Literacy Council of Northern Virginia

Literacy is a survival skill

Learning Lights My Path Forward

Annual Recognition Ceremony 2021
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A Message from the Executive Director

After 59 years of offering language and literacy education to the Northern Virginia community, this year, the Literacy Council of Northern Virginia reached a milestone we never expected: a full school year of virtual instruction. This was not a goal we set out to achieve, but even so, I could not be prouder of our learners, staff, teachers and volunteers who made this accomplishment possible.

This Annual Recognition Ceremony is a celebration of that year with the theme “Learning Lights My Path Forward.” It was a difficult year for many, especially for our learners who were among those most affected by the pandemic and its effects on our economy. Through it all, however, this theme rang true.

This year, our staff and volunteers dedicated themselves to learning the technologies and methodologies that would best work for our student population online. They strove for excellence even in the unfamiliar territory of screen-sharing, breakout rooms, and the vital “mute” button. Due to their efforts, LCNV is now recognized nationwide as a leader in virtual education, giving presentations and appearing in articles both regionally and nationally to share best practices.

For our students, attending English class each week was a step of hope, bringing them closer to achieving their goals and offering the promise of a better future. For some, virtual classes opened doors of access, allowing students to attend classes while caring for their children, in between work shifts, or even after returning to their countries of origin. The challenges of meeting online also created opportunities for growth as our learners gained expertise in new technologies and tools that will give them a foothold for future employment opportunities. Perhaps most importantly, students learned from each other, inspired to press on toward their aspirations by seeing the courage and tenacity of their classmates even under the most difficult of circumstances. We are excited for you to hear about their experiences in their own words through the essays and stories in this book.

We hope that there is never another year like this one. While we are pleased to continue to offer virtual opportunities for learning, we are very eager for classes to once again meet in person and for the laughter and conversation of students from around the world to once again fill our classroom halls. There is nothing like it. But we are also even more assured that despite any uncertainty that stands before us, we will continue to find a path forward in the grit and dedication to learning we see in all those we celebrate today.

Guest Speaker: Dalia Palchik

Fairfax County Providence District Supervisor Dalia Palchik’s priority has been keeping the community safe during the COVID-19 pandemic and serving communities that are disproportionately affected by the virus, both economically and physically. She leads the County’s work on these issues as Chair of the Health and Human Services Committee. She also serves as Vice-Chair of the Housing Committee, Audit Committee, and is a co-lead of the Successful Children and Youth Policy Team. Supervisor Palchik plans to continue focusing on new and creative ways to increase quality affordable housing, bring more thoughtful transit-oriented development to Fairfax County, find new solutions to modernize schools, and commit to a new renewable energy standard. Prior to being elected to the Fairfax Board of Supervisors, Supervisor Palchik represented the Providence District as a representative on the Fairfax County School Board. Additionally, Dalia served on the board of the Tysons Regional Chamber of Commerce, as Co-Chair of its Women’s Leadership Council, and on the board of the Woodburn Village Condo Association.
About the Literacy Council of Northern Virginia

The mission of the Literacy Council of Northern Virginia (LCNV) is to teach adults the basic skills of reading, writing, speaking, and understanding English so they can access employment and educational opportunities and more fully and equitably participate in the community.

Roopal Mehta Saran
Executive Director

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Director of Partnerships and Community Engagement

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Student Services Coordinator

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Nathan Telaraja
Senior Program Manager, PricewaterhouseCoopers

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Community Partnership Awards

Each year, the Literacy Council of Northern Virginia recognizes a number of its partners for their consistent support of our programs and mission. This year, LCNV is proud to recognize four outstanding partners.

BlackRock, Inc. has partnered with LCNV since 2017 and is committed to helping people build stability today for a more resilient future. Since our partnership began, BlackRock has given more than $50,000 in funding for LCNV’s Beginning English Program, offering essential language skills and training to low-income immigrant adults so they can access employment and educational opportunities and more fully and equitably participate in the community. BlackRock has also provided impactful leadership via board membership, contributing to LCNV’s fiscal management and ensuring that LCNV’s critical programs are financially sustainable and affordable for our learners both during the current crisis and for the long-term.

The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation has partnered with LCNV since 1999 and has improved the quality of life for Washington, DC metropolitan residents since 1948. LCNV is honored that the Foundation values our service and sees LCNV as an integral part of their commitment to build a stronger community for residents of the Washington, DC metro area. Since our relationship began, the Foundation has been more than just a financial supporter, but a true partner. Through our long tenure with the Foundation, the program staff have come to know LCNV, its mission, and vision, and have provided thoughtful advice, guidance, and connections. We have been fortunate to receive over $441,500 in grant monies over the past 22 years, which has impacted tens of thousands of vulnerable adults living in Northern Virginia. The Foundation continues to award general operating support, understanding and investing in the success of our organization as a whole.

The scope, nature, and dynamic of community partnership during this challenging year has tested our capacity for creativity and impact. The work of the City of Alexandria’s COVID-19 Community Response Advisory Committee (CCRAC) and Fairfax County’s COVID-19 Community Partners Strategy Team (CPST) aims to better serve the whole of the region and gives particular attention to low-literacy and English language learner (ELL) residents. These collaborative initiatives have redefined what strategic, cross-sector collaboration can look like and taken it to new levels. Partnering with the CPST and its precursor, the Community Partners Coordination Team, allows LCNV to be a co-leading voice in the essential planning and maneuvering we organizations and agencies have had to do to serve the needs of Fairfax County residents most affected by the pandemic. With the City of Alexandria’s CCRAC, LCNV was able to help shape, plan, and promote COVID response initiatives through the lens of our ELL neighbors. The collaboration and leadership of both entities enabled LCNV to better assist our learners to navigate the web of critical community services that help them to survive and thrive during this trying period. These partnerships further allowed LCNV’s voice to contribute to the County and City’s collective efforts to envision and develop new cross-sector channels to more equitably reach our region’s diverse community in response to the COVID-19 emergency and beyond.

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Learning Lights My Path Forward

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit in 2020 and LCNV had pivoted all of its courses from in-person to virtual platforms, one of LCNV’s students said to their instructors, “You light our path of darkness.” In the midst of so much uncertainty, this expression fueled our collective commitment to continue delivering the best programming we could in service to our dedicated and ambitious learners. This sentiment serves as the inspiration of this year’s Annual Recognition Ceremony theme: Learning Lights My Path Forward. We hope that these essays give you a sense of how learning English has helped LCNV learners provide for their basic needs, create connection, and find opportunities to use their skills and talents to be an active part of our community.

The ideas and opinions contained in the publication are those of the learner and do not necessarily reflect those of LCNV or its partners.

Student Readers

Nadia Gomaa
Egypt

Waleska Ortega
Chile

Ignacia Pacheco
Ecuador

Nadia Gomaa

When I came to the USA 3 years ago, I was the same as a baby when he tries to speak or tries to walk. I often had a friend come with me to translate when I had to do anything. It was embarrassing for me. But I tried. I listened. I watched movies.

I searched for anywhere to take English class. I listened to anyone who would give me advice. Now, thanks to my God, I have a solution. I say, “Good job Nadia, you are a strong woman.” I support myself to do everything.

Conversation is easier. I listen and ask what things mean and I remember. When I speak with any person in my shop, I think ‘what does that mean.’ Sometimes I use the online translator and when I know what something means, I remember it.

My boss all the time helped me in everything in my life. He said you have to push yourself. He spoke with me in English all the time at work. Before my class, I was scared when he [spoke] English. I could not answer him because I did not trust myself. Sometimes I would say to him, ‘can you translate for me to Arabic,’ and he said no. He said to me, ‘translate to me what you understand.’ After I translated for him, he said, ‘Why you don’t answer me? You understand already!’

I feel I am good. I can speak with him now. I trust myself, especially with email. My boss said now he will open a position for a job as buyer and I will apply. I made one goal.
Waleska Ortega

WHAT?
At first everything was so alien to me. I looked at the street signs and thought... WHAT?
I listened to the people in the supermarket and thought... WHAT?
Everything around me had changed its name and I needed a translation. I love talking with the people and now I couldn’t express myself. I had to do something, that’s why I decided to take English classes.
I have been in class for a few weeks, but now I feel like building the world again, but I am no longer alone. Now I am accompanied by a new community that shares my interests and my questions, especially the...
WHAT?
I still walk in the street and sometimes I don’t understand some things and I wonder... WHAT? But now I have answers and I feel more comfortable with this world in English.

Ignacia Pacheco

When I got to the US a year and a half ago, I had a lot of frustrations because I left behind a lifetime as a person and as a professional. So, I thought if I could reinforce my little knowledge of English, maybe I could outperform myself and achieve new goals. So I decided to take English classes at LCNV. Since then, I have achieved incredible emotional stability because I have managed to make new friends, better express my ideas, and talk to my neighbors without having one of my daughters by my side as a translator. One of the things that I like the most is to be able to talk about my country and say how beautiful it is to be in the middle of the world with one foot in the north and one foot in the south at once. It makes people want to visit Ecuador and its wonderful Galapagos Islands. I still have many limitations, but I aspire over time to be able to overcome all my fears and become a medical assistant. That is my greatest goal.

LCNV Learner Q&A with U.S. Congressman Don Beyer
I did not know any English before. Now that I go to English class and have been helped by many amazing teachers, I understand English better.

Marwa Abdalla Shtawa

Since taking English class I have many goals. Learning the language is important to me. I am confident and I can connect with the surrounding community. By learning English now I can get a job and get a certificate. I would like to get a degree. That study requires a high level of language. I can get a job and fulfill my dreams of being a successful business woman. The English language is a reason for developing oneself and understanding everything new in this world.

Yolanda Acho

It is true that learning leads us to advance further. 1) Knowing more about a topic that interests us the most, we want to know more, learn and understand. 2) When you learn more, such as English, you feel more secure. 3) When you achieve more you want to move on. It means that you have learned and all doors will open. 4) Learning is very important because you advance. You achieve extraordinary things. You feel more satisfied, secure and happy.

Julia Ajak

As I learn new things everyday, I realized how learning lights my path forward. Learning opens new doors for me and unlocks hidden chapters. It guides my every step of the way into things I want to achieve. It brightens my knowledge about things and is used as a tool throughout life.

Without learning, everything would be pointless. It’s important because it has aided me in many ways, and I hope [as] the years go by I don’t stop learning.

Wendy Alvarenga

Since I started taking English classes, I feel that I have advanced much more than I already knew. Now I feel safer having a conversation with someone in this language. Before I was afraid to answer a phone call and be spoken to in English. In my work it has also been very helpful since I can communicate much better with clients and with my boss. I have made new friends. There are words that I still cannot understand but I tell them that I am learning a new language and I try to speak it as well as possible. I’m able to express a little more easily what I like and what I don’t like. My reading and pronunciation have also improved, although sometimes I have mistakes, but there is always someone who corrects me and explains.

My hopes for the future are:
• Get a better job or grow in the same company where I am.
• To be a citizen of this country.
• Study to have my own beauty salon.
• Study a professional career at a university.

Fatiha Attar

Since taking class, I am learning English. I understand more. I am happy because I want to speak English. Thank you, Jackie, Chris, Ayuko, and the Literacy Council of Northern Virginia.

Ganga Bajimaya

My name is Ganga and I am from Nepal. When I was in Nepal, I spoke four different languages which include Newari, Nepali, Hindi and Urdu. I didn’t need to speak the English language in Nepal because everybody speaks Nepali in Nepal. When I came here to the U.S., I needed to learn to speak in English. I have to speak in English everywhere in America. So I have to learn English to be able to communicate to everyone. I am a cosmetologist and I want to open my own business one day. In order to do that, I need to learn how to speak fluent English. I hope I learn to speak good English soon. Thank you.

Ana Barrera

I’m Ana Barrera. I [am] 31 years old. I’m from Guatemala. I have two children. My daughter Caterin is 14 years old. My daughter Andrea is 9 years old. I live in Fairfax City. I am very happy. I’m learning new things in English. Now in my work I can understand more things in English. Thanks to Teacher Bill.

Zenaida Bastidas

Since I took English classes, my life changed. First, it has helped me make important decisions; communicate much better with my family, friends and neighbors; participate in programs that help me; talk about the needs of my family and community; learn new technologies and improve my cognitive skills. Second, when I started in the fall of 2018, before English classes I had some free time and I worked as a volunteer in the offices of the Literacy Council of Northern Virginia, supporting the staff in routine jobs. This time allowed me to make excellent friends, necessary for every immigrant. Finally, I wish to thank and at the same time congratulate the team of professionals from the LCNV office, who with responsibility and excellent coordination faced the challenge of successfully adapting the curricular content of each level for the realization of the online English classes, and all the volunteer teachers, for their responsibility, training, excellent mastery of technology and vocation for service, who enriched the [assignments] allowing attractive, simple and effective classes adapted to the programmatic contents of each level.

Mursal Bawar

My name is Mursal and I am from Afghanistan. I came to the United States on March 2, 2020. When I came to the United States, I faced a lot of problems with speaking English because in our country the language that we spoke is totally different from the English language. I had a little bit of knowledge about English. I learned it in Afghanistan, but our pronunciation was different. That’s why it was difficult for me. Then I started to learn English with it’s correct pronunciation. Now for me, it’s easier to understand what others tell me and they also understand me. Now I can schedule appointments, go to the doctor by myself and when I go somewhere, I can communicate with others very well. I can feel a lot of changes in my life from learning English. I want to continue my studies. My dream is to learn English completely.
Tourya Belgamria

Learning lights my path forward means to me that learning itself will open up opportunities and guide my life moving forward. If I learn something, then I will be able to apply it in the future like learning new skills for a new job or career.

Elizabeth Berryman

My name is Elizabeth Berryman. I am from Ukraine. I moved here in January 2020. I didn't know much English before I come here. I like [to] learn English in my class.

Anmilsy Betancourt Vasquez

Since taking English classes, I have learned about new cultures, customs, food, clothes, places, and many more things which are really important to be included into society and to contribute to the productivity of this country. I was nervous at first to even say hello to people. Now that I know how to greet, I feel so much more relaxed and confident communicating with other people. Each English class is amazing, dynamic and fun. I like it a lot because the content is interesting and very useful for everyday life. Also each student can participate in the subject and tell how it is done in their country. This makes it even more interesting because we can know a little about other cultures. I look forward to the end of the day to see my English class because I love the way the teachers teach. They are the best for me. They light my path forward because I feel that I will be able to achieve my dreams of working in information technology. It is what I like and what I studied in my country. They make me believe that I can do it. They encourage me to keep trying when I feel like I will not succeed. They have a lot of patience and energy. I am very grateful to LCNV for all that I have been able to learn in these difficult times for everyone.

Faiza Bookenridge

Hello, my name is Faiza. I’m from Algeria, North Africa. Two years ago, when I came and decided to stay living in the USA, I felt foreign and lost at the same time. I couldn’t communicate, but after finding my right way I’m very happy and lucky. I can use this language easily every day. I feel more secure and confident, especially with COVID because it is necessary to be able to follow the information in this new situation.

After participating in different meetings with Congressman Don Beyer on March 25 and Dr. Scott Schroth on March 31, who clarified our ideas on COVID, I thank LCNV very much for the interest that we are given. I appreciate these meetings which break the routine and I realized I speak and read and write and can listen and understand better during these meetings. I can share ideas and can give my own opinions. I have very important points. I learn from my mistakes and the mistakes of my classmates and it gives me chances to advance.

Something special happened to me: that is to be able to pass my test for my driver’s license in English the first time. I was proud of myself. All these positive things happened thanks to my dear teachers: Karen Schroth, Kathleen McCleary, Marie Tibor, Lisa Sborofsky, and Laurie Tracy.

I’m very satisfied with them; they are key to our success, they motivate and encourage me and they are ready to help me any time. I’m grateful for the teachers’ efforts. I keep learning English with LCNV for the best job [opportunities] and life.

Luis Carranza

My English class is very important for me because I do my job much better. Many companies like when their employees speak two languages and now it is more easy because we can learn in our homes. We just need an app like Zoom.

This is helping me because I can communicate more with my daughter and at the same time I can learn more with her and I don’t feel so scared if someone asks me a question.

Now imagine that we’re using this magic key to go straight into official situations and help other
people solve important problems and get people to communicate well. With a key like that, you would nearly be a superhero!

Myrian Castro de Aguilar

I work as a Dental Assistant. In my job, I help the doctor during dental exams. English will help me to communicate with the patients at the clinic.

I want to be able to take courses at NOVA to get a license to take x-rays. In the future, I need to take classes for cleaning. This will help me to earn more money.

I also want to be able to help my nieces with their homework. My nieces are 7, 12, and 18 years old. I will help them with math and US history homework. My 18 year-old niece will go to NOVA soon and I want to help her too.

Songi Choi

English broadens my horizons. Before I learned English, I always lived in the same environment. I came to Virginia and I feel that my vision has broadened as I learn English. The more I learn English, the more I express my thoughts. This will also have a good effect on my family. I am lucky to meet great teachers and LCNV. Thank you very much!

Antonia Cinto

Hi, my name is Antonia. I am a wife and a mother. I have 3 kids, one boy and two girls. English has not been easy but I still want to learn. And the thing I most like is that my teacher tells step by step. I have not learned that much but I am trying to learn. Thanks teacher for having patience with us.

Tsigereda Ebedingl

It’s true that learning lights the life of each and every human. It has so many positive benefits, including increasing our knowledge, expanding our thinking ability, and helping us to understand things easily.

Learning is also the main key to solving and understanding problems. The more we learn, the more we have the lights and power to go forward. Learning helps me have more confidence. It’s easier to communicate with other people. My knowledge is bigger.

Norkris del Carmen Figuera

I think that my pronunciation is better nowadays. I improved my English language. I feel more sure when I talk with a native [English speaker]. I don’t feel afraid anymore; my vocabulary is bigger now. I can understand the forecast in the morning and put on clothes according to the weather, knowing how to dress. Communication will be better in my job or anyplace. I appreciate the time with my teachers and classmates. Finally, I say thanks a lot for the opportunity for all Spanish speakers. Congratulations for this program is very nice… THANKS.

Maria Flores

I have always thought that studying is an investment. I personally like to study and learn new things, as they usually serve me at work and in my daily life.

In El Salvador, I studied and worked as a registered nurse for 10 years. Right now, I’m studying at Career Nursing Academy to become a Nursing Assistant here. I need to study and learn English first to be able to work.

I sometimes use a translator to help me understand when I’m reading. In class, sometimes the teacher will translate for me in Spanish. I know that learning is a process and my difficulty is the speaking and writing and reading.
**Zuhra Fnu**

I want to learn English. I have a lot of problems. My son was sick. He had brain cancer. I [was] almost four months in the hospital. I talked to the nurse and the doctor and I learned English. After two years I started work [at] Panera Bread and after this I started work in a Ross store. I talked to my friends and my boss. My speaking is good. But now I need to learn reading. Because it is very important for me.

I cannot open my mail. Sometimes emails come to my name and my husband is yelling at me. He doesn't read for me. I wish I can read. I need to help my daughter when my husband is not home. He [is at his] job. I cannot help my daughter. But now she helps me!

**Trino Gutiérrez**

Since I have taken English classes, I can speak with my daughter's teacher, and now I can help with all the things that they require. Now I can tell my boss all my thoughts, and I can do better in my work and towards my goals. I can speak with the bus driver or with the person who sells me a coffee in the morning and receive a big smile from them. Learning English has improved my life because now I can speak with other people and I can help a lot—that makes me happy.

**Rosa Hernandez**

Learning a new language sometimes can be difficult but never impossible. I am taking classes at [LCNV] in level three. I have very good teachers and they help me with my pronunciation. By learning English now I can help customers in my job and I can easily give some recommendations when they ask me. The classes really help me understand many questions, and communicate better with my daughter's school and I want to say thank you to all my teachers. I really appreciate their dedication.

**Halal Humadi**

There is a wisdom used by people in the Middle East, which is: knowledge is light. This means that without knowledge everything is dark in life and this wisdom does not only apply to study, but also applies to knowledge of something that illuminates knowledge within. The light is learned first when we realize that there is something extinguished within us that does not allow us to walk forward toward our goals that we have drawn in order to illuminate our paths, and secondly we focus on what we want from learning so then we [are] present to learn that thing and insist on it.

One day earlier, I felt that there was something inside me that was dead that wanted to enlighten, and that was because of the talents that I possessed and the passion for art and design, but I did not have enough knowledge for that. I was fully aware that I am not only a housewife. This dream by setting plans to reach the goal that I drew and reached it even after a long time and double effort and spent a lot of time and money without anyone’s help. On the contrary, I was at that time a single mother and had young children in a country where wars last for long years, but I achieved an impressive achievement, and everyone witnessed that. I graduated from the university as an interior designer in only 3 years and was always the first in my class and graduated with a BA with honors.

In order to learn something:

First, there must be love and passion to learn
that thing.

Second, plans must be drawn up to reach that goal of learning and set it as a priority.

Third, there must be determination, willpower and self-confidence to reach the goal.

Fourth, no matter how unsuccessful our attempt and many times, we do not become frustrated, but we turn it to challenge oneself. Success and vice versa, every time we fail, we learn something new or a new way to succeed.

Fifth, whatever the failures, we never change the goal, but the plans to reach it.

Finally, learning and enjoying what we learn, education is another opportunity that assures us that we are in contact with that light that shines for us...our paths.

Zainab Hussaini

I am an Afghan and I loved learning English from a very young age. At that time, I was rewriting every Dari word in English and I thought English was very easy, but when I grew up and learned English in school, I realized that it was very different. After school I wanted to continue English but it was not possible and I was very upset, but now that I have come to America and I have kind and talented teachers like Ms. Maura and Ms. Robin, I am very happy to be here, even with problems I have. I can continue my studies and when I learn English, I can have a good and comfortable life for myself and my family. I want to be able to plan everyday to achieve my goals. I have to read a lot and listen to a lot of videos and try to speak English, and God is merciful. I want to help my children with the lessons because it is my responsibility and I have a great responsibility to my children. I want to have a good job, to be able to help my husband, to have a good life, to buy a house and also to be able to help my family in Afghanistan.

Hanan Ibrahim

Since taking English class, I have gotten a job. I am a sales clerk at Ross. By learning English I can become a U.S. citizen. By learning English, I can be involved with my kid’s school.

Safieh Jama

By learning English for the past four years, I can communicate better with people. And I can order food or even book an appointment with the doctors for my children without needing help. I can now speak to people in my work and do my job better. It is helpful for people to understand me without me repeating myself. I also can speak to my coworkers and explain things better. That alone is a big achievement for me.

Berta Jaramillo

My experience during the pandemic has been very difficult due to changes in social and family isolation. Studying English has benefited me a lot, to learn to communicate with American people. I know it is not easy to speak another language but based on my effort I am managing to improve myself. I hope to learn more every day, until I achieve my goal.

Adad Khaled

Learning lights my path forward because it gives me the encouragement to reach the success I need for my dreams. Learning makes everything easy because when I know, I don’t feel scared and lost. Learning lights my path and keeps me going forward without stopping.

Bahija Laanani

Since I started learning English at LCNV with wonderful teachers like Ms. Karen, Ms. Kathleen, Ms. Lisa, Ms. Laurie and Ms. Marie, these nice teachers work hard helping us to be successful [speaking] English with my kid’s neighborhoods and helping my kids in homework with this pandemic since school closed. I appreciate your help. Thanks.
Hong Le

My name is Hong Le. I currently live in Annandale, VA. Since taking English class, I am able to do many more things and my pronunciation is getting better. I can use the GPS on my phone. I can more easily speak to people in stores to ask questions. I can use the computer now and I know how to google things when I want to know something. English class has also helped me become more fluent. I can now talk with my friends in English and they can understand me better. My improved English makes me feel more confident when talking to other people.

Andrea Ledeza Cespedes

When in Rome do like the Romans. I did not understand what it meant and teacher Isabel said it was easy. For example, if you are in the United States you have to speak English. That day I did not just learn how to say phrases in English, but also that I must be more demanding and committed to my learning in order to get involved in this country. In each class the teachers work hard. They have taught us how to say the different directions of where we live, fill out applications, count, read and they have even taught us how to describe our dream house. That’s why I am very grateful to the teachers Jody, Astrid and Isabel for all the love and patience that they have for us. Thank you so much. May God always illuminate your path.

Cecilia Noemy Lopez

I have learned a little English and I don’t have too much to say. It is better to be safe but I would like everything to happen to have the classes in person. I took classes in person once before. In both ways you learn. I understand English, but it is hard for me to do pronunciation. The important thing is to do our part to continue learning day by day.

Malika Majidi

Learning lights my path: by learning and [getting] my diploma it will open a lot of doors for me. Learning and studying hard will light up the future for me. Hard work always paid off.

Paola Mancilla

In 2021 my ESL class [with LCNV] was on Zoom, because of the pandemic. I just moved to the U.S. 6 months ago with my husband. I’m originally from Mexico, and this ESL class helped me plan my wedding, learn a new culture and new traditions, and also helped me be in contact with people that
have a similar situation as me. It's hard to be in this pandemic with new people around me, but LCNV and my teachers Kathleen and Karen taught me more than just English, they taught me how to be human and empathetic, how to be brave and not give up. I just want to say thank you so much for all this work it means a lot for me.

Carlos Alberto Mayorga Ortiz

Until 2019 my level of English was very low. In summer of the same year, I enrolled in the English Course offered by LCNV at the Korean Community Service Center in Annandale, then I did the English course in Fall 2020. I am currently doing the Spring 2021 English Course.

I have achieved a lot of knowledge of English, the LCNV teachers have a high professional level, human qualities, excellent methodology and a lot of perseverance. My teacher Anu, with her special motivation for the students, has driven me to learn much more than I expected. Today I can understand the news topics on TV and radio, I understand a good percentage of the readings, I can update myself on technological news and I have advanced in communicating with other people when they speak English.

I have learned many things for daily life: for example, interpreting housing advertisements, their characteristics such as the value of the rent or housing, utilities and amenities, conditions of the contract, location of places and roads, interpretation of plans of homes, furniture and their location within the home; know the management of public transport in the city; make budgets for the home; cooking topics such as interpreting and creating recipes; activities outside the home, for example going to the bookstore, the restaurant, the supermarket, grocery store; what should I do when I need to communicate with commercial and public entities and with people, for example firefighters, the pharmacy, the hospital, select the neighborhood of the house where I want to live; compare prices; buy clothes; know and handle cash; interpret calendars and schedules; know the four seasons with the behavior and customs and needs of people during these seasons; know people’s feelings and describe people.

The knowledge of the English language has given me a new horizon of life. I will continue in this stage of learning the English language at LCNV.

Feruzakhon Mirzaveava

Hello there! When I came to the USA, I didn’t understand English, and I didn’t even know how to speak. I just said yes or no to people’s questions. I can’t say it’s difficult now; I understand better than before. I thank my teachers for that. It is a plus that I now know a little bit of English. For example, I understand daily routines in the store and in my son’s classes. When I go to the doctor, they answer questions with me until I can get an interpreter if I need one. When I went to get my first vaccine of COVID-19 recently, the doctors asked me questions and I understood them and tried to answer their questions well. I have a lot of dreams for the future. I want to speak English fluently and I want my children to be good people, well-educated people.

Iman Mohamed

How can I illuminate my life and my path in a correct way?

My name is Iman. I moved to America five years ago. I studied computer science in my country but found out that this is not enough for me to do a good job. Because I cannot speak the English language. It is the key to everything here, mastery of the language is very important because it may open up many areas for me, which may facilitate learning and development in many areas. Also, I can now read mail without anyone’s help, and I can easily
make an appointment at the doctor now. So English with learning is a reason to illuminate my life and my path in a correct way. For knowledge is light and ignorance is darkness.

**Hekmat Mohammed Salih**

My name is Hekmat. I came to the United States in June 2016. When I first came to the US I didn’t know English. Usually my husband would be the one talking in shops, or at the doctors, and when I went to my kid’s school or the doctor, I would ask for a translator. After I started going to English courses, I gained some confidence to speak English in public. Now when I go to public places like the doctor, my kid’s school, or stores, I can speak without the need for a translator. I also have a driver’s license that I use to go to places that are nearby. I’m still taking courses at LCNV to improve my English skills. Thanks to LCNV and all my teachers for helping me improve my English.

**Hawa Mumin**

I like to read and write in English because it helps me in my life. I want to be independent. I want to help my children. My children go to school and I want to talk with their teachers. My children need help with homework and I want to help them. I want to talk to the doctor and make appointments. Now it is hard to ask the doctor questions. When I learn English, I can talk with the doctor. I want to go shopping and talk to customers. For example, if I like a dress, I can ask a customer, “Excuse me, this dress is beautiful?” I want to travel and talk in the airport. I want to talk to the staff. I can ask, “Excuse me, where is immigration or what time does the airplane arrive?” When I learn to speak and write English, all these things will be easy for me.

**Forozan Naseri**

I came to America 3 years ago. I didn’t know any English at all so I started watching English videos for beginners. I learned a bit of English from the videos. Then in my old neighborhood [in] Lorton, I found an English class so I attended the classes. I learned a lot in those classes. But COVID-19 came and I couldn’t attend anymore. Then we moved and I got a message from LCNV classes so I attended. And I have learned a lot from these classes. I can understand English better and I can read some easy books. I can help my younger kids with school and I can understand people in the store while shopping. And I can read labels and signs. And I’m planning to continue these classes until I am a good English speaker.

**Ngoc Ngo**

I came to the US in 2013 for the first time. Everything seemed bigger to me. The roads were very wide and everyone was driving cars. In Vietnam, everyone rides motorcycles. I didn’t really know English so it was difficult for me. I started working, but I work for Vietnamese people so I don’t need to use English. After four years I enrolled at LCNV to study English. I was poor in English at first but I kept studying and did not give up.

Now I can drive, shop in stores and talk with my neighbors who are very polite and nice. Everyone helps me. My class is great and I thank you and love you all. I love this country too.

“I have a lot of dreams for the future.”

-Feruzakhon, LCNV Student
Naqiba Naqiby

My name is Naqiba Naqiby. I am a student at the Literacy Council of Northern Virginia. I am learning English there. The class is online. Our teachers are very good and kind. They are teaching their students very well.

Chien Nguyen

My name is Chien. I am from Vietnam. I live in Annandale with my husband and my daughter. I worked at Care People Home Health Company. I had worked there for three years. My clients were Vietnamese, so I only spoke Vietnamese. After three years living in America, I still couldn’t speak or understand English. I was learning English myself every day on YouTube, but I still couldn’t speak English very well.

After that I changed to another job with the hope that I could learn more English. I changed to Fairfax County Public Schools. I was only a substitute with Food and Nutrition Services. I only worked there for six months. I have yet to become an official employee. I think maybe I don’t speak English well enough.

I decided to register to learn English at [LCNV] in August 2019. Then in March 2020 all schools closed because of the Covid pandemic. I lost my job and I couldn’t go to English classes. I felt very sad, no job, no classes.

Now I stay at home every day. Fortunately, I met her, a full-hearted, caring teacher. She taught me to learn English on Zoom. Her name is Laurie Hayden, my teacher. I love her so much. She taught me to speak, listen, read, and write carefully. I feel happier and more confident now. I hope I can speak, write, and listen much better now. I try my best. English is very important to me. It will help me. Now I can find a good job. I can understand everyone talking more easily. I can have conversations with others. I can read books and newspapers that I like in English. I can travel without the help of others. This is the path to learning in my new country.

Magdolin Osman

I learn a lot of ways to better myself and family. COVID-19 helped me navigate the world and taught me how to stay safe and keep others safe. I was able to help my family because I could bridge the language barrier. Learning online gave me more time to understand myself more and what I’m like, not just me but my family as well. I am able to help my community by understanding COVID-19 guidelines and do my part to stop the spreading. I hope that all the lessons I learned during this time will be the foundation of me bettering myself and family in the future.

Maria Perez Linares

Thanks to learning we can get skills that will allow us to improve every day. Learning must be continuous throughout our lives. Learning allows us to be independent and sure of our potential.

Carmen Piedad Blanco

Since taking English, I have more opportunities to have conversations in English.

Learning English is important to me because I want to watch movies without reading the subtitles. By learning English I can speak more English with my daughter.
Martha Pineda

English in my life has been the most important task to learn, but also the most difficult challenge experienced.

As a second language, English has been very important for me because I’m an immigrant that wants to overcome in this country. English for me is like a key to open doors to succeed, especially here in the USA where English is the main language, and we as immigrants meet people from different countries and need a job to get a better life. We have to learn English.

My experience learning English has been much harder than I expected. I came here to United States when I was 18 years old with zero English in my head. I took English classes in my native country but I didn’t give my attention to learn even though I knew I was coming here anytime soon. The year I arrived and started going to school to get my high school diploma was not easy. I struggled with English. I didn’t understand my teacher and at the same time I felt like that I had to work and help my parents but I needed English to get a job. I committed myself to at least learn basic English to apply for a job and communicate with others. That’s what I did. Now that I have more responsibilities and understand why English is very important for us, I want to express myself better in writing, reading, understanding and also a good pronunciation to get better pay and ask for my needs. Now I’m practicing my English with 2 amazing teachers with a lot of patience and dedication to explain.

Mizael Portillo

I work in landscaping. It’s very hard work. I work too much outside. I want to get a better position level at work. I want a construction job with benefits. My goal in learning English is to get a better salary.

I want to buy a house for my children and family. I want to have more money in the bank.

In the future, I want to be my own boss and own a small construction company. A better salary will help me. English can help me.

With English, I can communicate with the workers about the job details in writing and speaking. I will make a good boss and business owner because I have experience, I work well with other people, and I have good references.

Angela Ramirez

My name is Angela, I am from Colombia. I got married in Colombia when I was 22 years old. When we made the decision to come to this country I didn’t think about the need to speak the English language. Being here I knew the advantages of speaking English. Then my daughters were born and I wanted to go to school, but my studies were interrupted by raising my daughters, work at home and other activities and I couldn’t go back to school. Now I have more time that I can dedicate to learning English and to be able to communicate with everyone and feel good in this country.

Wendy Vanessa Rivera

First of all I want to say how blessed I am. I have a family, 3 kids - two girls, one boy. They are amazing.

Second of all I have a job. I am a CNA (nursing assistant) and I try everyday to be the best person. That is why I made the decision to learn English, because in the future I want to be a nurse and also I know that it is the best way and the best decision to have a better future and better communication with other people, even with my kids. I like what I do, I like to help other people. I can learn from each patient that I care for, they all have a different story. I enjoy listening to their experiences because I feel
that [they] help me grow as a person.

Learning English will open doors for better job opportunities. Having online classes has been a challenge but a very pleasant challenge. I can say...I will miss this group when we finish classes.

Wendy Y Rivera

English lights my path forward because it opens doors to new experiences for communication, for new jobs, and with teachers of my children. Since taking English class, I have communicated better with other people. I feel more secure when I speak English. I want to learn more, read, write and speak English, so I can study in high school. My goal is to get my GED, citizenship, and more.

By learning English, I can make new friends, speak on my cell phone, walk, go to the park, go shopping, and have a picnic or dinner together. I understand more when I watch movies. I feel very excited and happy, I have the opportunity to learn English. Thanks Jody, Isabel and Astrid for teaching me.

Rebeca Riveros Dimberg

I think that knowledge makes us free. I always try to learn. I don’t get tired of learning. There are so many things to learn in life.

Mery Rodriguez

Hello, my name is Mery Rodriguez. I [think] that it is difficult to tell our lives to a person because I think it is reserved in the end. I will tell you because for me the English classes with Teacher Bill are going super well for me. It helped me to overcome something better than before. Thanks to the one who teaches us a lot. [He] is the best but despite everything he never misses his classes.

They know because despite everything I had barriers in my life. I had COVID-19 and I never left the road behind. I always asked my God for strength. I cried and asked God for strength and my mom who is in heaven to take care of me because having COVID-19 is a process that many left, but I fought for my dreams and I know that God loves me. He never left me alone despite everything. I always thought I was alone since my mom died. I always said that life had no meaning [but] I thank God and my mom who is in heaven. I love her very much in spite of everything. I will tell you [to] thank God.

In school I am doing super better. I already passed my first exam and I feel so, so happy. I never imagined that God would bless me so big despite my falls so great and for me this year was my best experience knowing how to value what [is] by your side and love him and take advantage of the maximum to overcome yourself. Love this life that God gave you because it is beautiful. I love God very much, he has blessed me a lot since mommy left and well, I am thinking about studying too to have my license because I want to be someone important. Being a lawyer, I would like to help many defenseless people, children, etc.

“Learning English has improved my life because now I can speak with other people and I can help a lot—that makes me happy.”

-Trino, LCNV Student
Well that is what my heart wants because my story is very long because I feel very blessed with God and I love him and because I am going to a church too. I would like to serve God and help many who do not believe in God and many in need because that was the best [way] to have a better experience in these last days. Thanks to Teacher Bill. Blessings to his family and thanks for everything.

**Santos Rubio**

Learning English and online made my life better when I had conversations with other people. I can understand a little more and there are no limits to learn when we want.

The changes I have experienced are that learning online is more difficult than in person. I learn more in person than online. Learning English helped me to communicate and understand a little more when other people were talking and I am not afraid of any place and involved more in my community.

COVID-19 has helped me to understand a little more information. The CDC, doctors, and health experts told us to be patient and have changed our lives and that life and health is the most valuable and important part of life in this word.

My hopes for the future are: learn to talk, read, and write English, to get a green card then get citizenship and vote, to get a better job and be involved in my community and help other people.

**Amina Safi**

I started studying English with LCNV in 2020. Now I understand speaking and listening. I can talk with my classmates and outside with people. Second, I used to ask my husband to help me with the homework. Now I can do the homework by myself. Third, I have met so many great people and I found new friends who can speak English. Now I can prepare to be a citizen. Finally, now I can solve my problems and I am very happy to study at LCNV.

**Ernidar Rusli**

Learning is one of the most important aspects of our life. Learning is also a way to achieve all of our goals in life. The more knowledge we gain the more opportunities will open up to allow us to achieve better possibilities in our career. If we have a higher education, it will be easily qualified compared to a person without an extended education. “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world” once said by a wise man named Nelson Mandela. “Without education, you’re not going anywhere in this world” is a famous quote by Malcolm X. That is the reason why I strongly agree [that] education or learning is important for us.

**Zalia Sharifi**

Before I could not drive to the places I wanted to go, I had to ask my husband to take me places I want to go, and now I can drive to most of the places I want to go and I can go alone without asking my husband.

Before I could not read books or anything but when I came to this amazing class I read now, but I am still working on writing.

When I first came to America, my life was kind of hard since I was new and I did not know anything. For example, reading, writing, driving and all of that stuff, and I am changing. I know all of them and my life in America is better!
Amira Titay

Nowadays, English is the international language of communication and it has, therefore, become a necessity to learn it.

Learning English online has improved my life and helped me to rely on myself. I can read online news articles and books, I can participate in a discussion, help my kids with their homework, understand my customers’ issues and meet their needs at work. I have also developed new skills and enriched my vocabulary and I feel that I can better express myself presently.

On top of all these benefits, I can now listen effectively, ask questions, clarify points, rephrase and think in English.

In brief, I believe that the English language plays an essential role in my life and I will never give up pursuing my studies in English until I master it perfectly.

Erhan Tomar

My name is Erhan Tomar. It has been almost 4 years since I came to America. The first year I arrived I could only say yes and no. I can speak English enough to survive now. But I know that is not enough because I live in this country and I have to speak English, which is the official language of this country, in order to live in better conditions.

Sobyeda Valle

By learning English I can have better communication with other people. Also, it can help me to find better opportunities in my professional life. Learning English as a second language opens a lot of opportunities for me. I can help other people to translate, I can get a job as a bilingual person, I can also have a lot more friends from different cities, and I can be more diverse. I am very thankful to have great teachers who have given me the opportunities to learn English as a second language.

Sandra Vasquez

English helps me with work, communicating, and with my goal of starting my own cleaning company. When I start my own company, I am going to talk to a lot of people and it is important because they are going to ask me questions and I am going to have to respond to them.

English helps me with work because I can talk to the clients better. English helps me with communicating because when someone asks me a question or I ask a question, I understand what they want. Communicating with the clients in my job is important because if they have a question or want something I am going to respond to them and I am going to report it to my boss.

Gildaro Velarde

In English classes I have learned how to describe what I am wearing, how to pronounce many words correctly, how to ask everyday questions such as filling out applications, how to describe our house, and how to make budgets. But above all I learned that it does not matter what country or religion, we are like a soccer team when we have a common goal. We can all help each other. That is why I am very grateful to the teachers and each one of my classmates. We are a beautiful team. Thank you.
Shughla Wali

I like reading books. I want to be educated and learn English. I want to study for a driver’s license and get my driver’s license. I enjoy cooking for my family and friends.

Fenglan Wang

No matter what problems I encounter as long as I learn from books and practice, I can overcome the difficulties and move forward forever.

Ferejet Wubbet

When I came here from Eritrea 20 years ago, I needed to learn English more. As a Child Care/Home Care worker, I need to speak English, write English and read English.

Sometimes the family I work for doesn’t understand me. My country language is Tigrinya. Sometimes my accent they don’t understand. Sometimes I go to Google to know how to say something.

I think learning English is very important. I have a desire to learn English for multiple reasons. Some of the reasons why I want to learn English is so when I am working with kids and parents I want them to understand me with ease. [Also] if I’m going outside shopping if I need to talk to someone I want them to understand me with ease as well.

Veronica Yanez

The English language is so very important to me. It opens many opportunities for me in the USA. It is my dream to be able to speak, understand, write, read, and pronounce English well. With English, I can have conversations with other people, cultures, and religions.

I want to be able to study Business Administration at NOVA. This will help me to have a better job. I love working with people. I want an important position as a business owner. I need to speak better English, be able to drive, and to learn the computer.

I was training people for Mary Kay Cosmetics for two years in sales, making them more comfortable with customers, but only in Spanish. I have to ask a lot of questions and be able to explain things to give the customer good service.

Khalida Zaheer

Since taking English class, my shopping experience has been changed and improved. Since taking English class, I see I can help my family. Since taking English class, I see I can speak with my neighbors now.

Ali Zreik

My name is Ali Zreik. I had a big problem with English. I couldn’t reach anyone in that big, full country of people. I felt like I lived alone. English is very important to live, communicate with people, work, and do anything. Time changes that a little
bit. I’m speaking a little English, understanding, and writing. I’m working for Uber, communicating with the customers, talking to them, and things are changing a little easier. I feel like I made a change, but I still need more.

Now in all the countries of the world they speak English. English is very important and supports you in your life, in any country, travel, work, you have to understand English well. I hope to speak and understand English well because that will help me find a good job, friends, good life, and everything.

Dulce Zreik

Learning throughout my life has been a continuous process that encompasses all aspects in my life, both formal and informal. Learning has prepared me to face different challenges on a professional and personal level.

With my engineering degree at the university I learned to develop as a professional that allowed me to improve my quality of life and that of my family. Then with the specialization in the area of fire protection I had the opportunity to opt for new projects that benefited me financially, and additionally it allowed me to teach others.

I have also read many books throughout my life that have allowed me to learn about many topics that I apply to my daily life, related to habits, goals, finances, communication, leadership, discipline, among others.

Throughout my life I have had training in many areas of my life that have allowed me to develop emotional, spiritual, financial and intellectual intelligence.

For me, learning is something of everyday and that lasts for a lifetime, learning must be continuous and never end.

Learning has had a great impact on my personal growth and has influenced my relationships and success in my workplace. Learning enriches my brain with new and valuable information, that improves my ability to think, analyze and process.
More from Our Learners: Classroom Writing Samples from 2020-2021

Throughout the year, LCNV learners practice their writing skills in the classroom, taking time to use the techniques and vocabulary they have learned to express themselves in a new language. The work below is a sample of the excellent work of learners at various levels, shared by their instructors.

**Roua Abdalla: Coming to the USA**

I arrived in the USA in February of 2002. First I went to Ohio state to see my family members. I was sixteen years old when I came. I came with my mother and stepfather. I was happy seeing a new country, the different diversity of people that live in the USA and the beautiful views. Finally I was blessed with my new home that I came to and I knew that I would enjoy the four seasons that I used to watch on the TV’s cartoons when I was a kid.

**Wadaha Amhed**

This is about my son, Abdalla. He has curly black hair and brown eyes. I want to write about my husband. His name is Ahmed. He has black hair and brown eyes. He likes movies and soccer.

**Parwana Azizi**

My daughter’s name is Bebe Zaineb Azizi. She is 1 year and 3 months old. Her eyes are black. She has black hair.

**Musal Bawar**

I arrived in the United States on the second of March 2020. I was 26 years old. I came to the United States with my husband. It’s very difficult to leave your home country and family and to come to another country. Everything will be new when you arrive - new place, new people, new religion and new language. Even though it’s very hard, it’s also exciting to go to another country for the first time when we have imagined many things about that country. When I first arrived in the United States, it was the most wonderful experience that I ever had.

**Helen Bonfim: How to Improve My English**

There are some things to do to improve my English. I will speak English at home with my husband and I will talk to someone different everyday. That way I will be more confident. Another thing I will do is stop thinking in Portuguese. At the same time I will try to think only in English. Something else I will do is watch TV focused on learning. Lastly I will read kids books because it is easier to understand. If I do that everyday my English is going to be better.

**Faiza Boukemidja: A New Life**

My main goal is I want to continue my English classes at a high level. It’s important for me, because this is the key that allows me to access other bigger goals in my life. I hope to find a job as an administrative assistant after I finish my English class. I plan to rent a small apartment and I’m going to buy a car too.

I need to improve my English. I am searching for a job part time because I don’t speak very well. I need more practice because I want to change my language of thinking. I watch subtitled movies every night. It helps me to understand and read quickly and learn new words. I enjoy learning English.

**Emily Castro**

She has brown eyes. She has light brown hair. She is from the United States.

**Salma Danish**

I have straight black hair and my eyes are brown. My husband has black hair and brown eyes.
Gianluca Godoy: Learning English

These are some things that I’m going to do to improve my English. I want to learn writing skills and expand my vocabulary. I am going to improve my English watching movies with subtitles. My other main goal is to improve my use of apps on my phone. The application that I use is Duolingo. When I get up in the morning, I use my phone to read some news. Another thing that has helped me is talking with friends or with my cousin. I’m going to work hard on these ideas.

Zohra Hanan: My Most Important Goal

My most important goal is to complete my high school diploma in 2 years. First I am going to work on my writing, reading, and listening. I will also practice speaking English with my kids at home. I will also listen to English audios and videos to improve my listening skills. Once I improve my English and complete all advanced classes, I am going to take math and social science subjects to prepare for the GED exam. I will take my time to prepare and pass the GED exam and get my high school diploma. All these activities will be helpful for me to reach my goals.

Halal Humadi

1. I do homework, life skills, open time. I listen to YouTube in English from 1:00-2:00. I write short sentences in my notebook. I read pages from the book and translate it before bed.

2. My daughter’s name is Ninad. She is seventeen years old. She is 5 feet 3 inches tall. Her weight is 145 pounds. She has straight black hair and dark brown eyes. Everyone says she looks a lot like me.

Hanan Ibrahim

Meryam has black hair and brown eyes. She has long hair. She is 46 pounds. She is 3 feet, 6 inches tall. Akram has short black hair. He has brown eyes. He is 4 feet, 11 inches tall. He is 95 pounds. Mohammed has curly, black hair. He is 120 pounds. He is 5 feet, 7 inches tall.

Sanika Kanade: My Goals

I want to learn English. I will talk in English with my family. I will listen to audiobook[s]. I like scary books. I will watch English shows. I like Miley Cyrus. I will read children’s books. I like comic books. I want to learn English to help people and pets.

May Khalil: I Am Thankful

I am thankful for many things. The three things I am grateful for are family, friends, and technology.

First, I am grateful for my family. I am grateful for this because they always present caring and love and support me in weakness.

The next thing I am thankful for is friends because they always support me and also show love and care.

Finally, I am grateful for technology because it helps me to learn new things and minimize time to find or understand things in many fields.

For what are you grateful? During this time of year, I like to remember all the things that are truly important. I am especially thankful for family, friends, and technology.

Hajer Matous: Things for which I’m Thankful

I am thankful for many things. The three things I am grateful for are family, internet, and friends.

First, I am grateful for my family. I am grateful for this because they taught and supported me in all my life’s journey.

The next thing I am thankful for is the internet and technology because it taught me how to see everything that is going on in the world and benefit from knowledge, study and learn English while I am in this pandemic and also because it helped my children study so that time does not pass and they are without [their studies].
Finally, I am grateful for friends because they are with me in my exile and spread joy in my life. For what are you grateful? During this time of year I like to remember all the things that are truly important. I am especially thankful for my family, internet, and friends.

**Dora Menjivar**

He is 6’5” tall. His weight is 140 pounds. He has black hair and brown eyes. He is 44 years old.

**Saliha Najeeb**

I have five children, two sons and three daughters. My older son is 19 years old. He has black hair and brown eyes. He is five feet five inches tall. My little son has brown hair and brown eyes. He is five years old.

**Mona Hassan Abdoun Osman:**

Things for which I’m Thankful

I’m thankful for many things. There are three things that I am grateful for, which are my kids, my good health and my family.

First, I am grateful for my kids because they are giving meaning to my life. I have one daughter who is not only a daughter but also a sister and best friend. Then there are my sons who all give me support all of the time.

Second, I am grateful for having good health and thank God for that. I try all the time to provide my family with healthy food and to do exercises to keep us all healthy.

Finally, I am grateful for having an amazing family. They are always behind me helping and supporting me. I miss my family members who live in Egypt, so far away. I miss them very much. I miss seeing them and hugging them, especially my mama. I hope to see them soon.

In conclusion, I know all of us have different and many things to be thankful for. Let me know what you are grateful for. I’m especially thankful for my kids, our good health, and my loving family.

**Ignacia Pacheco: My Goal**

My goal is to get a job in Medical Assistance, but my biggest obstacle is that I do not speak English fluently. My second obstacle is that we are going to move to another house and I don’t have enough time to study between packing and cooking. I am trying to find a solution so I think that I will ask my other two daughters to help me with packing, and maybe I will cook once for three days each time so I can have more time to study. Anyway I must find the best solution because I must get my goal.

**Angie Rios: I Improve My English**

I am going to improve my English. I will talk to my friends in English. I will talk to my friends in English on the phone. I will listen to music in English and sing in English. I will watch TV. I will watch Days of Our Lives in English. I like to talk to the pastor in church on Wednesday night on WebEx. I read a book at the Sunday school at the church. It is in English. I read the Holy Bible at home too. My English is getting very good.

**Marta Rivera**

My brother is 30 years old, has black hair and brown eyes. My sister is 34 years old, has black hair and brown eyes. My niece is 9 years old, has black hair and brown eyes.

**Zalia Sharifi: Goals**

I want to improve my English. I will watch English TV. Also I will talk to my children at home. I will read my children books everyday. And I will write a lot of English words. I will keep a notebook of new words. Also I will listen to the radio. If I practice English everyday, my English will get better.
Amira Titay: Pollution

Pollution is a danger that threatens the earth. It can poison soils and waterways, kill plants and animals and it can also lead to many diseases that can be fatal to human beings. This is why we must take strict measures as soon as possible to save what is left.

First of all, pollution has very bad effects such as climate change, extinction of certain animals’ species and deterioration of fields. Besides all of this, pollution can cause a variety of diseases. Second of all, most of people are not aware of that jeopardy. They don’t care and they are not worried about this global warming. Pollution affected the quality of our lives at all levels.

Finally, if we continue destroying our planet, life will be unlivable for next generations. So let’s think about how to protect the air we breath, the water we drink and the land we live in.

Fenglan Wang

I am Fenglan. My mother is 80 years old. Her eyes are black. Her hair is white.

Ali Zreik: Ways to Improve My English

I want to improve my English. I can improve my English by watching movies on YouTube. I can also practice English with my wife even though it is not correct. That will help me with my confidence and speak more. I can meet up with my friends and speak English with them. I can use sticky notes all over the house and write in English the meaning of all the stuff so it can help me remember the meaning in English. Practicing more will improve my skills.

Sue Jacob’s Level 3 Beginning English Class: My Special New Community

Our English language class is an impressive group of students from around the world. While we come from many different countries and speak many different languages, we also have many things in common.

First, we are all working hard to improve ourselves and our lives to create a better future for ourselves and our children.

Second, we are all strong people, physically and emotionally.

Third, we are very busy with jobs, family, and English class.

Together, we are a human landscape of motivated people working to create a better world for our families and our community.

“I try my best. English is very important to me. It will help me. Now I can find a good job. I can understand everyone talking more easily. I can have conversations with others. I can read books and newspapers that I like in English. I can travel without the help of others. This is the path to learning in my new country.”

-Chien, LCNV Student
Volunteers of the Year

**Sajida**

Sajida came to the United States in 2016 as a refugee from Afghanistan and was referred to LCNV. Though she had basic skills from studying English in college, she learned the language she needed to thrive in Northern Virginia through LCNV’s Intensive English language program. After finishing the Intensive program, at the request of her teachers, Sajida began volunteering as a class aide, helping others as they work toward their own goals. A powerful communicator, Sajida spoke at LCNV’s 2020 A Taste of Literacy event and spoke to other students about the journey to employment. Using her multilingual skills to help others, she often translates materials, helps with class registration, and provides technical assistance to new students. She has also served as a Community Ambassador for the City of Alexandria’s COVID Response Advisory Team. Sajida is always eager to do more, generously sharing her passion and kindness and modeling for others that their success is possible and attainable. She shares, “At LCNV, I enjoy the diverse community...For me, LCNV is a place to grow, and a great place to learn from people.”

**Laurie Hayden**

A retired teacher from Arlington County Schools, Laurie Hayden started teaching at LCNV more than ten years ago. For years, she has gone above and beyond to create a rich learning environment for her students, including providing extra enrichment and practice materials, enhancing language learning by incorporating new technologies into class, and providing additional tutoring and support to students who desire more conversation practice, need to develop their decoding skills, or are preparing for their citizenship exams. Laurie shared, “It does my heart wonders when I meet a student who does not know how to speak or read in English, who later comes back to a graduation to encourage other students. I love to see when students are able to achieve their goals (a cosmetology license, citizenship, GED, driver’s license) because of their language skills.” Not only is Laurie a generous teacher, she is also a generous colleague and mentor to new instructors. She is always willing to share her knowledge and teaching materials and was an instrumental part of our transition to virtual classes, leading a Zoom basics training, modeling new strategies, participating regularly in our Professional Learning Community (PLC) on teaching remotely, and working with some instructors one-on-one to prepare them to successfully and confidently teach online.

**Karen Schroth**

After retiring from Fairfax County Public Schools, Karen joined LCNV as a volunteer class aide. She was impressed not only by the high-quality teaching and curriculum in the class, but by the sense of community the teachers, aides and students built within the classroom. Karen has volunteered for LCNV in a number of ways, including gift wrapping, arranging extra conversation partner sessions between volunteers and learners, helping with mock interviews, providing students with COVID-related resources, leading virtual book clubs for learners, and participating regularly in our Professional Learning Community (PLC). Now, as an instructor, Karen is motivated by her students. She explains, “Yesterday, at the end of class, one of my students said, ‘I learned so much today! I am so happy!’ What wonderful words for a teacher to hear...My students have a lot happening in their lives. And I know that learning English is difficult. Yet the students remain motivated and excited to learn after multiple semesters in my class. They sign up again and again to continue their learning. Seeing that ongoing dedication makes me very proud when I realize how hard they are working to improve their English.” Karen is a powerful advocate for her students, committed to helping them have the words and resources to be advocates for themselves, for example, helping them to prepare to ask questions at a Q&A with U.S. Congressman Don Beyer. “LCNV students, with their highly varied backgrounds and experiences, share important ideas that benefit their classmates and their instructors,” Karen says. “So it’s as if we are all instructors – they are teaching me new things while I am teaching them!”
Volunteer Milestones

25 Year Anniversary
Susan Clayman

20 Year Anniversary
Jan Auerbach

15 Year Anniversary
Patty Grajewski | Kristen Landry | Richard Morton

10 Year Anniversary
Karen Al-Kinani | Lidia De Las Casas | Molly Dias | Barbara Glotfelty | Terry Hermann | Alana Landey | Christie Phillips | Robert Tiemann | Janna Unterzuber

5 Year Anniversary

436 LCNV volunteers gave 16,344 hours of service in 2020-2021!

800+ Hours of Service, 2020-2021
Kobi Carter

500+ Hours of Service, 2020-2021
Laurie Hayden

400+ Hours of Service, 2020-2021
Mauri Sleevi

300+ Hours of Service, 2020-2021
Stacey Becker | Linda Johnsen | Kathleen McCleary | William Meara | Karen Schroth | Anuradha Srirangarajan | Loren Zander

200+ Hours of Service, 2020-2021
Clare Anderson | Margaret Breen | Paul Byrne | Krista Carlson | Ida Draim | Jane Michaels | Elizabeth Nelson | Stacy O’Connor | Pamela Schmoll | Samantha Strauss

100+ Hours of Service, 2020-2021
Christina Cho | Susan Clayman | Sherri Coles | Astrid Dejesus Rivera | Glen Finland | Margaret Frankel | Christopher Hrdy | Julie Kehrli | Ayuko Kimura-Fay | Robin Lundgren | Maurice Negrin | Sandra Olson | Susan Pettay | Shannon Smith | Jody Sweet | Maria Velez | Isabel Walls | Debra Willen | Mary Ann Wilson | Cortney Witmer | Chris Wollenberg | Christopher Zeleznik

Want to learn more about volunteering with LCNV?
Contact volunteers@lcnv.org or call (703) 237-0866 x116.
Outstanding Instructor Recognitions

Each year, LCNV learners are invited to thank their instructors by nominating them for an Outstanding Instructor Recognition. LCNV thanks every instructor for their hard work, and for their dedication and passion for adult literacy in Northern Virginia. Enjoy these words straight from our learners.

Instructor: Ludette Agura
Student: Yessica Cruz Polo

Patient, engages students, punctual, [and] nice.

Instructors: Clare Anderson and Anuradha Srirangarajan
Student: Carlos Alberto Mayorga

My teachers are very supportive. Mrs. Srirangarajan has an excellent pedagogical guideline and for foreign students is practical and spontaneous. Great skills.

Instructor: Stacey Becker
Student: Meijun Pan

My teacher is a very friendly person. She always helps me patiently and guides me professionally. Every time I have a class with her, I am very happy.

Instructors: Stacey Becker, Ida Draim, and Maurie Negrin
Student: Jamshid Mirzabaev

All the teachers I have listed are masters of their professions. They take into account the opinions of all students and conduct their classes. They always help all their students, without any comparison. They treat all students the same way without any distinction.

Instructors: Stacey Becker, Kathleen McCleary, Ellen Morgenstern and Karen Schroth
Student: Bahija Laanani

I have 4 teachers [at] LCNV. I like them because they are friendly and patient, learning and listening when I ask questions. I want to thank you so much for your hard work and your time.

Instructors: Stacey Becker, Kathleen McCleary, Karen Schrroth, and Laurie Tracy
Student: Oksana Vishniauskaite

Thank you so much for all of my teachers. I am so glad [to] be with [these] teachers. They are very patient with us, very kind. All of my teachers for me [are] more than just teachers. Thanks so much for [the] chance [to] join your classes.

Instructors: Stacey Becker, Kathleen McCleary, Lisa Sborofsky, and Karen Schroth
Student: Ignacia Pacheco

I am so thankful [that] God permits me [to be] introduced [to] this group. All my teachers are patient, kind and with great knowledge. They explain the lessons carefully and speak slowly so I can understand. All of them are very professional. They [make] our class very interesting with things. Finally I just want to say that even though I am the oldest student in my class (73 years old) the teachers are so good and patient that I have learned a lot and I [am] thankful for that. I was lucky enough to have four excellent teachers, with great professionalism, responsibility, and general culture. It was easy to learn English with them [with] their incredible patience, high human qualities and excellent and paused pronunciation that allowed a quick understanding even though it was such a heterogeneous group of different nationalities and
pronunciations. The appropriate and timely method of making us work in groups, made us not only learn English but also establish nice student relationships. I think they deserve a special recognition.

Instructor: Christine Bobal  
Student: Roua Abdalla

Ms. Christine is a perfect teacher for English teaching. She always makes sure the students understand every detail about the vocabulary that she taught to them. I recommend her to teach new students and they will be happy to have her.

Instructor: Suzan Borno  
Student: Patricia Arias

She tries to explain to you [so] that you understand.  
Her class is not boring.  
She uses instruments to explain to you.

Instructor: Suzan Borno  
Student: Miguel Guerrero

Because she always tries to teach and explain exactly everything that we learn and also because she generates a lot of trust and is a good person to give advice about how to use words and when to use words and also gives us homework so we can learn more each day.

Instructor: Margaret Breen  
Student: Fany Medina

[I] encourage [you] for your dedication and support for your students. For your patience, for your performance in your work, for your ability to explain and make the class easy.

Instructors: Margaret Breen and Krista Carlson  
Student: Isabel Mata

First of all, [I] want to congratulate Teacher Margaret for her attention and dedication to the students.  
Teacher Krista is also a person who has been very interested in the students learning English well, she helps a lot with verbs. I am very happy and encouraged to learn, [and] thank them for their patience.

Instructors: Bob Brown, Vaishali Deshpande, and Anita Raghavan  
Student: Hyeshin Kim

My teachers gave prompt feedback. They helped me to get a new direction.

Instructor: Kobi Carter  
Student: Zenaida Bastidas De Pacheco

I think Professor Kobi Carter is magnificent. She has many qualities that allow her to clearly express all the knowledge of the English language that she dominates. She is very expressive and uses all the possible resources that the audio visual program offers her, she enriches it with its own resources, which in my opinion are excellent. She induces the student to use the same content if he does not understand by listening, she writes it to him, she exemplifies [it] herself. She is very responsible and something that I liked was her personal appearance that was always neat.

Instructor: Kobi Carter  
Student: Heesook Kang

She is more than a teacher. She tries to understand learners and help them with sincerity, not just delivering knowledge and teaching English.

Instructor: Kobi Carter  
Nominating Instructor: Stacy O’Connor

I recognize Kobi for her outstanding work and dedication to creating a motivating class environment. Kobi has spent many hours using technology to create activities that are engaging, challenging, and reinforce the curriculum in a new format.

Instructors: Kobi Carter and Lisa Crothers-Vermette  
Student: Sohyun Yun

They are good [at] teaching us.
Instructor: Stan Citron  
Student: Rahel Debretsion

He is an excellent teacher. He teaches us with an easy way. He gives us more time [than just] the regular scheduled time.

Instructor: Stan Citron  
Student: Felicia Luciana Floriani de Otero

Mr. Stan Citron is an excellent teacher and great person who gives his best in each class, with patience and dedication. His classes are always well planned and organized. He goes above and beyond to make classes thorough, dynamic and fun. We all participate in a friendly and respectful environment. Stan uses a lot of his personal time to create different materials and activities for us, such as "Funny Friday", when we practice conversation and other topics. Besides Funny Friday (extra day he offers), he creates his own website for us (padlet) with information, videos, stories, creative and helpful activities.

I am very happy and thankful [to be] in his classes!!!

Instructor: Stan Citron  
Student: Elvis Melo

He is very patient. He shows interest in our learning. He makes me feel [without shame] when he corrects my mistakes.

Instructor: Stan Citron  
Student: Lan Phuong

[She] teaches good, she teach[es] [us to] understand.

Instructor: Jackie Corkins  
Student: Julia Ajak

She deserves to be recognized because she was an excellent teacher and a great mentor. I learned a lot from my experience with her. Ms. Jackie Corkins is supportive and undeniably a great communicator. Her delivery of message was outstanding, I really understood her.
Instructor: Jackie Corkins  
Student: Rosa Avalos

[She] is dynamic, [she] makes one participate, and if wrong, [you are] corrected by an excellent teacher.

Instructor: Jackie Corkins  
Student: Elsa Lilian Rivero Claros

She is a very nice, and patient teacher. I feel very comfortable in class because our classes are interesting and always different. I like Mrs. Jackie and I hope to continue with her in the next class. Thanks for helping us with your time. I like her classes because she gives us a lot of confidence to express ourselves even without speaking English well.

Instructor: Jackie Corkins  
Student: Ernidar Rusli

Ms. Jackie is the best teacher ever that I know. She is friendly, she teaches us with her heart. She is very creative.

Instructor: Jackie Corkins  
Student: Silvia Villarruel

She is an amazing teacher. She has big patience. She helps all the students to improve their English.

Instructors: Jackie Corkins and Samantha Strauss  
Student: Samed Agirbas

They are good teachers for us.

Instructor: Lisa Crothers-Vermette  
Student: Seonhee Oh

1. She is trying to do her best to provide for what students need, such as inviting guests from different fields and experts.
2. [She] prepares a variety of materials.
3. [She is] very kind to support what each student needs.
4. [She has a] very open mind and is honest.
5. [She is] very intelligent.

Instructors: Astrid Dejesus Rivera, Jody Sweet, and Isabel Walls  
Student: Wendy Y. Rivera

She is a very nice person [and] excellent teacher. I learned a lot in this season. I appreciate the time and the patience to teach. Also Astrid and Isabel, thank you. God blessed [me with your] dedication.

Instructor: Vaishali Deshpande  
Student: Jeonghee Hong

She is a genius to teach. And she is very skillful and efficient.

Instructor: Vaishali Deshpande  
Student: Heesook Kang

She was passionate in her teaching and prepared well for every class.

Instructor: Vaishali Deshpande  
Student: Sneha Sharma

[She has] good teaching skills.

Instructor: Vaishali Deshpande  
Student: Kristin Yoon

She was prepared for the class and coordinated the class with fruitful time allocation.

Instructors: Nikoleta Dineen, Margaret Gregory, and Mariam Khan  
Student: Felicia Luciana Floriani de Otero

They are so helpful, they always help us with patience, and try [to make sure] that each student understands every topic. They are excellent people, very dedicated!! Thank you so much!!!!!

Instructor: Ida Draim  
Student: Roua Abdalla

Ms. Ida is [an] outstanding teacher because she understands what is important to the students and how to deliver the English language to them. She is also patient with the students in terms of submitting their homework and tests. In conclusion, I really
recommend her to be a number one teacher to teach people who speak English as a second language.

**Instructor: Ida Draim**  
**Student: Angela Ramirez**

She is an excellent teacher. I really like her classes.

**Instructors: Ida Draim and James Wallar**  
**Student: Jamshid Mirzabaev**

My teachers Ida and James help me to develop my English. They are very kind, clever and experienced teachers. My classmates and I respect our teachers [and] they teach us very correctly and targeted.

**Instructor: Darlene Fahrenkrug**  
**Student: Katy Capacityachi**

She's a very nice teacher. She corrects you a lot and when teaching you, she gives you many examples.

**Instructor: Darlene Fahrenkrug**  
**Student: Trino Gutierrez**

She is a good teacher, helps us a lot and we learn and enjoy during all the class time.

**Instructor: Darlene Fahrenkrug**  
**Student: Hajer Matous**

Miss Darlene is a wonderful teacher. Her method of teaching is excellent. She communicates information to you in a beautiful way. She gave us many sentences that I did not know. I benefited a lot from her. She is an excellent teacher.

**Instructor: Darlene Fahrenkrug**  
**Student: Ghousia Sargand**

[He] listens to students. [He] makes time for each student. My teacher knew more about using online technology.

**Instructor: Darlene Fahrenkrug**  
**Student: Norkris del Carmen Figuera**

Excellent teacher, I would like to continue in class with [my] teacher, Darlene Fahrenkrug.

**Instructor: Eileen Foxwell**  
**Nominating Instructor: Darlene Fahrenkrug**

Eileen was the class aide for the T/Th Family Learning Program at Glasgow Middle School. She was warm, caring, and positive with learners each week. Eileen welcomes the class and answers questions in the chat box. She helps to guide discussions in breakout rooms and provides additional support during skills activities. In addition, she takes notes on attendance and classwork and has met with me outside of classes to present ideas and suggestions. Eileen has a wealth of knowledge from her educational background and is more than willing to share it in a learner-centered way.

**Instructors: Margaret Gregory and Mariam Khan**  
**Student: Felicia Luciana Floriani de Otero**

They help us very much. They clarify any doubt. They are excellent, dedicated and kind!!!

**Instructor: Laurie Hayden**  
**Student: Silvia Freundt**

Because she is a great human being who understands the way her students learn, [and] follows it [by] creating strong links between each other. Laurie is very professional and friendly. Laurie has pedagogical skills and she is sensitive to my learning capacity. Laurie not only helps [us] to speak English, but [she] inspired me to speak. Thank you, Laurie.

**Instructor: Laurie Hayden**  
**Student: Ilham Harras**

I have never seen or met someone like her. She is the best. She's kind, patient, and smart. I love what she did for me. I'm so thankful.
Instructor: Christopher Hrdy
Student: Guillermo Escobar

[He is] hard working. Good teaching skills.

Instructor: Christopher Hrdy
Student: Kyung Moon

He is [the] best teacher who I have met.
He has good teaching skills and he encourage[s] us.

Instructor: Christopher Hrdy
Student: Daniela Pineda

He is a person who knows how to transmit his knowledge. His classes are not boring, they are very didactic and practical so that teaching is faster and easier.

I think he is a very dedicated and patient teacher and he always had the topics and classes prepared.

Instructor: Sue Jacob
Student: Shamsiya Awol

She is the best teacher. I like the way she teaches. She motivates me to learn more. She change[d] me. Thank you, Sue.

Instructor: Sue Jacob
Student: Samah Gad

She is very patient and clever.

Instructor: Sue Jacob
Student: Luisa Londono

She respects all students and she has a good method to teach English.

Instructor: Sue Jacob
Student: Jamila Mousavi

She is a bunch of positive energy.

Instructor: Linda Johnsen
Nominating Instructor: Jane Michaels

Linda Johnsen is a terrific teaching team partner. As a former French teacher, she brings so much experience and insight to our team effort and has a gift for organizing our planning efforts and laying the groundwork for each semester. Linda has an eye for innovation, loves to try new ideas and encourages us to adopt new technologies. Her slide presentations are amazing, filled with so much effort, care and fun.

Instructors: Linda Johnsen, Kathleen McCleary, and Jane Michaels
Student: Zenaida Bastidas De Pacheco

These three teachers are excellent and the success of the classes was the connection they maintained to make classes dynamic, full of all kinds of knowledge, and very fun.

Instructors: Linda Johnsen, Kathleen McCleary, and Jane Michaels
Student: Nancy Gonzalez

They want to learn, speak, listen and enjoy very much with their students.

Instructors: Linda Johnsen, Kathleen McCleary, and Jane Michaels
Student: Eka Kobuladze

My teachers are very professional.

I am very grateful for their dedication and effort. They are teaching us very well. Their lessons are very interesting and we get a lot of information. I am happy to be their student. They are organized, interesting, [and] teach very well. They are the best teachers.

Instructors: Linda Johnsen, Kathleen McCleary, and Jane Michaels
Student: Myrjana Lika

They are warm and caring. They work hard and [are] smart. Together [we] learned new technologies (Zoom, flipgrid etc.) and [they] voluntarily have worked overtime [so we can] improve our skills in English.
Instructors: Linda Johnsen, Kathleen McCleary, and Jane Michaels
Student: Sharling Tellez

I couldn’t choose just one teacher and I would like to include the volunteers. I’m so happy and grateful [for] their professionalism, punctuality, pedagogy, personality, candidness, courtesy, [and] in summary, love for teaching and empathy with us.

Instructors: Linda Johnsen, Kathleen McCleary, and Jane Michaels
Student: Santos Valle

All of these teachers are very supportive to all students. They are very patient and go above and beyond to help all [of] us. It is a bless[ing] to have them.

Instructors: Margaret Kepley and Jenny Kronovet
Student: Zubaida Sadat

They have very good teaching skills.

Instructor: Kathleen McCleary
Nominating Instructor: Jane Michaels

Kathleen McCleary is a fabulous team teaching partner. Her background as a writer and novelist is such a benefit in helping students with written expression. Her lessons are extremely creative, and it’s apparent she spends a lot of time researching short videos and articles which prompt great class discussions. Kathleen also is very flexible, able to make last-minute adjustments in picking up where another teacher hasn’t quite finished, or where students need additional practice.

Instructors: Kathleen McCleary and Karen Schroth
Student: Fruzan Kabulzad

My teachers [are] the best. They are working very hard. I appreciate all my teachers, especially Miss Kathleen and Karen. Thank you I am so happy [because] of my teachers.

Instructors: Kathleen McCleary and Karen Schroth
Student: Ngoc Ngo

They speak clearly and slowly so it is easy to learn from them.

Instructor: Bill Meara
Student: Catalina Martínez

My teacher is a person that understands much about our culture. He made our classes very pleasant. Our teacher always considers our opinions. Our teacher makes our classes very fun and interesting.

Instructors: Bill Meara, Monica Nunez, Karina Solis
Student: Gloria Ramirez

Teacher Bill has an excellent method to teach us. Likewise, Monica and Karina are very good, and have a lot of passion and very good methods to explain [to] us. [Thank you to] LCNV also for supporting us and giving us this great opportunity to all the people who need it. A million thanks.

Instructor: Jane Michaels
Student: Eka Kobuladze

My teacher is [a] very interesting person. She explained our English lessons. We often practice English.
She gives [a] to boost my English knowledge.
Instructor: Jane Michaels
Nominating Instructor: Mindi Weisenbloom

She keeps getting better and better. She is innovative. Most importantly, she’s kind.

Instructor: Wafa Misellati
Student: Veronica Montes Ortuno

Wafa is a patient person who knows how to teach English easily. Her face-to-face and Zoom classes are nice. I like how she teaches and she is a very good teacher.

Instructor: Ellen Morgenstern
Student: Jeongyoon Kim

I met Ellen and chatted every Wednesday. She is a teacher who made me feel how kind and generous Americans are. She helped me start my immigration life smoothly. I am very grateful to her.

Instructor: Elizabeth Nelson
Student: Martha Espinosa

I want to express my gratitude to my teacher for her dedication, patience and affection in teaching. I feel that she has provided me with very important tools and knowledge in all classes. Thanks to your professionalism that has allowed me to learn more everyday.

Instructor: Stacy O’Connor
Student: Zenaida Bastidas De Pacheco

[My] teacher Stacy is very responsible, she has mastery of the program content. She frequently uses audio visual resources.

Instructor: Jackie Park
Student: Aicha Ait Said

She is a very good teacher because she takes enough time to explain everything.

Instructor: Jackie Park
Student: Parwana Azizi

She is a good teacher and helped us a lot.

Instructor: Jackie Park
Student: Dora Menjivar

I recommend Jackie as a good teacher to teach. I think that because of her performance in the class with the students. She explains well and I understand her.

Instructor: Jackie Park
Student: Marta Rivera

[She] is excellent at teaching and dynamic and responsible.

Instructor: Jackie Park
Student: Fenglan Wang

[She is a] hard worker and patient.

Instructors: Jackie Park and Chris Wollenberg
Student: Koos Yusuf

Jackie is really good when she is trying to get us to understand something. Chris is great when it comes to reading conversation. They are both patient!!

Instructor: Sabrin Said
Student: Noha Soliman

She is excellent.

Instructor: Cynthia Sadur
Student: Maria Elena

[She is a] very good teacher. I thank you for your patience and kindness.

Instructor: Cynthia Sadur
Student: Aiman Khalid

Mrs. Cindy is a very nice teacher. She is always positive and helpful. Her method of teaching is easy. I am grateful to have her as my teacher!

Instructor: Cynthia Sadur
Student: Sarah Rahoumah

She is elegant in her dealings with us. She cares for each one of us individually. She makes a good
effort with us, and I understand her. I do not feel ashamed because I do not understand. I feel safe. She supports us morally and teaches. [I give] her full appreciation and thanks.

**Instructor: Patricia Sawyer**  
**Student: Leydi Gramajo Reyes**

She is very nice.

**Instructor: Patricia Sawyer**  
**Student: Zulma Morales**

She is a great teacher and really respectful person.

**Instructor: Patricia Sawyer**  
**Student: Doris Vicente Gómez**

[She is] the best teacher. I’m loved.

**Instructor: Patricia Sawyer**  
**Student: Karla Zeballos**

[She is] kind and patient.

**Instructor: Patricia Sawyer**  
**Student: Áda Escobar Ramos**

[She is] responsible, serious and organized.

**Instructor: Karen Schroth**  
**Student: Jeongyoon Kim**

I could open my mouth, send an e-mail to my child’s teacher, and listen to my neighbor’s story because of her. I was so lucky that the first English teacher I met in my immigrant life was Karen. I send her infinite trust and gratitude.

**Instructors: Maura Sleevi and Christopher Zeleznik**  
**Student: Marcelino Moreno**

Christopher and Maura are committed and responsible teachers. I have learned with them. They are patient and have a good teaching methodology. Thank you for teaching me English.

**Instructor: Anuradha Srirangarajan**  
**Student: Linda Amaya**

[My] teacher, Anu, explains very [well]. She has much patience. She motivated me and my classmates.

**Instructor: Jody Sweet**  
**Student: Anmilsy Betancourt**

I love her way of teaching. She is cheerful and funny. She has a lot of patience and energy.

**Instructor: Jody Sweet**  
**Student: Gildaro Orellana**

She is patient. She strives to teach. She is very fun. I like the methods she uses. Her class is very dynamic.

**Instructor: Mindi Weisenbloom**  
**Nominated Instructor: Jane Michaels**

My co-teacher Mindi Weisenbloom is an outstanding volunteer. She brings so much dedication and enthusiasm to every class. She is very perceptive of students’ needs and goes the extra mile to encourage and support everyone. Mindi is willing to try anything I propose and brings lots of good ideas to the table, as well. Her sense of humor makes our class a fun place to learn and grow as a community.

**Instructor: Sheila Weiss**  
**Student: Konjit Legesse**

She is nice and good for all of us, the way she teaches us and her approach. She is experienced.

**Instructor: Sheila Weiss**  
**Student: Konjit Legesse**

She is nice and helps to transfer her knowledge. I appreciate [the] way [she] teaches.
Instructor: Sheila Weiss  
Student: Mitin Mengistu

She is very kind, passionate, patient and awesome teacher.

Instructor: Sheila Weiss  
Student: Bezauayehu Tadege

Because she helps us learn, I recommend she [teaches] more students because she helps me very much.

Instructor: Mary Wilson  
Nominating Instructor: Darlene Fahrenkrug

Mary was an integral part of my onboarding as an LCNV instructor. Although she was more than busy enough between teaching the M/W Family Learning Program class and a recent promotion at her own day job, she graciously allowed me to observe two classes with her. In addition, she shared 2 of her powerpoints with me, met with me to discuss the class, and provided thoughtful advice when I asked questions about classroom management. The lessons that I observed her teach had clear, relevant objectives and were taught with empathy and humor. Learners were engaged and built the foundation for a classroom community.

Instructor: Mary Wilson  
Student: Claudia Nerio

She is a teacher with a lot of patience [and] explains the class very well. She makes the class very entertaining.

Instructors: Cortney Witmer and Loren Zander  
Student: Faiza Boukemidja

Our teachers are friendly and very patient. They give a chance to all students to participate. They are at our disposal any time, even after school hours. I admit to having sent questions several times about sentences or courses to my teachers, and I always received the answers very quickly. Also, if the lesson has not been understood by the students, even just one student, she insists on explaining the course until everyone understands the course. I am satisfied with LCNV. I hope I continue with this establishment.

Instructor: Loren Zander  
Student: Songi Choi

[She is] very passionate and very interested in students. [She] explained English easily and above all, Lauren’s voice was good to hear.

Instructor: Loren Zander  
Student: Iman Mohamed

Because I understand it, I wish progress and excellence.

Instructor: Loren Zander  
Instructor: Jane Price

Loren is always pleasant, energetic, and well organized. She is an excellent teacher to work with as a class aide.

Instructor: Loren Zander  
Student: Zalia Sharifi

Excellent teacher with very good lessons.

*This year, books were distributed via curbside pick-up due to COVID-19 safety regulations requiring masks and social distancing.*
Outstanding Student Recognitions

LCNV’s adult English language learners come from 90 different countries and speak 50 different languages. LCNV’s instructors have the opportunity to celebrate some of these remarkable learners with these Outstanding Student Recognitions.

Student: Roua Abdalla
Instructors: Stacey Becker, Christine Bobal, Marie Cavanaugh, Ida Draim, Maurie Negrin, and Ann Niederpruem

We would like to acknowledge Roua Abdalla as an outstanding student. Roua came to the U.S. from the Sudan in 2002, when she was 16. Roua has the gift of joyfulness. During both Fall and Spring Semesters, whenever she has joined class, it has been with a smile on her face and a happy glow in her eyes. Roua clearly enjoys learning English and has become an excellent English speaker. She has entertained the class with wonderful stories about her childhood in the Sudan, her family and her life in the U.S., often inspiring her classmates to tell their own stories. Roua also has shared her practical knowledge, gained from living in the U.S. for close to 20 years, during our class units on banking, health and jobs. She has taken great pride in her written assignments and their quality has been very high. When she reads other writers’ passages and poetry, she demonstrates an understanding of their meaning and significance and often volunteers her thoughts and impressions. We feel very grateful to have had a joyful and positive student like Roua in our class.

Student: Sara Aldaz
Instructor: Bill Meara

Sara arrived in this country just days before the start of our classes on October 5, 2020. While still coping with adjustment and culture shock, she threw herself into the study of English. She took every opportunity to learn and practice. She asked more questions than anyone else in the class. Her attendance was the best in the class, and she consistently turned in high-quality written homework. She requested additional reading material. Sara is a survivor of COVID-19 and she was willing to share with her classmates her experiences with the virus; she did so in English, once again seizing an opportunity to improve her language skill. Sara is an outstanding student, well on her way to achieving her goal of fluency in English.

Student: Lucila Arevalo
Instructors: Margaret Breen and Krista Carlson

We are happy to recognize Lucila Arevalo for the Literacy Council’s 2021 Outstanding Student Recognition Award. She has been our student for several years and, during that time, she has impressed us with her desire to improve her English. Lucila just doesn’t give up. She is persistent. This is what it takes to master a second language. Despite leading a very busy life with work and family, Lucila comes to class each night full of energy for learning.

This year on Zoom, Lucila has been especially helpful to newer students. Her smile is contagious. Lucila is a positive role-model for her fellow classmates.

We feel fortunate to teach Lucila and watch the progress she has made. She should be proud of her accomplishments. We respect and admire Lucila and wish her great success and happiness in the future.

Student: Mursal Bawar
Instructors: Stacey Becker, Christine Bobal, Marie Cavanaugh, Ida Draim, Maurie Negrin, and Ann Niederpruem

We would like to acknowledge Mursal as an outstanding student. Mursal came to the U.S. from Afghanistan in March 2020. During both Fall and Spring Semesters, Mursal has greatly impressed us with her intelligence, enthusiasm and hard work. She is often the first to volunteer to read a passage or answer a question and she does so flawlessly. Mursal typically has submitted her writing assignments the earliest of any student and her submissions have been beautifully written, thoughtful and heartwarming. Because she concentrates so deeply in class, Mursal has been the one to speak up when there is something that
the teacher has appeared to have missed or not explained fully. She also has discovered several errors in the Level 3 post-tests early enough for corrections to be made and the tests redistributed. As a result of her dedication and love of learning, Mursal has developed into a confident and eloquent English speaker and graceful reader of passages and poetry. She is also a very caring individual, who finds joy in bonding with and helping others—both inside and outside of class. We have greatly appreciated Mursal’s participation in our class.

Students: Kongit Baysa, Elizabet Berryman, Neemat Hussein, and Santos Rubio
Instructor: Christina Cho

They were really passionate and hard-working students. Most of them were very busy working and taking care of their children at the same time. Many times they joined with their children due to lack of help of childcare. Sometimes, bad wifi connection disturbed the class, but they kept on concentrating on the class and tried their best to adapt to this new circumstance. Despite all those obstacles, they tried to attend the class and concentrated at all times. They were willing to do much homework for practice. I really appreciate them and I feel that I was very lucky.

Students: Anmilsy Betancourt, Piedad Blanco, Andrea Cespedes, Hanan Ibrahim, Cecy Lopez, Feruzakhon Mirzabaeva, Gildaro Orellana Velarde, Gloria Ramirez, Wendy Rivera, and Marwa Shtawa
Instructors: Astrid deJesus Rivera, Jody Sweet, and Isabel Walls

Most Energetic: Anmilsy Betancourt

Anmilsy is always ready for a new adventure and a new lesson. She’s excited to jump in and try new things…. new lessons, exercises and games. She’ll even make her own new adventures and ways of learning…like taking the class on an outing we mapped around the cherry blossoms. Even for that lesson, she brought her book and was ready to learn….even when out having fun! Don’t stop having fun as you learn English, Anmilsy.

Most Encouraging and Helpful to Other People: Piedad Blanco

Zoom classes are not always easy. It can be quite difficult to hear students. But we could always hear one student….ready with an answer to help her fellow students. Whispering encouragement and willing to help others out. And her answers were right! So she was a “teacher”. Sometimes helpful to a fault — whispering some quick advice in Spanish — she quickly corrected with the biggest, brightest smile and everyone saw it every day. Keep smiling, Piedad!

Best Person to Work With on a Project: Andrea Cespedes

Working on a team project, some people jump right up and start talking and taking charge. But others take a moment to think about the project, listening to others, and offering their own ideas. And they are the people who always get along with others, working hard and cooperating with everyone, and doing whatever is required to do the best project possible: reading, writing, taking notes, annotating. We would always want you on our team projects, Andrea.

Most Improved: Hanan Ibrahim

Hanan is quiet — I say that about many students. But even though she is quiet, I can tell Hanan has really improved her English all areas. And we have been so impressed with how well she is doing and how much she understands. Her English is growing day by day. And it never hurts to have the very best smile. She wins that award. Keep smiling, Hanan. English and a great smile will take you a long way.

Most Courage and Perseverence: Cecy Lopez

Cecy was missing in action from time to time, but when she came, she was a dynamo. She jumped right in and volunteered to read just about anything. And when she started, she really persevered. She was never afraid to tackle a lesson, even if she has missed a few. We wish she were in all classes when we asked for volunteers. We knew we’d have an active class when we saw you, Cecy.
Problem Solver: Feruzakhon Mirzabaeva

We think Feruzakhon is common sense smart - good sense and good judgment in practical matters. It is sometimes tough to get students to answer “opinion questions” and that is understandable when language can be a barrier. But when Feruzakhon was in class, it was easy to call on her because she understood quickly and offered a thoughtful response, good commonsense answers in good English. She was always easily understood. Feruzakhon was a good student with a good brain and she was so easy to have in class. Keep up your English, Feruzakhon.

Most Entertaining: Gildaro Orellana Velarde

Let’s be honest, grammar classes aren’t always fun and there is much serious work to be done when studying English. But all work and no fun is not a good way to learn. So, every class needs someone to bring humor and laughter at the right time. Gildaro knows how to work hard....in all aspects of his life. But he also knows how to make people laugh in the nicest way. Not loud and noisy- just quietly funny and every class he gave us a good laugh. Never stop making people laugh, Gildaro. You are very good at it.

Hardest Fighter: Gloria Ramirez

Even though she had a hard time with her technology, Gloria never gave up. We’d lose her and know that she would quickly reboot, restart and sign right in again as if she never skipped a beat. Her tenacity was inspirational. She recreated her beloved hometown Cochabamba in the New World during our exercise creating dreamtowns. Love for your country means love and respect for others and their heritage. You go Gloria!

Most Dedicated Student: Wendy Y. Rivera

Wendy has worked the hardest of any student all session. She never missed a homework assignment. Even over a weekend she was always the first to return her work, always the first to complete the pre/post test. And she never just “raced through” to complete. She had perfect scores on every assignment. Teachers always appreciate the dedicated student who works hard – all the time. She’s quiet....but she is very smart and knows more than she thinks she does. Wendy’s effort will take her far. Don’t give up Wendy....you’re doing great!

Most Likely to Start Her Own Business: Marwa Shtawa

Marwa knew exactly how she wanted English learning to light her path. She spoke right up and told us she wanted to be a successful businesswoman and I have no doubt she will be. She is a strong, intelligent woman who was never afraid to ask questions when she did not understand and persisted until she did. Ready to take on new challenges and never give up - that’s what Marwa brought to our class. Best of Luck, Marwa!

Student: Basira Haleemi
Instructors: Jennifer Kronovet and Susan Pettey

We nominate Basira Haleemi for an LCNV student recognition. Basira is thoughtful and curious, and eager to learn English. She has made significant progress in reading and speaking since she began class this year. When doing exercises in class, we can almost see the wheels in her brain turning as she considers the problem at hand! Basira is a quick learner. In two short months, her sentences have gotten longer and more complex. When she makes a mistake, she can usually self-correct before we teachers can even mention it.

In addition to her quick mind, Basira has a ready smile, and helps other students if she is able.

Student: Farida Hashmet
Instructors: Jennifer Kronovet and Susan Pettey

We nominate Farida Hashmat for LCNV student recognition. Farida moved to the US with her family from Afghanistan. She tells us that she was a journalist there, and wants to learn English so that she can resume her career here.

Farida is always the first student in our Beginner 1 class, with perfect attendance. Her enthusiasm and dedication show in her studies. She has a strong work ethic, even when she is tired and fasting for Ramadan.

Farida’s reading and conversation skills have improved considerably in the 2020-2021 class year. We hope that she continues her lessons, and that LCNV can help her reach her goals.

She has a positive attitude, and is quick to help others in class, if she is able.
**Student: Berta Jaramillo**  
**Instructor: Bill Meara**

I nominate Berta Jaramillo for special recognition. From the very first day Berta has shown deep dedication to the course, and to her goals of passing the language examination for American citizenship and achieving fluency in English. She always arrives early in class and has the best attendance record in our group. She is the only student who ALWAYS turns in homework; her writing assignments show that she gives deep thought to all her assignments. She bases her writing on her life experience and through these assignments shares her experiences with everyone in the class. I can -- through the Zoom screen -- see that Berta is working as hard as possible to take in all of the lessons of each class. She often asks for additional examples of English word usage. She went the extra mile and bought an English-Spanish dictionary in an effort to improve her vocabulary. She has served as an excellent example for the other students in our course and their respect for her is evident in the way that they address her (Doña Berta). She is, in short, the ideal language learner. She is deeply deserving of special recognition.

**Student: Eka Kobuladze**  
**Instructor: Kathleen McCleary**

Eka is a warm, hard-working student who listens diligently, asks good questions, and always has a friendly smile for her teachers and classmates. A doctor in her native Georgia, Eka has been a great asset to our class, especially when we studied health and talked about the COVID pandemic. Eka completed intensive medical training while attending our English class, and plans to work as a phlebotomist while continuing her education to practice medicine here. When Dr. Scott Schroth visited our class to discuss the COVID vaccine, Eka asked smart questions that benefitted the whole class. She is always eager to tackle anything and willing to try new things, whether it’s giving a review of a video we just watched or reading a difficult paragraph aloud. Eka provides friendly encouragement to her classmates, and always expresses appreciation to her teachers. We have been so lucky to have her in our class this year.

**Student: Angela Maria Ramirez**  
**Instructors: Stacey Becker, Christine Bobal, Marie Cavanaugh, Ida Draim, Maurie Negrin, and Ann Niederpruem**

We would like to acknowledge Angela as an outstanding student. Angela is from Colombia and has been in the U.S for over 20 years. She is a dedicated and motivated student. She missed just 2 classes during the Spring Semester. Angela is a delight in class and always attentive with a curious smile. She is very thoughtful in class and it is heartwarming to watch how she sits back and observes the chaos zoom creates when 14 students want to respond to a question. However, through the noise, and when she is certain of an answer, she quietly but firmly responds, always with the right answer. During this Spring Semester, her reading, comprehension, and pronunciation have greatly improved, as has her self-confidence. We feel very fortunate to have had Angela as a student in our class this term.

**Student: Kyung Moon**  
**Instructor: Christopher Hrdy**  

She is an excellent contributor during class, she is focused and dedicated, and she always does her very best.

**Student: Kyung Moon**  
**Instructor: Jack Reickel**

She was such a positive contributor all semester long—both calm and energetic.

**Student: Chien Nguyen**  
**Instructor: Laurie Hayden**

Learning English as a second language is clearly difficult as an adult. But learning English online requires a tremendous amount of dedication.

I have been itching to recommend Chien Nguyen for this recognition. Since the start of our teaching on Zoom fourteen months ago, Chien has attended 261 classes online. That’s rather incredible and a true testament to her dedication.

Some activities, like essays, videos and workbook assignments, may seem mundane. But to Chien, these were completed with an attention to detail that was always impressive. Her eagerness to learn requires a constant variety of activities suitable to her rapidly advancing levels. As she became more comfortable with Zoom, she would
chat and annotate with ease. Her writing skills and the scope of her vocabulary have grown quickly. But most satisfying for her is the effort and success she found with her pronunciation. Many of the sounds not found in her native language can now be articulated very clearly. It seems to me the Literacy Council was designed for students as motivated as Chien Nguyen.

**Student: Salma Oraal**  
**Instructors: Stacey Becker, Ida Draim, Maurie Negrin and Ann Niederpruem**

We would like to acknowledge Salma as an outstanding student. Salma came to the U.S. just two years ago from Afghanistan. As a member of our Spring Semester class, Salma has really put her heart into her English studies and has blossomed into an excellent student. She has worked hard on her vocabulary skills and has very impressive reading comprehension. She has strengthened her conversation skills by providing us with wonderful insights into her life - both in Afghanistan and in the U.S. When she has known something about a topic or person that we are discussing, like Nelson Mandela, she has informed us. Salma has been a very good listener during class and has been able to accurately continue reading a passage or completing an exercise where the preceding student left off. In addition to her English fluency skills, Salma has a thankful heart and often expresses her gratitude for the learning opportunity presented by our classes. It has been a pleasure to have Salma in our class.

**Student: Waleska Ortega**  
**Instructor: Susan Jacob**

There are many reasons to recognize Waleska’s outstanding work. First, she is a dedicated student as demonstrated by her excellent attendance record and her strong commitment to completing homework assignments. Second, Waleska challenges herself in class and is always willing to volunteer for demanding activities. Finally, Waleska’s artful expression is like poetry. Her thoughtful analysis is insightful, and her writing is full of imagery. Her use of language is as beautiful as it is illuminating. Waleska is truly an exceptional student.

**Student: Asia Perveen**  
**Instructor: Ludette Agura**

Asia was an outstanding student this Spring semester. She had perfect attendance and always took additional steps to use supplementary English resources to practice and review outside of the class. She is a hard worker and I hope that she will come back to continue developing her skills in English.

**Student: Sandra Rivera**  
**Instructor: Christopher Hrdy**

She made incredibly fascinating contributions to class discussions. For instance, she discussed Diego Rivera’s relationship with Frida Kahlo, which nobody else knew about. She was also enthusiastic and funny, making class more fun.

**Student: Wendy Vanessa Rivera**  
**Instructor: Sue Jacob**

Wendy is an excellent student and should be recognized for her hard work and dedication. She has excellent attendance and is a diligent student completing assignments and working hard in class. Wendy’s writing and speaking skills are impressive, and Wendy’s communication skills have improved over the course of our class. Wendy deserves recognition for her accomplishments.

**Student: Ting Summer Wang**  
**Instructor: Christopher Hrdy**

She is intellectually curious, always asking interesting questions. She worked hard in small group practice to reach perfection, and didn’t let go of difficult concepts without trying hard to understand them.

**Student: Rahel Terefe Gemechis**  
**Instructor: Wafa Misellati**

Rahel is a pleasure to have in class. She is extremely enthusiastic and eager to learn. She always came to class early with a smile. In a fairly short time frame, she began to gain vocabulary and confidence to the point where she would volunteer to answer questions posed by the teaching team and help other students who were struggling. You will be speaking English fluently in no time. Keep up the great work.
Student: Sandra Vasquez  
Instructors: Robin Lundgren and Maura Sleevi  
We would like to recognize Sandra Vasquez as Outstanding Student in our most remarkable Spring 2021 English class. Juggling between taking care of her family and expanding her career left Sandra little free time, yet she attended nearly every class and was always an eager, active participant. She also tackled each homework assignment with vigor. Always ready to volunteer, Sandra made great strides in her reading, speaking, and writing. But it was especially a treat to see her grow in self-confidence—she believed she could do it! She frequently encouraged other students and affirmed them whenever they tried. Her positive attitude and people skills will no doubt help her with her goal of starting her own company. We also hope she gets to “meet New York” this summer!

Student: Shughla Wali  
Instructor: Jackie Park  
I recommend Shughla Wali for student recognition. She always joins our Zoom class early with a positive attitude and completes her homework. She was a little shy at the beginning and did not talk that much, but she improved a lot as time went by. We were truly lucky to have her in our class.

Student: Ting Wang  
Instructor: Jack Reickel  
She brought everyone into the fun with her, never hesitant to entertain with her personality and attitude in English as she learned.

Students: Spring 2021 Beginning English Level 2: Anisa, Linda Amaya, Rosa Arteaga, Carmen Canales Martinez, Patricia Casafranca, Kubra Hedayat, Carlos Mayorga, Nourreddine Ouajou, Khadija Shah, and Manoon Tanaka  
Instructor: Anuradha Srirangarajan  
From the beginning of the semester to the last day, this group of students were in unison and worked as a group. This class, as a whole, has been outstanding and proved to be the essence of “community.” Not only did these dedicated students attend class regularly and work hard to improve their English language skills throughout the semester, they continually and openly supported one another. When beginning a new lesson, learning new words and spellings, as well as when reviewing completed homework, each student helped their classmates with encouraging words, helpful suggestions, warm smiles, and attentive listening. This, in itself, is worthy of recognition, but even more so when the class was conducted entirely online. There are many examples that can be shared of class-wide support related to classwork, but beyond that, there was an equal amount of interest and support given by students to each other when a student would share newsworthy topics about their home country or discuss their culture. This special group of students deserves recognition for the supportive and effective learning community that they built.

“Not only did these dedicated students attend class regularly and work hard to improve their English language skills throughout the semester, they continually and openly supported one another.”  
- Anuradha S., LCNV Instructor
The Patricia M. Donnelly Merit Scholarship

Named in honor of the Literacy Council of Northern Virginia’s retired Executive Director who led the organization from 2002 to 2017, the Patricia M. Donnelly Merit Scholarship is awarded to an outstanding beginning-level LCNV learner whose dedication to literacy inspires the LCNV community.

This scholarship, which covers tuition for up to six semesters of classes, is given to students who exemplify commitment, perseverance, achievement, and classroom leadership.

Berta Jaramillo came to the United States from Cuenca, Ecuador in 2012. For many years, she struggled without English skills. While at the James Lee Community Center Senior Center, she learned about LCNV and began attending classes. Berta has shown a deep dedication to her work and to her goals of passing the U.S. citizenship exam and becoming fluent in English. She explains, “My teachers helped me by being patient and teaching me step by step to help me to understand words and phrases in English. My classmates demonstrated their respect and friendship.” This past semester, Berta had the best attendance record in class and always turned in her homework, worked hard in class and asked for additional examples to ensure her understanding. She responded carefully to her assignments, using experiences from her own life, which she shared with her classmates. Her instructor, Bill Meara, shares, “She has served as an excellent example for the other students in our course and their respect for her is evident in the way that they address her (Doña Berta). She is, in short, the ideal language learner.”

Berta’s daughter, Maria Velez, was inspired by her mother and began volunteering with LCNV in 2017, eventually becoming a Lead Teacher and helping many other students reach their own goals.

“My main goal is to improve my listening, speaking, reading, and writing English skills to become a bilingual person in order to pass the U.S. citizenship test.”

-Berta Jaramillo, 2021 Patricia M. Donnelly Scholar
LCNV Thanks Our Supporters

LCNV thanks these Literacy Circle Donors who have given in excess of $50,000 to LCNV and continue to give generously to support LCNV’s mission.

During its current fiscal year to date (July, 2020 through June, 2021) LCNV received generous contributions from:

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*Due to space limitations, only donors who gave $1,000 or more are listed in this publication.*
The mission of LCNV is to teach adults the basic skills of reading, writing, speaking, and understanding English so they can access employment and educational opportunities and more fully and equitably participate in the community.

“Learning has had a great impact on my personal growth and has influenced my relationships and success in my workplace.”

-Dulce, LCNV Student