



DECEMBER 2025

WORDS TO LIVE BY

The quarterly newsletter of the
Literacy Volunteers of the Montachusett Area



WHAT'S INSIDE THIS
ISSUE:

**Appreciation
event
Tutor training
Workshops
Citizenship**

WORDS FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Zwanieke Visser

Office Hours:

Mon-Wed: 8 AM-4 PM
Fridays and evenings by
appointment.

Office is closed on:

DEC 24 - JAN 4
FEB 13-20,

A Holiday Message from Our Executive Director

As the year winds down and the holiday lights sparkle around us, I want to send heartfelt thanks to everyone who makes our Literacy Volunteers community so special. This year, we've celebrated students' achievements, welcomed new tutors, and shared countless moments of learning, laughter, and connection. Every story of progress, every volunteer's dedication, and every student's courage reminds me why this work is so meaningful.

During this festive season, I hope you find time to rest, reflect, and enjoy the people and moments that bring you joy. Thank you for being part of our community—you make our work possible, and our world a little brighter. Here's to a new year filled with learning, growth, and more shared successes in 2025!

Warm holiday wishes,
Zwanieke



APPRECIATION EVENT

December 6, 2025

**A night that showed the heart
of our mission**

Our Tutor–Student Appreciation Night was a powerful reminder of how far our program has come—and why our work matters. Just a few years ago, Literacy Volunteers served 44 learners; today, we support 229 students from around the world and offer a wide range of group classes across multiple towns and online. This growth is only possible because of our extraordinary tutors, whose dedication, creativity, and compassion fuel every success story. Seeing tutors and students together—sharing conversations, laughter, and community—was truly the highlight of the evening. It captured the spirit of our program: resilience, generosity, and the belief that learning changes lives.

We are proud to recognize Sharon as our **Tutor of the Year**. For more than six years, she has shown exceptional dedication—tutoring the same student for 371 hours and supporting her remarkable growth. Sharon also co-teaches our citizenship classes, leads the summer conversation circle, and even hosts monthly gatherings in her home to create a warm, welcoming learning community. Her commitment, leadership, and kindness embody the very best of volunteerism, and we are grateful for the tremendous impact she makes every day.

We are proud to recognize Anette as our **Student of the Year**. Anette approaches her studies with exceptional focus, persistence, and positivity—balancing learning with many life responsibilities. She is also a wonderful supporter of her peers and our program. Fluent in Haitian Creole, Spanish, and French, Anette often helps others navigate challenges and encourages new students as they begin their journey. Her hard work, generosity, and warmth make her an inspiring presence in our community.





TUTOR TRAINING

“This fall’s tutor training was a lively, hands-on, and highly interactive experience. Together, participants explored effective activities for every level of English learning, practiced creating structured lesson plans, and built confidence in supporting adult learners. We are thrilled to welcome five new ESOL tutors trained through our program, along with one additional ESOL tutor and two new basic literacy tutors trained by our affiliate partners. Their enthusiasm, curiosity, and commitment were evident throughout the sessions, and we are excited to have them join our LVMont community as they begin working with students across the region.



*The following students
passed their citizenship
interview recently:
Mercedes, Edgar,
Roberta, Katherine and
Nicole.
Congratulations!*





WORKSHOPS

Online tutoring tools workshop

Sara, one of our dedicated tutors and the leader of our Fitchburg evening conversation circle, recently offered an online workshop on Zoom tools that can enhance virtual tutoring. The session was open not only to our tutors, but also to those from the Framingham and Worcester programs, creating a wonderful opportunity for shared learning and collaboration. We're grateful to Sara for sharing her expertise and supporting tutors across our wider community.



Tutor lunch

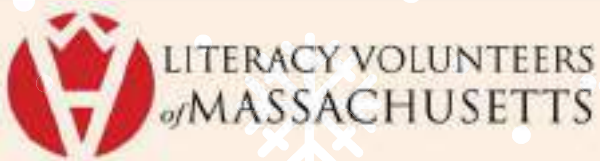
After the final session of our tutor training, we hosted a lunch for all tutors, giving new tutors a chance to meet and connect with more experienced volunteers. The lunch was followed by an engaging workshop on teaching pronunciation, providing practical strategies for supporting learners at every English level.



Teaching pronunciation workshop

We were thrilled to host a workshop on teaching pronunciation, led by Paula Cookson Luria, Professor in the Master's Program in Pedagogy and Learning – Teaching English as a Second Language at Fitchburg State University, and Kelly Calamari, ELL Coordinator and ESOL teacher for the Narragansett Regional School District. Tutors learned practical strategies to support learners at every level in developing clearer, more confident speech. A fun piece of trivia—Paula's husband, Paul Luria, was president of LVMont nearly 40 years ago! It was inspiring to connect our tutors with such experienced educators and see them gain tools they can use immediately in their sessions.





Literacy Volunteers of the Montachusett Area (LVMont) is an affiliate of Literacy Volunteers of Massachusetts



THANK YOU TO ALL OUR GENEROUS SUPPORTERS.



Thank you to all our donors, funders and partners

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Literacy Volunteers of Massachusetts

Community Foundation of NCM

ProLiteracy

Agnes M. Lindsay Trust

Gardner Women's circle of Trust

All One Credit Union

IC credit union

Walmart

Workers Credit Union

LVMont Board of Directors

Great Wolf Lodge Fitchburg

Domino's Pizza Leominster

Last Minute Gifts and Flowers, Fitchburg

Our Board of Directors

All our individual donors

Fitchburg Public Library

Leominster Public Library

St. Mark Community Education Program

Fitchburg Public Schools

Fitchburg City Hall

Fitchburg Senior Center

Leominster Veteran's Memorial Center

Fitchburg Art Museum

"We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give." – Winston Churchill

