



## **Have an interest in teaching an adult to read or speak English?**

### **YOU PROBABLY HAVE SOME QUESTIONS FIRST.**

**Q:** What is Literacy Volunteers of the New River Valley?

**A:** LV-NRV was established in 1979 to offer free tutoring in basic literacy and conversational English for speakers of other languages. We became accredited with Literacy Volunteers of America and we are now an affiliate of ProLiteracy America, an organization formed from the merger of Literacy Volunteers of America and Laubach Literacy in 2003. We are a volunteer based program and rely on trained volunteers to carry out our mission. Our central office is located in downtown Christiansburg and we have satellite offices in Pulaski, Giles, Radford, and Floyd. Our funding is through grants, local governments, direct contributions from community members, and the United Way and United Fund that serve the New River Valley.

**Q:** What tutoring programs does LV-NRV offer?

**A:** LV-NRV offers two basic programs.

- **Basic Literacy**

The Basic Literacy program provides free, confidential, one-on-one tutoring in reading and writing for adults with minimal everyday literacy skills. Basic literacy tutors work with an adult to achieve his or her literacy-related goals such as learning to fill out a job application or write a check; learning to read a story to a child, an employee memo, or a recipe; or learning to read the newspaper or a book for pleasure. Basic literacy learners become more independent with their everyday literacy needs, develop increased employment and

career options, and feel more comfortable exploring life long learning opportunities in their lives.

- **English for Speakers of Other Languages**

The ESOL program provides free, confidential tutoring in English as a second language for adults with limited conversational skills. Tutoring is conducted individually or in small groups. Students in this program may have goals such as learning how to communicate with a child's teacher or doctor, communicating with a supervisor at work, or using community services such as the post office and doctor's office. It is not necessary to know a second language to be an ESOL tutor.

**Q:** Where does tutoring take place?

**A:** Tutoring takes place throughout the New River Valley in public locations, such as libraries, churches, and our local offices. New locations are developed as needed.

**Q:** Who are the adult learners?

**A:** Adult learners are a variety of ages (over 18), income levels, and backgrounds, with diverse family and job situations. However, they often have many things in common, such as frustrating school experiences, low self-esteem and embarrassment about not being able to read well, and they often have busy lives that can make time commitments to tutoring difficult. ESOL students come to the U.S. from all over the world. They speak a variety of languages and have a wide range of educational backgrounds.

**Q:** How do the learners find LV-NRV?

**A:** They find us in a variety of ways:

- Word-of-mouth
- Referrals from human service agencies or workplaces
- Flyers & posters around their community
- Local libraries, schools or GED adult education programs
- Family members or close friends

**Q:** What is the LV-NRV approach to tutoring?

**A:** LV-NRV utilizes a learner-centered collaborative approach to tutoring. Adult learners bring extensive life experiences to tutoring that form a rich resource for their learning. Instruction is individualized and based on the learner's immediate real life literacy goals. Tutor and student work together as a team to set short-term goals, plan lessons, choose materials, and evaluate progress. This partnership approach promotes the development of independent learning strategies and life long learning.

**Q:** **What is the initial training program for volunteer tutors?**

**A:** Volunteers must complete a comprehensive training to become an LV tutor. Basic Literacy and English as a Second Language tutor training covers approximately 15 hours and is conducted on evenings and/or weekends in the spring and fall. Readings and exercises are assigned between sessions and a follow up session is held approximately four weeks following training. A \$25 registration fee helps cover the cost of training.

**Q:** **What is the LV-NRV approach to tutor training?**

**A:** LV-NRV utilizes a participatory approach to training. Tutors learn through active participation such as large group brainstorming, small group exercises, individual reflection, readings, and application of new skills to real life case studies. Learning takes place not only from LV trainers and resources, but also from a panel of experienced tutors and students.

**Q:** **What kind of commitment is involved in being an LV tutor?**

**A:** Once you have successfully completed training, you will be asked to tutor a student for approximately two to three hours a week for a minimum of a year. In addition, you should plan for time each month to talk with us about your tutoring and to provide monthly reports that you complete with your student. The time commitment may be more extensive than most volunteer opportunities, but the rewards are equally as extensive. Tutors report a deep sense of satisfaction and personal rewards from being an LV tutor.

**Q:** **What opportunities are there for ongoing learning?**

**A:** Throughout the tutoring experience, tutors receive support from staff on an ongoing basis. We have extensive resource materials for tutoring and

professional development. We also sponsor annual in-services and monthly "tutor talks", where tutors share ideas and learn new skills.

**Q:** How and when do I get started tutoring?

**A:** Once volunteers have successfully completed tutor training, they are ready to be matched with a learner or small group of learners based on the times and locations they are available to tutor. We receive new students on an ongoing basis, so you could be matched at any time after completing training.

*Pre-registration for tutor training is required. Interested volunteers must complete our volunteer intake form found on the form section of our website. For questions teaching conversational English, contact Jennifer Seip at [jennifer@swva.net](mailto:jennifer@swva.net) - Other inquires can be sent to [lvnrv@verizon.net](mailto:lvnrv@verizon.net)*