



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



A million thanks to Kathryn Waggener McGuire, who last month presented an extremely helpful workshop on Writing Prompts Using Art.

Literacy Volunteers of America Essex & Passaic Counties

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The Insider

Greetings LVA Family,

Did you know Bloomfield Public Library has given us more space for group tutoring? Stop by the office and we'll show you this space that's available on a first come, first served basis. Thank you for your hard work with your students!

It's here! ProLiteracy, the nation's largest adult literacy and basic education membership organization, just announced the inaugural issue of *Adult Literacy Education: The International Journal of Literacy, Language, and Numeracy*. The mission of the journal, which will be produced twice each year by ProLiteracy, in partnership with Rutgers University, is to publish research on adult basic and secondary education and transitions to college and career programs, according to the organization.

The 82-page inaugural issue produced this month includes a research article on the perspectives of 19 adult literacy teachers on reading difficulties, as well as others topics, among them a pilot study on linking root words and derived forms for struggling adult readers. The entire journal can be downloaded via this link: <https://bit.ly/2IhTI31>

A report in the news explains why the differences between spoken and written English, with their odd and inconsistent pronunciations, difficult to form sounds, and the lack of masculine and feminine forms of words, make English a difficult language to learn for students in some parts of the world, and even harder for those in other parts. 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.

'NJ appeals court strikes down English-only election ballots.' Daily Record, <https://bit.ly/2InW17D>

'Learning English as a second language can be difficult for some, even harder for others.' The Vermilion, <https://bit.ly/21qD2zU>

'Connecting native and second language deepens English literacy for ELLS.' Education Dive, <https://bit.ly/2CPaf3X>

'NJ is big business for immigrants, study says,' NJ.com, <https://bit.ly/2Ks73Sv>

'NJALL 2019 Scholarship', application for adult



Student Estefani, who had an accounting career in the Dominican Republic, wants to perfect her English so she can become a U.S. teacher.

Tutor Support Workshops

“Who We Are and What We Do,”

with Cristhian Barcelos

Bloomfield Public Library

90 Broad Street, 2nd Floor Boardroom

Bloomfield, NJ 07003

Thursday, April 25, 2019, 1:00 pm -2:30 pm

“Taking the Mystery out of Lesson Planning,”

with Ann Moore

Bloomfield Public Library

90 Broad Street, 2nd Floor Boardroom

Bloomfield, NJ 07003

Tuesday, May 7, 2019, 1:00-2:30 pm

Tutor Training Workshops

Hilton Branch, Maplewood Memorial Library

-by Carolyn Van Doren

1688 Springfield Avenue

Maplewood, NJ 07040

Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9:00 am-12:00 pm

June 4, 6, 11, 13, 18 & 20, 2019

Getting to Know Us *Estefani, LVA student*

When Estefani arrived in the U.S. from the Dominican Republic, she had a short list of dreams and goals. She wanted to go to college, she wanted to become a teacher, she wanted to work with children, and she wanted to start a family. But most of all she wanted, and needed, to learn English.

“My English was very bad when I came here,” Estefani explained. “When I had to speak with someone, they could not understand me. I was ashamed.”

She was particularly embarrassed because she’s studied English in Santo Domingo. But, admittedly, she didn’t practice. Now, a mere half year after enrolling in LVA, it would appear that Estefani can soon cross learning English off the short list.

The reason is simple. She studies with two tutors each week, practices daily and shows a love for her new language that is infectious. Her vocabulary is extensive and her grammar is improving.

“My English is getting better and better,” she said. “I feel more comfortable speaking and I can understand everything. Before coming to LVA, I could understand some of what people said, but now I can understand 99-percent.”

She plans to abandon the accounting career she enjoyed at home, attend college in the U.S., and become a teacher.

Recent immigrants often face barriers to employment in the U.S., like lengthy recertification processes, language barriers, and employers who are unfamiliar with foreign credentials, according to The Migration Policy, a nonpartisan research organization.

That’s where Estefani’s tutors come in. One tutor, Mary, grills her on grammar while the other, Jennifer, teaches resume writing and job interview techniques. “She gives us tips on writing resumes in the United States which is a very different style from my country,” Estefani said.

“My dream is to have children and go to college,” she added. “I want to work with kids. I love kids and they love me too, so it is a win-win.”

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/donate/olva/> or by mailing us a check.



“George Archer: Illiterate Masters champion who beat the best”

By Ewan Murray, Irish Times, at Augusta National, April 8, 2019

There are unremarkable Masters winners. At the opposite end of the scale is George Archer, a player worthy of the recognition on the 50th anniversary of his triumph that could not be forthcoming when he was alive. Only after his death, in 2005, did an incredible secret emerge to the wider world: Archer forged a career at the top level while illiterate.

“It was a golf thing,” says Donna Archer, George’s widow. “He didn’t want to give his opponents any advantage over him. He knew that if somebody knew about it and said something, that he probably wouldn’t be able to handle it. He would crack.”

Donna will return to Augusta National this week, grateful for the kindness shown to her by the club, but also inevitably drawn towards reflection. Six weeks after meeting George, in 1960, she learned of the reading and writing impairment that was not absolute – he had the skills of perhaps an eight-year-old – but sufficient to seriously affect their lives. “I thought: ‘Oh, no problem, I’ll teach you how to read,’” she recalls. “But I wasn’t able to.”

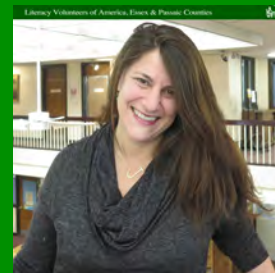
If George felt an understandable bitterness towards a system that treated him poorly – it emerged that his San Francisco high school had been graduating pupils who did not know how to read or write – he found sanctuary in golf. He was a prolific winner and a renowned, brilliant putter.

Reprinted from the Irish Times. For full story, paste the following link into an Internet search: <https://bit.ly/2KmnoYW>

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.lvaep.org/students.html>

Getting to Know Us Jillian DiGiacomo, LVA tutor

Proactive is the word that comes to mind when describing LVA tutor Jillian DiGiacomo. Whether encouraging people to produce their best, or empowering her students by providing them with the tools needed to move their lives forward, one can bet Jillian has a plan of action.



Her lessons are active and she enables her students to take ownership of their learning. Lessons typically include the use of cards, pictures, clay, or other manipulatives, and they produce results. For example, one student obtained his driver’s license and earned a boiler operator certification within a year. He’s now taking a course in refrigeration and feels confident that he’ll pass. “Together, we figured out a great routine as to how to approach his learning style,” Jillian said. Other students have also reached goals.

Jillian came to LVA with tons of experience. She earned a degree in Asian studies from Vassar College and a master’s degree in teaching from Harvard University. Before she had children, she spent most of her time either teaching English in Japan or teaching Japanese in New York.

She was previously an LVA tutor, as a college student working with a Vietnamese family back in 1991, and returned, in her own words, “due to the current political situation.”

Along with teaching, tutoring, and raising two children, Jillian is also a writer. Her first novel, “Codename Cupcake,” is the story of a stay-at-home mom, recruited by a spy agency to infiltrate the PTA. The Midwest Book Review called it “a deftly crafted and absolutely entertaining satire that reveals the author to be an extraordinarily gifted storyteller with an impressive gift for wit and humor.”

Jillian’s children’s book, “Off the Wall,” published in 2011, is possibly more relevant today than when she wrote it. Themes of the book, which was inspired by Jillian’s wish that her own children follow their hearts, include always being yourself and never letting others define who you are. “This magical and funny story twists and turns and touches upon important themes of self-image and friendship,” one critic wrote.

Jillian credits her father, in part, for her drive. “Simply by including me, by not telling me that I couldn’t or shouldn’t participate, my father taught me to stand tall,” she said. “I grew up never questioning my right to pursue my dreams and I never feared the hard work it took to achieve them.”

Adult Literacy & Community Library Partnership Program

Louina'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 Memorial Library which works with LVA to offer intensive ESOL classes. The program is now in its third year. This round of classes ended in March and new classes began this month.



Students arrive at the LVA beginner classes from all over the world and with all variety of experience and a hunger to learn English. From a picturesque hometown on the Danube to the warm sun of Haiti, adult students bring their stories along with their hope to their new home.

“Knowledge is the best thing you can have,” says Vanessa. “And that’s why I’m taking this English class.” Originally from Haiti, she now lives here with her father and younger brother while working at a local donut shop. Her dream is to enroll in college and study medicine so she can eventually open an orphanage in Haiti for poor children. Having known suffering in her own life, she dreams of giving back.

