



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



*Cristhian Barcelos, executive director of LVA Essex & Passaic Counties, led a tutor support workshop last month on "Shaping the Future of Adult Education in New Jersey." See our upcoming schedule of workshops on the next page.*

### *The Insider*

Greetings LVA Family.

Happy New Year! We at Literacy Volunteers of America, Essex & Passaic Counties, wish all of our students, tutors, teachers, fellow advocates of adult education, and others in the literacy community a safe, happy, healthy, and productive 2017.

Have a student who needs advice on an immigration case? Or perhaps he or she is looking for affordable medical, mental, dental, vision, or nutrition services? We hope you'll guide them to our newly enhanced website – [www.lvaep.org](http://www.lvaep.org) – which, among other new features, includes Resource pages for students and tutors. The pages contain links to useful services - - everything from legal services, health care, housing, and tax preparation for students to professional development, lesson planning, and materials for tutors. It's a work in progress and we'll add more dependable links to our site, so please keep checking, and encourage your students to check, for updates.

The New Jersey Association for Lifelong Learning (NJALL) has extended the deadline for 2017 Learner Writing Contest submissions to February 6th. The contest offers cash prizes to first, second, and third place winners in fiction, non-fiction, memoir, poetry, and photography categories. Winners also will have their work published, which can be a great confidence booster for an adult learner. More info available at [www.njall.org](http://www.njall.org)

COABE, the Coalition on Adult Basic Education, offers some interesting free webinars this month. Course descriptions and registration info at <http://www.coabe.org/pdwebinars1/>

### *In the News*

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

**'Information illiterate: Challenges libraries face in this fake news era,'** Salon.com [goo.gl/r7NZ4P](http://goo.gl/r7NZ4P)

**'Immigrants make 200-mile round-trip to study for GED,'** Cronkite News. Arizona law prohibits undocumented immigrants from taking publicly-supported GED classes. So some state residents make the long trek to Phoenix to a class supported by the Mexican consulate. [goo.gl/xX06E9](http://goo.gl/xX06E9)

**'Colvin's literacy movement,'** Baltimore Sun. Ruth Colvin, mother of adult literacy movement, turns 100. [goo.gl/8nqGO5](http://goo.gl/8nqGO5)

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*Luz Nelly, a student from Colombia who, despite child care issues, completed with honors our ESL class at the Bellevue Avenue Branch of the Montclair Public Library. Congrats!*

## Getting to Know Us

### Luz Nelly, LVA student

It's often the first encounters in a new country that leave a lasting impression on recent immigrants. And they are not always positive.

In the case of Luz Nelly, who was raised on a coffee farm in Neiva, Colombia and arrived in the U.S. three years ago, the toughest of those encounters took place in local stores. It was there that her attempts to communicate with merchants, using a beginner's English and a thick foreign accent, turned simple purchases into ordeals.

"They would speak to me with an attitude and say, 'Speak English!'" she said. "You feel like garbage sometimes. It was very difficult for me. But you try not to feel resentment. I would read my Bible, pray, and ask 'God, please help me to speak English.'"

Luz Nelly said she tried to remain positive following those verbal confrontations and not let them influence her one way or another. But one thing was clear, she said: Her English needed to improve. "My husband saw a flyer for Literacy Volunteers of America in a local library," she said.

So last summer, she enrolled in a beginning-level ESL class offered by LVA at the Montclair Public Library - Bellevue Avenue Library branch. But her academic plans were delayed when, unable to find childcare for her 9-year-old daughter and not permitted to bring her to class, she was forced to leave the program just four days later.

"But she didn't let that discourage her," said Maureen Cooper, who teaches Luz Nelly's ESL class at the Montclair Public Library. "She worked out of the book at home and came back in October stronger." And she's something of a workaholic, when it comes to learning English, and that's not a bad thing. Besides the ESL class in Montclair, Luz Nelly has studied English at Essex County College, at her church on Saturdays, and she meets regularly with an LVA tutor.

"Luz Nelly is a very hard worker," said Sally Fillmore, her tutor at LVA for more than 15 months. "She spends a lot of time doing homework for her classes, and also is very invested in her young daughter's education." Her daughter's education is her first goal, Luz Nelly said, but close behind on her list of goals are obtaining U.S. citizenship, a GED, and studying nursing. "I want to participate fully in life in this country," she said.

## Tutor Support Workshops

### "Using Poetry to Build Language Skills and Vocabulary"

With Margaret Valentine

Bloomfield Public Library, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor Boardroom  
90 Broad Street, Bloomfield, NJ 07003  
Tuesday, February 7, 2017, 1:00-2:30 pm

### "Teach Vocabulary with Pictures,"

with Mary Kao

Bloomfield Public Library, 2nd floor Boardroom  
90 Broad Street, Bloomfield, NJ 07003  
Tuesday, March 21, 2017, 1:00-2:30 pm

## Tutor Training Workshops

### Montclair Public Library

By Mary Kao

50 South Fullerton Avenue, Literacy Room  
Montclair, NJ 07042  
Saturdays, 12:15 pm – 3:45 pm  
January 28, February 4, 11, 18, & 25, 2017

### Belleville Public Library

By Nina Peyser

221 Washington Avenue, Teen Center  
Belleville, NJ 07109  
Tuesdays & Thursdays, 12:00-3:00 pm  
March 7, 9, 14, 16, 21, & 23, 2017

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*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.*



*David Baumbach, a photographer who has captured the images of celebrities and city politicians, was inspired to become a tutor by his sister-in-law, a teacher.*

## Will NJ's undocumented students be punished for following the rules? *NJ Spotlight*

By Hank Kalet

They signed up for a program that deferred deportation — one that President-elect Trump wants to dismantle. Will the government use their personal data to track them down?

Idrissa Kaba, 23, emigrated from Guinea in West Africa in 2000, when he was seven years old. He grew up in the United States, and graduated from high school in Newark. He has attempted to attend Essex County College, but repeatedly ran into financial issues that interrupted his studies.

His mother helped, but it wasn't enough. As an undocumented immigrant, not only did he not qualify for college aid or in-state tuition, he couldn't work legally in the United States to help offset the cost of his education.

"There were semesters that I had to take off because I couldn't make the payments," he said.

That changed in 2013 when New Jersey allowed undocumented students to qualify for in-state tuition, and perhaps more importantly, a new federal deferred action program was put in place. President Barack Obama created the program in June 2012 when he issued an executive order that deferred legal action against people like Kaba — undocumented immigrants who were brought to the United States as children or young teens. Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) allows undocumented immigrants who were between 16 and 30 in 2012 ...

*Reprinted from NJ Spotlight. For full story, copy and paste the following link into an Internet search: [goo.gl/7kEAzB](http://goo.gl/7kEAzB)*

## Getting to Know Us (cont.)

David Baumbach, LVA tutor

Photographer David Baumbach communicates not only with pictures but words as well. And what words he has. An LVA tutor for more than 5 years, David has worked with students from all over the globe and enjoys every minute of it.

"I like to work one on one with people so I can address their individual goals. I don't like crowds. That is why I spent most of my life in a dark room," David said. He has helped many students pass their citizenship test but one of his fondest memories is of a native English speaker with limited literacy skills who had never written a letter and wanted to learn how. David and Lakeva began a long history of correspondence.

"I came in with stationary, envelopes, and stamps," David remembered. "I helped her with the format of writing and addressing a letter, and even showed her where to place the stamp. First I wrote a letter to her and she returned the gesture." Lakeva's skills developed and David had another technique to add to his tutoring bag of tricks. Currently he is working with a young woman from the Dominican Republic and she has recently entered employment.

A lover of the English language, when David is not holding a book, he is holding a camera. David has photographed celebrities such as Matthew Broderick, Sarah Jessica Parker, and Kenneth Lonergan (most recently of Manchester-by-the-Sea fame), and New York City notables like Mayor David Dinkins and the late Mayor Ed Koch. David attended Fordham University and graduated with honors.

David's interest in tutoring was sparked by his sister-in-law, a volunteer English teacher in Manhattan. "She inspired me," he said. "I have always enjoyed teaching or volunteering. The people who come to LVA are living in very limited circumstances and if I can help students assimilate into American life in some small way, it is very rewarding."

## Tutoring Tips

*The following suggestions for news sites to help ESL students come from LVA tutor Patricia Runkle.*

<http://learningenglish.voanews.com/z/4652.html>

Voice of America site contains news stories in three levels, similar to 'News In Levels,' and includes videos.

<http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/simple-english-news.html>

Breaking News English includes reading examples that scroll the screen at 3-speeds, text jumble activities, and links to exercises at different grade levels.

<http://www.thetimesinplainenglish.com>

Times in Plain English features news of interest to ESL students.

### *Adult Literacy & Community Library Partnership Pilot Program*

*The Adult Literacy and Community Library Partnership is a state pilot grant program that aims to create direct partnerships between local libraries and adult literacy service providers. Together, libraries and literacy organizations provide training or language instruction that help New Jersey residents increase their Adult Basic Education and language proficiency skills in order to enhance their chances of finding employment outside of the low-skilled job market.*

*Funds were granted to 11 libraries throughout the state, including Maplewood, Montclair, Passaic, and Paterson, which work with LVA to offer intensive ESL classes.*

*Congratulations to all the hard-working students who last month completed those 10- and 12-week-long ESL classes. The students, who hail from five of the world's seven continents, celebrated the final day of classes with potluck meals, speeches, toasts (soda only), and music.*

*At the Hilton Branch of the Maplewood Memorial Library, teacher Jasmeet Kaur led students in a celebration of dance and song from India, Haiti, and Colombia.*

*"The people come from different countries, speak different languages, and they all have different stories," said Martha, who wore the yellow, blue, and red colors of her native Colombia to Jasmeet's first-level ESL class. She told students about her country and danced to Cumbia, a music genre popular in Latin America. Her classmates are from Haiti, Ivory Coast, Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, and other countries. "In the end, everyone spoke and understood better," Martha added. "And the teacher is very organized."*

*At the Bellevue Avenue Branch of the Montclair Public Library, Luz Nelly, a student from Colombia, said her instructor, Maureen Cooper, made learning English enjoyable. "The teacher is excellent," Luz Nelly said during the final day's celebration. "She explained everything, she made it seem simple."*



### *Adult Literacy & Community Library Partnership Pilot Program*

*At the Reid Memorial Branch of the Passaic Public Library, Angelica, a student from Ecuador, said she spoke almost no English when she arrived in the U.S.*

*“This class has helped me to understand people around me,” she said of Lidya Mikhail’s level 2 class. “I started to notice that I can understand TV news better than before. I better understand whatever I read too. I can find things faster when I go to the supermarket or to the mall.”*

*Theresa DeNoia, who led the ESL class at the Paterson Public Library’s Southside Branch, identified a married Turkish couple as a model for what the grant program, or any ESL program, was meant to be: students who attended every class, were eager and willing to work hard and learn, and then move on to a more advanced level class. “From day one, they have been eager to learn the English language and put forth, and they exhibited great effort,” Theresa said of the couple, Rafik and Gonul. “They are able to communicate with their family in English and both are proud of their success.”*

