



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



People often are uneasy about speaking in a new language; that's natural. Tutor Abby Kane shared her insight last month in the workshop "Helping Students Overcome Their Fear of Speaking."

Literacy Volunteers of America Essex & Passaic Counties

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

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

Cristhian Barcelos	-Executive Director cbarcelos@lvaep.org
Jorge Chavez	-Data Processing Coordinator jchavez@lvaep.org
Debbie Graham	-Education Coordinator dgraham@lvaep.org
Ellen Martin	-Recruitment & Training Coordinator emartin@lvaep.org
Mary O'Connor	-Trainer & Tutor Support Specialist moconnor@lvaep.org
Marisol Ramirez	-Student Coordinator mramirez@lvaep.org

The Insider

Greetings LVA family,

Aren't you just glad it's over? Much was lost in the coverage of the 2020 U.S. presidential election, which may forever be remembered for its political polarization, a contentious debate, all night vote tabulations in key battleground states, allegations of fraud and corruption, voter suppression and foreign meddling, legal challenges and demands to stop ballot counting.

One of the areas barely touched on was the huge number of eligible voters among foreign-born, naturalized U.S. citizens, one of the largest on record. About one-in-ten people who were eligible to vote in this year's U.S. presidential election were immigrants, according to the Pew Research Center, a non-partisan fact tank. And most (61%) of these 23 million naturalized citizens live in just five states, including New Jersey, with 1.2 million immigrant eligible voters, the fifth on the list after California, New York, Florida, and Texas. And we're extremely proud to say that many our students and alumni are in that pool, including Anelsi and Margarita of the Dominican Republic, Irma from Ecuador, Esther from Nigeria, Cristina and Perseveranda from Peru, Nunu of Liberia, and Nuray from Turkey. Here are the Pew Research Center numbers: <https://pewrsr.ch/3eDrVSc>

In "good news on the employment front," congratulations to Katya, a student from Lima, Peru who was hired as an educational assistant at her children's elementary school; student Clifford Henry, a military reserves soldier who served in Iraq and Guantanamo Bay, who was hired as a grounds crew worker on the military base at Fort Dix; and former student and office volunteer Jouseth, a pediatric oncologist from Ecuador, who recently earned a registered nurse's license.

Some folks don't miss classes, even in a pandemic. We'd like to recognize the efforts of Ana, a visually-impaired student from El Salvador who continues to study via a device provided by the state Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired; and Shagoofa, a student from Afghanistan, who kept up with lessons, right up until she gave birth to a baby girl two weeks ago.

If you've received an email invitation to attend our first ever virtual membership meeting on Tuesday, December 1st, from 7:00-7:30 pm, when we'll provide a status report, vote on key issues and announce our student and tutor awards, please RSVP via email to our executive director, Cristhian Barcelos, cbarcelos@lvaep.org, by Monday, November 16th.

In the News

"Your View: Why I'm an adult literacy volunteer in Allentown," The Morning Call. <https://bit.ly/35eotui>

Literacy Volunteers of America, Essex & Passaic Counties



Pamela, who grew up in rural Guyana, is determined to improve her literacy skills and make up for the limited educational opportunities of her childhood.

Tutor Training Workshops

Online Training, by Catherine Mitch

Platform: Zoom

Tuesdays, 6:30 - 8:30 pm

November 10, 17, 24, & December 1, 2020

Tutor Support Workshops

"Writing Prompts for the Classroom,"

with Dr. Erik Jacobson

Platform: Zoom

Tuesday, November 17, 2020

11:00 am - 12:30 pm

"Building Vocabulary Through Stories,"

with Mary O'Connor

Platform: Zoom

Tuesday, December 8, 2020

11:00 am - 12:30 pm

"Easy Guide for Working With Small Groups,"

with Barbara Hathaway

Platform: Zoom

Tuesday, January 19, 2021

11:00 am - 12:30 pm

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

Getting to Know Us

Pamela, LVA student

The inspirational saying "It's not how you start; it's how you finish" is not just a maxim for a struggling New Jersey pro football team.

For literacy students like Pamela Wayloo, whose opportunities to attend school as a child in rural Guyana were extremely limited, it's the tenet that keeps them going.

"It was a hard life," Pamela said, when asked to describe her childhood years. "I went to school until I was about 10 years old, but the teachers didn't teach us anything."

Pamela and her two sisters were raised by their uncle, a truck and bus driver and crop planter, and their grandmother, whose homes they shuttled to and from as children.

Pamela said she'd never even been out of her own small village until August 2001. It was then that she traveled to the United States and met up with a cousin who helped her get a job at a New Jersey clothing store.

Speaking English was never an issue for Pamela; it's the native language of Guyana. But reading and writing, for someone with so little formal schooling, was another matter. So when Pamela saw an opportunity to enroll in LVA, where her sister was a student, she jumped on it. She was determined to learn to read and write in order to have a steady income and support her young children.

"If she can learn, then I can learn, too," Pamela said in reference to her sibling. She currently works with two tutors, Charlotte and Lynn, who say that Pamela's reading and vocabulary have excelled. She recently read and studied the entire state driver's manual, in preparation for the written test that leads to a driver's permit.

Charlotte, one of her tutors, said "I break words down into small parts (phonemes and Elkonin boxes) and congratulate her when she decodes new words. Pam is such a gentle soul and is now much more relaxed and confident." Charlotte and Pamela work together for two hours each week, with an emphasis on reading.

Lynn, Pamela's other tutor, said "We have faced challenges such as Covid-19, distance learning, data usage, running out of ink, and she never let me or herself down. Pamela is a superstar and has accomplished so much during her LVA journey."

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



“Off the Shelf: The Cost of Low Literacy Levels”

The Hawk Eye

By Rhonda Frevert, director, Burlington Public Library
October 18, 2020

“Low literacy prevents millions of Americans from fully participating in our society and our economy as parents, workers and citizens. It lies at the core of multigenerational cycles of poverty, poor health, and low educational attainment, contributing to the enormous equity gap that exists in our country.”

When I got my first 9-5 job, I felt a bit lost in my off-hours. I no longer had homework and campus life to fill all my time. Part of my solution came in a small notice in the newspaper looking for adult literacy volunteers.

After attending training in the basement of the local public library, I was assigned a student with whom I met weekly to work our way through the lessons of the program. Her goal was to read from the Bible with more ease at church. Aside from the fact the Bible is filled with some pretty challenging words and names that don't show up in literacy lessons, we made good progress together and developed a friendship that often resulted in her sending me home with delicious food.

I wasn't working in libraries at that time, but I think working with her really drove home the importance of literacy skills. While public libraries offer lots of services, like loaning out mobile hotspots and offering creative programs like our Little Learners kits, I always come back to the role public libraries play in supporting literacy skills at all ages and the impact those skills have ... (cont)

Reprinted from *The Hawk Eye*. For full story, paste the following link into your favorite web browser address bar: <https://bit.ly/2JJW4UI>

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.)

Trina Rogers LVA tutor

Face masks and shields, six-foot of separation, with handshakes, hugs, and other forms of physical contact frowned upon. Is it any wonder that the long pandemic has left many of us feeling socially isolated?



Well, for one pair – tutor Trina Rogers and Zeno, her student from Thailand – discussions of the coronavirus, masks and social distancing have brought them closer, helping the duo turn lemons into, well, a fruitful partnership.

“It was dumb luck the way that happened, for me to find something he was excited about,” said Trina who, like most tutors, remembers and relishes the moment that she and her student really connected.

“We were talking about COVID,” she explained. “He went and got his mask. So I went and got my mask. I made it into a lesson plan.”

As luck would have it, Zeno is quite a mask-maker.

“In the process of talking about masks, I learned that his sister taught him how to sew,” she said. “We talked about where he bought his material, how hard it is to find elastic, different patterns. I introduced new vocabulary. We had an animated 40-minute conversation about masks,” she said with enthusiasm.

Trina, whose father was from Venezuela, was raised in the Washington Heights section of Manhattan. She grew up around many Spanish-speaking immigrants who struggled with English and she always wanted to help them learn.

She earned a bachelor's and a master's degree in psychology and child developmental psychology, respectfully, worked in the finance section of a large construction firm, ran an interior decorating company franchise, and volunteered in the Home and School Association of her children's school.

She's been a tutor for a year, working with everyone from a Muslim religious leader to her current student, a Thai hair salon worker who produces the face masks.

“I have been fortunate with all of the students assigned to me,” Trina said. “I have really cared about them all.”