



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



Elizabeth Salerno presented the second part of her popular tutor support workshop series, "Grammar for You and Your Students, Part 2," at the Bloomfield Public Library last month.

Literacy Volunteers of America, Essex & Passaic Counties

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The Insider

Greetings LVA Family.

As many of you know, the New Jersey Department of Labor recently mandated that adult education organizations around the state increase their hours of instruction for students, under a state plan to implement the federal Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA). At LVA, Essex & Passaic Counties, this means increasing the average student's hours from two to four hours per week, eight to 16 hours per month. Please know that LVA has come up with a number of strategies that will add hours to our students' academic schedules, without overburdening our volunteer tutors. They include workshops and seminars for students, and assigning students to more than one tutor. All we ask is that you bear with us during this adjustment period and, when possible, add what you can to the time you spend with your students.

This is our final week to post-test students who want to continue with our program in the coming fiscal year, which starts July 1. Testing is mandated by the state. We've reached out to all current students but have not heard back from some. Tutors, if you would encourage students to make an appointment to be tested this week, if they have not already done so, it would be greatly appreciated.

This month's tutor support workshop is a little different than most in that it combines literacy and student employment preparation. If you haven't signed up for tomorrow's "Resume Readiness for the Adult Learner," workshop with tutor and career coach Stephanie Mazzeo-Caputo, and you want to attend, please RSVP. Details appear on the next page.

In the News

To view the following stories, copy and paste the highlighted website into an internet search bar.

'Feeling the full-bodied joy of students who got a late start,' New York Times. Graduating high school is always a cause for celebration, particularly when you're over 50. Or 70.
<http://nyti.ms/1UON8Wq>

'Silly talk directed at infants may be more educational than imagined,' Rutgers-University Newark. 'Baby talk' not the best way to teach adult language to infants? A Rutgers study, using mathematical models, says otherwise. <http://bit.ly/1VU4vu8>

'Maplewood Library receives large grant to support ESL classes,' Essex News Daily. Maplewood Memorial Library and LVA Essex & Passaic collaborate on pilot program of ESL classes at Hilton Branch.
<http://essexnewsdaily.com/headline-news/14643>



Giovanni Romeo, an LVA tutor for more than a year, will soon teach ninth-grade history on the south side of Chicago for Teach for America.

Getting to Know Us

Giovanni Romeo, LVA tutor

While many tutors come to Literacy Volunteers of America when their professional careers are winding down, Giovanni Romeo is just beginning his. And what a beginning it is.

After a little more than a year with LVA, Giovanni is setting off for an adventure with Teach for America, a non-profit organization that trains recent college graduates to teach for two years in “under-resourced urban and rural schools.”

His first post will be on the south side of Chicago where he’ll teach ninth-grade history. When asked about the new position, Giovanni said, “I always wanted to have some kind of a positive impact and help people out. LVA has given me a good opportunity.”

Giovanni is a recent graduate from William Paterson University where he majored in history and African Studies. While attending a professional development conference in Washington, D.C., Giovanni had some down time he used to become immersed in the popular book, ‘The New Jim Crowe.’

“In the book, the author wrote about literacy in New Jersey,” Giovanni said. “Data proved that one out of four adults cannot read. These were jarring statistics. When I returned home, I saw a New York Times article referencing Literacy Volunteers of America. I called the Bloomfield office and a month later, I was in a tutor training course.”

Although he felt the training was “wonderful,” Giovanni said sitting down face-to-face with a student was altogether different. “I really did not feel that I knew what I was doing until I started tutoring,” he said. “I am shy to admit that I thought my first meeting was a disaster.” Contrary to his early self-evaluation, Giovanni tutored three students, all of whom progressed rapidly and improved their employment opportunities.

Come June 1, he’ll load up his car and head west to teach a new group of eager students, armed with the confidence he gained through LVA. Giovanni is excited to begin this new chapter.

Tutor Support Workshops

Presenters and ideas wanted!

“Resume Readiness for the Adult Learner”

with Stephanie Mazzeo-Caputo
Bloomfield Public Library
90 Broad Street, 2nd floor Boardroom
Bloomfield, NJ 07003
Tuesday, June 14, 2016, 2:00-3:30 pm

Tutor Training Workshops

Please spread the word!

Bloomfield Public Library
90 Broad Street, 2nd floor Boardroom
Bloomfield, NJ 07003
Mondays & Wednesdays, Sep. 12-28, 2016
10:30 am – 1:30 pm

Free Webinars

Developing Human Capital in the Age of WIOA
Commission on Adult Basic Education (COABE)
Aug. 19, 2016, 2:00 pm EST
www.coabe.org/pdwebinars1/

Background, practical applications and strategies for implementation of the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) which promises to change the face of adult ed.

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.



Latifah, shown here with the word board she created with her tutor, Mary O'Connor.

Getting to Know Us (cont.)

Latifah, LVA student

When Latifah first came to Literacy Volunteers of America, she cried and we cried with her. She could neither read nor write, and getting through the written assessment test was an emotional struggle. Latifah was desperate to learn to read both for herself and her young daughter.

"I first came to LVA because I needed help with my reading and writing," Latifah said. "I was trying to better myself. My daughter was 5 and I wanted to be able to read to her," she added.

Latifah attended school in Newark through 8th grade but the system failed her. Realizing that school was not helping her, she dropped out in the 9th grade.

Upon Latifah's arrival at the LVA office, we met a shy young woman whose eyes were wet with tears. Mary O'Connor, a seasoned tutor with a soft heart, took one look at Latifah and said, "I'll take her."

Latifah has been working with Mary for almost two years. Their relationship goes far beyond tutor-student. Mary is also her mentor and friend. She is always ready with a listening ear and kind heart.

Together, Mary and Latifah have developed an engaging method of study, using a word board. "It is a beautiful, nice board that we made together," Latifah said. "Mary purchased a project board and I put sticky strips on it."

Together they wrote nouns, verbs, and punctuation marks on paper and attached them to the board.

Along with this innovative tool, they also use a phonics book from the series Phonics, Modern Curriculum Level 1. Both methods have proved to be highly successful. "Right now I am reading to my daughter," Latifah said proudly. "I take her to the library and let her pick out books. If I come across a word I don't know, I type it into my phone, and the phone pronounces it for me."

In addition, Latifah is diligent about her homework. "At home I study the words we learned that day. When I come back, Mary is so happy that I know the words." Latifah's success is due to her dedication and that of her tutor. They meet twice per week for two hours each day.

"I have been with my tutor for almost two years," Latifah said. "I am writing sentences and always learning new words. I think I am doing pretty well. I am getting the hang of it now."

When we asked Mary about Latifah's efforts, she smiled and said, "I think she is terrific. She has made such great progress and is dedicated to doing her very best."

'City School District Provides adults with English as a Second Language,' NPR News Buffalo

By Eileen Buckley

A former refugee from Russia is teaching immigrant and refugee adults English. WBFO's senior reporter Eileen Buckley said she is one of the teachers at the Buffalo Public Schools Adult Education Division on Virginia Street.

22-years ago Yelinson arrived as a Russian refugee searching for a new life in Buffalo. Like the men and women she now teaches, Yelinson knows how difficult it is to adjust to living in America.

"Just getting to know the life in this country is the most difficult part of it. Language of course is a huge part of it, because you don't speak English, but everything else, the whole culture is completely different compared to what they used to have in their other countries," Yelinson explained.

Yelinson is a former student of the ESL program. When she arrived, her goal was to get into college. In 2001 she returned as a teacher. "It helped me to be what I am right now. When I came here I didn't speak English so I had to learn English first," Yelinson remarked.

Students rely on Yelinson for help and advice to adjust. Yelinson works in the classroom with Nick Pruyn ... (cont.)

For full story, place web address below into a Google search.

<http://bit.ly/1Uw4LdC>