



**Literacy Volunteers  
of Somerset County**

# Executive Director's Annual Report

*July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024*

*Prepared by Aimee Lam, Executive Director*

# Growing & Thriving Together

- ▶ 2023: last year, we announced a return to pre-pandemic levels of service
- ▶ 2024: this year, we're celebrating significant expansion
  - Doubled space
  - Doubled staff
  - Increased programming to reach more students
- ▶ To support this growth:
  - Budget has nearly doubled since 2020





# Growing & Thriving Together

*When LVSC is successful, students succeed. Well-trained, supported tutors help students learn English and achieve life-changing goals. Adequate funding ensure we have the space and staff to provide programming.*

*Celebrating a team effort:*

- ▶ Amazing students
- ▶ Dedicated volunteers
- ▶ Generous donors
- ▶ Caring partners

# Welcome New Students

We are seeing an increase in student applications:

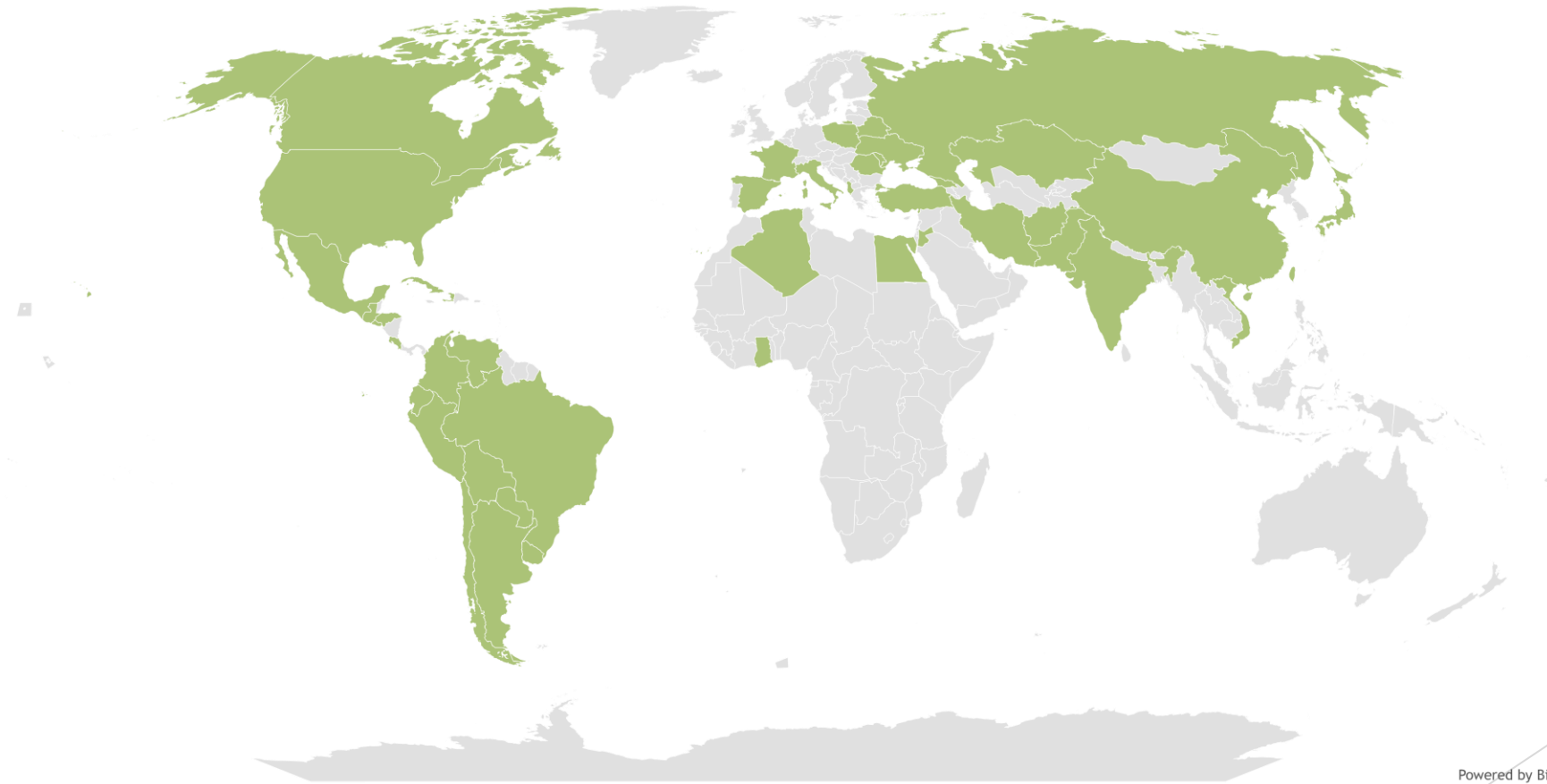
- ▶ 202 assessed  
(142 *prior year*)
  - ▶ By 16 volunteers - 140 hours of service!
  - ▶ During 30 assessment sessions





# Students Come from 47 Different Countries

*(represented countries are shaded in green)*




© Australian Bureau of Statistics, GeoNames, Microsoft, Navinfo, Open Places, OpenStreetMap, TomTom, Zenrin

Powered by Bing



# We are serving more students

500+ unique students served! (*400 prior year*)

- 293 worked with a tutor
  - 104 attended a conversation group (12 offered)
  - 72 attended a beginner class or small group led by LVSC tutors
  - 156 attended a class offered through *First Steps Basic English* pilot partnership
  - 28 received US citizenship preparation support
  - 40 students contributed to 3 great issues of *Connections*, a student-run newsletter
- 

# Congratulations, Students!

So many accomplishments. Here are a few:

- ▶ 146 achieved employment goals
- ▶ 124 got more involved in the community
- ▶ 101 became more informed citizens
- ▶ 97 increased involvement with children's education
- ▶ 49 entered training programs
- ▶ 44 became more knowledgeable consumers
- ▶ 43 improved health knowledge
- ▶ 18 became U.S. citizens
- ▶ 10 attained computer skills

... plus, hundreds improved their English skills!





# Welcome New Tutors

*To meet demand for services, we are recruiting and training more volunteers.*



- ▶ 76 new tutors trained (*64 prior year*)
- ▶ 20 tutor information sessions
- ▶ 3 tutor training workshops
- ▶ Plus, summer workshop planned – in-person!



# So Many Amazing Volunteers

195 volunteers *(175 prior year)*

- ▶ 180 active tutors
- ▶ 12 conversation group leaders
- ▶ 6 U.S. citizenship preparation tutors
- ▶ 16 assessors
- ▶ 5 event volunteers
- ▶ 1 office assistant
- ▶ 5,400+ hours of volunteer service: \$180,000 value



# Student Success Center

- ▶ First Full Year
- ▶ Welcoming Place
  - ▶ Tutoring
  - ▶ Weekly Conversation Group
  - ▶ Student Assessments
- ▶ Increased Tutor Support
  - ▶ Starter kit for new tutors
  - ▶ Quarterly tutor reach-out
  - ▶ In-service workshops (7)
- ▶ Lending library of adult ESL resources
  - ▶ 350+ materials available
  - ▶ 65+ materials loaned
- ▶ Funded by grants & donations





# First Steps Basic English – The Pilot

- 18-month pilot to expand access to free beginner-level English instruction
- Funded by Somerset County American Rescue Plan Funds
- Partners:
  - ▶ Greater Raritan Workforce Development Board - Oversight
  - ▶ Literacy Volunteers of Somerset County-Lead Agency
  - ▶ Hunterdon County Educational Services Commission
  - ▶ Raritan Valley Community College
  - ▶ Libraries throughout Somerset County



Enjoy this First Steps Video





# First Steps Basic English – The Program

- Reaching 156 new students
- 6 classes taught by experienced teachers, 4 hours/ week for 18 months.
  - Bernardsville
  - Bound Brook
  - Franklin (2)
  - North Plainfield
  - Raritan
- 10 small groups taught by LVSC tutors



# First Steps Program Partners



Clarence Dillon Public Library  
Your Community Center



# First Steps Basic English-LVSC's Role

As Lead Agency, LVSC:

- Coordinated Project Team & Defined Goals
- Hired Literacy Navigator, Stella Nieves:
  - Conduct community outreach, student assessment & enrollment.
  - Support student participation and success; liaison between instructors and students.
  - Connect students with relevant community resources.
- Developed Beginner Bootcamp Training for LVSC Tutors:
  - 16 tutors trained to teach beginners & use online curriculum



# Cultural Connections – Phase 2



## 6-Week ESL Writing Workshop

- ▶ Promoting cross-cultural communication and understanding
  - ▶ 12 student & 4 tutor participants

## Reflections Booklet

- ▶ Students' written stories published
- ▶ [Read the booklet](#)

## Luncheon and Panel Discussion

- ▶ Project celebration
- ▶ Student and tutor panelists
- ▶ 70 attended: volunteers, students, and supporters

**Funded by:**

**NEW JERSEY** COUNCIL  
FOR THE  
**HUMANITIES**



**Literacy Volunteers  
of Somerset County**

# Behind the Scenes



# Thank You, Staff!

Susan Engelstein, Program & Events Manager

Stella Nieves, Literacy Navigator

Lauren Randolph, Tutor Trainer

Lisa Ries, Student Success Manager



# Thank You, Board of Trustees

- 14 members strong
- 5 current/former tutors
- Diverse expertise
- All volunteers



Information  
Technology

Actuary

Librarian

Financial  
Advisor

CPAs

Immigration  
Attorney

Local  
Government

Workforce  
Development

Pastor

Corporate  
Communications

Social Policy  
Foundation  
Chair

Business  
Development



## Welcome New Trustees

- ▶ Dana Ponciroli, Syensqo, Director – Employee Communications
- ▶ Peter Russell, CPA Inactive, Prudential Financial Retiree
- ▶ Cathy Peckens, MBA, Johnson & Johnson Innovative Medicine, Head of Technology - Cardiovascular



# Thank You, Community Partners



PeopleCare Center  
For Nonprofits



# Thank You, Donors

*(July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024)*



## \$1,000-\$2,499

- Exxon Mobile
- Pheasant Hill Foundation
- PSEG Foundation
- Thrivent Financial
- United Universalist Congregation of Somerset Hills

## \$2,500-\$4,999

- J&J Somerset County Companies-HealthCare & Basic Needs Fund
- Nora Roberts Foundation

## \$5,000-\$9,999

- Matching Gifts & Volunteer Grants\*
- The Fred C. Rummel Foundation
- Ullmann Family Foundation

## \$10,000-\$14,999

- Munich Re America
- New Jersey Council for the Humanities

## \$15,000-\$19,999

- The George H. and Estelle M. Sands Foundation

## \$20,000 - \$29,999

- Billian Family Charitable Foundation

## \$30,000+

- Individual Donors
- Somerset County – American Rescue Plan Funds (Covid-relief funding)

### \*Matching Gifts & Volunteer Grants

- Exxon Mobile
- Johnson & Johnson
- Munich Re America
- Nationwide
- Prudential
- Thrivent Financial
- Verizon Foundation



Three FUNdraising Events  
*Net income: \$27,000*

# What's Next?

## Continue Growing, Together...



Move from Pilot to Program: *First Steps Basic English. Seek continued funding. Operationalize program.*

Keep on Training: *Recruit and train new volunteer tutors. Expand pool of citizenship tutors and beginner-level tutors.*

Continue Enhancing Tutor/ Student Support: *Through Student Success Center programming.*

Fund Development: *Seek and maintain stable sources of funding to support operations and growth.*





**Literacy Volunteers  
of Somerset County**

*We are grateful to the  
LVSC community and look  
forward to another  
meaningful year ahead.  
Thank you!*