

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 Insider

Greetings LVA Family,

New Jersey's recent heat wave hasn't broken any records, according to climatologists, but believe it, it's helped make life miserable for some of us. We hope that you make an effort to stay cool this summer and take advantage of area cooling centers, for instance, our local libraries. A list of New Jersey cooling centers by county, along with days and hours of operation, can be found here: <https://bit.ly/2KEfQfW>

Good news for Essex County tutors and students: The Bloomfield Public Library has graciously made the Special Collections Unit available to our tutoring groups. The second-floor room is private and is equipped with a table, chairs, and a white board.

The Fiscal Year 2020 President's Budget Proposal, which was released late last month, includes some cuts to adult education. The Coalition on Adult Basic Education, or COABE, recommends that each of us contact our elected officials and urge them to vote against the proposed cuts when they return from recess early next month. In fact, COABE makes the process easy via this link: <https://www.coabe.org/legislative-center>

We're happy to announce that, after a two-month summer hiatus, our tutor support workshops will begin again next month, with sessions led by educators Nora Devine and Erik Jacobson, among others. Please see Page 2 of this newsletter for the next workshops or check our website for a complete list.

In the News

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

'43 million Americans -- said to include R Kelly -- struggle to read and write', ABC News <https://abcn.ws/2Yklizw>

'"This is a miracle": Kids, grandkids celebrate as 56-year-old Raymond man graduates', Union Leader <https://bit.ly/2LVTZF4>

'Another Voice: Literacy training is crucial to workforce development', The Buffalo News <https://bit.ly/31hl8G2>

'72-year-old graduate is college's oldest valedictorian', News 12 New Jersey <https://bit.ly/2K8KwYW>

'Ask the Experts: How Literacy Impacts Workforce Development', Springfield Business Journal Live <https://bit.ly/2SRLV8R>



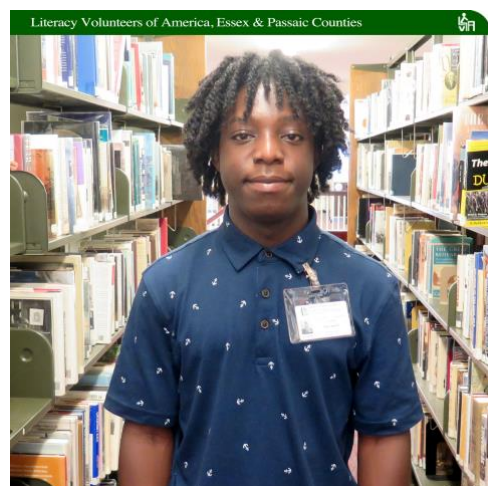
We have a new world map in our Bloomfield office, which shows the dozens of countries our current students hail from. Come on in, check it out, and share your story with us.

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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Thierry, a student of English as well as cartooning and graphic design, uses his artistic skills to illustrate new vocabulary words for classmates.

Tutor Training Workshops

Montclair Public Library

-by Mary Kao

50 South Fullerton Avenue
Montclair, NJ 07042

Saturdays, 12:15-3:45 pm

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

Bloomfield Public Library

By Mary O'Connor

90 Broad Street
Bloomfield, NJ 07003

Tuesdays, 10:00 am-1:00 pm

November 5, 12, 19, 26, December 3, & 10, 2019

Tutor Support Workshops

"Teaching Struggling Readers,"

with Nora Devine

Bloomfield Public Library
90 Broad Street

Bloomfield, NJ 07003

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

"Teaching Non-fiction Reading,"

with Erik Jacobson

Bloomfield Public Library
90 Broad Street

Bloomfield, NJ 07003

Thursday, October 3, 2019, 1:00-2:30 pm

Getting to Know Us

Thierry, LVA student

It's no surprise, given his bright smile and cheerful clothing, that Thierry is a cartoonist. And some days he dresses head-to-toe in a single color, yellow, red or blue.

But when Thierry first arrived at LVA just over a year ago, his appearance was that of a preppy, shy, young man. When his grandmother brought him and his brother to sign up for ESL tutoring, she spoke for them that day and never let them out of her sight. Thierry wasn't even allowed to take public transportation in an effort to hold them close in their new home here.

Thierry noticed the differences right away between his life in Port au Prince, Haiti, and now in New Jersey.

"In my country you see people every day, but here it's like people are hiding themselves," Thierry said. The parks in Port au Prince were full of families. "Kids played games, basketball or skateboard, and adults talked about politics, the weather and improving the area," he said.

New Jersey was different. "I saw kids in the park, but they always have an adult with them," Thierry said.

Now a year later, Thierry has a job at Shoprite and is riding his bike from Newark to his tutor sessions in Bloomfield.

"This program has been very helpful," he said. "I learned a lot. I learned pronunciation, how to read and how to write." And now he's ready for the next part of his life. Grandma laid the groundwork.

Thierry's dream has always been cartooning. He recently began studying college level cartooning and graphic design. He's moving on from LVA now and will be missed. When he came to say his sad goodbyes to the office, he photographed the staff and promised to return with a cheerful caricature.

"His artistic gifts were a valuable tool when introducing new vocabulary words," said Din Garcia, Thierry's LVA tutor. "His classmates and I will miss him and will be rooting him on as he takes the next steps in pursuit of his passion."

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.



“5 unusual, evidence-based ways to get better at a new language”

Big Think

By Emma Young, July 7, 2019

It's hard not to conclude that if you act like a child, maybe you'll learn as effectively as a child, too...

The last time I tried to learn a foreign language, I was living in an Italian suburb of Sydney. My hour a week at a local Italian class was inevitably followed by a bowl of pasta and a few glasses of wine.

As an approach to language-learning goes, it was certainly more pleasurable than my German lessons at school. Despite the wine, it was also surprisingly effective. In fact, getting better at a new language doesn't have to mean hard hours on lists of vocabs and the rules of grammar. It turns out that what you don't focus on matters, too. And a glass of wine may even help...

Listen to the language, even if you don't have a clue what's being said – and you're not even paying close attention

One challenging aspect to learning a new language is that it may contain distinct speech sounds that, as a non-speaker, you can't even tell apart. This isn't a problem for young children – they only need to spend time around the new language to learn to hear the different sounds, simply through passive exposure. It's long been thought adults can't do this, but a study published in 2019 brings a more optimistic message and has implications for the best approach to adult language learning.

The researchers asked native Finnish-speakers to listen to Mandarin speech sounds while engaged in other tasks, and to do this for two hours a day on four consecutive days.

Reprinted from the Big Think multimedia web portal. For full story, paste the following link into an Internet search:
<https://bit.ly/2YNFaGI>

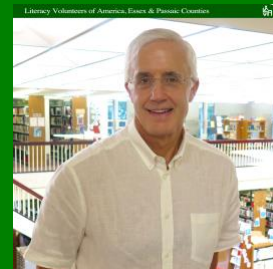
Learning a new culture is more than studying a language. Tutoring is more than learning techniques. Our 'Resources' page covers everything from legal matters, health care, & scholarships for immigrants, to professional development for tutors. Give us a look @:

<http://www.lvaen.org/students.html>

Getting to Know Us (cont.)

Peter Vigeland, LVA tutor

Doing things for others without expecting anything in return is core to what makes us human, as the saying goes. That pretty much sums up the efforts of Peter Vigeland, a volunteer literacy tutor with a penchant for empowering the disadvantaged.



Peter's path to helping people began while he was an undergrad at Dartmouth College. It was there that he began mentoring disadvantaged youth as part of the Big Brother program. Upon earning his J.D. from the Columbia University School of Law, Peter continued his journey of lending his expertise to an underserved population.

"When I graduated from law school, I worked in a number of public service jobs in the Manhattan D.A.'s office and U.S. Attorney's office in Manhattan," Peter said. "The criminal law which I practiced is primarily about moral choices and prosecutors have tremendous power. They have to use their power wisely and compassionately."

Peter's mom, a single parent, raised him and his siblings on a gym teacher's salary. She also instilled in him a love of exercise.

"I like to keep fit," Peter said. He alternates his daily exercise routine between swimming, biking and tennis. Peter swims one mile daily. When he is not in the pool, Peter plays tennis or cycles 30 to 50 miles per day. One memorable bike trip was cycling in a downpour in Zion National Park in Utah that included a very steep drop off. "That is the only time I was really scared for my life," Peter said.

For one as active as he, there's usually the question of how to spend your time when you've stopped working for a living. For Peter, that was a no-brainer.

"When I retired, I wanted to do something that I thought was valuable and had meaning," he said. "By joining Literacy Volunteers of America Essex & Passaic Counties, I feel like I am part of a group that has real changeable benefits on the students."

So these days, when he's not working out, you'll find Peter doling out lesson plans to his group of appreciative ESOL students at the Bloomfield Public Library. "I try to make learning fun," Peter said of his teaching strategy. "If the lessons are too tedious, it is kind of heavy sledding. It is not all conjugation of verbs."