



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



*We enjoyed, and learned, during "Teaching Reading Comprehension Skills Through Effective Questioning," a tutor support workshop presented by Catherine Mitch.*

## Literacy Volunteers of America Essex & Passaic Counties

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## The Insider

Dear friends,

Finally, some good news. New Jersey plans to ease many of its COVID-19 restrictions effective May 19<sup>th</sup>, shortly before the Memorial Day weekend, as the number of infections continue to fall and vaccinations become more available, Gov. Phil Murphy announced this month. The move will allow museums, theaters, restaurants, retail stores, offices, amusement parks, gyms, fitness centers, barber shops and other businesses and events to operate at full or at a larger capacity than last year when restrictions were imposed to prevent spread of the coronavirus. For more info on the state's plan, called "The Road Back", please check this site: <https://covid19.nj.gov/pages/reopen>

As for public libraries, many plan to reopen indoor portions gradually this month, while following guidelines for capacity limits, social distancing, mask wearing, and mitigation requirements. The libraries of Bloomfield, Montclair, and Maplewood have each posted partial reopening plans online and you can view them through the following links:

Bloomfield Public Library: <https://www.bplnj.org/>

Montclair Public Library:  
<https://montclairlibrary.org/reopening/>

Maplewood Memorial Library:  
<https://www.maplewoodlibrary.org/policies-reopening>

Just learned that our student Shagoofa received her U.S. citizenship last week after studying hard to prepare for the test, which is both oral and written. Congratulations to you, Shagoofa, as well as to your tutor, Elizabeth Jacobs.

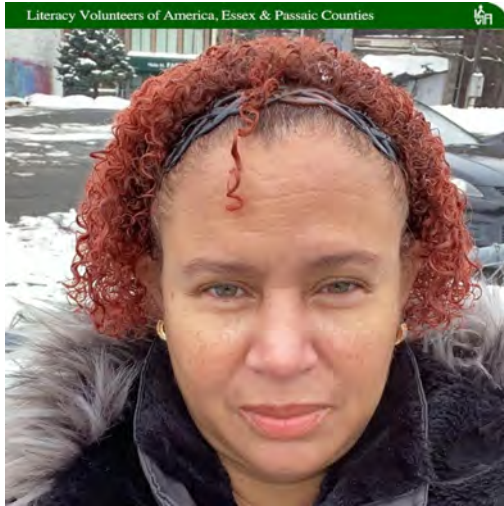
May is Asian American and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Heritage Month, a celebration and recognition of the history, achievements, and contributions of this diverse group. You can view a schedule of related events via: <https://asianpacificheritage.gov/>

## In the News

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

**"Take poverty out of the literacy equation for good."**  
Language Magazine. <https://bit.ly/2QYn6Md>

**"NJ undocumented residents apply for driver's licenses for 1<sup>st</sup> time, but MVC turns some away."** Nj.com  
<https://bit.ly/3nRswUZ>



*Emiliana, a student from the Dominican Republic, has taken a multi-layered approach to learning English that includes classes, music, and use of a translator app.*

## *Getting to Know Us*

### **Emiliana, LVA student**

When Emiliana left her native Dominican Republic in October 2018 she knew there was little chance of communicating right away with U.S. doctors, pharmacists, employers, or even direction givers on the street.

But these days if you're struggling with English, well, there's an app for that. And she made sure to get one.

"I didn't know anything in English," Emiliana said of her first days in the states. "Life would have been much harder. So I used a translator app."

There are dozens of these applications for language learners, from voice-activated phone apps that enable live conversations to computer programs that help you write in a foreign language like a native.

But she did much more. Emiliana, who studied interior design and manufactures bedding for big box stores, studies English with Duolingo, a popular language learning app. She watches English-language Netflix series, and follows music and videos in English, particularly "Cocomelon", a child cartoon YouTube sensation who cites nursery rhymes and sings children's songs.

And she enrolled in ESOL classes at the Passaic Public Library, a joint program run by the library and LVA, Essex & Passaic. Ten weeks later, when that session ended, she enrolled in another.

"She is a very good student who is always persistent in learning," said Lidya Mikhail, Emiliana's teacher. "What I like about Emiliana is that she is always present and is very eager to learn, even with her busy life with her grandchildren."

Family is everything to this Santo Domingo native, who has two sons and two daughters ages 20-27, and three grandchildren.

"I spend my spare time with my kids," she said. "We play Monopoly, Uno, and do puzzles. We watch movies, we cook together."

It is while cooking that she practices with her youngest daughter, who studies English at Passaic County College. Language has certainly been a challenge for Emiliana, but not her greatest one.

"The most difficult thing for me is the cold," Emiliana laughed. "My country is tropical. It's never cold."

## **Tutor Training Workshops**

**Online Training**, by Barbara Hathaway  
Platform: Zoom  
Tuesdays, 6:30 - 8:30 pm  
May 4th, 11, 18, 25, & June 1, 2021

## **Tutor Support Workshops**

"How Understanding Personality Can Improve Your Tutoring,"  
with Stephanie Mazzeo-Caputo  
Platform: Google Meet  
Tuesday, June 22, 2021  
11:00 am - 12:30 pm

## **Webinars**

### **ProLiteracy**

#### **Perspectives on Persistence: A Review of the Research**

Webinar will discuss research on defining and strategies for improving learner persistence in Adult Basic Ed.  
Platform: Zoom  
Wednesday, May 12, 2021 02:00 pm  
<https://bit.ly/3uAO1vR>

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



## *“From high school dropout to college graduate: Goodwill’s adult high school gave me a second chance to excel”*

Guest contributor, Chamber Business News  
April 21, 2021

I was on a road to nowhere – a high school dropout and single mom, like the two generations before me. Trapped in an abusive relationship.

To protect my son and myself, we fled with nothing but the clothes on our backs. I worked a series of dead-end jobs, and we even found ourselves homeless for a time.

I was desperate by every measure – most of all for a second chance.

That’s when I found myself one day at an orientation session for something called a Goodwill Excel Center, a tuition-free high school for adults like me. An Excel Center had recently opened near me, in Indianapolis.

I’ll admit I was apprehensive. I was now 26 and raising a child alone. Could I finally finish high school? I started to walk out of the room, hoping to slip by unnoticed. That’s when an Excel Center employee stopped me with a simple question: Was I ready to change my life?

The answer was yes.

Finding new purpose and motivation, I earned my diploma in just seven months and finished with a 4.06 GPA ... (cont.)

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

<https://bit.ly/3heOqAg>

*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.lvncn.org/students.html>*

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

### **Charlotte McAllister Attenborough, LVA tutor**

With her customary gentle humor, Charlotte McAllister Attenborough recalled her first meeting with students as a volunteer literacy tutor. It was something of a shocker when, fresh out of training, she slowly introduced herself to the Turkish couple assigned to her and they responded in fast and flawless English.



“Are you here for English as a second language?” she asked the husband. “He said ‘Yes, are you here to teach?’”

After a short chat Charlotte had to ask “Well ... what do you want?” she recalled with a laugh. “There’s been some mistake, what do you want?”

It was a conundrum, no doubt, but no mistake. While the husband was something of a scholar whose work had been published in English language scientific journals, he was also a registered literacy student. His wife was a nurse who, while not as fluent as her spouse, was still an advanced speaker.

Charlotte summoned up advice she’d received from trainer Nina Peyser which, in part, stressed the importance of expecting the unexpected, remaining flexible, and finding common ground within a diverse student group.

What the couple had in common was a desire to pass the state motor vehicle driver’s test and Charlotte helped them do just that.

In the several years that have since passed, Charlotte has worked with immigrant students of several different levels. She helped her current student, a woman from Guyana, study for and pass the U.S. citizenship test.

In her spare time, Charlotte is an abstract painter, a potter, and a world traveler. She’s also a writer of poetry, short stories, and a children’s book slated for publication this year.

The Newark native spent nearly three decades as an administrator, as well as a teacher, at Essex County College. She became a volunteer in her retirement, or semi-retirement as she calls it, and tutoring quickly became her passion.

“It’s the most worthwhile thing I am doing at the moment,” Charlotte said. “It’s the most challenging thing I’m doing at the moment. And I love it.”