



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



*Congratulations to Randy Budros, an LVA tutor who was named Teacher of the Year by the New Jersey Association for Lifelong Learning (NJALL). More details on Page 4.*

### Literacy Volunteers of America Essex & Passaic Counties

90 Broad Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Bloomfield, NJ 07003  
(973) 566-6200, ext. 217 or 225

195 Gregory Avenue, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Passaic, NJ 07055  
(973) 470-0039

Cristhian Barcelos -Executive Director  
[cbarcelos@lvaep.org](mailto:cbarcelos@lvaep.org)  
Russell Ben Ali -Social Media & Newsletter Coordinator  
[rbenali@lvaep.org](mailto:rbenali@lvaep.org)  
Jorge Chavez -Data Processing Coordinator  
[jchavez@lvaep.org](mailto:jchavez@lvaep.org)  
Mary O'Connor -Trainer & Tutor Support Specialist  
[moconnor@lvaep.org](mailto:moconnor@lvaep.org)  
Marisol Ramirez -Student Coordinator  
[mramirez@lvaep.org](mailto:mramirez@lvaep.org)

## *The Insider*

Dear friends,

While it may be too soon to belt out a verse of “Happy Days Are Here Again”, the reopening of the state last month after a year of lockdown and restrictions was about as welcome as May’s flowers.

Under the governor’s broad plan, restrictions were eased or lifted May 19<sup>th</sup> on everything from amusement parks to zoos, although some masking and social distancing measures remain in place and proprietors are granted wide discretion.

Most public libraries established their own reopening plans and some went on to fine tune them. The Bloomfield Public Library, for example, recently announced an expansion of hours, computers available without appointments, and limited seating as long as masks are worn in both the adult and children’s buildings. What does this mean for tutors and students hoping to return to in-person instruction in the library? Well, it’s early but possible that a tutor and a single student may meet at a library table, provided each feels it’s safe to do so and they get an okay from library staff ahead of time, as restrictions at each institution vary and are subject to change.

You can view the state’s timeline and guidelines for reopening here: <https://covid19.nj.gov/pages/reopen>

The month of May also brought good news from our students and tutors. Students Rosa and Maria earned their high school diplomas, students Georgina and Rosa (yes, same Rosa) won NJALL writing prizes, and tutor Randy Budros was named NJALL Teacher of the Year. Most are profiled later in the newsletter.

The latest edition of the ProLiteracy journal, *Adult Literacy Education*, released this month, contains the findings of new research on reading and teaching reading, reflections from teaching basic adult literacy, and an interesting forum on COVID-19 and the future of adult education. You can read the journal via this link: <https://bit.ly/3wam1zT>

## *In the News*

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

“Being an Asian immigrant in Canada.” The Peak.  
<https://bit.ly/3is3dZb>



*Student Rosa didn't let the pandemic slow her educational goals. Last month she earned a high school diploma and won an NJALL writing award.*

## *Getting to Know Us*

### **Rosa, LVA student**

The coronavirus pandemic created one of the largest disruptions of education in human history, according to some experts.

Still, some students flourished. Literacy student Rosa, for one, last month earned her high school diploma and won a New Jersey Association for Lifelong Learning (NJALL) Adult Learner Writing Contest award.

“I was in shock,” said Rosa, after acing the GED exam. “I wasn’t expecting that I was going to pass.”

Rosa is one of eight children, six girls and two boys, who was raised by a single mother in the small town of Biblian, Ecuador. Life was a struggle for the family and Rosa left school early in order to earn a living. But she always hoped to go back and finish high school.

“I thought I needed to improve myself,” said Rosa, who enrolled in the LVA program during the pandemic. “To work a little bit better job so that they can pay me and I can save for a pension.”

The good news didn’t end there.

After entering the writing contest, Rosa was awarded a second place prize for her non-fiction work, “Kids Left Behind for a Dream.” The story, which will be published in NJALL’s online magazine, describes the emotional trauma experienced by families who send their children to the U.S. alone, in order to offer them more opportunities.

“Parents and children pay a very high price to have a better future, but losing their relationship can also hurt a child for life,” she wrote.

Perhaps it’s knowledge of family separations that helped inspire her own family to remain close. Remarkably, Rosa’s mother, her five sisters, and one of her two brothers all live on the same Essex County Street where they’ve purchased homes. Her only other sibling, another brother, lives in a bordering town five minutes away.

Karen Cardell, who tutors Rosa virtually on weekends and encouraged her to enter the writing contest, said “She’s extremely close to her family and she spends a lot of time with her kids. I’m amazed at her ability to balance things, taking them places and still paying attention to her class.”

## **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

*Last support workshop before the summer break*

## **Webinars and Conferences**

### **Onlinexperiences.com**

#### **2021 Teaching the Skills That Matter in Adult Education (TSTM), a free virtual conference**

For more info: <https://bit.ly/3g6dms1>

Tuesday & Wednesday, June 15-16, 2021

### **ProLiteracy and EdTech Center**

#### **Distance Education Strategies & Solutions**

Webinar features experienced educators who share best practices and discuss your distance learning questions.

Platform: Zoom

Friday, July 23, 2021, 1:00-2:00 pm

<https://www.proliteracy.org/webinars>

***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.*



## ***“Why Can’t Immigrants Learn English? Americans Say Immigrants Should Learn English. But U.S. Policy Makes That Hard.”***

*Immigrants who speak English earn more and are better accepted by Americans. But the U.S. fails to provide sufficient free English classes for newcomers.*

### **The Atlantic**

By Olga Khazan, June 4, 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.

“Speak English!” can be one of the cruelest things for an immigrant to hear. It can sound simultaneously like a demand for instant assimilation, an accusation of disloyalty, and a presumption of stubbornness or ignorance. In some circles, the call for immigrants to speak English has fused with a call for less immigration in general, as though language differences are themselves offensive. It’s no accident that “You have to speak English!” was a Donald Trump rallying cry.

The uncomfortable reality is that learning English can, in fact, make immigrants’ lives much better. Immigrants who learn English improve both their earnings and their acceptance by other Americans. Most immigrants want to learn English, and immigration advocates think it should be easier for them to do so. Unfortunately, it’s extremely difficult for immigrants to find English classes that are affordable and accessible.

I know firsthand the bewilderment of living in a new culture (cont.)

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

<https://bit.ly/2T1y4kx>

*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.lvaen.org/students.html>*

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

**Mimi Paperman, LVA tutor**

It wasn’t easy catching up with tutor Mimi Paperman because, well frankly, she wasn’t waiting by the phone for our call.

When we finally did, the busy Queens, NY native had just returned from an exhaustive trip to Seward, a seaside village on the Gulf of Alaska where she and her husband Joe visited their son, daughter-in-law, and two grandchildren.



Traveling is an integral part of Mimi’s life and she’s done plenty of it. She’s driven across the continental U.S. to visit national parks and cruised along the Danube River through Germany, Austria, and Hungary. She’s vacationed in Belgium, England and France. And she regularly visits family in Alaska where she’s hiked stunning Kenai Peninsula trails, fed sea lions behind the scenes in a maritime center, landed by helicopter on a glacier, and munched through the wild aboard a fast eight-dog sled.

“We like to travel,” said Mimi (pronounced “Mi-mee”.) “And because of the pandemic we haven’t been able to.”

But she stays busy, mostly through a ton of other interests that she pursues with enthusiasm.

She advocates for gun control legislation as a National Council of Jewish Women volunteer, reads to elementary school students as a Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) “reading buddy”, and takes a virtual Tai Chi class.

“I try to do as much as my energy allows me to do,” explained Mimi, a former kindergarten teacher and geriatric social worker, who spent years working in adult protective services where she looked out for abused and exploited adults.

Her energy allows her time to tutor, of course, which she’s done for nearly three years. She meets weekly with her student on the video call platform FaceTime where they focus on reading and pronunciation.

“I love tutoring because I feel like you’re helping someone who wants help,” said Mimi.

## ¡Felicidades!

### New Jersey Association for Lifelong Learning Teacher of the Year



Many congrats to Randy Budros, the LVA tutor who was named Teacher of the Year by the New Jersey Association for Lifelong Learning (NJALL). The award is presented to an adult educator who has demonstrated professionalism and exemplary performance teaching adults in the field of lifelong learning.

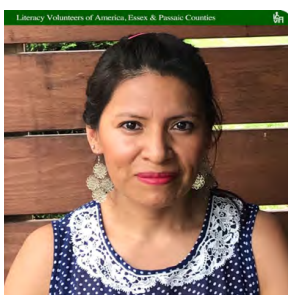
Dr. Budros is a social justice advocate and a dedicated volunteer literacy tutor who has never declined to accept one more new student into one of his ESOL groups. This retired researcher and University of San Francisco professor spends many hours as a volunteer in efforts as varied as aiding refugees from West Africa and South America at the International Rescue Committee and Catholic Charities, fighting voter suppression

in Georgia, and promoting racial justice and LGBTQ rights. And, for the past five years, he's still found time to help students learn to read, write, and speak English, as well as to find essential life resources, and to assimilate into their communities. In turn his students provide him with a window into their complex worlds, both now and prior to their journeys here, he said in his award acceptance speech. "This sort of symbiotic relationship makes tutoring a richly rewarding, even intoxicating endeavor, making you eager to return for your next weekly fix."

### New Jersey Association for Lifelong Learning Adult Learner Writing Contest 2021

Congratulations to our talented student authors who earned awards in the NJALL Adult Learner Writing Contest 2021. Contest winners will have their work published by the organization both online and in a hard copy magazine.

Georgina, who in the past has garnered the attention of NJALL writing contest judges, took this year's first-place non-fiction award for *Justice for Vanessa Guillen update*, an opinion piece that questions the sincerity of the military's response to the murder of an Army specialist stationed at Fort Hood, Texas. An investigation into Specialist Guillen's homicide found a command climate that was permissive of sexual assault and sexual harassment and it resulted in the firing or suspension of 14 Army officials. "How long would we continue to see cases like Vanessa's?" the Ecuadorian native asked in her piece. "There needs to be a change in culture within the military and within society as well."



In *Kids Left Behind for a Dream*, Rosa, a native of Ecuador, tackled the issue of children who suffer painful separations from their parents when they are sent to the U.S. to live with other relatives. Rosa won a second-place award for her non-fiction effort, which captured the emotional trauma that many of these children experience, including her husband who was sent to the states at age 10 to live with a sister. Many of these children are grateful for the sacrifices their parents made but remain emotionally scarred. "As an adult, he still experiences the loss of his mother and father deeply," she wrote of her husband, whose mother died before he could return home to see her. "In his mind, the last image of his mother saying goodbye haunts him." *You can read a profile of Rosa, who also earned her high school diploma last month, on the second page of this newsletter.*