



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



## Join us for the LVA Annual Awards Ceremony

**Date:** Wednesday, October 23, 2024  
**Time:** 6:00-7:30 pm  
**Location:** Bloomfield High School  
160 Broad Street, Auditorium, Bloomfield, NJ 07003

## *The Insider*

Greetings LVA family!

As summer ends and the back-to-school season begins, we reflect on the remarkable journeys that have taken place within our community. This newsletter is a celebration of the dedication, perseverance, and triumphs that have marked the season.

We are thrilled to share Jorge's inspiring English Learning Journey. Jorge pursued a career in Statistics and Data Analysis, in Venezuela, but as economic conditions worsened, he migrated to the U.S. His commitment to mastering the language has not only transformed his own life but also positively impacted those around him.

You'll also find Dorothy's heartfelt account of her journey as a volunteer tutor who enjoys selecting books that spark her students' curiosity while helping prepare them for future steps such as citizenship.

In this issue, we have also selected an article written by Teachers College at Columbia University that recognizes the gaps in bilingual education and proposes research-based recommendations. We have also included a second article on International Literacy Day, which is coming up on September 8, that includes the history of the day and ideas to celebrate it.

And don't miss our featured story from EdSource, which convened a panel discussing the need for increased access and outreach within adult education, as well as the barriers and ideas on how to overcome these.

As we look ahead to fall, we invite you to join us in recognizing and celebrating the incredible efforts of our tutors and students at the upcoming LVA Annual Awards Ceremony. This event is a highlight of our year, offering a moment to acknowledge the hard work, enthusiasm, and achievements that define our community. **Please RSVP @ [info@lvaep.org](mailto:info@lvaep.org) or (973) 566-6200 x216 by August 29<sup>th</sup>**

Together, we continue to create stories of hope, learning, and success. Thank you for being a part of this journey.

### *In the News*

Copy and paste the highlighted website into an internet search bar to view the following stories.

**"Education's Future for English Learners Must Start Now"** Teachers College, Columbia University.  
<https://bit.ly/3MFDR89>

**"International Literacy Day September 8"** Journee Mondiale. <https://bit.ly/3yVMbNE>

### 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  
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## Getting to Know Us

### Jorge, LVA student

Originally from Colombia and raised in Venezuela, Jorge pursued a career in Statistics and Data Analysis. However, as Venezuela's economic crisis deepened, he faced a crucial decision: seek opportunities elsewhere or stay and struggle.

In February of 2017, Jorge arrived in the U.S. for a temporary work stint but returned to Venezuela as conditions worsened. By October 2019, he was back in the U.S., intent on moving permanently. This time, Jorge was determined to overcome the language barrier that had previously limited his opportunities.

His initial attempt to learn English involved a course in New York, but balancing work and study proved challenging. Jorge found a renewed focus after reconnecting with Professor Marisol at Literacy Volunteers of Essex and Passaic Counties (LVA). "Learning English is crucial for advancing my career and using my skills effectively," he says.

Jorge's commitment to learning English is evident in his daily life. He juggles his studies with work as a Lyft driver and Amazon Flex delivery driver, roles that require constant communication in English. Although he has made significant progress in reading comprehension, he acknowledges the need to improve his listening and pronunciation skills.

A pivotal moment for Jorge came during a job interview for a supervisor position, where his limited English proficiency was a barrier. This experience only strengthened his resolve to master the language. "It was a tough lesson, but it motivated me to push harder," he reflects.

Despite these challenges, Jorge's achievements are notable. In his previous job, he successfully communicated with engineers and supervisors. His dedication to English learning, supported by his wife and LVA's resources, underscores his resilience.

Looking ahead, Jorge dreams of working as a Data Analyst or Statistician. He acknowledges that his English skills thwarted his previous attempt at a Data Science Specialization but sees it as a steppingstone rather than a setback. "Improving my English is essential to reaching my career goals," he explains.

Jorge's journey highlights the power of perseverance and the vital role of education in overcoming barriers. His story is an inspiring example of how mastering a new language can open doors and transform lives, showing that achieving one's goals is within reach with determination and support.

Having pursued a career in Statistics and Data Analysis, Jorge found himself struggling as the economic crises deepened in Venezuela. He first came to the U.S. in 2017 for temporary work and decided to return in 2019 as conditions worsened in the country that raised him.

## Tutor Training Workshops

**Online Training**, by TBD  
Platform: Zoom (sponsored by LNJ)  
Tuesdays, 6 to 8 pm  
Sept. 10, 17, 24, Oct. 1, & 8, 2024

**Online Training**, by TBD  
Platform: Zoom (sponsored by LNJ)  
Mondays & Wednesdays, 6 to 8 pm  
Oct. 7 & 9, 16, 21, & 23, 2024

## Tutor Support Workshop

**"Clarity in the Classroom: Effective Comprehension Strategies for Tutors,"**  
with Maria Paduano  
Platform: Google Meet  
Thursday, September 19, 2024, 11 am - 12:30 pm

## Coffee Hour with Tutors

with Cheryl Locastro

Thursday, September 12, 2024, at 3pm (General in-person meeting)

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

***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.*

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



## More outreach and access are needed in adult education, panel says

Written by Mallika Seshadri, Ed Source  
July 26, 2024

The panel at EdSource’s roundtable, “Adult education: Overlooked and underfunded,” discussed how adults and their families can benefit from adult education, the common barriers to access and ways to overcome them.

“During the pandemic, our emergency room took in some of our most at-need people and triaged them to the right medical care that they need,” said John Werner, the executive director of Sequoias Adult Education Consortium at Thursday’s discussion. “Adult schools do very similar work with education.”

### Barriers to adult education

Panelist Francisco Solano grew up in Mexico, where he earned a high school education but had no interest in continuing his schooling. About 16 years ago, he came to the United States and found himself working for salad-packing companies.

He eventually enrolled in adult education classes at Salinas Adult School and is now wrapping up a doctorate in molecular biology at UCLA.

But the road through his adult education was “exhausting” and “not convenient at all.”

“That’s what I see with my peers,” Solano said. “They are not able to get out of that lifestyle because it’s so difficult for them to be able to have a job that secures rent and food for the families and, at the same time, find time and resources to go to school or try something else.”

Solano also believes that larger companies do not want migrants like him to succeed because that would take away a source of cheap labor.

Rural areas — where barriers associated with time and distance are greater — have a high need for adult education.

Steve Curiel, the principal of Huntington Beach Adult School, said not enough conversations about adult education are held at the policy level [ ...]

For the full story please copy and paste this link on your browser:  
<https://bit.ly/3z0pRIS>

*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.lvaep.org/students.html>*

## Getting to Know Us (cont.)

Dorothy Warner, LVA Tutor

Dorothy’s journey with Literacy Volunteers of America (LVA) began in 2017, driven by a desire to support immigrants during a time of heightened political tension. Since then, she has become a cherished tutor, guiding students from diverse backgrounds, including Haiti, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, and Liberia. One of her proudest achievements is helping a young man who, despite being pushed through the Newark Public School system, couldn’t read when they first met. Under Dorothy’s patient and consistent guidance, he made remarkable progress, eventually reading a full-length adult book—a milestone that left his mother in awe.



With a background as a children’s librarian, Dorothy initially questioned using children’s books with adult learners. She and a fellow tutor wondered if these books might seem condescending, but they soon discovered that children’s literature could be a powerful tool in adult education.

Dorothy finds joy in selecting books that ignite her students’ curiosity, whether it’s a biography of Benjamin Franklin or a history of the American Revolution. These materials often resonate deeply, especially for those preparing for U.S. citizenship.

Flexibility is a cornerstone of Dorothy’s tutoring philosophy. She always arrives with a detailed lesson plan but is equally prepared to adapt based on her students’ immediate needs and concerns. One snowy day, she set aside her plans to focus on discussions about snow, a technique inspired by a wise school principal. Another time, when her students arrived weighed down by personal challenges—one dealing with police action and the other grieving a friend’s overdose—Dorothy turned to a Dr. Seuss book, “Horton Hatches the Egg,” to bring comfort and connection.

Dorothy credits LVA’s comprehensive resources, particularly the “News for You” website, with supporting her work. Over the years, she has refined her ability to listen and respond to her students’ needs, a skill she first developed while volunteering with a migrant community in Arizona.

For Dorothy, tutoring is about more than teaching English—it’s about learning from her students’ resilience and determination. She believes that helping them navigate their challenges is the least she can do and finds deep fulfillment in being part of their journey.