

Literacy Volunteers Serving Adults

“Opening Minds – Changing Lives”

Winter 2009 Issue

LVSA 25th Anniversary Gala!

The 25th Anniversary Recognition Dinner saw program founders, past Executive Directors and members of the very first tutor training class mingling with present staff and learners. Congressman Michael Castle and a representative from then Senator Joseph Biden’s office were in attendance. The program highlighted the education gains made by learners and the program’s history of service in the



Congressman Michael Castle confers with LVSA Board members at the 2008 Annual Recognition Dinner (Photo by Roderick Moore)

northern New Castle County area. Dr. Page Bristow, co-founder, spoke of the early days of the organization and the leadership of Dr. Jill

Biden, now “second lady” of the United States. Larry Peterson spoke about his struggles with illiteracy and his successes with his

current tutor. Doris Cordova also spoke about the trials of learning English as a foreign language. Proclamations from the mayor, the governor and a personal letter from then Senator Joseph Biden were read at the end of the evening. As usual, the highlight of the evening was the variety of food brought by tutors and learners alike. Many thanks to all those who volunteered their time and energy to make the night such a success!

LVSA Learning Center Full to Capacity

Housed in the Woodlawn Library and staffed by Coordinator Jen Bachmann-Lopez, the LVSA Adult Literacy Learning Center is full to capacity with an endless stream of tutors and learners taking advantage of all the services the Learning Center has to offer. With Reading Horizons, a computer-based phonemic awareness program that learners can work on individually or with a tutor, the Rosetta Stone, a

“A Reading Club, open to learners and tutors alike will begin meeting in February.”

computer-based English Language emersion program and the expertise of the Center’s Coordinator, the Learning Center has much to offer. In addition, many tutors take advantage of the space to meet with their learners in the evenings and on

weekends. Jen tutors individual learners as well as hosting small groups. In February, a Reading Club, open to learners and tutors alike, began meeting during lunchtime every other Monday at the Learning Center. Jen is hosting it, providing yet another learning opportunity. Interested tutors or learners should RSVP to 658-5624.

Message from the Executive Director

“We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism”. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

What an apt quote for today’s world. The financial crisis we see in our country and state has taken its toll on businesses, schools, individuals, families, and yes even LVSA. Recently at a Legislative Forum for nonprofits, Governor Markell delivered a sobering address. “We are in the midst of a perfect economic storm. With hard work and determination, we will be ready to prosper out of this storm.” LVSA tutors and learners certainly know about hard work!

Alyssa, Gretchen, Jen and I are committed to work efficiently and effectively to help LVSA move through this storm. The need for our services continues to grow as more and more persons lose their jobs and realize they no longer can hide from their literacy needs. If our country wants to stimulate the economy, and grow the economy, literacy is the key. It is estimated that illiteracy/lack of education costs Delaware \$1,110,566,133.00 in income. On a recent published survey of the National Assessment for Adult Literacy, 10% of the population of New Castle County has minimal literacy skills. This is an increase from 1992 when a similar study was performed.

One thing I know, we can’t get through this “storm” alone. We need your time, talents, and yes, financial support. Please consider giving a tax deductible donation to LVSA. If you have already given to us, please consider digging just a little bit deeper to help us continue our work. Remember you can now make a credit card donation on our website <http://www.litvolunteers.org> . Unlike the Federal government, we cannot operate on a deficit budget, nor print more money to cover costs!

Once again thank you for all you do and continue to do for LVSA. In these difficult times, we are so grateful to have your support!

Regards,
Cindy

Tutor Training a Success and Newly Invigorated

LVSA held two recent tutor training workshops, one at Aldersgate Methodist Church, and one at the Bear Library. Each workshop had more than ten participants and resulted in many learners being placed. LVSA has restructured the training to better enable new tutors to plan lessons, understand their learner’s abilities and provide exceptional tutoring services. We now offer orientation sessions monthly in order to provide potential tutors with all the information they need to judge the volunteer opportunity. The next orientation session will be held at the Limestone Presbyterian Church on Limestone Road, March 11 from 7-8:30 p.m. Tutor Training will start April 1st at the same location from 6:30—9:00 p.m. Please call to register.



Participants in the Bear Library tutor training workshop compare notes.
(Photo by Danny Schweers)

Learner Spotlight

The following are some stories LVSA learners have written about their experiences with LVSA:

“Learning to read is important to me because I like to read books on roller coasters, transportation, the universe, animals, Sumo Wrestlers, Native Americans and other books. One of the reasons that reading has made by life better is because it’s important to be ready and prepared for life. I enjoy working at my job and reading has helped me take on more responsibilities.” — A.A.

“I have two children. They are 9 and 11 years old. They go to the school. They are not good at English. They need to be helped by me or my husband. I am not good at English. I don’t help them. I want to help them.

And my children’s school life is hard. I don’t know many things about their school. I want to understand them and I want to encourage them. So I want to learn English.

My husband and I hope to help people who live in a poor country. So I have to be good at English.” — M.S.C.

“I want to learn English because I want to become qualified as a plumber and an electrician in this country. I have a Polish license, but I need an American qualification to work here.

Also I want to be able to meet and talk to Americans. I would like to be able to understand the television, radio, movies and read a newspaper and books.

I would like to ask people for information when I go shopping. I need to be able to phone the doctor’s office or talk to government officials.” — A.J.

Literacy Study Proves Not Much Has Changed

The National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL) reported that from 1992 to 2003 percentages of illiterate adults, (adults who can not read well enough to function in their daily lives) have remained essentially constant. There are now 32 million adults, about one in seven, who are classified as illiterate. David Harvey, President of ProLiteracy America, LVSA’s parent organization, pointed to learning disabilities, immigration and high school drop out rates as prime reasons for the high percentages of illiterate adults. The problem isn’t going away. For more information see: nces.ed.gov/naal

Looking for tutoring resources online? Check out these free sites for ideas:
<http://floridaliteracy.org>
<http://larryferlazzo.edublogs.org>

Star Learner Program Unveiled

During the 25th Anniversary planning, LVSA was faced with the question of how best to acknowledge learner achievements. The Star Learner program was the answer. Now learners who demonstrate a commitment to their own progress by meeting regularly

with their tutor, taking both a pre and post placement test, and engaging in a variety of community activities such as the book club or a volunteer opportunity, can be awarded Star Learner status. Star Learners will receive a certificate, letter of congratulations, and be

recognized at the next LVSA Annual Recognition Dinner. Already the program has generated interest from both learners and their tutors. We anticipate having a host of candidates with which to celebrate achievements at the dinner!

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Imagine not being able
to read this...



The purpose of Literacy Volunteers Serving Adults is to help adults improve literacy skills and thereby realize their potential to be confident, self-sufficient, and productive employees and community members. We deliver services and programs in reading, writing, English language, math, workplace, and computer skills. LVSA works to create public understanding of the impact of *illiteracy* and advocates for literacy solutions.

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