



The LVSA Landscape

Literacy Volunteers Serving Adults Newsletter: Opening Minds, Changing Lives

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JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2011

DID YOU KNOW?

- In 2005 over 7 million people nationwide were on probation, in jail or prison
- High school dropouts are 3.5 times more likely than high school graduates to be arrested in their lifetime.
- A 1% increase in high school graduation rates would save approximately \$1.4 billion in incarceration costs

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LVSA Empowers Prisoner Literacy

WILMINGTON—Howard R. Young Correctional Facility, otherwise known as Gander Hill Prison, is no stranger to special programs. Located in downtown Wilmington, the facility processes approximately 60% of all detainees in the Delaware correctional system, and is already home to the Young Criminal Offenders Program (YCOP), the nationally recognized KEY substance abuse treatment program, and the “New Visions,” a community-based treatment and prevention program for the re-lapse-prone offender.

As studies attest, however, one of the greatest root-causes for such recidivism, let alone the initial criminal offenses, lies in low literacy and its related challenges. It is a problem that is both deep and widespread; according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, 75% of America’s state prison inmates are high school dropouts. Unsurprisingly then, literacy levels are quite low, with 60% of all state and federal cor-



rections inmates barely able to read or write, and the average reading proficiency lying below the 5th grade level. This translates to some very real world problems. Inmates require certain skills to make a successful transition back into society once they are released, yet “about 67% of prison inmates cannot write a brief letter explaining a billing error, read a map, or understand a bus schedule.”

Research demonstrates that education is one of the most effective forms of crime prevention, since educational skills and their attached successes deter both criminal activity and recidivism. According to ProLiteracy, the rate of re-incarceration is double for inmates without prison literacy education programs. Despite this, only 9% of all prisoners with low literacy skills receive literacy help while in prison.

Fortunately, at Howard Young,

an education system was already in place, but Warden Phil Morgan decided it could be improved upon. He recently had the idea to turn Q-pod, one of the prison’s sections, into a “boarding school,” where inmates would be facilitators and tutors to other inmates with literacy needs. While the prison did have their own education system in place, they did not have training working with the lowest level learners. In order to achieve this, they turned to Literacy Volunteers Serving Adults, which specializes in lower level learners.

State Director of Adult Education Maureen Whelan contacted LVSA about the opportunity, inviting the organization to the prison and asking that they provide tutor training for the inmates, counselors, and Adult Basic Education staff—16 in total. Instead of providing literacy courses, LVSA was to train

LVSA This Month

This Month, LVSA...

-**added** a new Monday Wednesday evening class at Bear
 -**revamped** a tutor **network site** on NING – offering tutors information and resources, including a form for submitting hours!
 -**collaborated** with William “Hicks” Anderson **Community Center** in Wilmington, LVSA trained two tutors there who will work with the center’s identified clients.

Donor Campaign

-The campaign raised \$10,360, a bit short of our goal of \$15,000.

Corrections

Correction from last issue – Thank you to Merrill Yost for her help cleaning and packing the office in preparation for the renovation

Learner & Tutor Accomplishments

Learner Accomplishments

Hamid Meziani – Serving Jury duty-Superior Court
Ricardo Sanroman – Visiting the library to check out children’s books
Jenny Yeh – Enrolling in classes at the Osher Lifelong Learning Academy
Ezekiel Parker - Doing well in CAN exams, retained employment
Sovad Elmagribi – Attaining Driver’s License
Kyoungjin Kim – Visiting the library, reading to children
Grace Ha - Reading to children
Clare Kwon - Reading to children
Rosario Santos - Reading to children

Tutor Accomplishments

Tutors with 30 or more hours (new)
 Anne Shelton
 Arlene Zeitler
 Majhed Subd
 Barbara Meierding
 Penni Gioffre
 Sally Steffel
 Becky Arnold
 Ruth Ansel
 Louise Smith
 Roberta Headley
 Phil Tissue
 Marjorie Johnson

New Tutors

New tutors this month include:
 Eileen Clark
 Dana Graham
 Fran Greenglass
 Lorraine Hargarten
 Martin Hayburn
 Dick Powers
 Marvette Smith Dunbar
 Sandra Waller
 Carl Webster
 Liz Zawisza
 Congratulations and welcome to all our new tutors!

Congratulations!

The following learners earned a Certificate of Attainment from the State

Margarita Castro –Reading	Sanjin Lee –Oral
Mike Kennedy —Reading	Maria Miranda —Oral
Wade Shearin —Reading	Iryna Motronenko —Oral
Juana Cabrera —Oral	Pavinee Peterson —Oral
Marleny Castano —Oral	Hassan Pooya —Oral
Josefina Cepeda —Oral	LemLem Resat —Oral
Paola Corredor —Oral	Neris Rosario —Oral
Soojin Kim —Oral	Rosario Santos —Oral
Yeonji Kim —Oral	Francisco Sauce —Oral

Learner Focus: Donor Thank-You Letters

The following are selected student written from LVSA learners to donors, thanking them for their support for a program that has made a difference in their lives.

Dear Friend of LVSA,

Hi! My name is Aurora Colin and I am from Mexico City. I am currently married to a wonderful husband and have a smart son. The English language is very important for my family and me because it is a language we have to use daily. I enjoy learning new things in the English language like using the verbs correctly.

I would like to thank you for your donation and support to this program and I would also like to encourage you to keep donating to this wonderful program that helps many like me.

Sincerely,

Aurora Colin

Dear Friend of LVSA,

I've tried to improve my English and looked for some classes. With your help, I have a class with a nice tutor. We meet each other every Monday, and practice English by read a newspaper, checking some words and talking about many kinds of topics. I have a writing homework every week and my writing skill is getting better. I really appreciate what you've done to give this opportunity to me and

Happy new year!

2011 Jihyun Yoo

Dear Friend of LVSA,

Thank you for support. LVSA is very good for me. They give me the help for my Drivers License. Most important is yesterday I become an American citizen.

Thank you,

Hamid Meziani

Dear Friend of LVSA,

I am happy to be part of LVSA. I am an ESL student, in this program I am learning English as a second language, so that I can live in this country and do different things by myself.

Thank you for your support of LVSA, you are helping many people like me. We are grateful for your contributions to the program, we are grateful too with our tutors and the staff in the office.

I wish you the best in this year.

Sincerely,

Liliana Grajales

Dear Friend of LVSA,

My name is Haekyung Lee and I'm from Korea. I'm a student of LVSA and my teacher is Sally. I really appreciate your support throughout the year. This class has been so helpful for me to get to know about America, as well as learning English. I have also made new friends. Thank you so much and Merry Christmas!

Sincerely,

Haekyung Lee

"I am happy to be part of LVSA... I am learning English as a second language so that I can live in this country do things by myself."

Tutor Corner: Pronunciation Workshop

Hi Tutors- pronunciation can be a tough aspect of learning any language, let alone English. If your English Language Learners are having difficulty in this area, Tom Himes is presenting a Pronunciation Workshop on March 30th at the Woodlawn Library which you may find useful. Here's what Tom had to say about it:

"The English as second language manual *I Speak English* by Ruth Johnson Colvin emphasizes attention to aspects of foreign accent other than word pronunciations, features such as a student's stress, rhythm, and intonation. The presentation

"ESL: Improvement of Speech" is the work of LVSA tutor Tom Himes, a speech pathologist who has been tutoring ESL students for more than five years. Tom suggests that tutors without formal training in correcting pronunciations can help students in significantly reducing foreign accents by means of work on pronunciations as well as work on other aspects of speech. He observes that some students who want to improve their pronunciations offer the tutor relatively easy opportunities. A speech sound that the student has mispronounced may be emerging in the student's speech, or the student may show an aptitude for learning the

sound. A student might only need a "refresher course" in pronunciations because his or her present speech represents a gradual decline that followed success in learning pronunciations and using them in speech. Also noted: the importance of certain speech sound errors -- omissions, as opposed to substitutions, and sounds frequently heard in English, such as the front vowels. Activities described in the presentation include a thorough, multisensory approach to learning vowel and consonant sounds by understanding how they are made and by discriminating between similar sounds."

Statewide Conference for Adult Educators

Each year Delaware adult educators gather in Dover for a day of professional development workshops, recognition for accomplishments, and networking.

A highlight of the event is the two students selected from different adult education programs to be speakers at the event. These students share their stories, inspiring those in attendance by their words.

This year LVSA is very proud to announce that Mike Kennedy has been asked to speak. Mike will open up the conference at 8:30 a.m.

LVSA Executive Director, Cindy Shermeyer says "We are thrilled to have Mike go to the conference and represent the dedicated and committed learners of LVSA. It will be nice to have LVSA in the spotlight."

DAACE Conference

DAACE stands for the Delaware Association of Adult and Community Educators. Tutors are welcomed to become members and/or attend the annual conference. This year the conference will be held on Saturday, March 19th.

Held at the Dover Downs, the conference begins at 8:30 a.m. with a buffet breakfast. Lunch features an awards ceremony recognizing students, tutors, and learners across the state. (Last year our own Pat Undercuffler won "Tutor of the Year".) The event ends at 4:30 after a "state of the State" address by Delaware Adult Education Director Maureen Whelan.

If any tutors are interested in attending, please call the office at 658-5624 for further information.



LVSA Empowers Prison Literacy (cont)

inmates to become tutors themselves, who would then each work with eight of their peers with literacy needs. LVSA provided all the training materials (textbooks, etc), just as used in regular tutor training.

On January 5th members of LVSA, including Executive Director Cindy Shermeyer, Program Coordinator Alyssa Almond, and Administrative Assistant Cathy Opdenaker visited the prison. Over the following days, Almond and Shermeyer returned to deliver an intensive version of tutor training to the inmates. Since receiving training in

early January, inmates have reportedly continued their tutoring on a daily basis.

LVSA will conduct a follow-up session on March 1st to check in and discuss questions, problems, and progress. Shermeyer says she is "excited to see [on March 1st] how things are shaking up." The feedback so far, however, is already quite positive: not only regarding the presentation and the training, but a high measure of enthusiasm and optimism for what possibilities such a program could provide as a model for prisons statewide.

—Adam Koppeser



Come see our incredible make-over and find out what we've been up to lately!

This project was made possible by the generosity of:

- The Longwood Foundation
- Brennan's Office Interiors, Inc.
- CB Richard Ellis
- Facilities Services Group, Flooring Specialties
- Fussy Painting LLC
- Master Acoustical, Inc

Good-Bye.....

It is with great sadness that LVSA says "Good-bye" to volunteer **Adam Koppeser**. Adam is the force behind this newsletter. We appreciate the time and work he has devoted to recreating an LVSA newsletter and working on articles and items each month for the publication. Adam has taken a job in Egypt and will leave shortly. Alyssa, Cathy and I wish him all the best as he begins this new adventure!



We are looking for volunteers to help continue the newsletter Adam has started. All the work can be done at home on the computer and e-mailed to the office. Please call Cindy for more information—658-5624. Thank You!



Literacy Volunteers Serving Adults

Opening Minds ... Changing Lives

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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

Upcoming Events

March 19th - (DAACE) Delaware Association of Adult and Community Educators Conference 8:30-4:30 Dover Downs

March 28th—Open House here in the Wilmington office 3-6p.m.

March 30th—Pronunciation Workshop (for tutors) at the Woodlawn Library from 6:30-8:30p.m.

March 31st — Legislative Meet and Greet luncheon in Dover provides a chance to have lunch and speak to legislatures.



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Literacy Volunteers Serving Adults

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Interested in tutoring, volunteering, or learning more? Contact us at:
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