



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



The Center of Excellence for Latino Health at Clara Maass Medical Center is offering free monthly blood pressure and glucose screenings to Bloomfield residents.

The Insider

Carol Palmer graduated high school decades ago, even though she couldn't read or write. Like millions of functionally illiterate adults, she developed coping skills to escape the shame and stigma associated with illiteracy, like shopping for food by using grocery store pictures because she couldn't make out simple words like "peas".

Some 36 million adults in the U.S. cannot read and write well enough to complete a job application, understand a pay stub, make out a street sign. And when seeking help, they often find a lack of funding for adult education programs, long waiting lists, and a shortage of teachers and volunteer tutors.

The plight of adults like Carol are portrayed in recent stories from Education Week and PBS, and can be seen via the following link: <https://bit.ly/2NvLK3W>

The Center of Excellence for Latino Health at Clara Maass Medical Center, together with the Bloomfield Department of Health and Human Services, and the Bloomfield Public Library, will provide free twice monthly blood pressure and glucose screenings to about 300 Bloomfield residents in the second floor boardroom of the Bloomfield Public Library on alternating Tuesdays, July through October.

Thank you to the students and tutors who attended our second "Coffee with Friends" event last month at the Bloomfield Public Library. It was a pleasure to share a few stories with you over a cup of java. We hope to do it again soon.

In the News

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

'Adult Graduates Get Hugs, Cheers and Second Chances,' WAMU 88.5, American University Radio, <https://bit.ly/2Shjpb0>

'Opinion: NYS Policies Translate to Failure for English-Language Learners,' City Limits, <https://bit.ly/2xPOc2E>

'Why Bilinguals Experience the World Differently; Multilingualism alters what you see and hear,' Psychology Today, <https://bit.ly/2L15K7N>

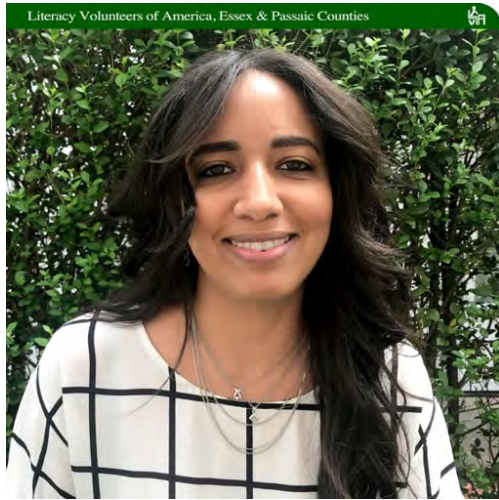
'Vietnam veteran who dropped out to join Army gets high school diploma 50 years later,' Philadelphia Inquirer, [2j02B](https://bit.ly/2j02B)

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
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Ana, an architect from the Dominican Republic, is a super student when it comes to learning English in only a few months.

Tutor Training Workshops

Montclair Public Library

-by Mary Kao

50 South Fullerton Avenue

Montclair, NJ 07040

Saturdays, 12:15-3:45 pm

September 21, 28, October 5, 12, 19, & 26, 2019

Tutor Support Workshops

"Teaching Struggling Readers,"

with Nora Devine

Bloomfield Public Library

90 Broad Street, Library Theater

Bloomfield, NJ 07003

Tuesday, September 24, 2019, 1:00-2:30 pm

Online Courses

ProLiteracy, the largest adult literacy and basic education membership organization in the nation, has launched two free online courses to prepare tutors to work with adult literacy and ESL learners. For more information on the courses, *Understanding the Reading Process* and *Working With Adult Learners*, please check the following link:

<https://bit.ly/2YTxhjN>

Getting to Know Us

Ana, LVA student, by Russell Ben Ali

For an architect schooled or trained overseas, the obstacles to finding work in the U.S. can be daunting. Some find it challenging to visualize things in feet and inches, when most of the world uses the international system of units, known as the metric system.

Some find it difficult to communicate in English.

It's enough to make the average draftsman throw up her hands in resignation, and possibly try another field. But there's nothing average about Ana, an architect from the Dominican Republic and English student extraordinaire.

In fact, she's taken on the language challenge like a boss, setting something of record as a student who began her studies at a 1st-grade level of English comprehension and rose to an 11th-grade level within months.

"Ana is awesome," said Din Garcia, one of Ana's tutors at LVA. "She immigrated to the United States less than six months ago, speaking very little English, and now is holding her own during casual conversations."

If the key to learning a new language is practice, it's no wonder that this quiet and confident learner has excelled. Just take a look at her schedule.

For 16 hours each week, she attends classes held in English at New Community Corporation's Adult Learning Center in Newark. At LVA, she studies with two different tutors, meeting them for a total of four hours per week. Ana also spends two-and-a-half hours every week as an LVA office volunteer. And she immerses herself in English at home. "I only watch American TV and I only listen to American radio," said Ana.

Back in her native Santiago, Dominican Republic, Ana, the middle-born of three daughters, earned a degree in architecture from Pontificia Universidad Catolica Madre y Maestra. For nearly two years she drafted plans at a local architectural firm that specialized in the design of cabanas in Jarabacoa, a mountain resort town south of Santiago. Here in the U.S., Ana will likely take on the matter of returning to the field of architecture or studying interior design at a university once she's satisfied with her English fluency. It's just a matter of time. And practice.

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.



“Back to school in July for these adult English learners”

By Kyle S. Mackie, WBFO 88.7, NPR News
July 12, 2019

It might still be more than a month away for kids, but some adults went back to school this week. It was the start of the Buffalo Public Schools’ summer semester of English classes for individuals aged 21 and older.

Somewhere between 1,500 and 2,000 people study English through the district’s adult education division every year, and they come from all over the world.

“Congo, we have Somalia, we have Eritrea, Pakistan, Burma or Myanmar, Nepal, Sudan, and that’s just right now,” said ESL teacher Courtney McCann, describing her introductory English class.

ESL stands for “English as a Second Language,” but the term ENL (meaning “English as a New Language”) is also commonly used throughout the school system. It’s a more appropriate term because many English Language Learners (ELLs) already speak multiple languages—just not English.

“We’ve had students who have started out speaking no English and have ended up starting their own businesses,” said Doreen Regan, ESL coordinator for the Buffalo Public Schools Adult Education Division. “A lot of them come with background skills that they can transfer over when they get here. The problem is their limited language proficiency in English.”

Reprinted from WBFO 88.7, NPR News. For full story, paste the following link into an Internet search: <https://bit.ly/30EHvRn>

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

Michael Wood, LVA tutor, by Russell Ben Ali

For nearly a quarter of a century, Michael Wood labored away in higher education, guiding hundreds of students along the road to earn degrees in institutions from the west coast to the east.



It was more a labor of love than a grind, for an educator who spent about 25 years as an instructor, adjunct professor, academic advisor, and administrator in colleges and universities in Los Angeles, New York City, and his hometown of Washington D.C.

Challenging students to use critical thinking is a mission he’s never abandoned, not even in his latest endeavor - - that of a volunteer literacy tutor.

“These goals have been with me throughout my entire professional experience in higher education,” Michael explained. “I love to see people grow and develop and reach their full potential. That is why I am here. I have retired and I still love teaching.”

Michael said he strives to enhance his students’ thinking skills as they learn English by using some basic elements of critical thinking. He’ll use arithmetic or basic math, for example, in a lesson that teaches students how to count in English.

“I want my students not to regurgitate English,” he added. “I want them to internalize and think about it.”

Before life in academia, Michael Wood worked as a systems analyst for computer consulting firms in the Washington D.C. area. He became an adjunct professor in research methodology and urban planning, while still a systems analyst.

Outside the classroom, Michael enjoys the game of chess, working out and staying physically fit, collecting antique classic model cars, and landscaping and landscape design. He learned about LVA while still working in education.

“It’s a new teaching experience for me,” he said of LVA. “As a teacher, everyone knew the language. Here, you are teaching the language while teaching a subject as well.”

It’s a new experience as well for his students. “I love the way he is teaching,” said Zoila, a student from Ecuador. “I have been in the country for 30 years and now I am feeling more comfortable because Michael is teaching me to speak better.”

LVA Coffee with Friends

Can you guess from these pictures who has opera in common, who has a newborn, or who shares a love of travel? LVA was proud to host our second Coffee with Friends last month with snacks, raffle prizes and lots of fun getting to know something new about each other.

We invited tutors and students to this casual afternoon and then asked people to pair off to introduce each other to the group by finding something unusual that they had in common. Everyone got to know each other a bit better beyond the tutoring tables and everyone got a raffle ticket just for joining us in the Theater of the Bloomfield Public Library. Prizes included gift cards for coffee and rolls of quarters for the dreaded meters near our office. We had lots of fun and the room was filled with happy chatting. Keep your eyes open for our next Coffee with Friends and bring your students, it counts as tutoring time. We hope everyone keeps the conversations going!



Adult Literacy & Community Library Partnership Pilot Program Hilton Branch, Maplewood Memorial Library

Esther was getting ready to finish high school attend college in Haiti when her mother told her they were moving to New Jersey. This was not happy news to a teenager despite hearing about great opportunities in the U.S. But over a year later, Esther feels much better having made friends, learned some English and plans to go to college in the U.S. next year, according to her teacher, Eidy Urena.

Esther'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 earn a nationally recognized certification, ServeSafe, and which can help enhance their chances of finding employment. Funds were granted to 11 libraries throughout the state, including Maplewood, which work with LVA to offer intensive ESL classes. The program is now in its third year and new classes began last week in Maplewood at the Hilton Branch Library.

Other students in the program include Ricardo, from Haiti who was sad to leave family and friends but remains connected to them through video chats. Ricardo works hard to understand English language TV and radio programs and hopes to attend college and become a physician's assistant, according to his teacher, Thomas Conlon.

Alexia earned her degree in economics and was working a government job in Brazil before coming to the U.S. She'd been working as a contract supervisor on an infrastructure project and after a few years decided to come move. Here as a part of an exchange program, Alexia is working as an au pair and speaking English every day. "Changes are never easy and beginnings are harder," she told her teacher, Thomas Conlon.



Sussex Educational Foundation, Berkeley College & LVA Essex and Passaic Counties Adult Education Program

Learning English can be a struggle for a variety of reasons. Adelir managed to get a full life from very little, creating her own home business and then trying to learn ESOL. Initially she didn't put enough time and effort into her classes and her scores disappointed her. She came back the next session determined to repeat the level and was very attentive in class, along with practicing outside of class, impressing her teacher. "Adelir decided to learn English this time and I'm sure she will in no time," said her teacher, Lidya Mikhail.

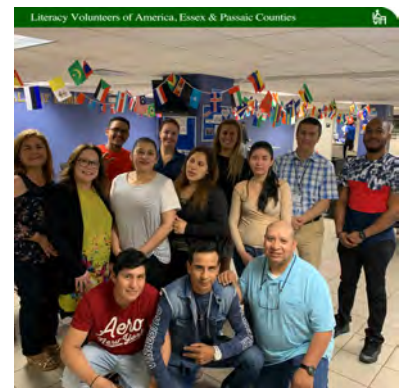
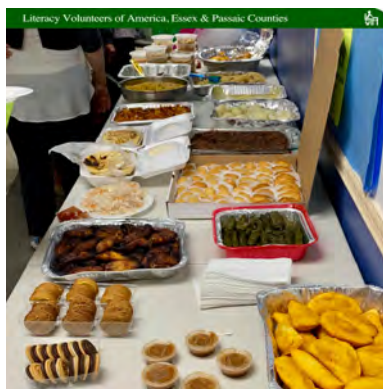
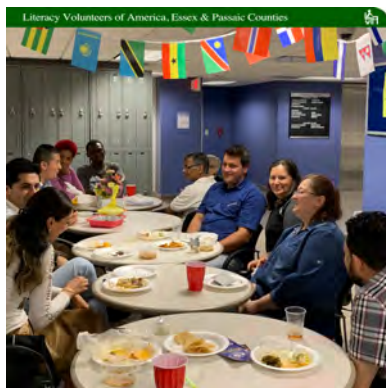
For 10 weeks, students attended ESOL classes at Berkeley College in Newark, in a joint pilot program run by the school, the Sussex Educational Foundation, and Literacy Volunteers of America, Essex & Passaic Counties. Dozens of students completed classes last month in three levels – beginner, intermediate, and advanced. Here's a snapshot of several students:

Marlene Marie moved here from Haiti last year and left behind her friends, family and her career in law enforcement. Her shyness melted away and now she gives helpful advice to other students including "Don't worry about your pronunciation, just talk," her teacher Roxanne Peterson told her.

Hardworking, loyal and honest are words Hale from Turkey would use to describe herself. A year ago, she needed a translator for English conversations, but now she can go on appointments alone. Hale's teacher would add three more words to her description: intelligent, self-driven and enthusiastic, said her teacher Roxanne Peterson.

Djetanta came from Togo in West Africa earlier this year and wants to learn English to continue his studies and become a lawyer. Right now, he is working as a dishwasher in a restaurant and has seen his level of English improve with the help of his teacher, Olga Roberts. "I'm working hard and I'm continuing to work hard for that," he said.

Satpall, from India, had trouble understanding pronunciations initially, and joined a class to learn. "I'm happy I'm improving my English. I'm thankful to the administration and my teacher, he said of Olga Roberts.



Passaic Public Library and LVA Partnership

Through a partnership with the Passaic Public Library, beginning level ESL classes are taught to students like Frida, from Peru, who dreamt she should open a restaurant. She knew the first step to owning her own business was to learn English. “She wants her English to be perfect,” said Jalaire Craver, her teacher.

Dulce, from Mexico, is a very busy person. She has a “mini” business making invitations, flyers and party decorations, parents three children, two with special needs and is always the first person to ask if something needs to get done. Dulce recently added learning English to her day and is working toward citizenship with her husband, according to her teacher, Jalaire Craver.

Glindy, from the Dominican Republic, earned her law degree there and as of recently finds it challenging to get used to the climate and the language. As a student, she has learned a lot in a short time likes to help her fellow students, according to her teacher, Grizzly Matias.

Irma is from a large Venezuelan family and recalls her childhood fondly. Now she’s a parent and grandparent and the move here reunited her with her family. She wants to learn English to help her understand her grandchildren, go to medical appointments without a translator and take a phone call without a language barrier. Irma comes to class eager to learn every day, according to her teacher, Grizzly Matias.

