



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



*Faleeha Hassan helped tutors know how it feels to be a new immigrant and not understand the language at our Tutor Support Workshop in October.*

### *The Insider*

Greetings LVA Family,

The Annual Awards Ceremony is always an incredibly moving night and this year was no different. Students and tutors work tirelessly to master literacy and we love to honor their commitment at our yearly event.

LVA EP Annual Award Ceremony continued its successful run with a full house of students and tutors on October 16, 2018 at the East Orange Public Library. Families and friends turned out to support the hard work of the students and tutors honored that night. Every last cookie was eaten and certificates were awarded during this fun evening and pictures of the event are in this issue of the Insider.

The Students of the Year, Edilma and Gurpreet are great examples of what our students can accomplish with study and commitment to LVA. We ask a lot of our students because we know what is possible. Our Tutors of the Year, Robin Furrey and Belitza Lopez have found ways to reach their students and help them thrive.

In this issue of *The Insider* you'll also meet student Betty who persevered on her circuitous path to LVA and is now reading with her daughters. Tutor Dean Garcia remembers a few yawns when he first taught his students, but now some are graduating from the program.

There's a really interesting story about how immigrants eat changes very diversity in their gut, check out the story below.

### *In the News*

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

**'What literacy skills do students really need for work?'** Education Week. <https://bit.ly/2QcGLBZ>

**'Woman fighting high illiteracy rates in Cleveland through the powers of superheroes in comic books'** News 5 Cleveland. <https://bit.ly/2Px3Jai>

**'Adult illiteracy as a workforce barrier: 3 in 10 Buffalo adults are "functionally illiterate."** WKBW Buffalo <https://bit.ly/2PEWjlq>

**'Adult literacy? There's an app competition for that'** StreetSenseMedia.org <https://bit.ly/2qnbPUJ>

**I never knew how to spell my name: Women who refuse to let illiteracy stop them'** Refinery29.com <https://r29.co/2oYFRNG>

#### Literacy Volunteers of America Essex & Passaic Counties

90 Broad Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Bloomfield, NJ 07003  
(973) 566-6200, ext. 217 or 225

195 Gregory Avenue, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Passaic, NJ 07055  
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*A busy working mom with two young children Betty was frustrated because she couldn't speak English. "I came to LVA to learn more English.."*

### Tutor Support Workshop

#### **"Understanding Adult Education," with Crishtian Barcelos**

Bloomfield Public Library  
90 Broad Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Boardroom  
Bloomfield, NJ 07003  
Thursday, December 6, 2018, 1:00-2:30 pm

#### **"Grammar With Your Students," with Mary O'Connor**

Bloomfield Public Library  
90 Broad Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Boardroom  
Bloomfield, NJ 07003  
Tuesday, January 8, 2019, 1:00-2:30 pm

### Tutor Training Workshops

#### **Bloomfield Public Library – by Sable Lomax**

90 Broad Street, Second Floor Boardroom  
Bloomfield, NJ 07003  
Tuesdays, 10:00 am–1:00 pm  
February 5, 12, 19, 26, March 5, & 12, 2019

#### **Montclair Public Library – by Mary Kao**

50 South Fullerton Avenue, Literacy Room  
Montclair, NJ 07042  
Saturdays, 12:15-3:45 pm  
January 26, February 2, 9, 16, & 23, 2019

### *Getting to Know Us*

#### *Betty, LVA student*

Like many a doting mother, Betty's priorities have always been the well-being of her family. And, like many an immigrant mom, she found that spending time with her children and working to help her husband support them, left little time to learn English. But, Betty never stopped trying.

Eventually she found herself at the Literacy Volunteers of America Essex & Passaic Counties office in 2016 and today has a job in the school system that allows her to both help support her family and spend time with her children after school.

But, finding LVA was not a straight path. Betty attempted to learn English at a school in Newark. That did not last long, as she stopped classes to stay home with her first child. "I stopped classes because I was pregnant," she said. I wanted to be home with my baby."

Betty, a Peruvian native, met Jorge Chavez, LVA's Data Processing Coordinator since 2014, at a social event in 2004 when she first came to the United States. Both being from Lima, they had more than language in common. Jorge was friends with Betty's husband.

Fast forward to 2016 when Betty walked into the LVA office at the Bloomfield Library. Who was the first person to greet her? Jorge Chavez. He asked, "How did you get here?" "My husband brought me. I felt frustrated because I couldn't do the things I used to do. I know I had a lot of knowledge and skills I could use in Peru and could not do here because I could not speak English. I came to LVA to learn more English, especially to improve my speaking," she said.

And, that she did. After two years of study with her tutors and also taking classes at Berkeley College, one of LVA's satellite programs, Betty will soon be testing out of the LVA program.

This mother of two young ladies has worked hard. She practiced English when her children were asleep. Now that their daughters are school age, they practice English with her.

Instead of returning to her 10-year career in accounting, Betty is now working as a substitute teacher and has the same schedule as her daughters. "They need me now," she said.

*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.*



## **“The Ecosystem in Immigrants’ Guts is Shaped by the Place They Call Home”**

New York Times  
By Steph Yin, November 8, 2018

Bodies that migrate across borders undergo tremendous change. Immediately, feet alight on alien terrain, ears channel novel sounds and noses breathe in unfamiliar scents. More gradually, daily routines fall into new rhythms, cultural norms hybridize and dreams evolve.

Another transformation occurs deep within the body, two recent studies from the Netherlands and United States find, as the trillions of microbes that live in the human digestive system shift in composition.

While many factors may influence how this change occurs, the studies suggest that scientists should consider individuals’ migration status and ethnic origin as they aim for clinical interventions based on the gut microbiome.

Researchers are trying to understand what governs gut microbial composition, in part because of increasing evidence that the trillions of microorganisms teeming in our guts influence health in myriad ways. Most chronic diseases have been tied to deviations in gut microbiome, though the specifics of cause and effect still need to be parsed out.

The first study, published in *Nature Medicine* in August, compared the gut microbiomes of adults from Amsterdam’s six largest ethnic groups.

*Reprinted from The New York Times. For full story, paste the following link into an Internet search bar: <https://nyti.ms/2JYeIEe>*

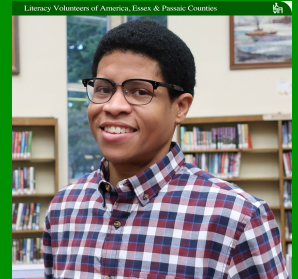
*Learning a new culture is more than studying a language. Tutoring is more than learning techniques. Our ‘Resources’ page covers everything from legal matters, health care, & scholarships for immigrants, to professional development for tutors. Give us a look @:*

<https://www.lvaep.org/students.html>

## **Getting to Know Us (cont.)**

Dean Garcia LVA tutor

While LVA tutor Dean Garcia likes to consider himself a behind the scenes guy, his results are front and center with his students at LVA Essex & Passaic Counties. Dean Garcia works full time at an exposition company managing their IT infrastructure. “I like to say, ‘I am your IT guy. I keep everything going behind the scenes.’”



And keeping everything going behind the scenes is exactly what Dean does with his Literacy Volunteers of America Essex & Passaic Counties students. Dean has only been a tutor a little over one year and what an impact he has made in that short time.

Dean tutors a group of five women from various backgrounds who come together every Tuesday night with one common goal: to improve their English.

“I have a couple of students that will test out of the LVA program this year,” he said. “When one of my students started, she could barely understand English. Soon, she will be leaving us. She has really excelled. She stated that she is very happy but a little sad at the same time. That is always great to hear.”

Dean found out about LVA from where else, but Google. “I was looking on my computer for great volunteer opportunities in Bloomfield, New Jersey. I read about the program and it sounded like they were doing some pretty worthwhile stuff. I thought maybe I could, too.”

Dean soon signed up for training and recalled that he “thought it was pretty overwhelming at first, but since working with the LVA office, and receiving such wonderful support, I felt a little more comfortable.”

Prior to coming to LVA, Dean graduated from U Penn with a degree in sociology. Over a decade later, he was able to put what he referred to as ‘soft skills’ to work.

The needs of the students captured Dean’s heart and mind. “They really want to learn,” Dean said. “That motivated me to be a good tutor.” Dean added that he is happy that LVA students feel safe that they have a place where they can practice their English skills.”

“I remember my very first class,” he said. “I got a couple of yawns. After listening to the students tell what their goals are, I try to be flexible and listen to what they want.”



### *2018 Annual Awards Ceremony Literacy Volunteers of America, Essex & Passaic Counties*

*At our Annual Awards Ceremony at the East Orange Public Library last month, students, tutors, instructors, and teachers were recognized for the time they'd devoted to their sessions and for their personal goals and achievements. Award winners came from programs and libraries in both counties, including programs with our partners at, Sussex Educational Foundation & Berkeley College, and the NCC-Adult Learning Center.*



*Students and tutors were awarded for their hours and personal achievements, including as Students of the Year from Essex and Passaic Counties, Edilma and Gurpreet. The Tutor of the Year from Essex County and President's Award winner was Robin Furrey and from Passaic County Tutor of the Year was Belitiza Lopez*



*Culture shock can feel overwhelming at first, but with LVA EP, some students find their way with new friends at tutoring and in their community. Two students who met at a table in the Bloomfield Public Library came from different countries, languages and faiths, now call each other 'sister'.*



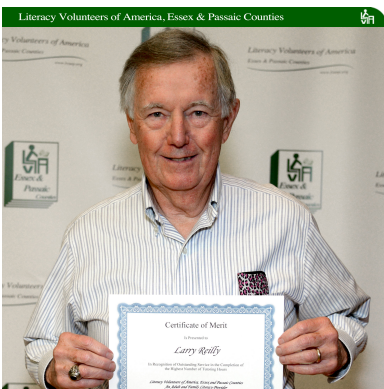


### *2018 Annual Awards Ceremony Literacy Volunteers of America, Essex & Passaic Counties*

*One student is learning English with the help of a new magnifier that enables her to see text with her visual impairment, all because of her tutor who helped her secured it. Tutoring offers so much more than a language exchange for both to tutors and students.*



*"The students make a personal commitment to tutoring considering they work long hours and have family commitments. It is such a viscous cycle. If you can't learn the language, you can't improve your life conditions," a tutor said. "I am impressed with how seriously they take the program."*



***Congratulations to all of our students, tutors, instructors, teachers, and affiliate organizations!***