



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



"Understanding Adult Education in New Jersey," a tutor support workshop with Cristhian Barcelos, provided tutors with an inside look at adult education efforts in the Garden State.

The Insider

Greetings LVA Family,

They say a new year is like a new page to start from anew, one on which to write an optimistic new chapter of your life. We hope the new year brings you plenty of opportunities to write a tale of happiness, hope, and success. Happy New Year!

The New Jersey Association for Lifelong Learning (NJALL) and other adult advocacy organizations are fighting to oppose proposed federal cuts to adult basic education programs and they could use our help. The organization urges you to join the COABE (Coalition for Adult Basic Education) Invest in Adult Education campaign by contacting your members of Congress, governor and mayor to get them to support Adult Ed. And it's easy to do with a couple of clicks on COABE's website link:

<https://www.coabe.org/legislative-center/>

Thank you Cristhian Barcelos, for an informative tutor support workshop last month on "Understanding Adult Education." Cristhian, the executive director of LVA Essex & Passaic Counties, provided tutors with an inside look at the work organizations carry out to improve adult literacy across the state. For the next tutor support workshops, please see Page 2 of this e-newsletter.

The government this week began accepting renewal requests from recipients of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. But the future of the federal program that grants temporary protection from deportation for undocumented immigrants brought to the U.S. as children is far from certain. These links provide general information on the program, as well as a perspective from NJ.

<https://goo.gl/3TK155>
<https://goo.gl/DzRESq>

The tutor support group will meet Tuesday, January 23rd, 12:30-2:00 pm, at Park United Methodist Church, 12 Park St, in Bloomfield.

In the News

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

'This infographic shows which languages are hardest for English-Speakers to Learn,' Science Alert.
<https://goo.gl/SRGUXa>

'The bilingual brain; Why one size doesn't fit all,' bigthink.com <https://goo.gl/7ShGKP>

'Michigan veteran earns his high school diploma at age 91,' The Suffolk Times. <https://goo.gl/FzFNir>

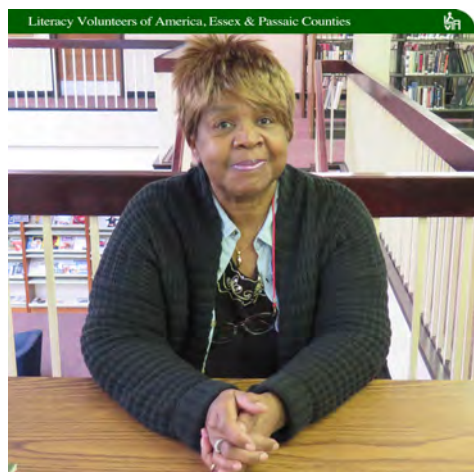
'What it's like to love someone in a second language,' hellogiggles.com <https://goo.gl/zUK3vZ>

Literacy Volunteers of America Essex & Passaic Counties

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

195 Gregory Avenue, 2nd Floor, Passaic, NJ 07055
(973) 470-0039

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| Cristhian Barcelos | -Executive Director
cbarcelos@lvaep.org |
| Russell Ben Ali | -Recruitment & Training Coordinator
rbenali@lvaep.org |
| Jorge Chavez | -Data Processing Coordinator
jchavez@lvaep.org |
| Debbie Graham | -Education Coordinator
dgraham@lvaep.org |
| Mary O'Connor | -Trainer & Tutor Support Specialist
moconnor@lvaep.org |
| Marisol Ramirez | -Student Coordinator
mramirez@lvaep.org |



Shalga is determined to earn a high school diploma, even at the age of 76. She studies daily, has two LVA tutors, and is enrolled in two different adult education programs.

Tutor Training Workshops

Montclair Public Library

-by Mary Kao

50 South Fullerton Avenue

Montclair, NJ 07042

Saturdays, 12:15-3:45 pm

January 27, February 3, 10, 17, & 24, 2018

Belleville Public Library

-by Nina Peyser

221 Washington Avenue

Belleville, NJ 07109

Tuesdays & Thursdays, 12:00-3:00 pm

March 13, 15, 20, 22, 27, & 29, 2018

Tutor Support Workshops

“Strategies for Teaching Decoding and Word Analysis Skills to Adult Literacy Students”

with Nora Devine

Bloomfield Public Library

90 Broad Street, 2nd Floor Boardroom

Bloomfield, NJ 07003

Wednesday, January 24, 2018, 1:00-2:30 pm

“How to Address Reading Needs for Your Students and Lead Them To Success”

with Bethany Blankenbeckler

Bloomfield Public Library (address above)

Tuesday, February 27, 2018, 1:00-2:30 pm

Getting to Know Us

Shalga, LVA student

At age 76, there may seem like there's no practical reason for Shalga, an LVA student, to earn a high school diploma.

Her working life is likely over, her daughter and five sons are grown and college educated, and there are no universities she seeks admission to, at least not for now. But the septuagenarian is at it five days per week, studying with two LVA tutors and enrolled in a Newark academy that focuses on rigorous instruction.

"I really feel good about what I have done," said Shalga, adding that her education is a personal goal. "If I didn't go, I would be sitting here as a TV bug, watching TV and drinking soda on the couch."

And she has a lot to feel good about. She recently advanced a grade level as an LVA basic literacy student and received a B in English and an A in World History at her second institution of learning.

Not long ago, she was enrolled in the GED program at Essex County College. It was there that she realized she needed extra help.

"I was handed the name of a different school and different organizations and LVA was on there," she explained. "My reality became I need to know English better."

Shalga started with her first tutor, a woman who was much younger than she, but Shalga was not at all intimidated. As a matter of fact, this student, who stands at about 5' 10" is not intimidated by much of anything.

Prior to staying home with her children, Shalga was a psychiatric aide in a hospital and also worked for the health department where she presented lectures on education and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases.

Shalga's nowhere near the oldest person to go for a HS diploma. In 2007, Evie Eaves of Amarillo, Texas earned her GED at age 97. A Michigan man recently earned his GED at age 91, and an Oklahoma woman earned hers at 78, after failing the test's math portion four times.

For Shalga, her secret to her success is simple, yet so hard for many of us to do. "You have to love yourself first," Shalga explained.

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.



“Idiomatic English means Brits struggle to communicate with the world.”

The Telegraph (London)

By Olivia Rudgard, correspondent, December 14, 2017

It's a theory which is bound to put the cat among the pigeons. The British are proud of the idiomatic humour of their language.

But an academic has argued that they are actually falling behind because they insist on using phrases that the rest of the world does not understand.

Professor Jennifer Jenkins, chair of Global Englishes at the University of Southampton, says that people who speak English as a first language are bad at changing their speech to suit non-native speakers, meaning they struggle to be understood.

The divide means those who speak English as a second language speak it very differently to native speakers - and the two groups are increasingly unable to understand each other, she argues.

Native speakers are also unwilling to make allowances for others by changing their speech patterns or slowing them down - meaning they struggle to socialise with non-native speakers who are better able to communicate with each other in English than they are with the British.

The dynamic means the two groups could be unable to understand each other in as little as a decade - putting native speakers at a disadvantage with the rest of the world.

In one case she interviewed Hungarian, German and Italian students who said they could speak to each other with perfect ease but only had trouble when a native English speaker joined the conversation.

Reprinted from *The Telegraph (London)*. For full story, paste the following link into an Internet search: <https://goo.gl/zy2S3q>

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 @:

<http://www.lvacp.org/students.html>

Getting to Know Us

Bethany Blankenbeckler, LVA tutor

By Ellen Rooney Martin

Bethany Blankenbeckler has teaching in her bones. Both her parents are teachers, and she is so obsessed with the craft that she can rattle off the names of educational philosophers such as John Dewey, Jean Piaget, and Leve Vygotsky. But it wasn't always that easy.



She struggled with reading as a child as a result, ended up being home-schooled rather than have her pegged as a special education student and possibly hurting her self-esteem.

By middle school Bethany was ready to attend a private school. It turned out to be a great experience, and she thrived both academically and socially, saying she still has many friends from school.

“I never wanted to be a teacher,” said Bethany, who ended up with multiple degrees and a teaching style guided by educational philosophers, in which she helps students learn by understanding their experiences and how that relates to learning. “I like to share that story with my students because it makes them feel more at ease,” she said.

After high school, she earned two concurrent undergraduate degrees at Arcadia University, one in elementary education and another in early childhood education. A teaching internship in a rural school in Uganda opened her eyes to teaching children based on their experiences. “It was awesome,” she recalled. “I learned a lot about how culturally relevant lessons really matter.”

After her first child was born she went on to get a master's degree at Hunter College in literacy in school-age children, inspired by her own literacy struggles. Now she has two young children and is an early education specialist for New York University in Brooklyn. She's responsible for professional development, sharing skills and strategies with teachers. Her emphasis is on the whole child, and she also runs workshops helping parents learn to teach their children long-term social skills.

She has been with LVA for nearly a year and is proud that her students converse with each other and two have found employment.

Adult Literacy & Community Library Partnership Pilot Program

There's a lot one can learn in an English class for adults, and it's not all gathered from repeating phrases or doing substitution drills and homework. There's much that can be learned from classmates who come from all over the world, said Polatkan, a student from Turkey.

"Maybe we don't have enough money but we feel richer because we've learned about different countries, cultures, a lot of traditional foods, music, dances, and habits," said Polatkan, a retired sales manager who attended ESL classes along with his wife at the Hilton Branch of the Maplewood Memorial Library.

Polatkan's class was offered through the Adult Literacy and Community Library Partnership, 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 libraries throughout the state, including Maplewood, Passaic, and Paterson, which work with LVA to offer intensive ESL classes. The program is now in its second year. One round of classes in Maplewood, Passaic, and Paterson ended in December and new classes began this month.

"Before I felt like I couldn't talk, couldn't hear, nothing," said Eugenia, a Hilton Branch student from Haiti who found work in a bakery. "Now I'm able to communicate better with people at work. On my job, if I can't talk, I wouldn't have the job."

The last day of classes in the three libraries saw a mix of presentations by students, farewell speeches, gifts to teachers, a smorgasbord of dishes from students' countries, laughter and tears.

"I'm so sad because this class is over," said Alona, a Hilton Branch student and ecologist from the Ukraine.

"Before I didn't speak English and knew maybe one person who spoke English," added Polatkan. "Now I know 30 people who speak English. I am 54 years old and I am late, maybe, but I can do it. I never give up!"



Adult Literacy & Community Library Partnership Pilot Program (cont.)

The support of classmates can be vital for adults who try to manage their studies while demands from jobs, child-rearing, financial issues, or health issues, compete for their time.

Support certainly hasn't hurt Ibtissam and Hafida, two Moroccan-born women who attended ESL classes in Paterson. The friends start each weekday morning by sharing a breakfast of mint tea and Moroccan bread dipped in argon oil before heading off to class and they credit their friendship with helping them avoid the loneliness that new immigrants often face. "We are so happy together," said Ibtissam. They also study intensely and are always ready to help their classmate, said Jalaire Craver, their teacher at the Paterson Public Library. "Ibtissam and Hafida are pursuing the American dream, and enjoying each other's company and support along the way," Jalaire said.

Several students said they enrolled in the classes in order to better help their children or to advance on their jobs.

Milena, a student at the Passaic Public Library's ESL program, is a Colombian-born woman who has lived in the U.S. for 20 years. She has spent much of her adult life working in factories where everyone spoke Spanish. "Everybody around me talked my language and I didn't feel the pressure" to learn English, Milena said. Her motivation for enrolling in English classes was her 11-year-old twin boys, whom she wants to better communicate with and help, in English. "She shared that she went to a parent-teacher conference at her children's school and, for the first time, she didn't have to ask for an interpreter," said her teacher, Grizzly Matias.

Robert came to the U.S. mainland from Puerto Rico in 1990, along with his wife and son. His degree in engineering and computer science helped him land a job with a company that builds specialized parts for military aircraft and boats but his lack of English meant limited opportunities for advancement or mobility. Within weeks of enrolling in ESL classes in Passaic, he reported feeling more confident, engaging in more conversations with his bosses, receiving a promotion to a higher paying position, and interviewing for other jobs. "He now has choices he would have not dreamed of before because of the lack of English," said his teacher, Belitza Lopez.

