



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



Join our team of dedicated tutors and hard-working students, who are now meeting remotely, by attending our next tutor training workshop beginning Feb 19th. Details on Page 2.

### Literacy Volunteers of America Essex & Passaic Counties

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## *The Insider*

Greetings LVA family,

It's always a pleasure to hear good news from our students and tutors, especially during a year-long health crisis that has brought so much disappointment. So we couldn't be happier to offer our congratulations to student Carolina, who found a full-time job as a data processor for BioReference Laboratories, a large testing and clinical diagnostic services company. The firm, among other things, provides COVID-19 tests for players from the NBA, NHL, and the US Soccer's Men's and Women's National Teams.

Carolina says the job's income enabled her and her husband to move into a house that's large enough for her family and dog in Costa Rica, from whom she's been separated for two years. She said she wouldn't have had the confidence to apply, had it not been for her work with tutor Rachel Tomosieski. "I can now present myself in a positive light," Carolina told her tutor.

Congratulations and thank you to ProLiteracy and its Workforce Atlas, the online career pathways platform it developed with Pearson. Adults who complete Workforce Atlas's online assessments are recommended occupations, online resources, and local service providers to help them achieve their goals. The platform was featured last month on the Fox Business Network's "Behind the Scenes", a national television program hosted by actor Laurence Fishburne. Literacy issues don't often receive national attention so it was a delight to view the "Behind the Scenes" segment "Advances in the Workforce." You can view the segment here under the website's Business section: <https://bit.ly/3q4QAEd>

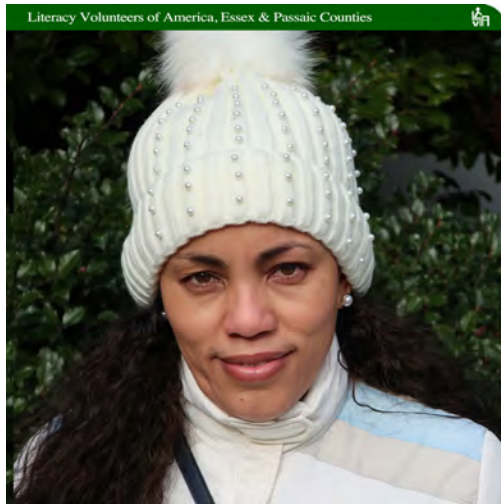
In case you missed the inspirational story of Evelyn Uba, a Nigerian immigrant who learned last month that she passed the bar exam after taking it more than 10 times during nine years of study, you can read it here: <http://gma.abc/3tCi9ag> She's the perfect example of achievement through persistence.

Friends, please don't overlook the NJALL Adult Learner Writing Contest 2021 which offers cash prizes in five categories - fiction, non-fiction, memoir, poetry, and photography. It also provides an opportunity to have one's work published in the organization's annual magazine, which has given a tremendous boost of confidence to many of our students. More information can be found at: <https://www.njall.org/news-925899.html>

## *In the News*

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

"4 Tips to Learning a New Language." UC Davis Magazine. <http://bit.ly/3q3Ibky>



*"Being in the classes has been good for me," said Rosa, a student from the Dominican Republic. "I can talk to my daughter's teachers. I read with my daughter every day."*

## 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

**Online Training**, by Catherine Mitch  
Platform: Zoom  
Tuesdays, 6:30 - 8:30 pm  
March 2, 9, 16, 23, & 30, 2021

## Tutor Support Workshops

**"Get to Know Your Students on a Personal Level,"**  
with Diana Sefchik  
Platform: Google Meet  
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

### Rosa, LVA student

With her two-year-old daughter by her side, Rosa arrived in the U.S. nervous and more than a bit weary, worn out from running a household and raising a toddler without her husband, who'd left the Dominican Republic to set up a home for his family in the states.

But she put all that behind her when her hubby arrived at the airport to greet her, leading her to burst into tears at the sight of his face. "I was very happy when I saw him," Rosa said.

Much has changed for this young Dominican woman in the five years since. For one she's set up a comfortable life for herself and her small family in a bustling New Jersey suburb, just 12 miles outside New York City. Her daughter is now in second grade and the two pass the time reading together. She studies English with two tutors and works part-time.

And, at the end of the day she's only too happy to collapse on the couch with her husband and watch "Gunsmoke", one of television's longest running prime-time series, which illustrates the settlement of the American West through fictional Dodge City, Kansas Marshal Matt Dillon. Her life is comfortable, although things were simpler back home where she grew up in a small village, dancing, playing ball, fishing for shrimp, and swimming in the river with four younger siblings. "I had a beautiful childhood," she said.

At a university back home, Rosa studied childhood education. And now, with the help of her LVA tutors, she hopes to return to school, complete her degree and become a Pre-K teacher.

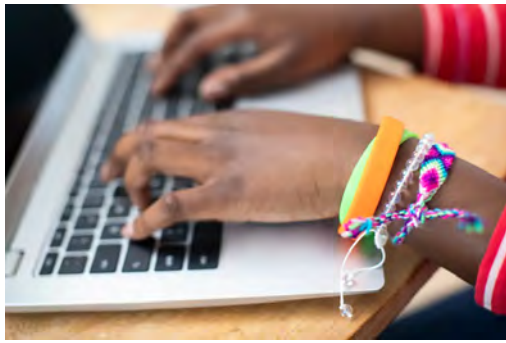
She learned of the LVA program through a friend. At the Bloomfield Public Library, she saw tutors and students sitting at notebook-scattered tables, deeply engaged in reading and conversation. "I saw the other students and I thought, 'I could do that,'" Rosa said.

Tutor Steve Pranis described her as a hard worker who learns more from her daughter than from him. "Rosa is quick to laugh and share stories about her life," he said. "She is always a joy to have in class."

Enid Friedman, a tutor who has worked with Rosa for a long time, described her like this: "Rosa is a thoughtful, compassionate and self-motivated woman. She is teaching me."

***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.*



***“In ‘achingly beautiful’ letters to Biden, students who are learning English, working full time and taking care of siblings share their hopes.”***

The Washington Post

By Theresa Vargas, columnist  
February 6, 2021

*“They are heartfelt, insightful, acute and achingly beautiful,” he says of his students’ letters. “I couldn’t be more proud of them, and, even though I am a hardened veteran teacher, I was driven to tears while reading them.”*

The 17-year-old, in her letter, did not reveal her situation.

She did not mention how every day, when it’s time for her English class to begin, she slips out of the place where she works, steps into an alley and uses her phone to virtually dial into her classroom.

Her English teacher, John Stewart, only knows that because he noticed the teenager’s surroundings on his screen each afternoon, and he asked why she was working during the school day.

“She told me that she took on a 40-hour-a-week job to help support her family, because her dad can’t work,” he says on a recent afternoon before pausing for a noticeable moment. “What these young people are putting up with right now is inspiring in some ways, and really saddening in others.” *(cont)*

*Reprinted from The Washington Post. For full story, paste the following link into your favorite web browser address bar:*

<http://wapo.st/36PAOWe>

*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.lva.org/students.html>*

## ***Getting to Know Us (cont.)***

**Margaret Fogel, LVA tutor**

Margaret Fogel felt many of the same sentiments and hopes as her classmates, minus the chills and jitters, as they wrapped up a literacy tutor training program and prepared to meet their first students.



Maybe that’s because Margaret, who was born in South Africa and raised there and in Israel, where she became fluent in Hebrew, was a bit more familiar with the language and other obstacles that immigrant families face in a new country.

Or perhaps it’s because she’d already spent years as a literacy tutor in New York City, working with well-established programs like Literacy Partners, and the New York Public Library.

No matter the reason, it’s easy to see how her experiences could come in handy while aiding students like a current one, an African woman in her mid-thirties with four children. The woman, a native of Nigeria, where English is widely spoken, could communicate orally but struggled to write.

“When I started teaching her, she barely could write two sentences,” Margaret explained. “She had a mental block about writing.”

But with practice came improvement.

“She writes now quite fluently,” Margaret said. “I have been trying to find things that are interesting to her. I have asked her to write about her kids, write about coming to the U.S.”

Margaret’s own coming to America story took place after a visit in 1989. She eventually married and remained here, working for an insurance company as a computer programmer, a field she’d studied at university in Israel. She worked days in the city, tutored there at night, then traveled home to New Jersey. Her schedule became easier after she was laid off; the commute never did.

“I realized it was too much effort to schlep into the city,” Margaret told us. “I had to come in twice a week.”

Her travel burden eased when she learned about LVA through an online search. “I looked at Idealist and saw LVA’s ad for a training in Maplewood,” she said. “I thought this was meant to be.”