Save, strengthen and transform lives through literacy.
Friends of Literacy Volunteers:

Hear Our Voices, the annual writing showcase for adult students tutored by Literacy Volunteers of Greater New Haven, in these times changed unimaginably by the coronavirus pandemic, is more powerful and inspirational in this 2020 edition. Voices of students from greater New Haven, the Valley, Meriden and Wallingford tell personal stories of hope, accomplishments big and small, reflection, joy and transformation — all highlighting newly learned and strengthened skills in reading and writing.

I extend congratulations to each of these students, and the tutors who worked with them, for showing extraordinary dedication and resourcefulness during these challenging months. Because of that, their achievements are all the more remarkable, as is their testimony to the positive impact that literacy has had on their lives in many ways.

Hear Our Voices has been an annual project of Literacy Volunteers for many years, supplementing the various strategies tutors employ to build students’ literacy skills. This year’s edition is dedicated to the committed volunteer tutors and staff, who even when in-person tutoring was suspended in March by the pandemic, continued to communicate with students in all sorts of ways, ranging from phone calls to texts and emails to FaceTime and Zoom, and postal mail.

Although life as we know it was upended by COVID-19 almost overnight, what has not changed is the fundamental importance of reading and writing, the ability to clearly communicate and comprehend. As the landscape of everyday life and the road to the future remain unsettled, basic literacy is now, more than ever, a matter of survival. LVAGNH did not shrink from its mission in the face of the pandemic and remains committed to that work by re-imagining the ways tutors interact with students.

Special thanks are due to Valerie Kilmartin, volunteer “extraordinaire” for coordinating this Hear Our Voices collection, with valued support from staff, Marketing Committee and Board of Directors.

I am privileged to be part of this organization, which is more vital than ever by helping adults achieve critical educational, career and quality-of-life goals.

We ask you to share the inspiring words in this collection, and spread the word about LVAGNH’s free classes and our continued need for volunteer tutors and community partners.

To continue our work, with emphasis on exploring new learning strategies and technology, support from donors and the wider community is crucial. With that support, Literacy Volunteers of Greater New Haven is resolutely focused on our mission, helping to “Save, Strengthen, Rebuild and Transform Lives Through Literacy.”

Louis D. Perno, MSW
Executive Director
These essays and reflections were written by adult students who attended Literacy classes in Greater New Haven, Meriden, Wallingford and the Valley in 2019-2020. Special thanks go to the dedicated volunteer tutors who worked with their students to create this collection of personal stories. Students lead us through cultural and personal experiences, sharing with us their struggles, their achievements, and the richness of their lives. We are grateful to all the students who have worked hard to communicate their unique perspectives through their writing.

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“Life in a world with the Corona Virus”

1. **How is the virus affecting you and your family?** I am not working right now. All 5 of the kids are around and I help with homework.

2. **What are some of the important questions or concerns that are on your mind?** I wonder when this will be over and that it might take longer than we think.

3. **Have you taken up a new activity that you find fun or fulfilling?** Perhaps it is one that you would not have thought to do otherwise? I tried some new recipes; desserts like strawberry and pineapple ice cream and cinnamon rolls. I have also been doing some organizing of my clothes. So far, I have organized my PJs, pants, sweaters, and shoes. I need to work on my shirts and dresses. I have started to keep a journal.

4. **What have you come to appreciate during these times?** I appreciate my friends especially now that I cannot see them. I miss going to church. My sister’s elementary school had a car parade where the teacher and principal drove around all of the students’ neighborhoods. We all waited on our porches for them to drive by. It was very exciting when they passed by. They honked their horns and waved and we all cheered and waved back.

5. **What have you learned about yourself over the last month or so?** Well, being together in one place with the same people can get to be irritating at times. I can still get out to the park and have fun in the house, though. I appreciate all of it a lot more.

**Student:** Magda  
**Country:** USA  
**Tutor:** Karen Arata  
**Site:** Wallingford Public Library, Wallingford
My favorite season

The spring is the most beautiful season of the year. Many people do a lot of outdoor activities like walking, running, playing, gardening and planting flowers. I enjoy running on the West Haven beach especially in the afternoon when it is sunny. Also I see many people walking with their dogs, other people playing soccer, swimming on the beach, and some families have a picnic. I like to plant flowers and tomatoes in the garden in my yard, this weather is perfect to do gardening. In May, I buy different kinds of tomatoes, plants like plum, yellow, cherry and green tomatoes also flowers too. In the winter some people feel depressed because of lack of sun light. The days are dark early and some days it snows a lot but after spring rain we can do activities, the rain is good for plants, flowers and trees. In my opinion all season have their advantages, but for me I love Spring.

I had heard the Corona virus story in the news but I never imagined how lethal it is. Personally, it is affecting me. I’m not working right now but I hope I will be back in September. Sometimes I feel worried about my family. They are in my country Ecuador. They are fine and are taking all precautions to avoid the spread the virus. I hope this everything will soon return to normal. I miss my English class too.

Student: Monika
Country: Ecuador
Tutor: Bud Sielaff
Site: 14 West Main Street, Meriden

I feel very happy to take part in social distancing because we can help to not spread the virus. This is for us as well as for older people too. Everyone has to keep the family safe, so everyone has to do their part.

Student: Michael
Country: USA
Tutor: Kerry Sheldon
Site: 14 West Main Street, Meriden
My thoughts about the Covid-19 pandemic

I got to know this virus early in January when more people started posting videos about it on social media. Soon after, Wuhan, where the virus started in China, was under lockdown. Then I saw the number of confirmed cases soar from hundreds to thousands in just a few weeks. This coincided with the Chinese New Year. Usually, families would gather together and enjoy a big feast at New Year’s Eve, just like Christmas in western countries. But our government issued a very strict “stay at home” order - No gatherings and no celebrations. Each family would be given a permit that allowed one family member to go out twice a week. Their temperature would be checked when they left and when they returned. What’s more, all the social media and televisions, even loudspeakers in some remote areas, were playing looping reruns of “Stay at home and wear masks when outside”.

At that time, I didn’t expect that things would be as bad in America, because there were only several cases. I thought that as long as the government was carrying out a strict policy for preventing people from entering this country, the virus would soon be under control. I was even planning to travel in April.

But in March, when things started getting better in China, the virus went wild in America. The government here also asked us to stay at home, but it seemed optional not compulsory. It's like a long vacation - a lot of people meeting friends, doing barbecues and going hiking with their kids. They are even walking dogs outside without wearing masks. This doesn’t make sense, and this is not quarantine.

The week before, I had a video chat with my dad. He was driving to work, wearing a mask. Even though the virus was already under control in China, he said, that people still needed to wear masks and to have their temperatures checked when they go into public places. Non-residents coming into the city, must quarantine for 14 - 28 days depending on where they are coming from. The police contact all overseas Chinese to determine when are they will return and where will they stay. I got a call, of course.

I understand that China and America are two different countries. They have different cultures and politics. It’s impossible to expect them to be exactly the same when dealing with this virus. But I hope that America can find an efficient and proper way to flatten the curve as soon as possible.

Student: Hongyan (Claire)
Country: China
Tutors: Charlotte Luzzi, Virginia Stevens, Eleanor Weseloh
Site: Keefe Community Center, Hamden
“Two coffee, please”

The first day I arrived in the US, I had a shocking experience. I couldn’t buy even a cup of coffee.

I came here last October to live with my husband who is a student at Yale. I felt excited and somewhat worried about living in a new country for the first time. The first day I arrived in the US, I went to watch the New York Yankees play baseball. The game was amazing, but it was a freezing day, so I went to a concession stand to order something hot to drink. I said, “Two coffee, please.” It should have been a simple and easy order. However, she could not catch what I said, and then I tried again, “Two coffee, please.” Again, she could not understand. My husband behind me ordered coffee, and finally we got two cups of hot coffee.

While I studied English for 10 years at school, English was my favorite subject. Nevertheless, I could not do anything. That is why I was embarrassed and upset at myself.

I come up with some reasons why it happened. My voice might be too small or unclear, but the most important problem is my pronunciation. While coffee is pronounced as “kˈɔːfi” in English, it is done as “koohii” in Japanese. I did not find this huge difference until then. This is because whether we could pronounce like a native speaker or not was less important at school, so I did not care about my pronunciation very much and paid more attention to writing and reading hard during my youth. Furthermore, I did not get many chances to talk to people who were not used to a Japanese accent. The shocking experience helped me to realize that I have spoken English with a Japanese accent and that most people could hardly understand my pronunciation. I have thought English with Japanese accent is a little different from native English, but actually it is very different.

Now, I can buy a cup of coffee by myself and enjoy even asking clerks at liquor shops their recommendations. I cannot understand all they’re saying, though. I am improving my English little by little as well as enjoying a new life.

Student: Mei K
Country: Japan
Tutors: Norma Barash, Desh Sharma, Nancy Ferraro
Site: Gateway Community College, New Haven
How my life has changed

I do not have many specific memories of my early years. I do remember though that I changed schools frequently and was expelled for acting out due to my frustration for not understanding homework. I did attend school up to the 10th grade and I completed Job Corps training in maintenance, carpentry and culinary skills.

I have made lifestyle changes as I have matured. I do not become angry and frustrated. My reading and comprehension are about 60% better now that I have come to Literacy Volunteers. Outside of class, I read Bible verses and newspaper sports sections. I complete my work tasks, can take construction measurements, read labels on work-related materials and write receipts.

My goals moving forward are to improve reading and writing, increase vocabulary and comprehension, get a plumbing license, credit for education through the 10th grade and a high school diploma.

Student: Stephen W. Jones
Country: USA
Tutors: Rosemary Benivegna, Tammi Means
Site: Literacy Resource Center 5 Science Park, New Haven

My life

These are some of the life changes since I started taking literacy classes with the literacy volunteers. I am more confident in writing. I use words that are more robust in my writing. I am confident in reading and like longer books. I like to read out loud to myself or with others around. It helps me both with yourself and on the job. I read faster and better now with confidence. I read more often and understand so much more. My habits have changed for the better. I am confident to enroll in another class to benefit my education. Also it improved my skills by reading the scene at the computer better and faster. Reading also gave me more robust vocabulary, which made easier to get my point to the lister I am speaking to.

Student: Michael
Country: USA
Tutors: Kerry Sheldon, Celeste Malia
Site: 14 West Main Street, Meriden
The Qixi Festival

The Qixi festival can also be called the Qiqiao festival, Seventh Festival, Night of Sevens, the Magpie Festival, or the Chinese Valentine’s Day. It falls on the 7th day of the 7th lunar month in the Chinese calendar. However, it was not considered as Valentine’s Day until the Han Dynasty when it was closely related to the story of Niulang, a cowherd, and Zhinv, a weaver girl. Then, it officially became a festival for women. The Japanese Tanabata Festival and Korean Chilseok Festival also come from this.

In the story of Niulang and Zhinv, their love is not allowed, because Zhinv’s parents, who are gods, thought that their daughter, a fairy, should not marry an ordinary person. So Zhinv and Niulang were separated to opposite sides of the Heavenly River. However, their love touched the magpies. So once a year, on the 7th day of the 7th lunar month, the magpies would form a bridge so that the lovers could be reunited for one day. It is said that after the two lovers were separated, the old ox that kept Niulang company asked Niulang to peel off its skin and drive its cowhide across the Heavenly River to see Zhinv. In order to commemorate the sacrificial spirit of the old ox, “celebrating for the ox” became a custom. But, unfortunately, these customs are all lost, and we just treat it as an ordinary Valentine’s Day.

During the Han dynasty, the Qixi festival was very important. People would prepare for it for a whole week. On that day, girls would gather together and pray to Zhinv for a happy life. Traditionally, domestic skills competitions took place to determine which girl was best at threading a needle or embroidery, skills which symbolized the talents of a good spouse. In addition, children would pick flowers and hang them on an old ox’s horns.

It’s also said that when you stand under the grape trellis, you will hear the sweet words between Niulang and Zhinv. I really tried to do that when I was a child. Certainly I didn’t hear anything, but that was so romantic! I do hope that we can pay attention to these traditional cultures again.

Student: Hongyan (Claire)
Country: China
Tutors: Charlotte Luzzi, Virginia Stevens, Eleanor Weseloh
Site: Keefe Community Center, Hamden
About Me and My Country

My name is Nairovis. I was born in Venezuela. I have three sisters and one brother. My mother is a beautiful woman. I arrived in the United States in 2007.

My country is a beautiful place. The weather is hot all year in almost all cities: Merida is a nice state and there are mountains where it snows in December, January, and February.

Student: Nairovis  
Country: Venezuela  
Tutors: Stephanie Fitzgerald, Enid Sherry  
Site: Gateway Community College, New Haven

Living in Another Country

I had never dreamed or thought that I could live in another country, and had never imagined that this could happen.

I always lived in Brazil and 16 years ago I moved with my husband and my daughter to the United States and our life changed a lot.

There were many changes we had to face. The communication was a big problem, staying away from our family and being an immigrant was not easy too.

It is necessary to be very courageous and very persistent to restart in another country. Living here gave me a strong lesson. I learned a lot of things such as: to live without the people I love, to have confidence in myself, to learn another language and to value things that really matter.

Student: Regina  
Country: Brazil  
Tutor: Linda Coppola  
Site: Derby Library, Derby
Okonomiyaki (Vegetable Pancake)

Sushi is very famous, but there are many other popular dishes in Japan. I would like to introduce a recipe for Okonomiyaki, a regular home dish. This is easy and quick. I make this for lunch on weekends for my family. I think this is a great dish because it’s not only nutritious, but you can also use up leftover vegetables in your fridge.

Although cabbage is recommended for the main vegetable, you can use or add your favorite vegetables. It’s also your choice to make it vegetarian or non-vegetarian with meat (pre-cooked meat recommended) or seafood.

Number of Servings: 2

Ingredients

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<tr>
<td>250-300 grams</td>
<td>(21/2 – 3 cups) cabbage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>green onions (scallions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>slices ham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 grams</td>
<td>(7/8 cup) all-purpose flour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 grams</td>
<td>(2 tablespoons) potato starch (optional)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 egg</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pinch of salt</td>
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<tr>
<td>100 – 200 millimeters</td>
<td>water (1/3 cup - 1/3 cup + 1 1/2 tablespoons)</td>
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Sauce and Toppings

Okonomiyaki sauce or Bull Dog
Vegetable & Fruit Sauce (available at Asian market or online store), Mayonnaise (optional, Bonito Flakes)

Directions:

1. Cut cabbage into fine strips; cut green onions; dice ham into small pieces.
2. Beat egg in a small bowl
3. Mix flour and potato starch (if using) in a large bowl and mix well.
4. Add beaten egg and salt; then, add 1/2 of water and mix well. Add remaining water and mix well.
5. When dough becomes smooth, add vegetables and ham.
6. Grease a pan and place on medium heat. Then add 1/2 of the dough mixture and cook it at medium-low heat for about 5 minutes.
7. After first side is done turn over mixture and cook 4-5 minutes more.
8. Repeat Step #6 and #7 for the rest of the dough.
9. Put sauce on the pancake, mayonnaise, and bonito flakes, if desired, and then serve.

Student: Hiroko
Country: Japan
Tutors: Charlotte Luzzi; Eleanor Weseloh; Virginia Stevens
Site: Keefe Community Center, Hamden
Tang Cu Pai Gu (Sweet and Sour Pork Ribs)

Sweet and sour pork ribs are a famous traditional Chinese culture. Almost all my friends like this dish. I chose this recipe for two reasons. First, I enjoy the sweet and sour flavor. I had lived in Nanjing city (southeast part of China) for eight years and people who live in this area prefer to add a little bit of sugar to dishes to balance their flavor. I adopted this cooking style.

Second, sweet and sour pork ribs usually need to cook a long time in order to make the meat tasty and tender. With this recipe, the preparation and the flavor of the meat is the same as a traditional sweet and sour pork recipe, but it takes much less time to cook.

**Number of Servings:** 2 – 3, with other dishes

**Ingredients:**
- 500 grams (1 pound) pork ribs, one inch thick
- 60 ml (1/4 cup) sugar
- 30 milliliters (2 tablespoons) soy sauce
- 30 milliliters (1 tablespoon) cooking wine
- 45 milliliters (3 tablespoons) vinegar
- 15 milliliters (1 tablespoon) roasted white sesame seeds

**Directions:**
1. Wash ribs and drain well.
2. Put a wok on burner; add sugar and turn heat to medium.
3. Stir the sugar frequently to avoid burning and continue until it melts and turns light brown in color.
4. Add ribs to wok and continue to stir about a minute.
5. Add soy sauce, cooking wine and vinegar and mix well.
6. Cover wok with lid and continue to cook on low to medium heat.
7. Remove lid and turn heat to high, stirring until almost all of the liquid is gone.
8. Turn off heat; place ribs on a serving plate; add sesame seeds and serve.

**Student:** Linda

**Country:** China

**Tutors:** Eleanor Weseloh; Virginia Stevens; Charlotte Luzzi

**Site:** Keefe Community Center, Hamden
Steps of Life
Climb the mountains
Break free from chains
Find your soul on top

Student: Sarah
Country: Brazil
Tutors: Charlotte Luzzi; Eleanor Weseloh; Virginia Stevens
Site: Keefe Community Center, Hamden

Fun Time in the Snow
Winter time outside
Floppy snow and puffy guy
Easy happiness

Soul of the Country
Standing on top of a perch
Overlooking the country
Inspiring the fight for freedom

Student: Linda
Country: China
Tutors: Charlotte Luzzi; Virginia Stevens; Eleanor Weseloh
Site: Keefe Community Center, Hamden

Look
The clouds are roaring
The mountains are soaring
The mighty power of nature
Makes humans insignificant

Student: Claire
Country: China
Tutors: Eleanor Weseloh, Virginia Stevens, Charlotte Luzzi
Site: Keefe Community Center, Hamden

Life
Down the mountain
Many houses all together
Sharing the mountain spirit

Student: Matina
Country: South Korea
Tutors: Eleanor Weseloh, Charlotte Luzzi, Virginia Stevens
Site: Keefe Community Center, Hamden
A Peace Filled Memory
Delicious pomegranate
Symbol of Armenia
Brings peace in my heart

Spring Greatness
April Spring Flowers
Snow covered mountain peaks
Speak greatness to older eyes

Spring
Young leaves coming out
Blooming flowers make a path
Here I start a new life

In Japan, a new school year starts in April and, for many people, Spring is the time to start a new life. Whenever I see the flowers start to bloom, I remember those days when I started new schools.

Student: Hiroko
Country: Japan
Tutors: Charlotte Luzzi; Eleanor Weseloh; Virginia Stevens
Site: Keefe Community Center, Hamden

Pink Flowers
Pink flowers on beautiful tree
With a lake below
Tourists on bridge
Enjoy the view

Ship On the Sea
Ship on the water
Sailing on the sea
The fisherman came out
Enjoying the sunlight

Student: Rida
Country: Pakistan
Tutors: Virginia Stevens; Eleanor Weseloh; Charlotte Luzzi
Site: Keefe Community Center, Hamden

Student: Tamara (Tammy)
Country: Armenia
Tutors: Eleanor Weseloh; Charlotte Luzzi, Virginia Stevens
Site: Keefe Community Center, Hamden
Hopes & Dreams

Naima’s Story
Life is good here. I am happy and everybody is nice.
I love my teacher – going to the store – TV, cooking and baking.
I dream to speak English and be a citizen.
Student: Naima
Country: Morocco
Tutor: Jayme Solak
Site: 14 West Main Street, Meriden

Malika’s Story
I like being in America.
I want to get my driver’s license, as I know how to drive but I need to speak better English to get one here.
I drove in Morocco.
I want to be a citizen. I like to go to Starbucks. Love to shop – TV – like E News.
Student: Malika
Country: Morocco
Tutor: Jayme Solak
Site: 14 West Main Street, Meriden

Reading is Essential
Reading is a most essential part of life for understanding the world, to get a job, read street signs, etc.
I want to become an American citizen. That is my dream and Literacy Volunteers is helping me to accomplish that.
I want to live a simple life where I have, by the grace of God, a roof over my head, food to eat, enough strength to keep going.
I love to cook, watch movies and go to my literacy class to learn citizenship.
Student: Sam
Country: Jamaica
Tutor: Jayme Solak
Site: 14 West Main Street, Meriden
**My Dream**

I dreamt about meeting my family in America before I came here. My three children were already here for a long time before I came. I didn’t see my oldest son for 10 years. When I arrived, my new hope was to be able to speak English. I wanted to know the language.

My day is great when I go to Gateway to my English class. I try to study hard. I learned some things are worth fighting for to reach my goal. Now I can speak a lot more and I’m not afraid to go places.

**Student:** Nahla  
**Country:** Syria  
**Tutors:** Norma Barash, Desh Sharma, Nancy Ferraro  
**Site:** Gateway Community College, New Haven

**Souad’s Story**

I want to become a citizen and speak English better.

I love pizza, Dunkin Donuts.

I love the people in America. They are very nice, especially the teacher. I like hanging out with the teacher and class friends.

**Student:** Souad  
**Country:** Morocco  
**Tutor:** Jayme Solak  
**Site:** 14 West Main Street, Meriden
Knowing a New World

My daughter Rebeca and I moved to America two years ago from Quito, Ecuador. When we arrived here, everything was new for us – the people, the food, the language, culture, places and basically, everything.

I love to travel with my daughter and take a lot of pictures. One of our favorite places is New York City, “the Big Apple.” We love this city, especially Manhattan. It’s like being in a movie. Rebeca and I went to Manhattan for my 50th birthday for one day, and we visited: The Grand Central, Fifth Avenue, the Statue of Liberty, Manhattan Bridge, Brooklyn Bridge, and other places. It was a great place to walk and take pictures.

I hope someday to speak English very well so I can get a job in a school, working with little kids. I want to know more about this beautiful country, about their people, their culture, their places.

Student: Laura
Country: Ecuador
Tutors: Naomi Shiloh, Linda Erlanger, Frank Corrigan
Site: Gateway Community College, New Haven

Hello

My name is Valbina, I come from Ecuador. I am very grateful to this great country, the country of opportunities, where we are all with a goal and a dream to fulfill, so I want to learn your language where we have the opportunity to improve ourselves.

Student: Valbina
Country: Ecuador
Tutors: Stephanie Fitzgerald, Enid Sherry
Site: Gateway Community College, New Haven
My Dreams for the Future

I dream of getting a degree in psychology, owning a car, and having my own place. In order to get my degree, I need to work harder in reading and writing. At the same time, I must keep my part time job for now to save money. I had an accident two years ago and that made it difficult for me to walk. I will need to be more consistent with my exercises. Achieving my dream will take several years. I need a plan to guide me along the way. My tutor told me she will help me with that.

I am interested in psychology because when I was little, I wanted to help people in any way I could. I enjoyed my psychology classes in high school, and I was very interested in how I could understand and empathize with people. My young cousin committed suicide when he was only 11. He was so happy and seemed so strong. We found out later that he was bullied at school and couldn’t deal with it. I want to try to stop that from happening to someone else so that kids don’t have to go through that.

I need to become more independent in my life moving into the future. Right now, I am back with my parents because of my accident. I am working hard to be able to catch up to where I was before I got sick. Now, I can drive a car again and work part time. If I save money little by little, I will have enough money to buy my own car. A studio apartment would be more affordable. My tutor believes in my dreams and will continue to help me with my reading, language, math and study skills and will also help me map the plan to get there.

When I imagine the future, I see myself waking up from my very own studio apartment and driving to my office. There, I might be helping a woman to help her improve her body image and eating plan. There would be others I could help everyday in my job as a psychologist. That would be my dream come true!

Student: Magda
Country: Mexico
Tutor: Karen Arata
Site: Wallingford Public Library
Why I’m Here

I am a student of Gateway College ESL class. I came to the United States many years ago from South Korea with my two children and my husband. We live in North Haven, Connecticut. My husband works at Yale University. He is a botanist. My children are all grown and married. I go to school twice a week because my English is clumsy and I improve when I practice in front of people. I want to be speaking English fluently.

Student: Kumsuk
Country: South Korea
Tutors: Norma Barash, Desh Sharma, Nancy Ferraro
Site: Gateway Community College, New Haven

My Future

One year ago, I joined Literacy Volunteers to help me catch up on my reading and math levels. Getting help with my reading has also helped me to spell my words better. Literacy Volunteers has been a good place for me to attend because it has helped me to increase my vocabulary. My future goal is to get my GED and also to get computer training. I would like to become certified in the United States as a forklift operator. I am already certified in Jamaica.

Student: Christopher
Country: Jamaica
Tutors: Rosemary Benivegna, Tammi Means
Site: Literacy Resource Center, 5 Science Park, New Haven
**My Hopes and Dreams**

I came to the U.S, 25 years ago. In the last 4 years, I have joined LVA. In the last 4 years my English has improved greatly. I am hoping to go for my GED in the future. I am also going to make a farm in Africa. I would like to thank all my teachers who have helped me.

**Student:** Isseu  
**Country:** Senegal  
**Tutors:** Catherine Miller, Gene Kirsten  
**Site:** Literacy Resource Center, 5 Science Park, New Haven

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**Returning to Literacy Volunteers**

I am returning to the Literacy Volunteers program after several years. I am preparing to enroll in a GED program. This time I am strongly motivated to stay with Literacy Volunteers. I am determined to get my GED. This time it’s all about me receiving my GED. My granddaughters have been helping me by saying “you can do it, grandma!” This has further helped me being motivated to go after my GED.

**Student:** Louvine  
**Country:** USA  
**Tutor:** Gene Kirsten  
**Site:** Literacy Resource Center, 5 Science Park, New Haven
Don’t Give Up!

My dream for the future is to be a good reader. I want to read better so I can read a lot of different books and read children’s books to my youngest granddaughter.

I would like to tell others who are struggling to read, “Don’t give up!” No matter what age. Age is just a number. As long as you have your mind right you can do it too! My life has changed for the better because now that I’ve been doing this I feel very good about myself and I can understand more things because I read a whole lot better. I even flew on a plane by myself from Hartford to Chicago and wasn’t worried about being in the airport.

I want other people to know if you want to better yourself, just go ahead and do it for yourself. You have to have Love of yourself and want to better yourself. And don’t let anyone tell you that you can’t because you have to do it for you to get ahead, not for anybody else to think for you or look down on you.

I’m so very proud of my daughters. I raised my daughters in the projects and now they have been blessed with good homes and good jobs. They make sure I don’t want for nothing. They help me with everything. I want to travel. I don’t care if I have to wear a mask and I already wash my hands and stay clean. I look forward to traveling.

Student: Ms. Bonnie Gregg
Country: USA
Tutor: Ife Michelle Gardin
Site: The Towers Senior Community, New Haven
My Memories from New Haven

In the spring two years ago, I came to New Haven with my husband. Before I came here, I did not know anything about New Haven. When we came here, I was happy to see cherry blossoms. Cherry blossoms are also very popular in Japan. New Haven has a lot of nice architecture, museums, parks, and cafes. In the summer there are many days of good weather. We can see many color changes of leaves in autumn. Winter is also beautiful, especially when icicles hang from trees. I like the landscapes of Connecticut and the people are very kind.

But I could not speak English well. I knew I had to study English, so I decided to go to Literacy Volunteers class at Gateway Community College. I began to speak English gradually and thought I could get a driver’s license. Seven months later I got my U.S. driver’s license.

I have been here only for two years. However I enjoyed great days. My English is still not so good but I believe it has improved. I am very appreciative to my ESL class, tutors, and new friends. Thank you so much.

**Student:** Aoshima  
**Country:** Japan  
**Tutors:** Naomi Shiloh, Linda Erlanger, Frank Corrigan  
**Site:** Gateway Community College, New Haven

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Why I’m Here

I’m feeling good about joining Literacy Volunteers. It has helped me better my understanding of English and enhance my math skills. I’m hoping to get my GED. I hope to become a nurse someday. I also like my tutors.

**Student:** Ghada  
**Country:** Syria  
**Tutors:** Gene Kirsten, Leo Cristofar  
**Sites:** Literacy Resource Center, New Haven & Atwater Public Library, North Branford
Small Recommendations

When you are learning a language, it is important to keep in mind that possibly the alphabet, the pronunciation, the sense of what you want to say, and the intonation of what you want to communicate, change from one language to another. Let’s look at each one of these.

Different languages sometimes use different alphabets. This could happen if you come from countries like Korea, China or Syria, for example. I recommend that you do exercises to learn the new alphabet. These exercises can be to repeat the alphabet written on a sheet of paper. This will help you remember the shapes of the letters and learn the logic and graphic representation of the words, as well as their possible combinations.

It is also possible that even using the same alphabet, the vowel and consonant sounds are different. An interesting exercise is to play with the diverse sounds of English. Do exercises to reinforce the intonation of the letters first and then the syllables, the words, and the sentences.

The sense of ideas can change from one language to another. Do not try translating all you want to say from your language directly into English. If you do, you could say very funny or meaningless things. So try understanding the meaning of things in English. For this, it is important to learn to understand social interactions, the context in which you communicate. This means that you don’t necessarily have to understand a conversation word for word. Many times, if you understand the meaning of the interaction, you can understand much of the language.

Intonation is essential. Observe how people express their questions and their affirmative or negative answers. Remember language is not only what we say but how we say it. The tone of the voice and the way we use facial expressions are part of the communicating. Our cultures can have many differences in this regard. It is significant to understand this. Remember that when you cannot express yourself with words you can use your body language.

Most importantly, don’t be afraid to speak. Always speak to express yourself. When people laugh, laugh with them. Other people will support you to improve your English. Learn with them.

Student: Luz  
Country: Colombia  
Tutors: Lee Stolzman, Robert Glen  
Site: La Casa, New Haven
**What are the Benefits of Traveling?**

If you have already wondered, then I am in a hurry to answer.

I will start with a fact: during your trips, you have greater motivation to try new things that you wouldn’t do in your own country. Another aspect is that traveling makes you become more tolerant, sensitive, and understanding to different cultures. The more you travel and learn about new cultures, the more you begin to accept.

Travel educates us and that is beyond doubt. No geography textbook would fully describe and give the feeling we get when we see places with our own eyes, a particular corner of the world. I try to always use my time to the fullest and discovering a world that I had no idea about. Another benefit is that we can see beautiful landscapes nature has given us. The journey broadens the horizons and gives us a 360-degree view of the world.

The next point is that you can meet lovely people, and sometimes you can meet new friends or find love. Who knows? It is important to mention, that it is also an opportunity to learn about local cuisine. Due to the fact that I love to eat, it is a pleasure for me to taste new dishes.

Finally, during the trip you collect experiences and amazing memories. It is a souvenir that nobody can take from you.

To sum up, these are some examples that show why traveling is worth doing. The only downside is that you spend a lot of money. But you get so much out if it. That’s why it is worth it.

This saying fits here: “Travel. Money will come back, but time, never.”

**Student:** Bogumila  
**Country:** Poland  
**Tutors:** Ali Baldenebro, Ally Freedland, Cecilia Hadley  
**Site:** Gateway Community College, New Haven

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**Reaching My Goals**

The literacy program has helped me in several ways. I can read street signs when I take the bus. I have been able to practice for my driving test. I am learning to read better so I can read books to my son. I am very happy to be in this program.

**Student:** Ed  
**Country:** USA  
**Tutor:** Jeannie Overbye  
**Site:** 14 West Main Street, Meriden
Personal Stories

My History about My Childhood

I was born in Mexico far from the city, in my hometown everybody knows all the people. When I was a child I was very happy just playing and sleeping. I didn’t have responsibilities. Climbing the trees to play with my neighbors. Jumping in the river.

I grew up and went to the school. The time passed slowly, sometimes was boring. But at the same time I visited my grandparents. On their farm, they had cows, donkeys, hens and pigs. My grandfather chose the seeds to sow. Corn, pumpkin, green beans and peanuts. Also sesame seeds. In spring the fields were green. There was plenty of water in the river. There were many flowers and butterflies of different colors by the river.

I miss those times. When I remember all that I get sad. I miss my grandparents since they died.

Student: Josefina  
Country: Mexico  
Tutors: Keith French, Peter Miller  
Site: 14 West Main Street, Meriden

How Meriden is Different

I am 84 years old and I have lived in three different countries and I can talk about the great differences that exist between them. The three countries are Cuba, Puerto Rico and Meriden, CT.

Cuba is a communist country where there is no freedom. It’s the worst country where you can live. (I lived in Cuba for 26 years.)

In Puerto Rico I lived for 48 years. I got divorced, I got married for a second time and became a widow.

In Meriden I’m living my last times without much to do. I’m taking English classes, I have friends much younger than me, I feel happy in Meriden. I live here more calmly and with more security. Here the elderly are respected.

Student: Maria  
Country: Cuba  
Tutors: Keith French, Peter Miller  
Site: 14 West Main Street, Meriden
My Childhood

My childhood was very beautiful. I was born in a town on the coast of Ecuador. I grew up in the countryside with my parents and my two brothers. Every day my dad cooked tortillas and orange juice for breakfast. My brothers and I walked to school. My Mom cooked a delicious lunch.

In the afternoons after doing homework we went out to play with my cousins and neighbors. We played with the ball, rode a bicycle. We enjoyed every minute. In the evening we had dinner and talked a lot.

On weekends we went to the park, to the river, the zoo, the beach with my family and my cousins. We enjoyed family time and my parents taught me that the most important thing is the family.

Student: Angela
Country: Ecuador
Tutors: Keith French, Peter Miller
Site: 14 West Main Street, Meriden

History for the School

A long time ago, having just arrived from the market with my then wife and my two young children 4 and 5 years old, I received a call from the doorman asking me for permission to let in my brother, his wife and their daughters ages 4, 5, and 6. At this time we were having economic hard times but still that day we bought lots of goodies that we had not been able to buy for a long time. So while they were coming up to my fifth floor apartment, I told my wife to hide the goodies at a safe place because if not, the cousins would leave nothing for our children.

After a couple hours of the children playing they began fighting and yelling at each other. That they don’t love them, that they had more and better toys than them, and that they had just bought and hidden some delicious goodies when we found out my brother’s family had arrived. They told them I said they eat like piranhas and that when they left we were going to eat everything and that we were not going to give them anything to eat.

The girls went crying to my brother giving complaints. Obviously, I have to say this is not true and that children always invent stories, and we went with my wife and took out and distributed all our hidden treasures.

Student: Juan Hernan M
Country: Colombia
Tutors: Norma Barash, Desh Sharma, Nancy Ferraro
Site: Gateway Community College, New Haven
Happiness

What is happiness? Happiness is something that people seek, what they live for and what they hope for. Happy people can be any age, any financial situation and with any character. Some people can reach a level of happiness, but they are not happy. Some people reach old age and do not feel happy, because they did not know how to be happy in their youth or maturity, or they did not know then that it is so important for further development.

I believe that happiness – is when people have reached their goal in life. My friend Sigita said, “My personal goals are to be happy, healthy and to be surrounded by loved ones.” When a person’s goal is reached, it defines the conditions under which they would be happy. So, if they have reached this goal, they are happy people. And as goals in life are different, then levels of happiness are different. The effects of happiness are: to be healthy, to have the feeling of love, and having children.

First of all, the most important part of a happy life is to be healthy. My mother told me, “Good health is our wealth!” If you are healthy you are able to work and make money and have the things you want. On the other hand, when you are not healthy, you can’t fulfill your dreams. Also, when your health does not permit you to work anymore, you lost the earning potential and to make it worse, you became a liability to you family and to society too. It becomes a suffering in your life. Whether you are a child or an adult, good health enables you to perform the daily functions of life. For students, normal health allows them to be able to go to school, to obtain knowledge and to build character. For adults, good health means you can go to work everyday, to earn a living, to be able to achieve your goals in life. For example, I had a lot of health problems 20 years ago. I realized that it is impossible to live like that since I was on the verge of two very complex diseases, diabetes type 2 and gastric ulcer. I began researching, did a lot of studying about these diseases. I think that to stay healthy we need three elements: happiness (less stress), a good diet or healthy food, and a healthy lifestyle (as well as getting enough sleep.) Since then, I am healthy
and happy, can work like everyone else always find a way out of difficult situations because I’m happy and I can be a complete human being: beloved wife and loving mother. Moreover, our health is our wealth.

The second effect of happiness is the feeling of love. So many people look to their love relationships, especially marriage to give them the happiness that they cannot find on their own. If we realize that love by itself will not bring happiness, then hopefully we will be more tolerant of the imperfections of those we love. If our relationships have their problems and if those we love do not always meet our expectations it doesn’t mean that we have lost our chance of happiness. When we do not expect love to give us the happiness we seek, there will be more room for forgiveness of the imperfections and problems that always accompany love. My happiness is my health, my success and my marriage.

Another effect of happiness is having children. Giving birth to a child is an ultimate feeling. I am a mother of four children and for me pregnancy and the birth of every child is the birth of a new world, because every child is an individual. More happiness may lead to observe how a little baby from newborn grows to an independent person and improves every day. Here is a miracle that is the result of happiness for the mother.

In conclusion, I think that everybody in this world has the right to happiness. I don’t agree that people should be selfish in order to get what they want. We need to have some balance in what we want and what would make us happy.

Student: Liubou
Country: Republic of Belarus
Tutor: Linda Coppola
Site: Derby Library, Derby
My Story

My name is Waleska Martinez and I’m a student at Junta Progressive Action. I came to the United States 24 years ago from Ponce, Puerto Rico with my Mom. I live on Easton St. in New Haven, Ct.

I used to work but I became disabled so now I can’t. I go to school to improve my English. This program, sponsored by Literacy Volunteers, has helped me a lot by giving me experiences that I didn’t have before. I was married here, I have 2 boys, and I got divorced 5 years ago.

However, I don’t like the place where I live. Now I want some place to make me happy and safe. I want to be close to my family and school. Thankfully, I have found a new place, which I’m sure, will make me very happy.

I miss my kids so much. I want to see them again. My kids are doing well and they’re good kids. They make me a proud mother. Hopefully, I’m going to see them soon because they are coming to visit me.

My goals and dreams are to be able to help others to make their dreams come true. That is why I’m volunteering at the Salvation Army. I feel like I’m doing important work. We go to the hospital to visit the kids, to visit the seniors at the nursing homes, and to visit the vets in the hospital, too.

Now I’m seeing all my dreams coming true little by little. If I can do it, you can, too.

Student: Waleska Martinez
Country: Puerto Rico
Tutor: Lynn Costa
Site: Junta Progressive Action Center
Who Is Important in Our Lives?

A person determines for herself the Importance of the people who surround her. We are taught from birth it is your family that you should love and protect. It seems it is already decided for us. Everything is clear.

I don’t want to offend anyone. I am interested in the moment when you come to the realization that a person is dear to you. You would go through fire and water for him, despite the fact that it can be your friend from school, or a brother with whom you lived your whole life, side by side.

Some time ago I worked with a woman who had a daughter and she looked happy in her marriage but did not maintain her relationship with her mother and sister. If you look at another example, I have a girlfriend who became like a sister to me. We can fight, but always get over disagreements. Our interests, views, living conditions all have an impact on our choice.

Based on what criteria we determine for ourselves, the importance and necessity of the people around us, we choose our direction.

Student: Katya
Country: Russia
Tutors: Laurie and Brian Gray
Site: Wallingford Library
The Heating Pad

I used to sleep on the floor in my home in South Korea where we had an underfloor heating system. After I came to the U. S, I slept on the floor for one year because I couldn’t fall asleep on the bed. I felt that I was floating in the air when I lay down on it.

After I bought a heating pad, I could sleep on my bed. I used the heating pad for many years until the edge of it became hard and tore. It still worked, even though it looked ugly. For safety reasons, I finally threw it away.

I looked in many places trying to find another heating pad just like my old one, but I was not successful. So, I had to buy a new style. I have been using the new one for a few years. This pad is bigger than the old one, and it turns off automatically every 20 minutes. I don’t like having to keep turning it back on.

When I have a back pain, I put the hot heating pad under my back. When I want to warm up my feet, I put the heating pad over them. I also like to use a heating pad in allergy season and cold weather.

I find that the heating pad is one of my more useful necessities in the United States than was the underfloor heating system in Korea.

Student: M. Lee (Matina)
Country: South Korea
Tutors: Charlotte Luzzi, Virginia Stevens, Eleanor Weseloh
Site: Keefe Community Center, Hamden

My Sister is Like My Mother

My sister Zoila is like my mother. She is thirteen years older than me. When I was a little girl in Ecuador, my sister took care of me when my Mom was working. My sister taught me how to cook and how to behave and respect other people. When she came to the United States, I was worried because when she came here I missed her. I traveled to the United States and now I see her once in a while where she lives in New Jersey. And I live here in Connecticut. My sister and my Mom were the best things in my life.

Student: Melida
Country: Ecuador
Tutors: Keith French, Peter Miller
Site: 14 West Main Street, Meriden
Brain Maps

The best thing you can do is to get help. You can’t teach yourself on your own. I went to Adult Education for help with reading and writing. They sent me to Stetson Library on Dixwell Ave. The library sent me to Literacy Volunteers and I was matched with a tutor.

I drove motor coach buses for over 30 years. My wife helped me read my routes by phone. I would make a copy for her to help me drive the correct routes. No one knew but her. I drove my routes by using pictures on highway signs, maps, odometer miles and by memory. I followed the signs for N, S, E and W. Some route numbers I drove were 85, 78, 81 and 79. I still have maps in my head, hundreds of maps.

One of my most memorable drives was to Los Angeles. I drove over the Hoover Dam and through the Grand Canyon. Other drives were to Nova Scotia and to Key West and several other places in the U.S. and Canada.

Student: Alphonso Lilly Jr.
Country: USA
Tutor: Tammi Means
Site: Literacy Resource Center, 5 Science Park, New Haven

Learning English at Literacy Volunteers

I would say that it is a pleasant place with very friendly teachers wanting to help you learn English, with classmates -- beautiful people from other nations, who want to learn English just like you. You also learn through them to know a little about their cultures, which for me is wonderful.

The work of Literacy Volunteers is exceptional, invaluable, done by volunteers with great hearts, who help all of us who want to learn English as a second language, for which I am greatly grateful.

Student: Bernahil
Country: Venezuela
Tutors: Norma Barash, Desh Sharma, Nancy Ferraro
Site: Gateway Community College, New Haven
My New Life in New Haven

I have been in New Haven since September. It was very difficult for me, especially at the beginning. There were just the two of us – my husband and me – without our family or friends, without my beloved job. I was a teacher and I have never imagined my life apart from it.

My sadness from the beginning was overcome by the joy of meeting so many different people from so many different countries in just a few months. And suddenly I was not alone with my husband, but I could communicate with others, people who are in the same position as me.

The idea of being part of a group is of paramount importance to me. It is a great comfort not to be alone, to be able to share ideas with others, to express myself. Also my fear of not speaking English very well dwindled day by day.

Here I have found all of this. What could be viewed as a small city is a whole world. It is a cosmopolitan place with a lot of museums, libraries, restaurants, and colleges, such as this great Gateway Community College. Besides the kindness of these wonderful tutors, there is something in the air that inspires me to study, to learn. I have found here good energy to progress, to be better and better. It is a little strange and in the same time amusing that when I was away on vacation, I missed New Haven. I am thinking about it like HOME.

Thank you New Haven for taking me in. You have a warm heart even in the dead of the winter!

Student: Cristina  
Country: Romania  
Tutors: Naomi Shiloh, Linda Erlanger, Frank Corrigan  
Site: Gateway Community College, New Haven
Thank You to My Tutor

I’m very proud of myself. Reading still feels like a challenge. It’s not 100% but it’s much better than before. I’m so happy. I’m not going to stop. I’m going to keep doing this.

I’m very happy with my tutor Vanessa. She’s very good at what she does. She explains things very well. Sometimes I’m confused. She sees if it’s giving me a hard time and says OK, let’s break it down this way. That’s the thing. She explains it to me in a way that I understand.

Vanessa also always makes time for my schedule. I work nights and my schedule changes. If I have to cancel, she always finds a time that’s comfortable for me to meet. Sometimes I think, this lady is doing all this for me?! That makes a huge difference for me. I’m very grateful.

Student: Grace Moore  
Country: USA  
Tutor: Charlene Vanessa Clarke  
Site: University of New Haven Library, West Haven

A Letter to my Program Manager

Hi Mrs. Martha.

I want to tell you that I am very happy with my English classes with Jackie because she is definitely the best teacher for me.

Also at home I have my son Brandon, he is 6 years old who helps me improve my English for example when I say short sentences to him, he corrects my pronunciation especially when they are words with b and v.

Also with him I learn new vocabulary and that is very important to me and for him.

We love reading stories and learning new words.

Blessings. Ruth C.

Student: Ruth  
Country: Ecuador  
Tutor: Jackie McKenna  
Site: Wallingford Public Library
Starting Over

Classes at Literacy Volunteers have changed my life. They help me toward accomplishing my goals. I completed computer classes, and now I’m in literacy classes to get me ready for college classes. I want to become a drug and alcohol counselor. I would like to thank the volunteers and staff. I recommend this program to anyone who would like to move forward in life. You are never too old to start over.

Student: Shirlisa
Country: USA
Tutor: Cindy Ostroff
Site: Literacy Resource Center, 5 Science Park, New Haven

How Literacy Volunteers Has Changed My Daily Life

Growing up as a child I didn’t attend school very much and that affected my life in so many different ways. I was told that in this country you need to have a GED. So one day I decided to go to West Haven High School to get my GED.

I failed the test and was introduced to Literacy Volunteers where I met people who believed in me and took time to listen to my story.

My tutor is Janie Holmes. She helps me by going step by step, reading with me. She not only reads with me, but she makes sure I understand what I am reading.

Because of Literacy Volunteers, I’m not only writing this for you I can read for you as well.

Thank you.

Student: Tracey
Country: Jamaica
Tutor: Janie Holmes
Site: Literacy Resource Center, 5 Science Park, New Haven
My Story So Far

Ms. Laura asked me to write about my learning experience since I came back to school. My reading teacher’s name is Ian. He taught me how to read and comprehend what I am reading, he also taught me about my vowels and gave me a lot of support in reading. He always said Michael you are going to learn your ABCs. Without them you are going to have a hard time pronouncing words. One day Laura came to me and asked me if I could take on another reading teacher. I said yes. His name is Brian, believe it or not. Ian and Brian would not let me get away with nothing. Both of them taught me how to be consistent with reading. Then she introduced me to a math teacher Gene. He taught all of us in the math class to subtract, add, geometry. Sometimes I see Ms. Valerie, I always ask her am I reading this right and she says yes. Keep in mind, she was one of my first reading Science Park teachers. At the library, Bill spent a lot of time teaching me how to read with the support of the staff at Science Park. I have so much confidence everyone there taught me something, from the secretary to the managers. Mr. Hill has a wonderful staff like the computer class at Science Park. Even though I didn’t know what I was doing, the same support in the computer class I found a big family in this organization.

Thank you my sisters and brothers, Aunt, Uncles, you know who you are. Thank you for supporting me all these years.

Yours truly, Michael Bryant

Student: Michael
Country: USA
Tutors: Brian Cookson, Ian Alsgaard, Gene Kirsten
Site: Literacy Resource Center,
5 Science Park, New Haven
Life is Not Toast with Nutella

Growing up bilingual I never had problems with communication. Explaining my thoughts in Armenian? Easy. Write a 2000 word essay in Russian? No problem. During my first year in America, those two languages were still the ones I used because I worked in Brooklyn NY, in an area known as “little Russia”. I never needed English in my everyday life.

Of course, I knew I would need to learn English someday. But my life before Connecticut, which included my job as a tutor of Russian to 3 young children and interacting with their parents, didn’t require that I have much knowledge of English. But life is not “toast with Nutella”, and twists can happen. I changed jobs and moved to Connecticut where I knew nothing and no one. By then, “Hello, my name is Tamara, I am from Armenia” was not enough to survive.

I honestly consider myself lucky that I met only nice and kind people in America. One of them happened to be my neighbor Jane Bouvier, who introduced me to the ESL class offered by Literacy Volunteers. I started attending the class every Friday, and still do, in 2013. At first, I felt stressed and had headaches every time I went to class. Afterwards, I would cry and wonder what I was doing there. After 6 months of emotional storms and indignation, something clicked in my head. With “blood sweat and tears” and the help of the most amazing tutors: Jane Bouvier, Charlotte Luzzi, Virginia Stevens and Eleanor Weseloh, English and I became best friends forever.

I would also like to thank my cable TV station for helping me on my English learning journey. The day I noticed that I laughed at the jokes on the “I Love Lucy” show, I finally realized that I understood the English language.

Now, 7 years later, I’m still convinced that our class is the best. I still attend when my job allows, even though I have improved my skills to the level where I can easily solve any issues with my bank by phone.

Our ESL class is not just English. It’s about making friends, sharing cultures, having parties, trying food from different countries, learning from each other and having fun.

Student: Tamara (Tammy)
Country: Armenia
Tutors: Charlotte Luzzi, Virginia Stevens, Eleanor Weseloh
Site: Keefe Community Center, Hamden
# Tutors & Volunteers 2019-20

## Meriden Wallingford Tutors & Volunteers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fatima Achibane</th>
<th>Vincent Gerbino</th>
<th>Celeste Malia</th>
<th>Tamara Morris</th>
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<td>Karen Arata</td>
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## New Haven Tutors & Volunteers

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<th>Karen Dahl</th>
<th>Merle Hornstein</th>
<th>Michele O’Connell</th>
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Tutors & Volunteers 2019-20

Valley Tutors & Volunteers

Stanley Alpert  Linda Gabor  (Peg) Margaret Moffitt  Shaun Shanley  Jackqueline Wallace
Linda Coppola  (Liz) Elizabeth Ianniello  Mary Alice O’Brien  Alan Solomon  Mary Williams
Gina Ferreri  Stephen Lemoine  Dwayne Paul  Patricia Webster

Tutoring Sites 2019-20

ANSONIA
Ansonia Library

BRANFORD
Branford ERACE

DERBY
Derby Public Library

GUILFORD
Guilford Free Library

HAMDEN
Brundage Community Library
Miller Library
Keefe Community Center
Quinnipiac University

MERIDEN
14 West Main Street
American Job Center
Casa Boricua de Meriden
College & Career Readiness Center - Meriden Adult Ed
Meriden Public Library
Midstate ARC

MILFORD
Barnes & Noble

NEW HAVEN
American Job Center/Workforce Alliance
Dixwell United Church of Christ
Fair Haven Branch Library
Gateway Community College
IRIS
Ives Main Library
Junta for Progressive Action
La Casa New Haven
Leeway, Inc.
Literacy Resource Center, 5 Science Park
Mitchell Branch Library
New Haven Adult and Continuing Education
Stetson Branch Library
Towers Senior Community
Wilson Branch Library
Yale University Health Center

NORTH BRANFORD
Atwater Memorial Library

WALLINGFORD
Fosdick Fulfillment Center
Midstate ARC
Spanish Community of Wallingford
Wallingford Public Library

WEST HAVEN
West Haven Public Library
University of New Haven Library
I recently found out that my grandfather, Louis Benoit, a fluent speaker of French and English, never learned how to read or write. He signed his name with an X. And he must have signed a lot of papers. He ran a thriving agribusiness, owned acres of valuable land, and left a robust legacy to his widow and eleven surviving children when he died in 1931.

Five years ago, I thought I was joining Literacy Volunteers as an ESOL Program Manager to share my love of language acquisition. Knowing what I know now, I feel that it’s in my blood to want to level the playing field for the Louis Benoits of 2020 who wouldn’t be able to work at gainful employment, build assets or raise healthy families – or deal with mountains of paperwork relative to doing all that — without first acquiring English language literacy. Merci, Pépère, for being my “Why.”

Martha B. Colaresi
ESOL Program Manager - Meriden/Wallingford

I work at Literacy Volunteers because I have seen first hand how literacy has the power to change peoples’ lives and give them hope. This has inspired me to work in the field of adult literacy. I am very fortunate to work with caring, dedicated volunteer tutors who help us to fulfill our mission at Literacy Volunteers and help our students reach their goals.

Erica Hoffman
ESOL Program Manager - Greater New Haven

Each year HOV makes us aware of the rich community of caring people with whom we work.

From the generous gifts of time and focused attention our tutors bring to their classes to the hard work and appreciation of the students, we are fortunate to work with such positive people – ever striving to better communicate with each other.

Rosemary Pilch
Basic Literacy Program Manager - Meriden/Wallingford
Words – imperfect as they are – are our main tools as human beings to translate ourselves to one another: our hearts, thoughts, intentions, struggles, hopes. That’s why our students’ and tutors’ time together is not just practical. It’s visionary and – in a quiet, subtle, everyday sort of way – actually quite radical.

On the surface, it appears simple: Each week they come together to practice language: sounds, letters, words, sentences, paragraphs, stories. But below the surface, literacy opens the door to understanding other people. In these times when words are so often used harshly, our literacy challenge – for all of us – goes well beyond reading the words.

Can we relate? Can we see ourselves in each other’s stories? Can we hear all we share in the midst of our differences? Our students’ words make that easy. We need to listen, to relate. Literacy makes that possible.

Laura Fawcett
Basic Literacy Program Manager - Greater New Haven

There is no better venture than to work with and support a team of volunteers who give their time to teach others. I am fortunate to have that privilege through LVAGNH.

It is wonderful to see students expand their world though words and language. These essential skills enable students to achieve their goals and enjoy the rewards of accomplishment.

Maria E. Senteio
Valley Program Manager
Thank You!