



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



Tutors received important tips and techniques from Caitlyn Pezza last month during the "Getting Your Students Writing" workshop.

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
(973) 470-0039

Cristhian Barcelos	-Executive Director charcelos@lvaep.org
Jorge Chavez	-Data Processing Coordinator jchavez@lvaep.org
Debbie Graham	-Education Coordinator dgraham@lvaep.org
Ellen Martin	-Recruitment & Training Coordinator emartin@lvaep.org
Mary O'Connor	-Trainer & Tutor Support Specialist moconnor@lvaep.org
Marisol Ramirez	-Student Coordinator mr Ramirez@lvaep.org

The Insider

Greetings LVA Family,

Well that was some year we just finished, possibly the best ever, according to a New York Times editorial, and scores of other publications that ran the paper's story in their editions. "In the long arc of human history, 2019 has been the best year ever ... since modern humans emerged about 200,000 years ago, 2019 was probably the year in which children were least likely to die, adults were least likely to be illiterate and people were least likely to suffer excruciating and disfiguring diseases," the story offered. <https://bit.ly/2QsVL1u>

For sure there was plenty to feel good about in 2019 but, when it comes to adult literacy, our work is far from over. We wish all of you in the adult education community a safe, happy, and successful new year as you continue your efforts.

Last year certainly became a good year for New Jersey residents without formal legal status when Gov. Phil Murphy signed a bill in December that made them eligible to obtain state driver's licenses. New Jersey joined 14 other states, along with Washington D.C., that passed such a law. See news story below.

If you've never heard the endearing story of Veronica Poole, an Irish woman who returned to school 50 years after dropping out and, 10 weeks later, was asked to write and deliver a speech on national television, please watch "One woman's moving adult literacy journey". Shivers. <https://bit.ly/2QViUc1>

In the News

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

'Undocumented immigrants will be able to get NJ driver's licenses,' NJ.com <https://bit.ly/2MW8Uho>

'New analysis probes economic costs of illiteracy', Politico <https://politi.co/2Mqpea2>

'No Improvement in American Adults' Literacy, Numeracy, or Digital Problem-Solving Skills,' Business Wire <https://bwnews.pr/2Qf9V54>

'Learning a new language is like an illicit love affair', TheWeek.com <https://bit.ly/35TGtIt>

'U.S Spanglish: How This Hybrid Language Ended Up as A Course in Over 40 Colleges Across the Country', Be Latina <https://bit.ly/2rHoE0c>



Chaivarit, who goes by the nickname "Zeno", is known for the long hours he spends studying English outside of weekly lessons with his tutors.

Tutor Training Workshops

Bloomfield Public Library
-by Mary O'Connor
90 Broad Street
Bloomfield, NJ 07003
Tuesdays, 10:00 am-1:00 pm
February 25, March 3, 10, 17, 24, & 31, 2020

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

Tutor Support Workshops

"Taking the Mystery out of Lesson Plans,"
with Ann Moore
Bloomfield Public Library
90 Broad Street, 2nd floor Boardroom
Bloomfield, NJ 07003
Tuesday, January 21, 2020, 1:00-2:30 pm

"Coffee with Friends,"
with Students & Tutors
Bloomfield Public Library
90 Broad Street, Library Theater
Bloomfield, NJ 07003
Tuesday, February 11, 2020, 11:00 am - 1:00 pm

Getting to Know Us

Chaivarit, LVA student

Chaivarit is neither a stranger to challenges nor hard work. The 9th-born of 12 children, he skipped college in order to help support his family but still rose to a managerial position at a large international credit card company in his native Bangkok, Thailand. He managed more than 1,000 workers over 17 years and several times was named the company's employee of the year.

During the evening, he sang in a restaurant which, he admits, was his favorite job. And on weekends he worked in one of three hair salons he owned which, along with a country house and a Bangkok condo for his mother, he purchased with his earnings.

So when Chaivarit, who goes by the nickname "Zeno", took on the role of English student here at LVA, it was a surprise to no one that he would approach the task with a similar intensity.

"He works so hard outside of our time together and is so eager to improve his English," said Meg Temkin, one of two LVA tutors with whom Zeno studies each week.

When he's not meeting with Meg or tutor Christine Burns, or working full-time at a West Orange hair salon, Zeno studies English through YouTube videos and books he borrows from the library. "I like to read history and, for fun, books like Curious George and Cat in the Hat," Zeno said. He came to our tutoring program after an intensive 10-week course at an LVA satellite.

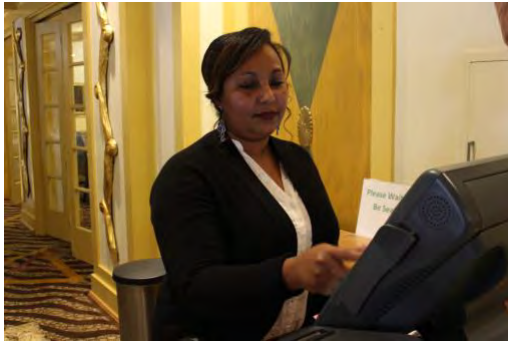
"He has learned so much in his short time in New Jersey," added Meg. "Additionally, Zeno is the greatest guy – always thinking of others with a kind word and remembering holidays and birthdays. It's an honor to be a small part of Zeno's journey."

His journey to the states began when Zeno met Danny, an American man, at a Bangkok temple. Despite their language differences, Zeno and Danny emailed, telephoned, and chatted via Facebook for five years. They were finally married in ceremonies in Bangkok and New Jersey.

While far from Thailand, Zeno keeps in close touch with his family, including his 17-year-old daughter, whom he supports. "I work hard because I want to help my family, my mother, my daughter," Zeno said.

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/donatotlva/> or by mailing us a check.



‘Brain Waste’: Highly skilled immigrants struggle to fill workforce gaps

Cal Matters

By Farida Jhabvala Romero, KQED, December 24, 2019

Burmese doctors dish sushi at a restaurant, a Jordanian computer engineer drives for Uber, and a Nepali non-profit program officer stocks shelves at a Walmart.

Nearly 2 million college-educated immigrants labor in jobs for which they are overqualified, or cannot find work at all.

The “brain waste” phenomenon is costing California and other states billions of dollars per year in lost individual earnings and tax revenues, according to estimates by the Migration Policy Institute. The problem is worsening as, among immigrants continuing to arrive in the United States, there’s a greater proportion of college-educated individuals, experts warn.

New immigrants face barriers to obtaining high-skilled jobs that may take years to overcome, including the lack of U.S. professional work experience and technical English fluency. The process for getting foreign credentials recognized in this country can be long, complicated and expensive, especially in highly regulated fields like health care.

Wilmer Garcia Ricardo, a physician in Cuba and Venezuela for seven years, was admitted to the U.S. in 2012 through a now-defunct government humanitarian parole program for Cuban medical professionals. But once he resettled in Louisville, Ky., Garcia Ricardo was left on his own to figure out how to work again as a doctor in America.

Reprinted from Cal Matters. For full story, paste the following link into your favorite web browser address bar: <https://bit.ly/2u5gxvb>

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 (cont.)

Will Williams, LVA tutor

It didn’t take long to see the results of Will Williams efforts as a volunteer tutor. One of his first students, a Jamaican farmer with no formal education, landed a job as a cook in a well-established restaurant. That came after the two spent countless hours together going over food and recipes.



But Will’s not one to linger on his success. He’d rather tell you the effect his students, and the program, have had on him.

“In this year, I have gained awareness of how I interact with people,” Will explained. “I have gained confidence in communicating concepts. I have always been conscious about not being condescending and now I feel I can have open dialogue with my students. There are no judgements.”

This former web developer of over 20 years, left his job, left his native Australia and moved to the United States with his wife, an American who’d studied in Sydney.

In something of a change of pace, Will enrolled in Montclair State University where he majors in anthropology and minors in archeology and religion. His interest in people, the human mind, and helping others eventually led him to volunteer.

“Early last year I saw there was a training for LVA at the Montclair Public Library,” Will said. “I wasn’t able to sign up at the time, but when it was reposted, I jumped on it. I saw it as an opportunity to work with people in a productive way. I feel that LVA has a direct impact on the student.”

He’s also realistic about the obstacles that some students face, particularly adults from vastly different cultures, and the time it takes for them to advance.

“I see glimpses of progress,” he said of his current students, who hail from the Caribbean and Africa. “There are always two steps forward and one step back. A word will come up that they have previously encountered and they will remember it. These are little nuggets of success.”

The future may see him working abroad to, again, help others. “I am interested in working in Africa and I think that I may have been influenced by my LVA students in a way,” he said. “I want to work to help toward correcting problems in the broken system.”

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

They came from Haiti, China, Turkey, Syria, Latin America, and the African continent, fleeing a war or the aftermath of a crippling earthquake or just seeking better economic opportunities. Yet, despite their different backgrounds, they worked together, and got along, as adult students in two English classes offered last fall at the Hilton Branch of the Maplewood Memorial Library. Several said that they hoped the classes would help lead to better jobs, new careers, or improved lives through basic English fluency.

The classes were offered through the Adult Literacy and Community Library Partnership, a state 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 and improve their chances of finding employment.

Marie, a student in the program, was a teacher in her native Haiti and would love to continue her passion of teaching children, once her English improves. She came to the U.S. after losing her father in the Haitian earthquake of January 2010. But she is motivated by the principles he and her mother taught her, particularly the importance of an education. “Her participation in the ESOL program continues to help her reach her goal of understanding and speaking English,” said Glenda Wills, her teacher in the first level class.

For student Rita, the adjustment to life in the states was sometimes overwhelming, given that she left her entire family behind in Brazil. Things improved vastly after she married and had two sons, said Eidy Urena, her teacher in the intermediate class. “She’s excited about learning English and is happy to continue her life in America,” Eidy said.



Passaic Public Library and LVA Partnership

When Arlyn left the Dominican Republic, opting to raise her three daughters in the U.S., there seemed no urgent need to learn English, she said. Spanish was widely-spoken in her Bronx neighborhood and in the beauty salon where she worked as a secretary. But years later, when her family moved to Saddle Brook, NJ, everything changed. She found that she could converse with no one, especially not with her girls' school teachers - - not without the aid of her husband. "Nobody understood me!" she complained.

So last fall, Arlyn enrolled in a beginner's ESOL class at the Reid Memorial Branch of the Passaic Public Library where, according to her teacher, Jalaire Craver, her progress is obvious. "I feel good about this class," Arlyn said. "The level is right for me and I like the people."

Like Arlyn, dozens of adults enrolled in classes offered through a partnership between the Passaic Public Library and LVA Essex & Passaic Counties. One student, Liliana, a native of Ecuador who works as a nurse's assistant, wants to improve her English so that she can study nursing and become a U.S. citizen. "This program exceeded my expectations," said Liliana, who attended Grizzly Matias's class at the Passaic Public Library's main branch.

Some students left behind loved ones at home and struggled to adjust to lives in a new country. In the end, it was worth the effort, said Adriana, a student from Mexico. "I never imagined that my children would speak two languages, and that my older son would play the cello at school," she said. "For me, it's important that my children are happy, and that I can give them tools for a better future."

