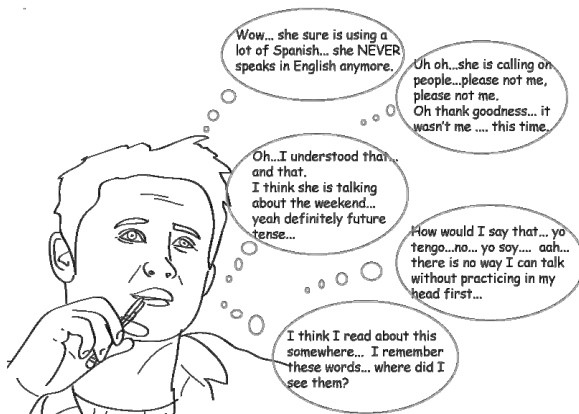




*The Insider*, the monthly newsletter of LVA Essex & Passaic Counties, will keep you in the loop on all of the organization's upcoming events.



*Linguist and educator Stephen Krashen holds some interesting opinions on why U.S. students can't speak the foreign languages they studied in school, as discussed in our Page 3 story.*

## *The Insider*

Dear friends,

We hope this bulletin finds you safe, happy, and healthy.

If you can read it you're more fortunate than 750 million adults and 250 million children around the world who lack basic literacy skills.

Illiteracy costs the global economy more than \$1.5 trillion per year, according to The World Literacy Foundation. Without a doubt, the ability to read, write, and comprehend language provides the building blocks needed to improve our lives and develop the abilities that lead to self-sufficiency.

Every September we observe International Literacy Day in order to raise awareness about literacy issues around the globe and, hopefully, to do something to improve them. The principal way to help, according to the foundation, is to volunteer. So please continue your good work and if you know anyone who wants to get involved please refer them to us. Many thanks.

We're happy to announce that our tutor support workshops will begin again next month, after a long summer break. With your help, we introduced these monthly presentations eight years ago, with the aim of keeping volunteers connected and informed through the sharing of ideas and techniques, after they'd completed training. Since then hundreds of volunteers have joined us for sessions offered by dozens of tutors and other educators. Thank you all for nurturing this idea. You can view the support workshops on the next page as well as on website <http://www.lvaep.org/workshops.html>

We hope that you continue to follow safe and healthy practices during these unusual times. To review state restrictions and advisories regarding the coronavirus, including the Delta variant, please refer to the state website: <https://covid19.nj.gov/>

## *In the News*

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

**"They saw ESL classes as a key to the American dream. Here's how they adapted through COVID."** The News Journal. <https://bit.ly/2X88Q65>

**"Struggling to learn a new language? Blame it on your stable brain."** UCSF.edu <https://bit.ly/3k6pbkH>

**"The U.S. is missing out on \$2 trillion per year due to illiteracy. Here are ways you can help."** GO Banking Rates <https://bit.ly/3rxDyWx>

### Literacy Volunteers of America Essex & Passaic Counties

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*Mariam, a literacy student from the Ivory Coast who speaks several languages, has her sights set on a nursing career and U.S. citizenship.*

## Tutor Training Workshops

**Online Training**, by Catherine Mitch

Platform: Zoom

Tuesdays, 6 - 8 pm

October 19, 26, November 2, 9 & 16, 2021

**Online Training**, Trainer TBA

Platform: Zoom

Tuesdays, 6 - 8 pm

January 11, 18, 25, February 1, & 8, 2022

## Tutor Support Workshops

**"Informal Assessment Strategies,"**

with Diana Sefchik

Platform: Google Meet

Tuesday, October 19, 2021

11:00 am – 12:30 pm

**"Easy Guide for Working with Small Group,"**

with Barbara Hathaway

Platform: Zoom

Tuesday, November 16, 2021

11:00 am – 12:30 pm

## Getting to Know Us

### Mariam, LVA student

Mariam recalls a joyful childhood - warm and pleasant times spent with seven brothers and sisters in Abidjan, a city in the West African nation Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, or Ivory Coast.

She's multilingual, a fluent speaker of her native Mandingo, French and English. But a regret that's followed her from child- to adulthood, is her sacrifice of formal schooling in order to help out at home.

"I had good times but I didn't go to school," Mariam said. "That's the one thing that I didn't like. I wanted to know how to write and read."

Fortunately, for lifelong learners like Mariam, where you start is not so important as where you finish. To focus on reading and writing, she enrolled in LVA's literacy program and hopes to end up with a career in public health.

"I want to help people," she explained. "People who are sick, old people, I want to help them. That's why I want to be a nurse." She also wants to become a U.S. citizen.

"She has a definite drive and focus, a goal for getting her citizenship," said her tutor, Will Williams. "She pays close attention to detail, to getting some of these key words that are used throughout the citizenship test, memorizing those and being able to use them in a practical way. That's definitely one of her strong areas."

Mariam arrived in the U.S. in 2011. She found work as a hairdresser but said that her inability to read and write flustered her efforts to find other types of employment.

"I didn't know how to read," she said of her arrival. "I didn't know how to spell my name. I can't do a job if I don't know how to read and write."

These days, Mariam's days are consumed with work and raising her son, age 14. But, when time permits, you can find her either studying English or passing time with her crew, a group of about 15 Ivory Coast friends. "For a long time, we couldn't see each other, only in conference calls," Mariam said. "But now we're all vaccinated so we do barbecues, cookouts, and invite people who come and dance and have fun."

***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 by mailing us a check or through our website @:*

**<http://www.lvaep.org/donate.html>**



## *Language curriculum is not effective – new method needed.*

### **The Daily Aztec**

By Brenda Martinez, September 10, 2021

Whenever the topic of high school language classes pops up in discussions, one statement gets thrown around nearly every time: “I took three years of the language and can’t even hold a basic conversation!”

Students are quick to accuse their language teacher of being bad at their job or incompetent if they are not fluent or highly proficient at the end of their high school language studies. However, this experience cannot be tied back to a language teacher’s ability to teach.

The fact of the matter is that schools approach language education in the wrong way. We are taught foreign grammar concepts in our native language, tested on conjugations and drilled to repeat scripts — which, in the end, does not properly equip us to learn the language, as articulated by leading linguist Stephen Krashen.

The most important factor necessary in acquiring a second language is input. Input refers to the language information we receive from reading or listening to content with the second language embedded such as conversations, passages from books, movies, etc.

Krashen proposes that we only develop a mental representation of a second language through input and the things we are explicitly taught about a second language in our native language will do next to nothing for acquisition. *(cont.)*

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

<https://bit.ly/3z33vKD>

*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.)*

**Cynthia Andrews, LVA tutor**

There’s a rush of excitement when a language student reaches a goal — whether it’s corresponding with a child’s teacher or obtaining citizenship.



And so it was for Andrea, a literacy student who passed the written state driver’s examination recently, after months of study.

“I was so happy,” said Andrea, a native of Uruguay who works as a restaurant cook and studies computer technology.

Equally elated, or just about, was Cynthia Andrews, the tutor who spent months reviewing practice tests with Andrea to help prepare her for the test.

“She texted me about the exam that same morning and we were able to celebrate face to face via Zoom,” Cynthia said. “We pretty much had a time of sharing and we sent each other emojis and smileys.”

Those are the moments volunteers and students relish, when they’re able to see the direct results of their efforts.

“She helped me so much,” Andrea said of her tutor. “We utilized applications, test questions, pictures. Every class it was practice, practice, practice.”

Cynthia is a Newark native who enjoys playing the piano, designing inspirational T-shirts, and practicing modern and liturgical or praise dance. She has worked as both a teacher and an education consultant and holds bachelor’s and master’s degrees in education from Seton Hall University.

She has strong spiritual values and enjoys doing community outreach, health and fitness activities, art, storytelling and sharing inspirational stories.

Cynthia and Andrea, who is now preparing to take her road test, work on grammar for Andrea’s job, and scripts that prepare her to communicate with her sons’ teachers.

“And I encourage her to practice with others in any other settings that she’s in,” Cynthia said.

“It is such a blessing to share the gift of literacy,” she added. “Being able to read just opens up so much for a person.”