



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



"Tutoring in Today's World," our Tutor Support Workshop via Zoom, was a success! Thank you for joining us and thank you to the presenters for their great distance learning ideas.

The Insider

Greetings LVA Family,

We hope this letter finds you healthy and safe. These are truly unprecedented and confusing times, with current conditions difficult and a future that's uncertain. If you find yourself in need of emotional support, the state Department of Human Services offers a free, confidential helpline, available 8 am to 8 pm seven days per week, at **1-866-202-HELP (4357)**. This and other vital services can be found on our resources webpage:

<http://www.lvaep.org/health-resources.html>

The New Jersey Association for Lifelong Learning (NJALL) went virtual this year, in lieu of its traditional annual conference. You can see the final webinar of the virtual mini conference, a panel discussion on "Transitioning to the New Reality of Adult Education", at: <https://bit.ly/2MG3xSU>

NJALL also remotely announced its annual awards, including those for Teacher of the Year, Lifelong Leadership, the Scholarship Program, and Adult Learner Writing Contest which this year included a category on Writing About COVID-19. You can view the awards here: <https://bit.ly/3f4PHFQ>

Congratulations to all award recipients. Some of our students, who received a special mention for their writing, are portrayed in the final two pages of this newsletter.

Thanks to all who attended our first virtual support workshop last week, "Tutoring in Today's World" where tutors Karen Cardell, Amy Mahoney, Ann Moore, Mary O'Connor, and others shared useful tips for transitioning to distance learning.

In the News

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

"Op-Ed: Language lessons are lifeline to immigrant workforce", Boston Business Journal, <https://bit.ly/2ZY3pWP>

"Coronavirus' online school is hard enough. What if you're still learning to speak English"? USA TODAY, <https://bit.ly/2BoWw6G>

"Don't let age stop you: Northern Ontario senior graduates with GED 62 years after leaving high school", CTV News, <https://bit.ly/2TYshtu>

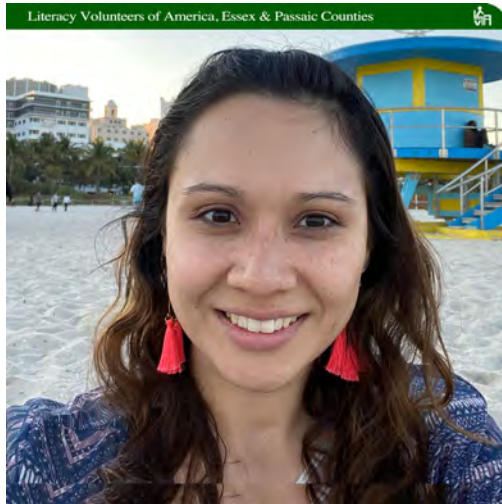
"Teaching remotely hasn't been easy. Try managing a classroom that speaks 10 different languages", nj.com, <https://bit.ly/3eFQuN9>

Literacy Volunteers of America Essex & Passaic Counties

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Paula, an ESOL student from Colombia who, according to her tutor, shows no fear of speaking English with strangers, gets tons of practice during her U.S. travels.

Upcoming and Archived Webinars

Tutor Support Workshops

“Sharing Strategies for Distance Learning,”
with *Christina Rahaal*
Platform: Zoom
Thursday, June 25, 2020, 11:00 am - 11:40 am

ProLiteracy

Friday, June 19, 2020, 2:00 pm
<https://proliteracy.org/webinars>

Ninth and 10th in a series of webinars, hosted by ProLiteracy, to help literacy program administrators, tutors, and teachers convert their instruction to distance learning.

World Education EdTech Center: mLearning Webinars Series

“Instructional Support”
June 17, 2020, 1:00 pm EST
<https://edtech.worlded.org/events/mlearning/>

Archived webinar:
“Move Forward with Mobile Learning”
<https://bit.ly/3f6N8Tw>

Getting to Know Us

Paula, LVA student

It’s hard to say how Paula caught the travel bug but, for her infectious passion for the road, there’s seems no cure. And that’s fine with her.

Paula, an ESOL student from Manizales, Colombia, comes from a family that extols the value of travel to discover different peoples, cultures, and languages. Or just for fun.

“My grandmother loved to travel,” said Paula, saying the same of her brother and parents. “She said you need to travel to know the world, so she saved her money and traveled. My grandma was 75 when she traveled to Disney and rode all of the roller coasters.”

As for Paula, she’s had the chance to admire the architecture of San Francisco, wander the historic streets of Boston, to be taken in by the lights of Times Square, and vexed by Los Angeles traffic.

She’s visited Disney parks in Florida, the Grand Canyon, Yosemite National Park, as well as Washington, D.C., Miami, Las Vegas, and Albuquerque. Paula, who works as an au pair for a family with two children, travels both with the family and solo.

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Paula has put future travel plans on hold. She’s also changed the way she studies English, from meeting her tutor in person to using FaceTime, a video chat application developed by Apple. But it hasn’t dampened her zeal.

“She’s very enthusiastic, very good about doing her work,” said Mary O’Connor, Paula’s tutor and an LVA trainer and tutor support specialist. “I really couldn’t ask for a better student.” The two work on grammar and syntax, reading, online testing, conversation skills, and essay writing. “Her answers are almost always on target,” said Mary. “She’s doing high intermediate, or advanced work online, and she is just knocking it out.”

In Colombia, Paula earned a degree in project management, and worked in quality control for a plant that produced milk for school children. She came to the U.S. to learn English and hopes to one day learn Mandarin and study business administration at a U.S. or European university. “I am going to follow the path the life shows for me,” Paula said. “I am open for all opportunities.”

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.



“Non-English speakers hit hard by coronavirus outbreak”

NJTV News

By Raven Santana, Correspondent, May 11, 2020

Ester Da Silva, a Plainfield school nurse and mom of two, is volunteering with the Plainfield Health Department as an interpreter for mainly Spanish-speaking residents who tested positive for COVID-19.

New Jersey’s Hispanic community – made up of more than 1 million people – is facing disproportionate impacts from the outbreak. She says for non-English speakers, language barriers can make it difficult to get help.

“As soon as I start talking and I speak Spanish, I can feel that they feel a little more relaxed, and they’re more open to talk about it, and then they have a lot of questions,” Da Silva said. “They always ask a lot about the virus itself, like, ‘How did I get it because I don’t know anybody who got it?’ ‘What should I do? Should I go to the hospital?’ I have talked to people who are afraid to get tested because they think about the whole immigration thing, but I clarify to them that this has nothing to do with immigration.”

Katia Paz Goldfarb, the assistant vice president for the Hispanic Serving Initiatives at Montclair State University, says New Jersey’s Hispanic population is also struggling with access to health care and job loss. “Restaurants, hotels, driving, cleaning, those kinds of industry and that kinds of work are the jobs that pay less but also some of them are considered essential. You may not have the benefits, or some places are closed — if you cannot go to the offices to clean, what do you do?” she said.

Reprinted from NJTV News. For full story, paste the following link into your favorite web browser address bar:

<https://bit.ly/2U35QU2>

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

Martin Parker, LVA tutor

Martin is a man of deep introspection. He knows a lot about himself and the world around him. But what he did not know is that the activism he started in his younger, more radical years, would continue and lead him to become a Literacy Volunteers of America tutor in his retirement.



As a young man in the 1960s, Martin majored in sociology at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, where he became deeply involved in civil rights. “I was more involved in getting a community organized and getting needed services into communities than working as a traditional social worker,” he explained. Later, armed with a Masters of Social Work degree from Fordham University, he got involved in the war on poverty while the Vietnam Nam War raged.

Martin organized a tutorial program for inner city kids, he was instrumental in setting up a daycare center for working mothers in New Brunswick, and actively participated in anti-war protests and activities while at Rutgers. And he did all but throw himself in front of a bulldozer to prevent the demolition of an underserved housing complex in New Brunswick.

“All my adult life I have supported and worked in organizations that were involved in social justice,” Martin said.

Things changed a bit in 1975, when he married. “The brain was still thinking radical but the body was doing things for family and wife,” Martin said. He took a job at a ‘quasi’ regulatory agency that made recommendations to the department of health.

Sadly, Martin’s wife died about 2 ½ years ago. Martin threw himself back into the world of helping others achieve their own personal victories. “As part of my getting over the loss of my wife, I got involved in a lot of different things like the Montclair Adult School, Succeed2gether at the Montclair Public Library, and the Shakespeare Theater,” he said. He learned of LVA, while at the library, and started training a month later.

He starts each lesson informally, then engages his students in the basics. His sessions on the life of Eleanor Roosevelt so moved his students that they now want to visit the Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site in Hyde Park, N.Y.

We’re grateful that tutor Martin Parker, who has a lifetime of commitment to social justice issues, chose to continue his efforts to help others through our program.

New Jersey Association for Lifelong Learning Writing Contest

Congratulations to our talented student authors who earned “Special Mention” in NJALL’s 2019-2020 Adult Learner Writing Contest. Each year, NJALL (New Jersey Association for Lifelong Learning) holds a writing contest for adult learners throughout New Jersey. NJALL is a professional association that supports adult learners by promoting and representing students to fully develop to their highest potential. Our student authors will have their works published online and in a hard copy publication that will be on display in the LVA office. Again, congratulations. Those who entered and to those who have never entered, start sharpening your pencils for next year’s contest.

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Ali left left Turkey 1 ½ years ago with his wife and baby girl and only joined our program six months ago. But his hunger for reading anything he can get his hands has helped him make fast progress in a short time. In **Difficulties with Obtaining Health Insurance as an Immigrant**, for which he won an NJALL **Special Mention** for non-fiction, Ali outlines the moves immigrants need to take to overcome one the greatest obstacles in a foreign country.

Carol knows all about perseverance. One of 13 children in her family in Trinidad, she survived a massive stroke as an adult in the U.S. and fought daily to regain the ability to walk. She’s now out of her wheelchair and uses a walker to get around but, for Carol, the struggle is still very real. She writes about a happier time, her childhood in Trinidad, in the non-fiction account **Keep Going**, which earned a **Special Mention**.



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Life can seem an overwhelming balancing act for a mother who works full-time. Now imagine that she doesn’t fully speak English and is struggling to maintain a home while keeping up with her factory job, and her children’s health and success at school. ESOL student Georgina describes how she pulled it off in **Balancing Motherhood, Work, and Learning English**, a non-fiction piece that received a **Special Mention**.

The gifts are wrapped in festive red and green paper, and laid out in front of a pine tree bristling with energy from Christmas lights that symbolize the candles that brighten the earth, even in its darkest hours. Add a traditional Portuguese meal of cod fish, potatoes, eggs and cabbage and you pretty much know what the holiday looks like at Luciana’s home. Her poem, **Christmas Spirit**, which fondly recalls the festive day for her family, earned student Luciana a **Special Mention**.

Literacy Volunteers of America, Essex & Passaic Counties



New Jersey Association of Lifelong Learning Writing Contest Cont.

It was a pivotal year for Milton, an impressionable 13-year-old who in 1986 left his native Montego Bay, Jamaica and settled in Montclair. With the support his family and a circle of new friends, he adopted strong values, like a good work ethic, respect, responsibility, manners, and accountability, that would help him later in life and in his livelihood as a barber. He would go on to teach those values to his children. Milton recalls the year with affection in his memoir, **A Year of Change**, which won a **Special Mention**.



Is it possible to learn a new language and find a new career as an adult? Just ask Nohra who, after staying home to raise two children, became an ESOL student and a licensed home health aide, work she finds deeply rewarding. Not bad for someone who left Colombia as a young woman and arrived in the U.S. where she knew only a cousin she hadn't seen since childhood. She writes about her experiences in the memoir **It is Never Too Late to Learn**, which received a **Special Mention** from NJALL.



In **The Gun Epidemic in America**, student author Nohra identifies two reasons she believes that gun violence has become an epidemic in the United States: a thriving and profitable market of guns sales and the government's lack of control of the market. y the government. Nohra, a native of Colombia who works as a licensed home health aide, notes that the epidemic causes families to feel anxious. The non-fiction entry won a **Special Mention**.

All was new and exciting for Rizwana and her three sisters, four newly arrived young immigrants from Pakistan who made their way around New York City like explorers. Until that day the girls were separated from their parents during a day trip to the park, unable to find their folks or the place where they'd agreed to meet. The sea of emotions that followed in the frantic search for one another is something that Rizwana didn't fully grasp until today, now that she has three children of her own. Her non-fiction account of the flustering day, **An Unforgettable Memory**, earned a **Special Mention**.

For some new immigrants there's a fascination with the seasons in their new home, with the changing colors of the trees, extreme heat, and freezing snow. For Rizwana, an LVA student and office volunteer from Pakistan, fall is without a doubt the most interesting. In a poem simply entitled **The Fall**, Rizwana depicts the transition from summer, the strong winds, falling leaves, rainy days, and even seasonal allergies. The poem received a **Special Mention**.

