



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, LVA EP's executive director, answered tutors' questions during 'Who We Are and What We Do.'

The Insider

Greetings LVA Family,

We're so proud of our students who recently won awards from Literacy New Jersey and New Jersey Association for Lifelong Learning. Read on to find about Gloria, Martha and Sara, whose works were honored.

We learned a lot at the recent conferences held by Literacy New Jersey and NJALL that we hope to pass on to you. For instance, Duolingo, a free language learning app, has a classroom function with homework options. It's an easy way to have your students practice their English beyond your sessions and you can track their progress. Many students already have the Duolingo App on their phones, the classroom function is available through the website <https://schools.duolingo.com/>. Stop by the office if you have any questions.

The U.S. Department of Education also has lots of resources for tutors through LINCS, Community, Courses and Resources for Adult Education. There are discussion groups and a learning portal with links via their website. <https://courses.lincs.ed.gov>

If we begin to think of mobile devices and computers as mere tools to help teach something new, they become easier to understand. And, if homework is assigned via students' phones, they might be more apt to do it during down time at home or work.

Can you imagine learning to read at middle age? 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.

'Learning to read, at age 55,' Nashville Public Radio, <https://bit.ly/2E7kHVL>.

'How a CSR pilot program became a key business imperative at Tyson Foods,' Forbes.com, <https://bit.ly/2LD7o5z>

'Talking jobs: lessons from ENB's 2016 ESOL student employment survey,' National Skills Coalition, <https://bit.ly/2LGwVLj>

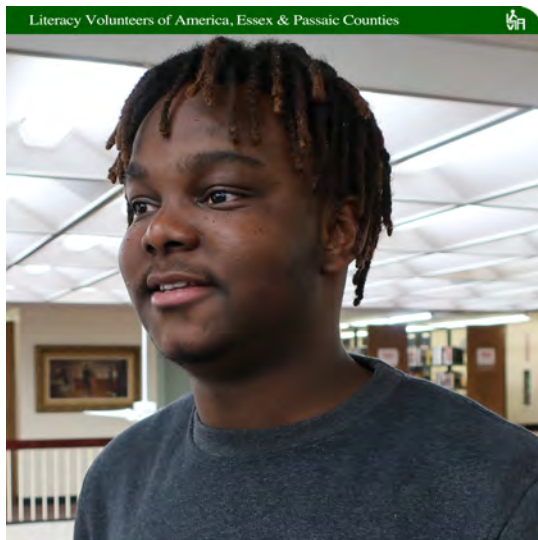
'Literacy Coalition Seeking members for literacy Americorps plan,' South Florida Sun Sentinel, <https://bit.ly/2HjCICi>

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Getting to Know Us *Ben, LVA student*

Bennchiwo came to the United States a little over a year ago. He left his native country of Haiti to learn English and get a better education. And, he's well on his way.

The shy, reticent young man who entered Literacy Volunteers of America Essex & Passaic Counties' tutoring program almost one year ago to the day, is now gainfully employed at a pet store and is writing songs in his spare time.

Ben admits that when he first moved to New Jersey, he could barely say, "My name is Ben." Now, he says, "I feel comfortable carrying on a conversation. I study every day. I tried taking classes with another organization for a few months, but came back to LVA. I feel more comfortable here because of the tutors and you guys in the office."

Ben works hard with his tutors with whom he practices conversation, writing, reading, and comprehension skills. "Each time I come, I learn new words," Ben said. When he is not studying or working, Ben enjoys watching sci-fi and action movies. His favorites include The Avengers, Mission Impossible, and Ghost Rider. By watching American television and movies, he has increased his word power.

Ben also uses his growing English vocabulary to write rap songs. "I am attracted to rap in general because of the story the songwriter is telling," he said. "I fell in love with rap when I first heard T-Pain, an American rapper and record producer," Ben said. "I loved the song and the beat even though I could not understand one word of the song."

Now, Ben is building a new in-home studio with equipment he's slowly replacing after having to leave his original home studio when he moved from Haiti.

Ben sometimes thinks about writing songs about the misery in Haiti. "But, I don't write it," he said. "Too many people write about that subject, he wants to think about the positives in life. "I want to become a music producer so I can inspire and produce other musicians. I like to sing, too. I want to keep growing," Ben said.

Student Ben is building his English skills and an in home music studio all while working barely a year after leaving his native Haiti.

Tutor Support Workshops

"Coffee With Friends,"
with LVA Staff
Bloomfield Public Library
90 Broad Street, Library Theater
Bloomfield, NJ 07003
Tuesday, June 11 2019, 1:00 pm -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

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.



“Running Out of Children: South Korea School Enrolls Illiterate Grandmas”

By Choe Sang-Hun, The New York Times,
April 27, 2019

Every morning on her way to school, Hwang Wol-geum, a first grader, rides the same yellow bus as three of her family members: One is a kindergartner, another a third grader and the other a fifth grader.

Ms. Hwang is 70 — and her schoolmates are her grandchildren.

Illiterate all her life, she remembers hiding behind a tree and weeping as she saw her friends trot off to school six decades ago. While other village children learned to read and write, she stayed home, tending pigs, collecting firewood and looking after younger siblings. She later raised six children of her own, sending all of them to high school or college.

Yet it always pained her that she couldn't do what other mothers did.

“Writing letters to my children, that's what I dreamed of the most,” Ms. Hwang said.

Help came unexpectedly this year from the local school that was running out of school-age children and was desperate to fill its classrooms with students.

South Korea's birthrate has been plummeting in recent decades, falling to less than one child per woman last year, one of the lowest in the world.

Reprinted from The New York Times. For full story, paste the following link into an Internet search: <https://nyti.ms/2DQ9cSu>

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 Jennifer Fidlou Bugat, LVA tutor

Jennifer Fidlou Bugat knows the struggles immigrant's face learning English all too well. “My husband is a French immigrant to the United States and we moved here almost 23 years ago. ESOL has personal meaning to me, Jennifer said.



This art history, French literature major, and former lawyer met her future husband when studying abroad in Paris.

Jennifer has always been very socially conscious. “I have tried other forms of activism, but I wanted to take more concrete action,” she said. The 2015 election was her tipping point. Along with volunteering with First Friends, an organization that helps immigrant detainees, Jennifer sought out Literacy Volunteers of America, Essex & Passaic Counties.

“I was looking for a way to volunteer my time to be responsive to the policies I thought the new administration was starting to implement toward immigrants,” Jennifer said. She has worked with many students during her 2 1/2 years as a tutor.

And, in that short time, her successes are plentiful.

Shalga, a native English speaker whose education was very limited, now in her mid 70's, is going back to school to get her GED. Jennifer found writing prompts to be the best teaching tool to address Shalga's learning style. “At the beginning, Shalga only wrote a few sentences, which in time, turned into several paragraphs,” Jennifer said.

Next, Jennifer's group of four women, started to write a story. “Everyone would contribute a sentence or two to keep the story going.” Jennifer added, “I was excited to see the ESOL students get more comfortable to speak and write in English about their hopes and desires.”

One of Jennifer's current students, a Haitian native and nurse in her country, with Jennifer's help, just earned her home health aide certificate and is now gainfully employed. Jennifer's native Spanish-speaking student is well on her way to testing out of the LVA program.

“I love volunteering,” Jennifer said. “It has been one of the most positive things that I have done in the past few years. I love getting to know my students. I am grateful to work with these people who have optimism for the United States. To interact with people who have such hope is very special. I honestly think I get more out of our tutoring session than my students,” Jennifer said.

Literacy New Jersey Literacy for Life 2019 Awards Student Excellence



Gloria arrived in the U.S. with beginner English and in her own words, progress hindered by one factor: fear. There was the fear of asking for help, even for directions on the street; the distress of answering the telephone; and the everyday anxiety of knowing that someone might say something she didn't understand, and react unkindly when she couldn't respond. But much has changed for this Bogota, Columbia native since arriving in the United States in 2017. She now routinely speaks with strangers, as shown by the daily calls she places as a volunteer in our office. She is much more confident in meetings with her daughters' schools. And her verbal proficiency reading and writing skills have improved immensely. In two years, she has gone from a beginner's ESL class at LVA to the highest level of proficiency in the New Community Corporation Adult Learning Center's high school equivalency program.

Gloria had three basic goals when she entered the program. She wanted to be involved in her daughters' lives at school, to work in an office setting and contribute to a company that requires a worker to communicate in English, and to overcome her fear of speaking in English on the telephone. She met these goals by immersing herself in the tasks of the offices of her English programs.

Gloria earned a bachelor's degree in accounting in Columbia and became a budget coordinator, the third-highest position of a company of 5,000. A similar position in the U.S. requires a CPA designation, a difficult undertaking for most holders of accounting degrees earned overseas, but Gloria is determined to do whatever is required to resume her career.

No doubt about it, Gloria has the same fears as any learner of a foreign language. What makes her unique is that she confronts those fears daily, inspiring all those around her.

