



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



LVA tutor support specialist Mary O'Connor, shown at top left, shared her experience and tips with tutors last month during the "Building Vocabulary Through Stories" workshop.

Literacy Volunteers of America Essex & Passaic Counties

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The Insider

Greetings LVA family,

Happy New Year! What can we say about last year, beyond the obvious, that it was a source of great stress and anxiety. Thank you to everyone who adapted to some pretty dramatic changes and helped us provide services to the adults who needed them most. We have a lot to look forward to in 2021 and, given that we're still in the midst of a pandemic, we hope that you continue to remain vigilant, safe, and healthy.

Flatten the curve, contact tracing, Hydroxychloroquine, PPE, droplet transmission, asymptomatic, shelter in place, super-spreader, covidiot. Has the pandemic changed the way we speak and think forever? Quite possibly, according to a group of linguists and lexicographers who note that, while the English language is in flux and changes constantly, this year has been especially maddening by the sheer number of words and terms that have quickly entered our daily vocabulary. So how's your covid vocab? Test your knowledge with the help of this offering by the LA Times: <http://lat.ms/3hNXMBb>

Friends, take a look at this Voice of America website and let us know what you think of its use of news as an English language teaching tool. It has stories for several levels of English language learners, including beginners, as well as a section on history and a self-test. The VOA began teaching English through newscasts and features in 1959.

<https://learningenglish.voanews.com/p/5631.html>

Congratulations to our newest round of volunteer tutors who completed training last month and got started helping others just before the holidays. They represent a spectrum of the working world – a musician, two attorneys, an insurance sales agent, a software engineer, and a teacher – as well as a retired epidemiologist.

Our next online tutor training session starts in February so if you know anyone who may be interested in sharing their gift of literacy with adults who are waiting for help, please send them our way. The training dates are listed on the next page.

In the News

“The US isn't an option anymore: Why California's immigrants are heading back to Mexico.” The Guardian. <https://bit.ly/38fwkcD>

“Literacy issues are often a real problem with far-reaching impacts.” The Daily Jeff. <https://bit.ly/38mvGVX>

Literacy Volunteers of America, Essex & Passaic Counties



Frida, a student from Peru, keeps her five children focused on their remote classes at home while studying remotely herself, with the help of two literacy tutors.

Tutor Training Workshops

Online Training, by Karen Cardell & Mary O'Connor
Platform: Google Meet
Fridays, 6:00 – 8:00 pm
February 19, 26, March 5, 12, & 19, 2021

Tutor Support Workshops

"Easy Guide for Working With Small Groups,"
with Barbara Hathaway
Platform: Zoom
Tuesday, January 19, 2021
11:00 am - 12:30 pm

"Get to Know Your Students on a Personal Level,"
with Diana Sefchik
Platform: Zoom
Tuesday, February 16, 2021
11:00 am – 12:30 pm

"Comprehension Strategies in Adult Literacy Instruction,"
with Erik Jacobson
Platform: Google Meet
Tuesday, March 9, 2021
11:00 am -12:30 pm

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

Getting to Know Us

Frida, LVA student

Five children ranging in age from 20 years old to 8. None currently in school due to COVID-19 restrictions. And a husband who works all day to help support them.

That's the new normal for Frida, a stay-at-home mom and literacy student who is used to having way more quiet time to study at home during the day. Still, this Peruvian native has never neglected her language studies or lost sight of her ambition, no matter how many times schools have opened and shuttered during the pandemic.

"Moms have dreams also," Frida confided. "I have two goals in my life. Since I like to cook, I would like to have my own culinary business someday. I also know I have to learn more English."

Frida and her dad waited 11 years for approval of their U.S. visa applications and paperwork, which enabled them to travel to the states from their hometown of Callao, a Pacific Ocean seaport city in the Lima metropolitan area. She gave up a good job in administration only to land, eventually, in a New Jersey factory.

"Most of the time, I worked with Spanish speaking people," Frida said. "I felt comfortable with people who spoke my language. This is where I made my mistake."

All that changed when Frida's pastor encouraged her to leave her comfort zone and study English. She landed in LVA's office at the Bloomfield Public Library where staffer Jorge Chavez signed her up.

"He told me about tutoring classes," Frida said. "It is a blessing. In my country, to take these classes would be so expensive."

Frida first classes were held at the Passaic Public Library. "I went for the first level of English and also took ServSafe classes," she said, referring to the food and beverage safety training and certificate program administered by the U.S. National Restaurant Association. "I took them over the computer and it was awesome."

Today, she reads to her kids at home, and they read back to her. And she works remotely with two LVA tutors, Karen and Kathleen, whom she describes as wonderful. "The program is great," Frida said. "I feel like crying every time I take my lessons."

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.



“The Most Inspiring Immigrants of 2020.”

Forbes

By Stuart Anderson, Senior Contributor
December 17, 2020

The year 2020 was like no other in recent memory, but many immigrants who faced difficult odds inspired Americans. These are their stories.

The Vaccine Makers: The people who developed the vaccines produced by Pfizer and Moderna will in the coming months help release America and the world from the nightmare of Covid-19 – and those individuals are overwhelmingly immigrants. They deserve thanks and appreciation for their amazing feats. “Moderna’s leaders, two cofounders and critical scientific personnel are immigrants, as are the chief executive of Pfizer and a key scientist (Katalin Karikó) who made a crucial breakthrough on messenger RNA,” as noted in a December 2020 article. Even the founder of Pfizer was an immigrant.

The Doctors and Nurses Who Gave Their Lives: More than 28% of physicians (281,000) and 15% of registered nurses (570,000) in America are foreign-born, according to a National Foundation for American Policy report. The sacrifices of native-born and immigrant health care professionals have been the backbone of the country’s response to Covid-19. “Nearly a third of the nurses who’ve died of coronavirus in the U.S. are Filipino, even though Filipino nurses make up just 4% of the nursing population nationwide,” according to CNN.

In May 2020, New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy publicly acknowledged the deaths of an Indian immigrant and his daughter, physicians who lost their lives treating patients with Covid-19, reported *The American Bazaar*. (cont.)

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

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.lvaacp.org/students.html>

Getting to Know Us (cont.)

Nat Cheney, LVA tutor

When adult education went remote in the early days of the pandemic, so did Nat Cheney. At least he tried.

But every time he logged on to Zoom, the popular cloud-based platform for video and audio conferencing, his old computer struggled, pattered, and died.

So he turned to another platform, this time an advanced online teaching tool that his wife used for music rehearsals. Again, his computer crashed.

“They said my computer was obsolete and could not handle the bandwidth needed,” Nat said of the computer techs he’d consulted. So he bought a new one.

That may seem a hefty investment for an unpaid tutor. But for Nat, who recalled how he’d labored to learn Portuguese when he arrived in Brazil on a four-year work assignment, it’s hard to put a price tag on literacy.

He knew there were students who counted on his lessons continuing, as they struggled to better communicate with their children’s teachers, find employment, and understand public health advisories in the age of a novel coronavirus. He also was aware of the volatility of their lives.

“The students have been very diligent and loyal,” Nat said. “The turnover is unavoidable and people have to do what they have to do. Life intervenes.”

Nat’s immigrant years were easier, by comparison, but still unnerving. Until he achieved fluency.

“I had no idea about the language obstacles I was to encounter,” he explained. “It took about three months for the lights to come on.”

Nat retired from his job in finance two years ago. In his spare time, he enjoys playing tennis, traveling, and singing.

As for his tutoring, Nat said he initially relied on citizenship prep materials found at the library but, with experience, is now finding material from other sources, like Pinterest.

“One of the challenges for someone who is not part of the educational community is learning what resources are available and how to access them,” he said.

