



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



*Thanks to presenter Darnelle Richardson, we now know how to teach students to overcome the fear of public speaking and express themselves in class.*

## Literacy Volunteers of America Essex & Passaic Counties

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## *The Insider*

Greetings LVA Family,

Good news: Many of the useful NJALL webinars that we may have missed are now archived. So if you were unable to sit in on sessions like "Ready, Set, Write", "Bringing Classroom Content to Your Students' Mobil Devices", or other informative webinars, you can catch them here: [www.bit.ly/2F4nW00](http://www.bit.ly/2F4nW00)

Jewish Vocational Service, in partnership with the Bloomfield Public Library, will offer free classes to help permanent residents prepare for the United States Citizenship Exam. Classes will be held at the Bloomfield Public Library for 10 Saturdays, from 9 am to 1 pm, beginning April 6, 2019. Students must bring their green cards to registration which takes place on the first day of class. The curriculum offered by JVS includes English instruction, American History, Civics, and the N400 application. Classes will also give students the chance to practice the 100 citizenship interview questions and participate in mock interviews.

Why not join the fun at the 'Literacy for Life Conference,' Literacy New Jersey's annual event that features workshops, networking opportunities, recognitions for literacy contributions and, of course, good food! This year's event takes places on Saturday, April 27, 2019, at The College of New Jersey. For registration and additional information: <https://literacynj.org/literacy-for-life-2019>

**In the news**, a best-selling author writes about the trauma and discrimination she faced as a Spanish-speaking immigrant child enrolled in U.S. schools and explains how her eventual rejection of her native language nearly severed her relationship with her mother, who lived in Los Angeles but never learned to speak English. Find this and other stories in the links below.

## *In the News*

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

'I lost my mother tongue - - and almost my mom.'  
CNN <https://cnn.it/2Su711d>

'My Turn: The rewards of teaching English as a second language.' Newsday, <https://nwsdy.it/2T92jp1>

'Useful hints for ESL teachers.' MultiBriefs Exclusive <https://bit.ly/2EIGhsg>

"Study finds fewer students taking tougher, more expensive GED." NJTV News <https://bit.ly/2Nxd1Yn>



## *Getting to Know Us* *Luciana, LVA student*

Luciana has a bachelor's degree in architecture that she earned in her native Brazil and a master's in urban planning that she earned when she went to help her family in Portugal. But in the United States she is coming to terms with the fact that, before she can resume her career, she must master English.

And, she is on her way. "I had some introduction to English grammar while living in Portugal and a little in Brazil," Luciana said. Luciana is now working in her husband's construction business.

Luciana's current project is to improve her English. She found Literacy Volunteers of America, Essex & Passaic Counties in September of 2018. Luciana started off meeting with two tutors for 16 hours per month, and in a short time, has made vast improvement.

"I have more confidence to speak and I can understand people much easier," Luciana said. "I had a meeting with one of my daughter's teachers because I had some concerns and was able to remedy the situation." Luciana also enjoys reading in English. "First I started reading little books," she said. She is currently reading a 360 page novel.

Luciana's two tutors are pleased with her progress. "She always comes to class prepared and goes the second mile," said Mary Kao, one of Luciana's tutors. "I asked her to read the next chapter of a book we were working on and, instead, she finished the entire book!"

Mary O'Connor, Luciana's other tutor, is encouraging her to enter her work in the NJALL Adult Learner Writing Contest. It's that good. "Luciana consistently meets each challenge with great enthusiasm," Mary O'Connor said. "She has not only grown individually in her English skills but has been an integral part of bringing together our class of five women from four different continents."

Since coming to the United States, Luciana has also obtained her United States citizenship. With her growing command of the English language, citizenship, and her desire to take on new challenges, she will be running her own business soon.

*Super student Luciana is on a mission to become fluent in English and resume the architecture career she enjoyed in her native Brazil.*

## **Tutor Support Workshops**

### **"Comprehension Strategies in Adult Literacy Instruction,"**

with Erik Jacobson  
Bloomfield Public Library  
90 Broad Street, 2nd Floor Boardroom  
Bloomfield, NJ 07003  
Tuesday, April 16, 2019, 1:00 pm -2:30 pm

### **"Taking the Mystery out of Lesson Planning,"**

with Ann Moore  
Bloomfield Public Library  
90 Broad Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Boardroom  
Bloomfield, NJ 07003  
Tuesday, May 7, 2019, 1:00-2:30 pm

## **Tutor Training Workshops**

Clifton Memorial Library -by Darnelle Richardson  
(In progress)  
292 Piaget Avenue  
Clifton, NJ 07011  
Saturdays, 1:00-4:30 pm  
March 2, 9, 16, 23, & 30, 2019

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*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.*



### **“Illiteracy is a national emergency unfolding across America, and it’s only getting worse”**

By Raymond Arroyo, Fox News (Opinion)  
February 25, 2019

*While people argue over the president declaring the situation at the border a national emergency, they ignore the national emergency in every town and school district in America. More than 30 million Americans cannot read or write above a third-grade level.*

I once walked into an inner-city school cafeteria for an author visit and was amazed by the scene. A donor had gifted copies of my latest “Will Wilder” book to each of the children in this particular middle school. As I entered the cafeteria, nearly all them were embracing their books and some were caressing the volumes.

“What are they doing?” I asked the principal standing in the doorway.

“Oh, most of these kids don’t have books at home,” she explained to me. “That’s probably their first one – and they’re happy to have them.”

Scores of author visits later, I discovered that the scene was not an anomaly. By every measure we have a literacy crisis in America, and it’s on track to worsen.

Sixty-four percent of all eighth-grade students are unable to read proficiently, according to the National Assessment of Education Progress’ latest report. Eighty-two percent of black students and 77 percent of Hispanic students are not reading proficiently.

Reprinted from Fox News. For full story, paste the following link into an Internet search: <https://fxn.ws/2VmzXUE>

*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 Olga Roberts, LVA tutor**

When Olga Roberts took on the role of volunteer literacy tutor a year-and-a-half ago she, like most, started slowly, with a single adult student. In time, she began to ask “How can I best help?” And the answer, of course, was to take on more responsibilities. So she did. Within little more than a year, Olga began helping nine adult students,



meeting with them in small groups for 10 hours per month.

That was an incredible time commitment, for sure, but Olga didn’t stop there. When no one else would, she volunteered to take on a class of eight adults, in the long-term absence of their regular tutor, rather than watch the group disband and enter the pool of students waiting for help.

Although English is Olga’s mother tongue, she has first-hand knowledge of the immigrant experience and the adjustments most undergo in their adopted countries. A native of Leeds, England, she spent her childhood interpreting for her Ukrainian born parents.

She has a bachelor’s degree in English Literature from Rutgers University and spent a successful 20 years as a real estate agent. Last year Olga enrolled in a TESOL program at The New School. The program allows students three years to complete all requirements; Olga aims to finish in one. With her drive and enthusiasm, there is no doubt that she will meet her goal.

As for her classes, she makes them interactive and fun. She often starts with a warmup exercise. For example, she’ll toss a paper ball in the air and the student that catches it has to recite a new vocabulary word. There’s no repeating the words of other students or words from last week’s class. It has proven to be a popular game, one that’s fun and helps students work towards their goals of expanding their vocabulary while overcoming their fear of speaking. She also gets students chatting by asking them to describe their hometowns and native countries. Or she might use music to help build a student’s vocabulary. She recently had students learn the lyrics of “Tom’s Diner,” the 1984 hit song by Suzanne Vega, two weeks before she introduced them to the song’s music.

“When people are having fun, they learn,” Olga said. “Learning is a lot about repetition, but you don’t want it to be boring, you want it to be fun and engaging. When students are engaged, they are more likely to learn. I try to be creative and energetic in my approach. I know what it means to be bored.”