



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



*Tutor Dan Barenholtz tries out the new LVA iPads with student Aliana during their tutoring session earlier this month.*

## *The Insider*

Greetings LVA Family,

Have you been up to our office lately? Come by and try out the new iPads for tutors and students to use. Just leave a photo id with us and you can check out one of the newest tools in literacy and ESL training that we offer here at LVA. Our iPads are loaded with useful apps for learning, listening, watching and imagining the world. For instance, have you ever thought about the stars in the sky as a conversation starter with your students? On our iPad, open Sky View Lite and watch the constellations appear in their stunning glory. We'll show you how to use the iPads and the apps and if you know any other apps we should add, let us know. In the meantime, find the list and brief description of the apps on our website under Resources/Student/Apps that you can then add to your own devices. Stop by the office and explore!

Our Facebook page is a great way to connect with other tutors, get information about our program and even find interesting trivia. For instance, Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito once showed interest in volunteering for LVA EP. We posted that on our Facebook page earlier this month. Let us know what you think about it or anything else you find interesting by posting a comment.

In this issue of the Insider, we introduce you to LVA student Pilar who works as a phlebotomist and spreads the word about LVA. She was an M.D. in Ecuador.

And meet tutor and LVA board member, Joanne Marren. She earned scholarships to undergraduate and law school and knows the value of mentors.

Photos of our students and teachers who completed their courses last month, appear later in this newsletter too.

## *In the News*

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

**'Literacy as a 21<sup>st</sup> century survival skill,'** Language Magazine <https://bit.ly/2tKEJW>

**'26 NJ towns where immigration is booming,'** The Star Ledger. <https://bit.ly/2MOyen6>

**'Why immigrants in U.S. avoid speaking their native language'** Journal Star <https://bit.ly/2KV4Tqc>

**'Reading as play,'** Psychology Today <https://bit.ly/2NqoWi1>

### Literacy Volunteers of America Essex & Passaic Counties

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(973) 566-6200, ext. 217 or 225

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*Pilar is an outstanding student who recently reached Basic Literacy level, on par with native English speakers. She works as a phlebotomist.*

## Tutor Training Workshops

### Montclair Public Library -by Mary Kao

50 South Fullerton Avenue, Literacy Room  
Montclair, NJ 07042

Saturdays, 12:15-3:45 pm

September 8, 15, 22, 29, and October 6, 2018

### Bloomfield Public Library -by Sable Lomax

90 Broad Street  
Bloomfield, NJ 07003

Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:00- 3:00 pm

October 2, 4, 9, 11, 16, & 18 2018

### West Orange Public Library -by Mary Kao

46 Mount Pleasant Avenue  
West Orange, NJ 07052

Wednesday 6:00 - 9:00 pm

October 10, 17, 24, 31, November 7, & 14

### Hilton Branch, Maplewood Memorial Library -by Mary O'Connor

1688 Springfield Avenue  
Maplewood, NJ 07040

Mondays and Wednesdays, 1:00-4:00 pm

October 17, 22, 24, 29, 31 & November 5, 2018

## Getting to Know Us

### Pilar, LVA student

When you go for a blood test with Pilar, she might also tell you about Literacy Volunteers of America. After all, that's basically how she learned about it.

This former doctor from Guayaquil, Ecuador currently works in northern New Jersey as a phlebotomist. An LVA employee came into her lab about two years ago and told her about LVA's ESL programs. "She told me I could go afternoon, night or weekend and I knew I would like to attend," Pilar remembered.

She has been an LVA student for almost two years and has quickly advanced through the program. Pilar first tested as an English Speaker of Other Languages student and she is now a Basic Literacy student on par with native English speakers.

Pilar's rapid rise comes as no surprise. She has always been passionate about education and knew as a child that she wanted to study medicine. "I liked everything about medicine and wanted to cure people with medical problems," Pilar said. "I dreamed someday I would be a doctor."

Pilar's dream became a reality after graduating from medical school at Universidad de Guayaquil. She loved field during her residency at Daule Hospital that was located in a rural area. "I worked with old machines. We used candles, not lights," she remembered. "Sometimes there was no electricity and if we had patients on oxygen, we had to send them to other towns."

Political problems and a corrupt government prompted Pilar and her husband to flee Ecuador. Her mother in law was living in New Jersey Pilar, her husband and four young boys made their big move to Newark in 1999. She said, "It was hard to leave Ecuador. I felt like I was coming with my whole life in two suitcases."

Both Pilar and her husband took jobs below their skill levels because of their limited English. "We took jobs not in our profession to be able to educate our children," she said.

"I wish I had found LVA earlier," she said. It changed my life. I feel more secure. I can still do the program and keep my job."

***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.lvane Newark.org/donatetolva/> or by mailing us a check.*



## “Adult Education Brings Generational Change,”

*Searchlight New Mexico*

By Amy Linn, June 12, 2018

Connie Flores never wanted to drop out of school, let alone leave in eighth grade. But like thousands of other teenagers who never graduate high school in New Mexico — a state with one of the highest dropout rates in the nation — Flores didn’t think she had a choice.

She’d been an A student in her early school years in Santa Clara, the small village near Silver City where she grew up.

“I loved school,” she says.

But when Flores reached fifth grade, she says her mother, an alcoholic, began to rage out of control. She alternately kicked Flores out of the house or disappeared on lengthy drinking sprees, leaving Flores in charge of her siblings.

“I had to stay home from school to take care of my younger sisters,” she says. “My littlest sister was still in diapers.”

At 13, Flores moved in with her boyfriend to avoid the abuse at home. She ended up pregnant. At 14, she had a son and dropped out of school. Years of chaos, depression and meth addiction followed.

Flores started selling small amounts to support her habit. She got busted — “a blessing,” she says. She got clean and sober and did her one-year stint in the “God Pod,” a cellblock reserved for devout inmates. “It totally changed my life.”

Now came the next big challenge: getting a high school diploma. By this time, it was 2013 — she’d been out of school for two decades. She couldn’t tell a polynomial expression from a parallelogram. It was going to be a struggle.

*Reprinted from the Searchlight, New Mexico. For full story, paste the following link into an Internet search: <https://bit.ly/2m43x1G>*

*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.lvaen.org/students.html>

## Getting to Know Us (cont.)

Joanne Marren, LVA tutor

Tutor Joanne Marren knows the value of education and mentors.

Joanne came from a large family and her passion for education developed when it became clear she needed a scholarship to pay for college. She is a quiet hard worker with a hidden warmth and sense of humor and she won a scholarship to LeMoyne College in Syracuse, NY.



At LeMoyne, Joanne took a constitutional law class and it became the first step on her life-long path toward greater learning. Her professor for that class became her mentor, encouraged her to go to law school and then steered her toward a scholarship to cover the tuition.

After graduating from St. John’s University Law School, cum laude, she landed her first job with Willkie Farr & Gallagher, a storied corporate law firm that focuses on investment funds, bankruptcy, and intellectual property. Joanne ultimately spent twenty-four years in corporate law.

After her law career, Joanne was invited to go on a teaching trip to Zibo, China, in central Shangdong Province. “The Chinese students hadn’t been exposed to native English speakers,” she remembered. “I had a great experience and fell in love with it.” Her interest sparked, Joanne earned a Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (CELTA) when she returned to the United States and began teaching ESL at Passaic Community College in 2005.

In 2011, Joanne earned a master’s degree in degree in applied linguistics at Montclair State University and later joined its staff as an adjunct professor in the linguistics department.

Joanne started tutoring in March 2017 and her success with students is due to her hard work and preparation for every class. “I see it as a continuation of what I was doing when I taught ESL in colleges,” she said. “It’s very gratifying when the students can do things they weren’t able to do before coming to LVA.”

Not only is Joanne working as a tutor for LVA, luckily for us she is also brought her broad professional experience and work ethic to her position as a board member for Literacy Volunteers Essex & Passaic Counties. Joanne is also on the board of Bloomfield College.

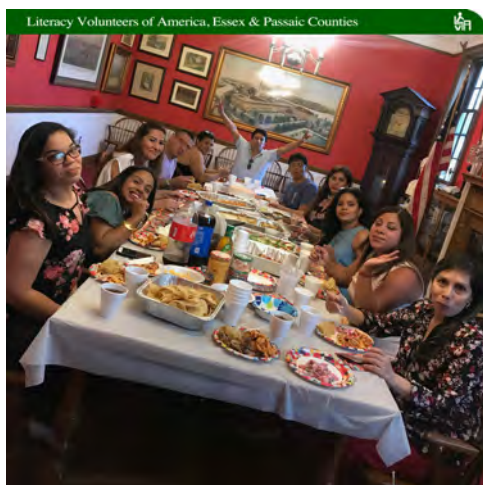
## Adult Literacy & Community Library Partnership Pilot Program

*It's often a simple accomplishment when navigating a new language that can feel like a triumph to a student and bring a sudden wave of encouragement. For Carla, an ESOL student from Syria, "The ESL program with LVA helps me a lot, I gained self-confidence and I am looking forward to completing this program, especially because we have a very nice teacher, Ms. Matias," Carla said.*

*Carla'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 11 libraries throughout the state, including Maplewood, Montclair, Passaic, and Paterson, which work with LVA to offer intensive ESL classes. The program is now in its second year and new classes began this week in Maplewood, Passaic, and Paterson.*

*"I want to speak very good English," said Kencia, who came from Haiti where she earned a degree in accounting. She hopes to improve her English and begin a career as a licensed practical nurse here in New Jersey. Kencia was a dedicated student in Leslie Gersho's class at the Hilton Branch of the Maplewood Public Library. Kencia started in the Beginning level of English for Speakers of Other Languages and is now in Intermediate level.*

*Margarita is from Mexico and works very hard to learn English. "My goal now is to learn more English and overcome my embarrassment of speaking to teachers and doctors and other people," she said. "Years ago, I worked cleaning houses and businesses. I have a small dream to start my own cleaning business. But to be my own boss I have to learn the language better"*



## *Sussex Educational Foundation, Berkeley College, & LVA Essex and Passaic Counties Adult Education Program*

*For 10 weeks, students attended ESOL classes at Berkeley College in Newark, in a joint pilot program run by the school, the Sussex Educational Foundation, and Literacy Volunteers of America, Essex & Passaic Counties. Dozens of students completed classes last month in three levels – beginner, intermediate, and advanced. Here’s a snapshot of several students:*

*Wilmer is from Ecuador and working with teacher Catherine Angus at Berkeley College Newark. “Wilmer and I both celebrated when he told me his boss pulled him aside at lunch recently. The boss remarked that in just five weeks of ESL classes, Wilmer was using multiple verb tenses, correctly and with ease,” Catherine said. “Talk about a confidence booster! Wilmer is a true success story: a student who is applying his knowledge in the work world every day.”*

*Shagoofa arrived from Afghanistan two years ago and spends her days reading her textbook, practicing online, and coming to class with questions that still confuse her. She was an accomplished scientist in Harat, and finds her life here quiet and a bit lonesome. She is very friendly, and has big dreams. Shagoofa uses Skype to communicate with her family and had near perfect attendance for her class with Catherine Angus. “She misses home, but loves the opportunities she has in the USA,” Catherine said. “With her ever improving English, she’ll accomplish much here as well. I can’t wait to see where she goes from here!”*

*Maria joined a class late and her teacher, Idya Mikhail, could see how unhappy she was at not being able to catch up to the rest of the class. “Over time she worked really hard, excelled and become one of the very clever and active students in my class,” Idya said. “She left everyone speechless at how rapidly she improved.”*

