on Instagram! And YouTube, Facebook and Twitter. Follow us as we proudly display, on our social media pages, the results of your hard work. Just click on any of the social media icons at the bottom of our website home page. While on our YouTube channel, check out the radio interview we did last month with Lite FM 106.7 WLTW NY.

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NJALL writing contest: The New Jersey Association for Lifelong Learning has postponed its deadline to February 20th for entries to the 2015 Adult Learner Writing Contest. So if you have students who likes to write, let them know that NJALL will award cash prizes and publish the best submissions for fiction, non-fiction, poetry and memoir writing. For more information: www.njall.org/

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In the News

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

City to spend \$5 million on literacy, language programs: Capital New York. New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio's preliminary fiscal 2016 budget will include more than \$5 million for literacy intervention teams and access to language services for parents, according to the mayor's office. <http://bit.ly/1zBOb5V>



Ryan, shown here with his tutor Margaret Valentine, has made huge strides since joining LVA a few months ago. He's studying for the US citizenship test.

Getting to Know Us

**Ryan, LVA student
Margaret Valentine, tutor**

At age six, while other children were in school, Ryan spent his days cooking, cleaning and helping to care for four younger siblings at home in Jamaica, West Indies. Ryan's parents had encountered tremendous financial hardship at the time and could not afford to send their eldest child to school. But he never lost hope; Ryan was determined to learn to read and write.

Twenty years later, Ryan has a lot to make up for. But his hard work, determination, and the aid of an encouraging tutor, are helping him to catch up quickly. In fact, after four months as an LVA literacy student, he is studying for the United States citizenship test.

"I could not wait to become an LVA student because it was something I always wanted to do," Ryan said. "I got Margaret as a tutor and it could not have gone any better."

Ryan, now 26, came to the United States five years ago, mostly to find a better life through work and educational opportunities. For a living he takes inventory of surgical supplies for a local hospital and he rises at 2 a.m. every morning in order to arrive at work by 4 a.m. He puts in a minimum of eight hours on the job, then makes time to study on his own or meet with Margaret Valentine, a retired teacher and LVA tutor, with whom Ryan was matched last October.

At their first meeting, Margaret expressed her amazement at how well Ryan compensated for his inability to read. "For someone who has had no formal training," he was impressive, she said of her new student.

Margaret introduced Ryan to a picture dictionary and flash cards with consonants. Ryan has a keen memory, a gift that has helped him compensate for his lack of reading skills. When he encountered the consonant flash cards, for example, he was able to list words that started with the same letters contained on the cards. He'd learned these words long ago from young friends in Jamaica and still remembered them, he said. He now knows more than 100 sight words and has a word bank of more than 300 words. He and Margaret are using sample questions from the citizenship test as study materials.

"It has been less than four months and Ryan has come a long way," Margaret said after a recent session at the Bloomfield Public Library. "I can see the road ahead and, as long as my health continues, I will be on that road with him."

Ryan affectionately added, "I am learning a lot. She is a great teacher."

Tutor Support Workshops Please RSVP

"Grammar Basics for You and Your Student,"
with Elizabeth Salerno
Bloomfield Public Library
90 Broad St, Bloomfield, NJ 07003
2nd floor Boardroom
Thursday, March 5, 2015, 1:00-2:30 pm

"Tips for Tutoring Multiple Students in Small Groups," with Mary O'Connor
Bloomfield Public Library
90 Broad St, Bloomfield, NJ 07003
2nd floor Boardroom
Tuesday, April 7, 2015, 1:00-2:30 pm

Tutor Training Workshops Spread the word!

Bloomfield Public Library
90 Broad Street
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10 am – 1:00 pm
March 17, 19, 24, 31, April 2, 7, 2015

Connect with us



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/lva/> or by mailing us your checks.