



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



*It was an enlightening afternoon for tutors who attended the "Easy Guide for Working with Small Groups," workshop last month with Barbara Hathaway and Nancy Lama.*

## *The Insider*

Greetings LVA Family,

As another year rolls to an end, we want to wish everyone in the literacy community a wonderful and safe holiday season, no matter what holiday you observe. When we started *The Insider* seven years ago this month, we were looking for a way to keep everyone connected. Since then we've been humbled by your efforts to do the same and your willingness to help others and support LVA. Your participation in our workshops, your sharing of ideas and suggestions that have made us more effective, are extremely appreciated. We plan to continue our efforts to keep us all connected, and hope you'll support us.

Further evidence of literacy's value to society can be found in the recently-released paper by the Open Door Collective. "Adult Education as a Key Strategy for Reducing Poverty and Improving Economic Security in American Life" urges organizations to work together to reduce income inequality. It can be found via the following link found on the website of NJALL, which is a member of the New Jersey Anti-Poverty Network: <https://bit.ly/2Ri6psT>

One of the challenges tutors face, both with ESL and basic literacy learners, is getting our students to start writing. If you've encountered this challenge before, you might want to join us for this month's tutor support workshop, "How to get your students writing". Details are provided on the next page.

## *In the News*

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

**'Illiteracy is America's Secret Shame. Is There Hope for Our Children?'** Thrive Global <https://bit.ly/37CqWxU>

**'Election Day 2019: New Jersey County Sides With ICE, Defies State's Sanctuary Policy In Landslide Vote'**, CBSN New York <https://cbsloc.al/2KQACLm>

**'67.3 Million in the United States Spoke a Foreign Language at Home in 2018'**, Center for Immigration Studies <https://bit.ly/34jmxOc>

**'College behind bars'**, Boston Review <https://bit.ly/34lxP4v>

**'One sister has DACA status, the other doesn't. Their lives are worlds apart'**, North Jersey.com <https://njersy.co/2ODxVOC>

### 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 <a href="mailto:charcelos@lvaep.org">charcelos@lvaep.org</a>
Jorge Chavez	-Data Processing Coordinator <a href="mailto:jchavez@lvaep.org">jchavez@lvaep.org</a>
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Ellen Martin	-Recruitment & Training Coordinator <a href="mailto:emartin@lvaep.org">emartin@lvaep.org</a>
Mary O'Connor	-Trainer & Tutor Support Specialist <a href="mailto:moconnor@lvaep.org">moconnor@lvaep.org</a>
Marisol Ramirez	-Student Coordinator <a href="mailto:ramirez@lvaep.org">ramirez@lvaep.org</a>



*It's been a long and steady journey for Freddy who went from a struggling literacy learner to become the Student of the Year, Essex County award winner. Nice work, Freddy!*

## 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, February 1, 8, & 15, 2020

### Clifton Memorial Library, Allwood Branch

-by Darnelle Richardson

44 Lyall Road

Clifton, NJ 07012

Saturdays, 1:00 pm-4:00 pm

April 4, 11, 18, 25, May 2, & 9, 2020

## Tutor & Student Support Workshops

### "Getting Your Students Writing,"

with Caitlyn Pezza

Bloomfield Public Library

90 Broad Street, 2nd Floor Boardroom

Bloomfield, NJ 07003

Tuesday, December 17, 1:00-2:30 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 21, 2020, 1:00-2:30 pm

## Getting to Know Us

### Freddy, LVA student

There was plenty Freddy hoped to do in life but two aims stood high above the others: He yearned to read and write better.

"I tried so many times," Freddy said of his struggles to gain literacy as an adult after dropping out of high school as a teen. "But I would get mad and give up."

It didn't help that those around him were not always encouraging.

"They would tell me it was too late. That I should give up and stop wasting my time," he recalled.

Fortunately, Freddy didn't listen. He enrolled in a GED program but labored with the its literacy demands. So he registered with LVA where he found the encouragement and support of veteran tutor Sherri Smith. They meet four hours each week and he continues on his own, even studying during lunchtime at work.

Freddy's struggles with literacy began early, in schools in New Jersey and Arizona. He eventually left school altogether, in part to work and help his mother, a single mom who worked to clean houses and later ran several businesses. But he never forgot his goals.

"My education is something I always wanted," he explained. "I want to better myself and I want my family to be proud of me."

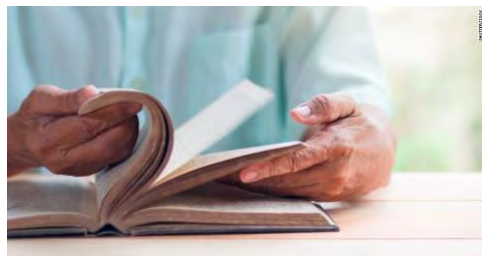
Today, his accomplishments are certainly worthy of pride. Last month Freddy accepted LVA's Student of the Year Award for Essex County. In an acceptance speech at the ceremony, he seemed proud of his achievements and willingly shared his story.

"I can only remember reading one book in the last 18 years," Freddy told the crowd gathered at the East Orange Public Library. "And now I'm about to finish reading book number 9. I am so happy. The program continues to help me. Even right now."

"Of course we all have different goals. So don't let anyone stop you from reaching yours. Turn that negative into something positive. Because it will definitely change your life."

***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/donatotlva/> or by mailing us a check.*



## “Illiterate people are twice as likely to develop dementia, study says” (CNN Health)

By Ryan Prior, November 16, 2019

(CNN)Whether or not you can read and write could be a factor in your ability to stave off dementia as you grow older, according to a new study from scientists at Columbia University.

They published their results Wednesday in the online issue of the journal *Neurology*.

Researchers studied 983 adults over age 65 living in New York City's Washington Heights area who had four or less years of schooling.

Visiting the participants' homes, the scientists performed tests of the memory, language and visual or spatial abilities. During those visits, they made dementia diagnoses based on the standard criteria.

The illiterate participants performed worse on those tests.

In establishing the baseline measures, those who had never learned to read or write were nearly three times as likely to have dementia than those who could read.

And among those who didn't have dementia at the beginning of the study, the illiterate section of the cohort was twice as likely to develop it.

One reason for the brain decline, the authors write, is that those who don't learn to read have "a lower range of cognitive function" than those who are literate.

*Reprinted from CNN. For full story, paste the following link into an Internet search: <https://cnn.it/35x3Si6> Results of the study can be found in the journal *Neurology* at: <https://bit.ly/2Olx9Xj>*

*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.lvae.org/students.html>

## Getting to Know Us (cont.)

Deborah Collins, LVA tutor

Deborah Collins fell in love with learning at an early age, going back to when she was a little girl growing up in Brooklyn. And it's no wonder, considering her roots. Her father liked to quote Shakespeare; her mother enjoyed reading what she called 'American Negro poetry'.



"She loved the writers of the Harlem Renaissance," Deborah said of her mom.

Deborah's quest for knowledge led her to study Spanish at the Instituto de Cultura Hispanica in Madrid and earn bachelor's and master's degrees from New York University.

She taught Spanish at both Lehman College and Medgar Evers College, within the City University of New York.

Deborah later earned a Juris Doctorate degree from Rutgers Law School-Newark where she studied under professor Arthur Kinoy, a progressive civil rights lawyer and founder of the Center for Constitutional Rights.

She worked on Wall Street for more than 10 years, developing a specialty in employee relations and labor law. She later entered county government where she served, among other positions, as Deputy County Administrator for Essex County and Director of Small Business Development and Affirmative Action.

"Ms. Collins has shown she is an energetic, dedicated self-starter – qualities that are essential as we reach out into the community and expand opportunities for small, women and minority owned businesses," Essex County Executive Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr. said while appointing Deborah to a county post in 2005.

Deborah, who's always on the lookout for a new adventure, didn't wait for retirement to become a volunteer tutor.

"I am always putting plans in place, so I started exploring my options while still working," she said. "I enjoyed the training. "I learned so much about teaching adults whose native tongue was not English. I give my LVA students challenging materials."

And they're appreciative, like one former LVA student who returned to his native Taiwan. "On the plane, he sent me a text saying, 'I will miss you'" she said. "That brought tears to my eyes to know that I had such an impact on him."