



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 discussed ways to make distance learning more engaging, during a workshop presented last month by Ann Moore who, along with a sample workshop question, is shown above.

The Insider

Greetings LVA family. Hola, bonjour, shalom, marhabaan, nǎ hǎo!

Edilma Cardenas who, in pre-pandemic days, was an LVA student and office volunteer, never ceases to amaze us with her drive. The Colombia native was hired by the U. S. Census Bureau and will use her bilingual skills to help the government enumerate households, a task that determines how many seats each state gets in the U.S. House of Representatives and helps bring billions of dollars in federal funds to our area. An important job for which no one is better suited than Edilma. Congrats!

And student author Georgina Jerez is at it again, this time penning a social justice essay about the murder of a 20-year-old soldier at Fort Hood, a Texas Army base. You can read her latest offering, "Justice for Vanessa Guillen", on the following NJALL page: <https://bit.ly/3a3siXr>

We've heard from many of you about what you're up to during the pandemic. Student Barbara is taking up the flute, Milton traveled to Portland, Maine and loves the city, and Nydia took up jogging. Doing anything new during the crisis? Let us know.

While working on gerunds, or present participles, tutor Catherine Cullar asked one student to come up with a verb that ends with the letters "i-n-g". Well the woman, who is raising six children and works as a home health aide, had no problem offering "*I am working all the time.*"

"We laughed about how busy she is with her job, her family and her household obligations and she then said, 'This sentence is so true, all I do is work!' And we laughed some more," Catherine said. "I have found her attitude to always be positive."

Mary Kao may have heard it all during decades of tutoring students and training tutors. But she was still a bit surprised while showing concern for one student, who often remains home alone during the pandemic while her husband travels for work. "Isn't it hard on you that he's only there for a few days each week?" Mary asked. "Oh no, no, no, this is great!" the student laughed.

In the News

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

"Tackling Adult Literacy," Sun Live
<https://bit.ly/3kQAgs>

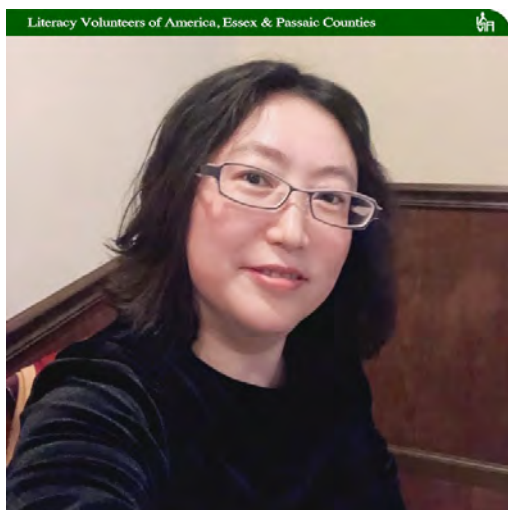
"The Income Penalty for Immigrants with College Degrees," Center for Immigrant Studies.
<https://bit.ly/3gX1vKK>

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
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Yue, an ESOL student, left behind a family and hotel manager's job in China to travel overseas and learn a new language and culture.

Getting to Know Us

Yue, LVA student

Yue was raised in a traditional family in Liaoning, on the shore of the Yellow Sea, the northernmost coastal province of the People's Republic of China.

There, single adult children tend to live with their parents and, once engaged, opt for large traditional weddings, with receptions in restaurants packed with relatives.

But Yue, who is not so traditional, wanted something more.

"I wanted to travel," said Yue, who saved for the venture by working as a hotel restaurant waitress, and later a hotel manager.

She arrived in the U.S. on a student visa in 2000 and later married a neighbor, a Chinese national studying for a master's degree in nuclear physics, in a small ceremony at New York City Hall. Her husband is the more traditional of the two.

"We cook Chinese food at home, but when we go to a restaurant, I eat steak," said Yue, whom friends call "Sofia". "I love Popeye's chicken. But my husband doesn't like it so I have to sneak out."

To learn English, Yue enrolled in ESOL classes at the Hilton Branch Library, a joint program run by the Maplewood Memorial Library and LVA. She now studies with two LVA tutors.

"At the start, I was scared because I felt my English was still very bad," Yue said. "My teachers were patient and I now feel very comfortable." Teachers describe her as a hard worker who focuses on English pronunciation, which many Mandarin speakers find challenging.

"Whenever I send homework, she gets it done," said Mary Kao, one of Yue's tutors, who works with her via Skype. "She's not hesitant to stop me and ask me why is something said a certain way."

In 2005, Yue and her husband travelled to China to meet each other's parents. "We had a traditional Chinese wedding with 400 people and a reception in a restaurant," she said of her second wedding ceremony.

Some traditions are forever.

Tutor Training Workshops

Online Training, by Barbara Hathaway

Platform: Zoom

Thursdays 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm

October 1, 8, 15, 22 & 29, 2020

Tutor Support Workshops

"Laughter is the Best Teacher,"

with Lisa Batitto

Platform: Zoom

Thursday, September 24, 2020

11:00 am – 12:30 pm

"Helping Students Overcome Their Fear of Speaking,"

with Abby Kane

Platform: Zoom

Tuesday, October 27, 2020

11:00 am – 12:30 pm

"Writing Prompts for the Classroom,"

with Dr. Erik Jacobson

Platform: Zoom

Tuesday, November 17, 2020

11:00 am - 12:30 pm

Additional info: <http://www.lvaep.org/workshops.html>

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.lvaep.org/donate.html> or by mailing us a check.



“Amid pandemic, 6,000 Fond Du Lac residents struggle with literacy. This group is helping”

FDL Reporter

By Melanie Steinert, Fond du Lac Reporter, August 12, 2020

FOND DU LAC - One in seven adults in Wisconsin and around 6,000 adults in Fond du Lac struggle with low literacy.

That's according to statistics compiled by the Wisconsin Literacy Program.

Since 1982, Fond du Lac Literacy Services, 32 Sheboygan St., has been trying to reduce illiteracy rates with its volunteer based tutoring program.

Through the organization, volunteers tutor adults who struggle with reading, writing and math skills. About 75% of students are trying to learn or better English as their second language.

“Just last year, 96 students began tutoring,” said Juana Montes-Hernandez, literacy coordinator. “Many students have graduated some type of schooling and we are helping them work toward their goals of pursuing higher education, bettering themselves in the workplace or just with life skills in general.”

The pandemic has created a strain on the program. Many students have had to suspend their tutoring sessions.

“Right now, literacy is especially important with so many people out of work, so we are striving to make this time easier for our students,” Montes-Hernandez said. *(cont)*

Reprinted from FDL Reporter. For full story, paste the following link into your favorite web browser address bar: <https://bit.ly/3jFu5Ck>

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 (cont.)

Amy Mahoney, LVA tutor

The pandemic struck suddenly, taking Amy Mahoney by surprise, as it had just about every other educator who'd earned her stripes in front of large classrooms and small groups.



But for Amy, who's been to Poland and back to earn her TESL certificate and gain valuable teaching experience, it was just another hurdle.

“I am not a high-tech person so I have had to adapt and develop new techniques,” she said.

Distance learning has brought new and challenging obstacles for educators and students, among them efforts to compensate for the loss of personal interaction and communicating through body language. But Amy is coping.

“My students have been up to the challenge and I have as well,” said Amy. “You have to learn to roll with the punches in this uncertain world right now.” She varies her lessons from the traditional to the practical; the class may focus on grammatical structure one day and text messaging the next.

Amy, a trained psychologist who worked as a therapist and mental health counselor for more than 25 years, has long held a passion for immigrants and English language learners.

She taught ESL at both The Elizabeth Coalition to House the Homeless and at LVA before leaving to pursue a TESL certificate at The New School. She completed her classroom work in Poland.

She returned to LVA and worked with students from China and Haiti. “Both students brought different stories,” Amy said. “One of my favorite parts of teaching is developing the relationships with the students.”

In her personal life, she's been married 31 years and has two sons, ages 24 and 30. She has a deep interest in meditation and the spiritual realm within oneself.

She's a Kansas native who moved to New York in the 8th grade which, of course, drew the interest of fellow students who knew Kansas for one thing.

“It helped me to become very flexible and adaptable,” she said of the move. “I got made fun of (with) ... ‘Is your name Dorothy? How did you get here? Did you click your heels?’”