



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



*Tutor Michael Wood's students surprised him with a cake to celebrate his final tutoring session. There were tearful smiles all around.*

## Literacy Volunteers of America Essex & Passaic Counties

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## *The Insider*

Greetings LVA Family,

Learning to read and write as an older adult can certainly be challenging but those who think they're too old to learn might find inspiration in the Mary Walker story, which is featured on Page 3. Ms. Walker, who was born into slavery in 1848 Alabama, enrolled in a Chattanooga, Tenn. literacy program at age 115. After studying for one hour per day, twice each week, she learned to read by age 116 and, a year later, to write, add, and subtract. She was certified as the nation's oldest student by the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, testament to the saying that you're never too old to learn.

Last month saw some interesting legal developments for New Jersey in the area of immigration. The U.S. Department of Justice sued New Jersey on Feb 10th, seeking a federal court ruling that would invalidate a 2018 state directive that prohibits New Jersey law enforcement from sharing information on a detainee's immigration status and release date with the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Gov. Phil Murphy called the lawsuit "election year politics" and said that New Jersey will "continue to provide a welcoming and inclusive home for our immigrant communities." <https://bit.ly/38cSby5>

In a separate legal case, a federal appeals court ruled Feb. 26 that the Trump administration can withhold millions of dollars in law enforcement grants to states, including New Jersey, and to cities that fail to cooperate with ICE. <https://bit.ly/2wjNNjK>

Thanks to all who attended our "Coffee with Friends" gathering of students, tutors, and staff last month. Please see our event photos on Page 4. We'll keep you posted on the next one.

## *In the News*

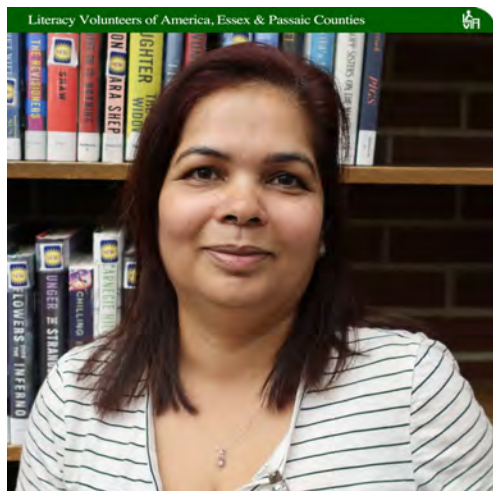
To view the following stories, copy and paste the highlighted website into an internet search bar.

**"This Cork man's literacy story has a happy ending,"**  
Cork Live, <https://bit.ly/388PCgu>

**"Tubman descendants commit to fighting illiteracy,"**  
Washington Informer, <https://bit.ly/32ANuWN>

**"The Northeast needs immigrants to bolster economy and help prevent a demographic catastrophe, according to Rutgers report,"** Rutgers Today, <https://bit.ly/3cmYOB5>

**"How Japanese and English merged to create a new language,"** CNN Travel, <https://cnn.it/2Tcje8g>



*Nado, who was unable to attend school in her native Guyana, has made steady progress towards her literacy goals with the help of two tutors.*

## Tutor Training Workshops

### Clifton Memorial Library, Allwood Branch

-by Darnelle Richardson

44 Lyall Road

Clifton, NJ 07012

Saturdays, 1:00 pm-4:00 pm

April 4, 11, 18, 25, May 2, & 9, 2020

### Hilton Branch, Maplewood Public Library

-by Carolyn VanDoren

1688 Springfield Ave., Maplewood NJ 07040

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:00 am-Noon

June 2, 4, 9, 11, 16 & 18, 2020

## Tutor Support Workshops

### "Mediation and Conflict Resolution,"

with Cindy Castañeda & Christopher Castro

Bloomfield Public Library

90 Broad Street, Library Theater

Bloomfield, NJ 07003

Tuesday, March 10, 2020, 10:00 am - 3:00 pm

### "Cultural Sensitivity and Reducing Microaggressions,"

with Diane Giachetti

Bloomfield Public Library

90 Broad Street, 2nd Floor Boardroom

Bloomfield, NJ 07003

Thursday, March 26, 2020, 1:00-2:30 pm

## Getting to Know Us

### Nado, LVA student

by Janet Donohue

Everyone who meets Rajpattie (nickname Nado) has a similar reaction: "Her eyes sparkle. You see pure love in them!"

That includes love for her family, for her native Guyana, and for learning. "She loves to learn," agree tutors Jackie Williams and Karen Kirk. "She is always on time and prepared for her lessons."

Nado is a Basic Literacy student whose first language is English. One of 11 children who, because of family circumstances was unable to attend school, she began working in housekeeping when she was 13. She had already learned cooking, cleaning, and clothes-washing from caring for her younger siblings.

At 15, Nado married Satrohan, now her husband of 33 years, after seeing him only once. "I left my family in the country and moved to his house in Georgetown. That's the tradition." Her daughter, Nalini, was born two years later. Nado stayed home until her little girl started school, then returned to housekeeping work.

In 2013 Satrohan immigrated to the U.S. for a job in construction with his nephew. Nado and Nalini followed several years later.

It was Nalini who directed Nado to LVA at the Bloomfield Public Library. As Nado remembers, "Marisol (LVA student coordinator) gave me a form to fill out. I told her I couldn't read and she said, 'You can learn'."

Nado began studying towards that goal in October 2019. "I am getting there very slowly but surely," Nado explained. "I started with the sounds of words, memorizing words." Early on she learned how to spell the names of her family.

Today, when Nado feels down, she calls her grandson, Nalini's child. "In Guyana, if our grandma lived far away, we called her 'far-nanny'," Nado said. "Here, I tell my daughter to teach her son to just call me 'grandma'." That may be the most special of the many new words that her tutors have helped Nado to recognize, pronounce and spell.

***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.*



## “A Chattanooga icon: The life of Mary Walker”

*WRCBtv*

By John Martin, February 18, 2019

Five short years before her death, Mary Walker enrolled in a class with the Chattanooga Area Literacy Movement (CALM), and learned to read for the first time in her life at the age of 116.

Mary Hardway Walker was born in Union Springs, Alabama in 1848. She was born a slave to slave parents. When the Emancipation Proclamation was signed by Abraham Lincoln in 1863, Mary Walker was already 15 years old.

In 1917, Mary and her family moved to Chattanooga. For many years, Mary lived in a flat, run down and dilapidated old-age brick apartment at 1812 Baldwin Street. It was said that Mary would cook for the neighborhood, sometimes for donations, to donate to New Hope Baptist Church on Kerr Street.

Mary eventually moved to the Poss Homes High Rise Apartments on Market Street. It was there she met a woman named Helen Kelly, a volunteer teacher for the Chattanooga Area Literacy Movement. The students who volunteered numbered 26 -- of whom 19 stayed and graduated from illiteracy to literacy. The spotlight of the class though was Mary Walker. She learned to read, write, add and subtract at the age of 117, after she attended a 1-hour class, 2 nights a week for more than a year.

Her age, determination and attitude earned her the greatest recognition given to any poor person, black or white, in the city of Chattanooga, and perhaps the nation.

*Reprinted from WRCBtv. For full story, paste the following link into your favorite web browser address bar: <https://bit.ly/2T8Zfra>*

*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.lvae.org/students.html>*

## Getting to Know Us

**Karen Cardell, LVA tutor**  
by Janet Donohue

Karen Cardell was fortunate to have a grandfather who valued education. A World War II veteran who wanted to become a pharmacist but had to forgo college for work, he emphasized to his family the importance of finishing their education.



When Karen was little, he gave her a tiny desk then regularly brought books and asked her to explain the information in them. Education became for his granddaughter something much more than an abstract concept. Small wonder that her favorite game was to play school.

“I had always wanted to be a teacher but until recently the time wasn’t right,” Karen recalled. She received a B.A. in Classics and Latin, an M.A. in Law and Governance, and a paralegal studies certificate, all from Montclair State University. In between her bachelor’s and master’s degrees, she earned a teaching certificate.

Five years ago, Karen spotted a flyer in the Montclair Municipal Building that highlighted a woman whose volunteer activities included tutoring for LVA. “I took a photo of the flyer, thinking LVA was something that I needed to look into.” A year later, with fewer work and school demands, she signed up for training. She has now been tutoring LVA students for two and one-half years.

“I find tutoring very rewarding,” she said. “I like this program because my students are very dedicated. They feel like a family.”

Her classes typically begin with students talking about what’s happened since the previous class. The class then turns to the day’s lesson. A big believer in lesson plans, Karen always includes exercises in grammar, syntax, reading comprehension, and writing. They work on pronunciation and she makes time to answer questions.

Karen is a natural teacher, evident from her lesson plans, teaching influences, and interactions with those in her care. In high school, she would sometimes show that she knew the material by, for example, doing a word game in math class or painting a picture in English. That’s also a fitting approach to teaching literacy.

“If we limit our ability to communicate with one another, however well-intentioned, we are taking a step backwards.”Karen said.

### Coffee with Friends

LVA, Essex & Passaic Counties recently hosted “Coffee with Friends,” a social bi-annual event gathering students, tutors and staff for a couple of hours of fun. Happy chatter filled the room as friends new and old joined us at the Bloomfield Public Library’s Theater. In addition to sharing coffee and treats including pastries from Rombiolo, a local Uruguayan bakery, the tutors and students talked in small groups about what they were a snob about and we heard answers ranging from food to sweaters. A word to the wise, don’t ever give LVA’s Debbie Graham a cookie with raisins in it. Thank you to everyone who was able to join us!

