

The LVSA Landscape

Special Extended Year-End Edition

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 3

DECEMBER 2010

DID YOU KNOW?

- 43% of people with the lowest literacy skills live in poverty.
- 17% of people with the lowest literacy skills receive food stamps
- 70% of people with the lowest literacy skills have no full or part time job.
- Workers who lack a high school diploma earn a mean monthly income of \$452 compared to \$1,829 for those with a college degree.

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LVSA Retrospective: 2010

Recently, LVSA's first annual report FY 2010 was released. And like the report itself, 2010 held a number of firsts, and exciting new potential for 2011.

Fundraising

While the economy may yet be wheeling mud in the ditch, LVSA has been able to meet its funding challenges through a nearly even mix of government grants and private donations. A large part of the former was comprised of funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act through First State Community Action Agency. However, more than half of our funding in FY 2010 has come from donors. Whether from individual donations and grants, or the sum of fundraising events like Octo-



ber's fifth annual SCRABBLE® Spellebration, which raised approximately \$10,000 for Delaware Literacy programs, such aid enables us to empower our learners. 2010 saw no lack of such achievements,

and Executive Director Cindy Shermeyer picked out some of which she is most proud.

Program Growth

In 2010, LVSA expanded from

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New Year, New Office, New Start

Out with the old year, in with the new walls and carpet!

After 25 years in its premises in the Wilmington Library basement, cluttered surfaces, dingy walls, torn carpet, and aging furniture were all crying out for a makeover.

Thankfully, last spring, LVSA received a grant from the **Longwood Foundation** to

purchase much needed office furniture, and with contributions friends, the remodeling happened last month.

From Dec. 8th - 15th, the main office was closed to accommodate the project. Thanks to the help of many friends of LVSA, the office has received new carpet, paint and ceiling tiles— at no expense to the organization!

The new office will provide a more pleasant effective work environment for LVSA's staff, offering a fresh start as they work to deliver expanding literacy programs in 2011.

To see the process and results, check out the before and after shots on page 3!♦

LVSA This Month: Focus on Fundraising

- The first **LVSA Annual Report (FY 2009-2010)** is out. Look for it to be posted on our website by the end of the month.
- We received a **\$5,000 grant from Crystal Trust**, which support requests for equipment, "bricks and mortar." To that end, the grant will purchase laptops, software, materials to set up a resource center in the Multi-purpose Room at the Woodlawn Library, providing learners access to independent study overseen by a volunteer who can answer questions and provide general assistance. It will also allow us to have a computer literacy class!
- The **LVSA Winter Donor Campaign** is underway. During last year's campaign we raised \$11,000. While significant, for the past few years, there has still been the need for an additional spring campaign, a need which would be eliminated if we are able to meet our **goal of \$15,000 by the campaign's end in February 2011**. As of late December, we have **achieved \$4,750 towards this goal**.



"There is nothing like watching someone learn and do something they could not achieve before, knowing that you played some part in helping them get there."

LVSA Retrospective: 2010

one English Learner Class to five at the Bear Library. The Bear program has been instrumental in helping people find employment, pursue citizenship exams, and meet other personal goals on the road to increased self-sufficiency.

LVSA has also established focused, small group instruction for challenged readers at the Woodlawn Library this year. Says Shermeyer, "I have seen first-hand the hard work and dedication of the learners in these groups as they struggle to learn to read. Sometimes achievements are "baby steps," but more important is not the size of the step but the fact that it has been tackled and you move on to the next one."

Tutor Accountability
Tutor accountability has been a major factor in

LVSA's success in 2010. "They have really stepped up and are putting in the needed time with learners," she says, citing "the growth in the commitment and professionalism of tutors and volunteers."

In fact, she admits that in 2011 she would like to return to teaching duties herself! "I miss it so much, and the ED duties have not allowed me time to breathe let alone teach - but I need to teach. There is nothing like watching someone learn and do something they could not achieve before, knowing that you played some part in helping them get there. It validates everything I do and who I am at the core. Any LVSA [management] struggles become bearable."

Looking Ahead to 2011
So what else might 2011 have in store? Collaboration

is a key word: expect to see increased cooperation between LVSA in Wilmington and its satellites elsewhere in the state, including an expansion of the program downstate. In Kent and Sussex counties, where LVSA's exposure has raised interest in the program, calls for involvement have been overwhelming.

Otherwise, Shermeyer wishes to "continue to ... build LVSA into an even stronger organization, and reduce our waiting list." She expects that "bringing in new ideas, methods and resources that will provide the absolute best training for tutors and instruction for learners. ♦

New Year, New Office, New Start

A BIG THANK YOU(!!!) TO:

Susan Fallon, Charlotte Baker, Megan Johanson – Helped with the packing and moving of all our texts and resource materials – a huge job!

Mark Brennan and Brennan's Office Interiors, Inc. – Donated time, expertise and plans for redesigning our office space and planning our furniture needs!
650 Centerpoint Blvd
New Castle, De
302-325-8190

Chip Grimes and Facility Services Group, Flooring Specialists– Donated the new carpet as well as the installation – outstanding!
725 Conshohocken Road
Unit #4
Conshohocken, Pa
610-940-4370
fsgflooring.com

Gary Bechard and Fussy Painting LLC– Donated a great percentage of time and materials to repaint the office a wonderful warm color!
302-234-1827 Office
302-584-0046 Cell

John Kaczowka – Ceiling tiles and installation

Brian Hopkins from **CB Richard Ellis**– Donated his counsel, time and expertise to find John, Gary and Chip!
The Nemours Building
1007 N. Orange Street, Suite 100
Wilmington, De 19801
302-661-6700
www.cbre.com

CB Richard Ellis Staff – Installing the ceiling tiles - **CBRE Cares!**

Alexander Ferrier— Currently working on sketches to paint designs on the pillars in the office.

Bob Hurka – Donated time and energy in researching the project and companies to help; donated time, wood and skill to make panels to cover up the holes in the wall, installed ceiling tiles and, lastly, vacuumed the new carpet!

Lisa Wagner—Helped tremendously with writing the grant that started it all!

And finally – **Larry Manuel** and the **Wilmington Library** – graciously embraced this project. They go above and beyond the call of duty in our partnership.

The Office Before:



The Renovation Process:



The Office After:



Tutor Corner: Messages to Our Tutors

Citizenship Exams

Apart from employment, citizenship exams are one of the most important goals for our learners. Accordingly, we would like to remind our tutors that they should try to work on a citizenship skill state certificate and that this is a great place for info. As always, the internet is a great launch point.

If a learner is preparing for citizenship, the Citizenship Resource Center

(www.uscis.gov/citizenship) is a great place to check out. They now have new lesson plans and handouts for teachers and volunteers preparing adult learners for citizenship (under tabs: "Teachers">"Classroom Tools">"Lesson Plans and Activities").

New Lesson plans include "George Washington" for low beginners covering civics test items 28, 69, 70, 93, 94, 100 from the naturalization test,

and "Capitals, Oceans, and Border States," a U.S. geography lesson plan and handouts for literacy and low beginners covering civics test items 44, 89, 90, 92, 93, 94.

Writing Certificates

Tutors should be incorporating writing into their work, helping their student to earn a writing certificate for their level from the state. If they have any questions or need info contact the office.

LVSA Profile: Joe Vanella, Tutor

I grew up in Queens and on Long Island in New York State. I moved from New York to Delaware in 2000 for a position at MBNA in Technology.

My professional background is in banking relating to Federal, State and Corporate Regulatory Compliance for both operations and systems for Student Lending and Credit Card. I served as the Compliance and Risk Officer. I also managed several

project technical and development teams. I sat on state boards for New York, Massachusetts, California and New Jersey relating to Federal Student Lending. I was also a member of the audit committee's for a number of the banks I was employed by.

My education is in Theology and Philosophy. During my off time I enjoy reading, music, on-line gaming, films, museums and computers. I also have been involved for a number of years

in mentoring middle school and high school students. I am also involved in a Headstart program reading to toddlers.

Tutoring with LVSA has been a great adventure. I have met great people and I have a great student. It has been exciting to watch my student get excited about learning and to want more. I think that my student has taught me more than I have taught him.

—Joe Vanella

Accomplishments

Tutors

Over 30 hours of instruction this fiscal year so far. Tommie Almond, Melanie Andrews, Charlotte Baker, Brett Cherry, Alden Gibbs, Moneca Graham, Rebecca Hayden, Dorothy Kalbfus, Bridget Kirk, Ann Negstad, Natalie Rose, Lisa Schetrompf, Axel Schwendt, Joe Vanella, Marta White, Mary White, Jack Winn.

Welcome New Tutors! Megan Johanson, BJ Kennedy, Joyce McClellan (2nd graduation!), Sister Bernice Pelczar, Ashley Whittington, John Yaschur III

Learners

Attended teacher conference without an interpreter—Diana Espinoza (Susan Fallon)
Voted—Lennox Wolfe (Brenda Tucker), Anna Lee (Judy Dolinger), Marleny Castano (Jack Winn), Jenny Yeh (did not need any reading assistance)(Dorothy Kalbfus)
Got Citizenship—Alicia Romo (October)(Rebecca Hayden)
Got Driver's License—Shabnam Vafapour (Louise Smith), Doris Dapaah—Literacy & Language Learning Center
Got Job—Konah Harris (Roberta Headley), Nazia Rahamn (Nancy Devine), Ravinee Peterson (Jack Winn), Got Library Card—Sarah Eum (Maud Dayton), Doris Dapaah (Literacy & Language Center, Eunhye Ha, Kyoungjin Kim (Lisa Wagner)
Community— Attended a Cerebral Palsy Fundraiser—Liliana Grajales (Marta White)

Learner Focus: New Year's Resolutions

The following are selected student writings from the English 200 Class, a small upper multi-level ESL group. Recently, learners were asked to write a paragraph about their New Year's Resolutions.

"I have one dream in my life. I want to be an art teacher. It is not an easy one, but I'll try to do my best for the rest of my life, ages 50, 60, and 70 years. So I have to study English hard, with detailed plans. 2011, it will be another chapter for me. This year my son went to college. He's staying in the dorm with a good roommate. He loves his school, friends, and professors. He is satisfied with his life. For now, I moved to a new house, a place in Delaware. I feel like I can do whatever I want to do. I love my life, so I'll enjoy having a life with my husband who encouraged me to study English and art. So thanks to him, I'm so excited about 2011! It'll be my year!" K.H.P.

[K.H.P has been attending the morning upper multi-level class since last fall. She wants to be a citizen and is also attending the Civics class. K.H.P came to the U.S. from Korea 10 years ago, and moved to Delaware last summer. As part of our class-work, she has been exploring her dreams and goals, and formulating plans for her future. K.H.P felt, at first, that her lack of fluency in English was an insurmountable obstacle for her. However, little by little she is not only learning more English and improving her writing skills, but also beginning to believe in herself and her abilities, as her writing shows. "



"In the new year, 2011, I don't know if I will need to learn English, or to read books, or to learn about living a healthy life. I need, with my friends, to learn to eat healthy food." H.Y.

[H.Y. has been a student in the Bear program since spring of 2009. She is a widow from Taiwan, with two adult sons. H.Y. started with virtually no English. However, she now can speak and understand a lot of English, so that she can function in English when she shops, goes for medical appointments, and visits the library. She has an exemplary attendance record, and has won awards for both achievement and attendance. She has, perhaps, the loveliest penmanship of all our students and enjoys practicing writing in English. She excels at grammar exercises, and often helps newer students in her class. She attends the afternoon upper multi-level group.

"Before, I had never thought about my future. Because I have worked for over 20 years, after I retire I'll get an adequate pension. So I want to take a rest and travel around the world. But while I have studied English with Karen, I've been thinking about my future. Finally, I set goals for after retiring. These days, there are many foreigners in my country, especially Asians. They have many problems, such as languages, different cultures, and workplace rights. I'll help them as a volunteer. I was impressed by volunteerism in America. I think volunteering will be very worthy in my life. Thank you for giving me an opportunity to study English with Karen." A.K.

[A.K. is a married woman from Korea. She has been living in the U.S. for over a year, with her husband and two teenaged children, while her husband (also an LVSA student) does research at the University of Delaware. Their family will be returning to Korea in early January. Both A.K. and her husband have been very popular and supportive of their classmates, who will miss them very much. A.K.'s goal-setting was conducted as part of

exercises in the morning upper multi-level group at the Bear Library. She says that these exercises have changed her life. It sounds as if she, herself, will in turn be changing the lives of others for the better.]



"My plans for the next year are: I would like to sell my house and find a house for my husband, my children, and me, in a nice neighborhood. Right now we live in a nice neighborhood, but I don't like the school for my children too much. Maybe I can find something better for them if we move to another place. Also, I wish to improve my English in the new year. These are my wishes for next year."

M.M.

[M.M. is from Mexico and has lived in the U.S. a long time. She is a citizen, and speaks a lot of English, but has not had the opportunity to achieve fluency. Her writing, especially, has improved dramatically since she began classes last year. She drives a school bus in her job, and asks many questions in class about the correct way to phrase requests and orders to the children she transports. Knowing that she is addressing them correctly has given her added authority and confidence in her work. M.M. is very child- and family-oriented. Her principal goals are always to improve the lives and future of her children and family. She attends the morning upper multi-level group.]

—contributed by Karen Kinsella

"There are many foreigners in my country, [who] have many problems, such as languages, different cultures, and workplace rights. I'll help them as a volunteer. I was impressed by volunteerism in America. "



Literacy Volunteers Serving Adults

Opening Minds ... Changing Lives

LVSA Headquarters and Administrative Offices

Wilmington Library
10th and Market Streets
Wilmington, DE 19801

Phone: 302-658-5624

Fax: 302-654-9132

E-Mail: litvolunteers@verizon.net

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.

LVSA Horizon: Upcoming Events and Info

Winter Donor Campaign

A reminder: LVSA Donor Campaign is underway. We are hoping to raise \$15,000 for operations. Last year we raised close to \$11,000; so far we have achieved \$4,740 towards that end. Campaign ends February 2011.

Happy New Year to all from LVSA!!



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@litvolunteers

Check us out on Facebook [and show you "like" us!] by searching:
Literacy Volunteers Serving Adults

Visit our website at: www.litvolunteers.org

Donate at:
www.litvolunteers.org/donate

Interested in tutoring, volunteering, or learning more? Contact us at:
(302) 658-5624
litvolunteers@verizon.net