



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



Uswatun Khasanah, our hard-working office summer intern, is returning to Indonesia to teach English. Uswa is a Fulbright Scholar who studied linguistics at Montclair State University and tutored ESOL students in Bloomfield. She'll be missed!

Literacy Volunteers of America Essex & Passaic Counties

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The Insider

Greetings LVA Family,

Clifford was a recently enrolled literacy student, anxious to connect with other adult learners and get a broader picture of the organization he'd just joined, Literacy Volunteers of America, Essex & Passaic Counties. So he attended the organization's annual awards ceremony.

He had no plans to speak publicly, not until he listened to the inspiring stories that students shared at the event. "When I heard the others express how they felt about getting an education, I had to get up and speak from the heart," he said. His was quite a narrative.

Clifford spoke of dropping out of school as a teenager in Florida and how he managed to establish careers as a restaurant cook and a member of the National Guard and Army Reserve. He'd served more than 30 years in the military, including dangerous stints in Iraq and Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Since joining LVA, he's become a budding author, the winner of a first-place NJALL writing prize for fiction. Still, he said, he regrets not earning a GED, which would have helped him advance his careers.

On Wednesday, October 19, we'll gather again for LVA's Annual Awards Ceremony at the East Orange Public Library and celebrate the hard work of our students, tutors, teachers, and other literacy advocates. You can expect to hear more real and heart-warming stories like Clifford's. Please join us. See Page 2 for details.

With summer's end, we sadly say goodbye to Uswatun Khasanah, our talented office summer intern. Uswa is a Fulbright Scholar from Indonesia who studied linguistics at Montclair State University, tutored ESOL students at the Bloomfield Public Library, and called many of you as an intern in our Essex County Office. She'll return to Indonesia and teach English. We wish her good luck.

In the News

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

'How the Burden of Testing Hits English Language Learners Hard,' Dnainfo.com goo.gl/40F1sv

'Volunteering in middle age and senior years enhances mental health,' British Medical Journal
The blog: goo.gl/0uDatL The study: goo.gl/0DGAMS



Martha, a student at LVA's evening ESL class at Berkeley College, Newark, aims to become fluent in English and enter a college nursing program.

LVA Annual Awards Ceremony

Wednesday, October 19, 2016, 6:00-8:00 pm

East Orange Public Library
21 S Arlington Avenue, 2nd fl
East Orange, NJ 07018

Family and friends invited. Please RSVP

Tutor Support Workshops

"Overcoming the Fear Factor in Writing"

with Catherine Mitch

Bloomfield Public Library
90 Broad Street, 2nd fl Boardroom
Bloomfield, NJ 07003

Monday, October 17, 2016, 1:00-2:30 pm

Tutor Training Workshops

Montclair Public Library

50 S. Fullerton Ave
Montclair, NJ 07042

Saturdays, October 1-29, 2016, 12:15-3:45 pm

Maplewood Memorial Library, Hilton Branch

1688 Springfield Ave
Maplewood, NJ 07040

Tuesdays and Thursdays,
October 6-25, 2016, 1:00-4:00 pm

Getting to Know Us

Martha, LVA student

Martha was only five when she lost her mother to a grueling struggle with cancer and her life took on new challenges.

For one, there was no permanent place to call home as she shifted from one relative's place to another in her native central Ecuador. And attending school was nearly impossible since she was constantly on the move. "My life in my country was really hard," she said.

Eventually, she was sent to live with an aunt, a pharmacist in Guayaquil, Ecuador's largest city about 100 miles away. It was yet another address change, a major one, but Martha was delighted.

"I could go to school," she said. She also worked, sometimes more than she wanted as a schoolgirl. From a young age, she put in long hours working after school in her aunt's pharmacy.

Nearly four decades later Martha is still studying and working. From July to September, she attended an intermediate English as a Second Language class at Berkeley College, a four-night per week program run jointly by the college and LVA. "It's never too late to learn a new language," she said.

Martha said she's dreamed of coming to the United States since she was five years old. Now her goals include becoming fluent in English, fluent enough to study nursing in college, much like she did at a university in Ecuador. "Anything is possible," she said.

In the U.S., she met and married a man from her hometown in Ecuador. He's a cook who works seven days per week. On school days he rushes home to care for their two sons, ages seven and 12, while Martha is still at work, preparing sandwiches and making coffee in a restaurant. He watches the boys while she attends night classes. "He is my support," Martha said. "My husband is my angel."

There's no question, with work, raising children, and night classes, Martha's schedule is exhausting. But she presses on, and hopes to set an example for her children. "When my sons see me tired, they tell me to stay home," Martha added. "I need to teach my sons that you have to be strong. If you start something you have to finish it."

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.



Jacklynn Williams, left, a community mental health nurse-turned tutor extraordinaire, is shown here with student Matenin.

Our View: New federal adult education law leaves too many behind. *Portland Press Herald*

A new federal law has adult education programs in Maine and across the country retooling to stress career readiness. But thousands of adults in our state could be left behind because they lack basic reading skills, and Maine won't be able to build its workforce without additional federal funds for adult literacy education.

Almost everybody can read and write simple sentences. But about 7 percent of Maine adults – over 70,000 people – can't read well enough to grasp information presented in short, simple paragraphs, according to the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy, the most recent comprehensive survey.

And because they can't do things like fill out an application for a new job or earn the post-high school credentials needed to advance in the workplace, people without basic literacy skills remain stuck in low-skilled employment, no matter how hardworking or committed they may be.

Maine's adult education programs – frequently partnering with Literacy Volunteers groups – do the heavy lifting when it comes to helping adults develop these basic skills. But under the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act – passed two years ago and implemented July 1 – adult education is now going in a different direction. In order to qualify for crucial federal funds, adult education providers are being called on to work with businesses and workforce development groups to create specific training programs.

Reprinted from Portland Press Herald (Maine). For full story, copy and paste the following link into an internet search:

goo.gl/9o3rXF

Getting to Know Us (cont.)

Jacklynn Williams, LVA tutor

Jacklynn Williams has been a Literacy Volunteers of America tutor for more than 15 years and shows no signs of stopping. As a matter of fact, working with her students energizes her. "It is extremely rewarding," Jacklynn said, "and you hope you can make a difference in their lives."

Jacklynn first became an LVA tutor right after 9/11. At the time, she was working as a nurse practitioner in community mental health. For 20 years, Jacklynn was employed by the Visiting Nurse Service of New York, both working directly with the clients and, as a supervisor, handling crisis services, case management and geriatric programs.

Jacklynn brings to tutoring her skills of understanding human dynamics and comfort in interpersonal relationships. This is apparent in the devotion and dedication shown by her students. Jacklynn has the unique ability to help people immediately feel at ease. "People who are seeking help in literacy are very apprehensive," she said. "In life, you are blessed if you have a few good friends to talk to."

While always making her students feel comfortable, she is cautious not to let the student/tutor relationship get compromised. "You have to watch that the lines don't get too blurry," Jacklynn said.

Currently, Jacklynn has two very different students. One is gainfully employed, earned a college degree in her native country and needs to further her skills in English. One is a mother of seven children that did not have the opportunity to attend school in her native Liberia and consequently never learned to read or write.

"Working with this population requires a tremendous amount of patience and support for people with these needs," she said. "You hope you can help people develop their skills." Sadly, she notes, "Life has been determined by their literacy or lack of it."

Jacklynn remains encouraged by the work of the LVA program and is still excited about coming to the Bloomfield Public Library three-days-a-week to tutor her students.

"I see other tutors working with the students in the library and it is very inspiring," she said. "People are giving a helping hand."