



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 Literacy Volunteers of America, Essex & Passaic Counties, explained some of the barriers students face during a tutor support workshop last month.

The Insider

Greetings LVA Family,

With the year rapidly coming to a close we wish you all a happy and safe upcoming holiday season.

The Fall 2019 edition of "Adult Literacy Education" (ALE), ProLiteracy's research journal is now available online. And, as usual, it doesn't disappoint. In this edition you can find articles on topics as diverse as "Why White Instructors Should Explore Their White Racial Identity" and "Cultivating Creativity in Adult Literacy Education Settings." You can download the journal here: <https://bit.ly/2NC61Sn>

Our Annual Awards Ceremony last month was a festive gathering with moving testimonials voiced about how literacy has touched the lives of our students, tutors, and teachers. For photos of the event see the final pages of this newsletter.

We have a special tutor support workshop coming up, "Easy Guide for Working with Small Groups" as well as a chance for tutors and students to share thoughts during our second "Coffee with Friends" meetup. Details on the next page.

It's not too early for students to plan for NJALL's 2020 Student Learner Writing Contest. The deadline is February 14th. The contest offers cash prizes in five categories and the chance to be published. For more details, see this link: <https://bit.ly/2oMPxOY>

In the News

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

'English only' laws in education on verge of extinction, Education Week <https://bit.ly/36wij7l>

'Profile: From an illiterate granny to a young writer', XinhuaNet <https://bit.ly/2WHSSLF>

'Anti-Immigrant Rhetoric Puts Latino Patients' Health at Risk', University of California San Francisco, <https://bit.ly/32439D2>

'Asylum seekers in US face years of waiting, little chance of winning their cases', USA Today <https://bit.ly/32c1L1b>

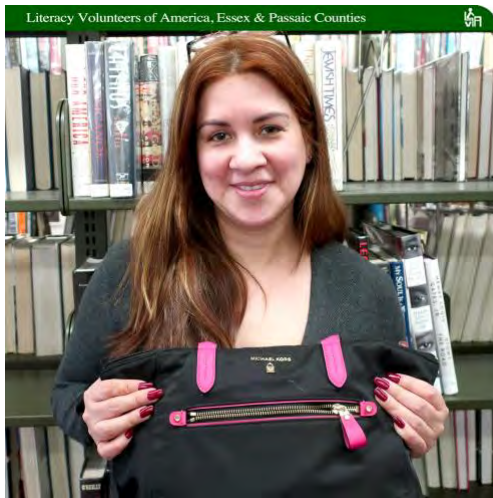
'Spanish-speaking children learn English faster when parents read to them in their native language', Consumer Affairs <https://bit.ly/2oMJOIY>

Literacy Volunteers of America Essex & Passaic Counties

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LVA student, Cristina, is holding the small bag that held all that was left after a fire destroyed her home last year.

Getting to Know Us

Cristina, LVA student

It was a year full of promise for Cristina, a student from Peru who dreamed of becoming a U.S. citizen.

Her eldest son was headed to college, her baby boy would turn one, and she was about to take her citizenship test, after months of studying with two volunteer tutors. She passed the test in January, on her first attempt.

“My tutors helped me a lot to study for my citizenship,” Cristina said of volunteers Susan Dorman-Dzubina and Ann Moore. “Without them, I might not have passed my interview.”

But misfortune followed. As she woke in the middle of a February night to nurse her crying infant, Cristina smelled smoke. A raging fire quickly followed, sparked by a faulty apartment electrical system. She grabbed her baby and, along with her husband and older son, fled to the street. Outside in the cold, in their pajamas, they were met by neighbors who brought them blankets and shoes. They’d lost their clothing, their furniture, their home.

“This last year for me was good and not so good,” Cristina explained. In the wake of an unspeakable setback, Cristina struggled to return to the library and meet with her tutors, a testament to her determination to learn.

“I have been very impressed by with her commitment to learn English, all while raising a family,” said Ann Moore, her tutor for two years. “I thoroughly enjoy having Cristina in my class.”

Cristina’s older son, now a business major at Montclair State University, babysits his younger brother while Cristina’s attends class. He also helps his mom with her homework, when she gets stuck, and the family watches TV together in English.

In Lima, Cristina once studied English for a year but, in her own words, “I forgot my English. When I came to this country I had to start over.” Today, she feels at ease reading about historical figures, learning about the United States, practicing grammar, and expressing her opinions with tutors and fellow students in English.

“I am learning very well,” she said.

Tutor Training Workshops

Montclair Public Library

by Mary Kao

50 South Fullerton Avenue, Montclair, NJ 07042

Saturdays, 12:15-3:45 pm

January 11, 18, 25, Feb. 1, 8, & 15, 2020

Tutor Support Workshops

“Easy Guide for Working with Small Groups,”

with Barbara Hathaway and Nancy Lama

Bloomfield Public Library

90 Broad Street, 2nd Fl. Boardroom

Bloomfield, NJ 07003

Thursday, November 14, 2019, 1:00-2:30 pm

“Writing Prompts Through Stories,”

with Sarah McGrail

Bloomfield Public Library

90 Broad Street, Library Theater

Bloomfield, NJ 07003

Tuesday, December 10, 11:00 am - 12:30 pm

“Taking the Mystery out of Lesson Plans”

with Ann Moore

Bloomfield Public Library

90 Broad Street, 2nd Floor Boardroom

Bloomfield, NJ 07003

Tuesday, January 14, 1:00-2:30 pm

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.



'A spirit of hope': Teaching English inside the Calhoun County ICE detention facility

Battle Creek Enquirer

By Elena Durnbaugh, October 30, 2019

"It also really recharges you, when you're in a place where you see people who are in the midst of such hardship and still have this great spirit. This spirit of hope, and they have faith," she said.

The classroom doesn't have desks or computers, bulletin boards or brightly colored posters. A stacked washer-dryer unit sits along one of the off-white walls. A lone blackboard is attached to the cinder blocks at the front. "Welcome to ESL class," Laurel Macon writes on the board in neat, elementary school teacher print.

She taught in Battle Creek Public Schools for 30 years, mostly third and fourth graders, but she's retired now. She and another retired teacher, Janet Chichester, volunteer once a week teaching English as a second language to immigrant detainees being held by U.S. Department of Homeland Security Immigration and Customs Enforcement at the Calhoun County jail.

The students are women who have been incarcerated by ICE because they are accused of being in the United States illegally.

Each woman is waiting for a court date. They're separated from their families and have no idea what their future might hold.

But the class is a bright spot of laughter and learning. Macon and Chichester call it a place of hope.

Reprinted from the Battle Creek Enquirer. For full story, paste the following link into your favorite web browser address bar:

<https://bit.ly/327D8T9>

Learning a new culture is more than studying a language. Tutoring is more than learning techniques. Our "Resources" webpage covers everything from legal matters, health care, & scholarships for immigrants, to professional development for tutors. Give us a look @: <http://www.lvaep.org/students.html>

Getting to Know Us (cont.)

Leeta Jordan, LVA tutor

Leeta Jordan completed her tutor training program on solid ground, as prepared as any trainee to launch a well-planned first meeting with students. But things did not go as planned.



"The first lesson was hard," recalled Leeta, a former corporate attorney who joined LVA as a volunteer two years ago. "I asked my students to write their Language Experience Story and it was way too advanced. I remember feeling a little panicked because I had to throw it out the window and reboot. I made food and clothing flashcards. That went over much better."

Her ability to improvise and adapt to conditions that sometimes change rapidly for tutors, has made Leeta the type of volunteer that non-profits like LVA, and its students, depend on.

"I like her class because it is interesting," said Alejandra, a student from Mexico. "She talks about history and makes learning fun."

Leeta was only 16 when she graduated high school, leaving her home on Chicago's South Side for Smith College in Massachusetts, the largest privately endowed college for women in the country. She graduated with a bachelor's degree at age 20.

She worked in advertising and later for the city of New York where she tried to increase drug treatment programs for women and children.

Leeta's work alongside attorneys who tried to help underserved populations inspired her to attend law school at Cornell University. She's been a corporate attorney, taught a "Race and the Law" course at Montclair State University, and even worked with director Dawn Porter on "TRAPPED", a documentary film that follows providers at reproductive health clinics in the South.

It's been a diverse career, for sure, throughout which she's always tried to help others. She learned about literacy tutoring through a neighbor and, after considering today's divisive political climate, decided it was time to join.

"I became a tutor because of the whole situation with the immigration policy and I thought this would be a good response to the country's immigration fiasco," Leeta said. "That resonated with me."

2019 Annual Awards Ceremony Literacy Volunteers of America Essex & Passaic Counties

Every year we gather for our Annual Awards Ceremony at the East Orange Public Library where students, tutors, instructors, teachers, and advocates are recognized for the time they've devoted to improve adult literacy. It's a warm celebration, with loads of personal experience stories touted by those whose lives have been enhanced by the gift of literacy. Award recipients come from programs and libraries in both counties, including programs with our partners at Sussex Educational Foundation & Berkeley College, and the NCC Adult Learning Center. Here are a few family photos from the event.



2019 Annual Awards Ceremony Literacy Volunteers of America Essex & Passaic Counties

More than 200 students and their families, tutors, and other educators attended our Annual Awards Ceremony, held last month at the East Orange Public Library. It was a night of beautiful acceptance speeches and heartfelt acknowledgements from students and tutors who are working hard to improve adult literacy. Here's a sample of what we witnessed that night.



2019 Annual Awards Ceremony Literacy Volunteers of America Essex & Passaic Counties

“Writing and reading decrease our sense of isolation. They deepen and widen and expand our sense of life: they feed the soul.” The quote from writer Anne Lamott pretty much summarizes why we believe in literacy for all adults. Thank you all for sharing your time and effort.



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