



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



Dr. Jan Adversario, a course lecturer at Texas State University who also teaches graduate level courses at the Adult, Professional, and Community Education program, joined us last month to support our tutors in learning about approach listening as comprehension and how to create opportunities for learners to engage in extensive listening practice.

The Insider

Greetings LVA family!

Summer is here in full force with amazing opportunities to get outdoors and explore our beautiful Garden State. It has also brought a recent dangerous heat wave affecting those most vulnerable, but we should be back to normal temperatures soon enough. Stay safe!

Please remember that the President's proposed budget, now being considered at the Senate, places adult education and literacy in danger by eliminating funding for programs like ours. As we mentioned before, the budget does need congressional approval, and there is still a chance to make your voice heard. Please help support our program and the many others who support adults in gaining literacy skills, learning English as a Second Language, and obtaining certifications to support their growth and their families by contacting your federal representatives and senators. Together, as a community, we can come together to support the future of adult learners. You can use this link from COABE <https://www.votervoicenet.com/COABE/Campaigns/126080/Respon> as a starting point: and don't miss our featured article for more information on a bill that could address some of these concerns.

In this issue, we bring you the story of Wendtwin. Originally from Burkina Faso, Wendtwin came to the U.S. in December 2024 with a dream: to go to medical school. Though he spoke French and Moore, English was still a challenge—especially speaking and listening. Since finding Literacy Volunteers through social media, Wendtwin's confidence has grown.

Millicent, a retired high school art teacher has found a new passion helping adults improve their English at LVA. Inspired by her mother—who immigrated from Puerto Rico and became a court interpreter, she now teaches students from Haiti, Bolivia, Russia, and beyond. Her goal? "I want them to feel proud of their voices, not afraid of them."

Thank you for your ongoing support, and for being part of the important work we are honored to do each day.

In the News

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

"Sentence Review: Literacy and the School-To-Prison Pipeline." Daily Bulldog. <https://bit.ly/44075YH>

"Never Too Late." Herald-Citizen. <https://bit.ly/449bWFC>

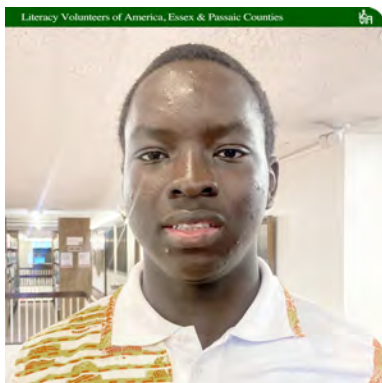
"17 new books our critics can't wait to read this summer." NPR. <https://bit.ly/43ZDvCE>

Literacy Volunteers of America, Essex & Passaic Counties

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(973) 566-6200, ext. 217 or 225

195 Gregory Avenue, 2nd Floor, Passaic, NJ 07053
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Getting to Know Us Wendtuint, LVA student

Wendtuint arrived in the United States for the first time in December 2024, stepping off the plane into a new life—and a new language. Originally from Burkina Faso, he speaks Moore, his country's local language, as well as French. But here in the U.S., he quickly realized that English would be key to his future.

"It's important to learn English because it's an international language nowadays," he says. "And I want to continue school."

Back home, Wendtuint earned his high school diploma, "that was my biggest success so far," he says. "Now, I want to go to medical school." It's a big goal—but it's not beyond reach for someone who has already come so far.

Though he started studying English in 2016, Wendtuint's learning was limited to reading and writing. Speaking and listening—skills vital for everyday communication—were still a challenge when he arrived. "When I got to the airport, I couldn't even answer the customs officer's questions correctly," he recalls with a laugh. But he didn't let that stop him.

He discovered Literacy Volunteers of America through social media and has been steadily building confidence ever since. "My tutors and teacher are very kind and do their best to improve my skills," he says, giving special thanks to Elizabeth Cook, Daniel, and Harry Handler. "They help me speak more clearly and understand people better."

Outside of class, Wendtuint practices by listening to podcasts, watching movies, and striking up conversations with strangers on the street—something many native speakers might find intimidating. "Sometimes I try to speak with American people," he says. "It helps."

Balancing English classes with daily life isn't always easy, but Wendtuint keeps his focus. "Stay focused and believe in your tutors," he advises other students. "They want to help you."

Now, with a clear vision for his future and the tools to reach it, Wendtuint is steadily moving forward. He misses his country, but he's excited for what lies ahead.

"Learning English has helped me understand people," he says. "That's important."

And perhaps that's the heart of it—language not just as a skill, but as a bridge. One that Wendtuint is crossing, step by step, with determination and hope.

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>

Wendtuint has not been in the United States for long, arriving at the end of 2024 from Burkina Faso. He already speaks two languages, but his English was limited to some reading and writing skills. He has been working with his tutors at LVA to build his confidence speaking and dreams of going to medical school.

Tutor Training Workshops

Online Training, by TBD

Platform: Zoom (sponsored by LNJ)

Mondays & Wednesdays, 6 to 8 pm

Sept. 3, 8, 10, 15 & 17, 2025

Online Training, by TBD

Platform: Zoom (sponsored by LNJ)

Tuesdays, 6 to 8 pm

Aug. 19, 26 & Sept. 2, 9, 16, 2025

Tutor Support Workshops

"Pick Your Battles: Best Practices for Helping Students with Pronunciation," with Steven Reid

Platform: Google Meet

Thursday, September 18, 2025, 11 am - 12:30 pm

Coffee Hour with Tutors
with Cheryl Locastro

Thursday, September 18, 2025, at 3pm (General in-person meeting)



Trump's Education Budget Calls for Billions in Cuts, Major Policy Changes

Education Week, May 30, 2025
Written by Mark Lieberman

President Donald Trump's administration on Friday revealed the full details of his administration's sweeping proposal to slash federal education spending, eliminate grant programs worth billions of dollars, and rewrite special education law in unprecedented ways.

The annual White House budget proposal, released with little fanfare just minutes before 5 p.m. on May 30, fleshes out the "skinny budget" documents the administration published earlier in May. These documents are merely proposals and do not have the force of law, and will likely look different from the budget Congress eventually approves for the fiscal year starting this October.

The administration's core priorities were already clear from the shorter document: \$60 million in new annual funding for charter school grants; a sharp overall reduction in federal agency staffing and funding support for K-12 education, and changes that aim to shift federal education responsibilities to states.

Overall, the proposal would reduce the U.S. Department of Education's budget by 15 percent, to \$66.7 billion from \$79.6 billion.

As Trump and Education Secretary Linda McMahon have promised repeatedly in recent months, the administration is proposing to cut the overall bottom line for the Education Department while maintaining level funding for two core streams of K-12 funding: Title I-A for low-income students (\$18.4 billion) and IDEA Part B grants for students with disabilities (\$14.9 billion). [...]

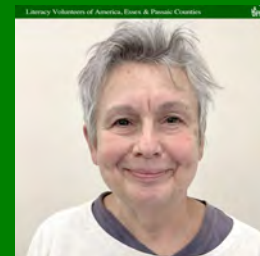
The proposal does, however, recommend changes that would affect both programs (Title I-A, IDEA B). The administration wants to eliminate funding for a smaller Title I grant program that serves migrant students (\$52.1 million), and consolidate another Title I program, for education in prisons (\$49.2 million), into a block grant states can spend largely as they see fit.

For the full study please copy and paste this link on your browser: <https://bit.ly/3ZOJBU1>

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.) Millicent Ansley, Tutor

Millicent's journey as an educator spans the creative world of fine arts, public school classrooms, and, more recently, adult education through Literacy Volunteers of America (LVA). After earning a BFA in illustration and a graduate degree in studio art, she spent a decade designing educational software before shifting to classroom teaching. She earned her alternate route teaching certification and taught photography, drawing, and computer art to high school students in Bloomfield, New Jersey, for ten years.



But it wasn't until retirement that Millicent found a different kind of classroom: one without grades or bells, filled instead with adult students working to master the English language. Drawn to service by her mother's journey—born in Puerto Rico, her mother worked diligently to refine her accent and eventually served as a court interpreter—Millicent saw language as both a bridge and a barrier.

Millicent first joined LVA in 2016, but caregiving duties forced her to step away. When she returned in 2023, the experience was different—and deeply rewarding. She now works with small groups of students.

Millicent tailors her lessons to the varying needs of each learner. One student is a retired Russian scientist with exceptional reading skills. Another, from Bolivia, speaks English well but struggles with reading. A Haitian student—shy, but a beautiful writer—has just interviewed for a job at a nursing home. "It amazes me how brave they are," she says. "Especially the mothers of young children. They've made a real choice to invest in themselves."

There's joy too—plenty of it. Millicent lights up recalling her first group of male students who kept her laughing through each lesson. "They were hilarious," she recalls. "The women are more serious, but the guys? Total comedians."

What impresses Millicent most is her students' resilience and drive. One former student dreamed of earning a GED and going to college. Another wants to return to nursing. While reading and writing come easily to some, many still struggle with spoken English. That's Millicent's focus now—helping students find their voice, literally.

When not teaching, Millicent finds balance in her 30-year yoga practice. "Iyengar yoga has helped me physically and mentally," she shares. "Just like language, it's about finding your center and staying grounded."