



English Language / English Literacy

EL CIVICS SUCCESS STORIES

Learn about life in America while
improving your English skills.





Literacy Volunteers of Rensselaer County's EL Civics Program Puts Learners First

EL (English language/English literacy) Civics gives newly arrived immigrants and refugees a chance to learn about life in America while improving their English skills.

EL Civics prepares intermediate level adult English language learners to participate in civic life and to explore the possibility of becoming U.S. citizens. Classes focus on topics of interest to adults ranging from education, employment and health care to U.S. government, history, and American culture.

Each class integrates speaking, listening comprehension, reading, and writing. Learners from diverse backgrounds and cultures interact with each other as well as with the teachers in a safe, friendly, supportive learning environment. Question-posing is encouraged, and learners are given many opportunities to demonstrate what they know.

LVORC is a learner-centered organization, putting students at the center of the educational process. We understand that adult learners set their own goals, and our aim is to help them to meet these goals through the acquisition of literacy skills. Regular needs assessments and testing help our instructors to customize lessons. Resources used in classes are age and level appropriate, and learners are invited to share their own lived experiences as part of the learning process.

Outcomes for learners include employment, improved communication skills, increased involvement in community life, and naturalization. As the members of the 2018 EL Civics class wrote in a letter to Congressman Paul Tonko, "All of us come from different countries, and this class has become our home since the first day we joined. When we came to the U.S., we didn't speak or understand any English. We couldn't do anything by ourselves, even simple things. This class has helped us to integrate better in American society, and understand the rules, laws and life in the U.S.A. We have learned about American culture, history and government. The class has helped us to become more independent and to be more confident."

This year 13 students have participated. The following pages will demonstrate the successes experienced by four of the EL Civics students.

LITERACY VOLUNTEERS OF RENSSELAER COUNTY

SUCCESS STORY

STUDENT
GOALS:

**COMMUNICATION
AND READING**



Fanny (right) at LVORC's Fall Festival of Literacy with volunteer, Sharon Gale

"I like that my teacher (EL Civics instructor, Joe Malone) is teaching me how to pronounce words and to use the right way to express myself. When I have to speak to somebody I can express myself better and they can understand me.

I can identify past, present, and future tenses in verbs.

I'm starting to read real books, like *Of Mice and Men*, *A Tale of Two Cities* and *A Time to Remember*."

– Fanny, July 2023

Fanny contributed her story to LVORC's *In Their Own Words: Student and Tutor Stories* and read her account of her lifelong struggle with learning disabilities to a gathering of more than 80 people at LVORC's Fall Festival of Literacy. Fanny is making great strides in communicating and reading with confidence in the EL Civics class.



LITERACY VOLUNTEERS OF RENSSELAER COUNTY

SUCCESS STORY

STUDENT
GOALS:

**ADAPTING TO
LIFE IN THE U.S.**



“Thanks to Literacy Volunteers of Rensselaer County for helping me learn how to speak and write the English language. This has helped me to adapt to life in America.

I arrived in America in 2019 and I could not speak or write in English. My teachers are helping me learn a lot of things and write very well. Now my skills are better than before. I can write and speak with people easily.

I wish the best for this beautiful organization that helps many people from around the world to easily learn the English language.”

– Jacqueline, August 2023



Jacqueline loves traveling, learning new things, and spending time with her children and grandchildren. She has participated in the Fall Festival of Literacy as an author and reader.



LITERACY VOLUNTEERS OF RENSSELAER COUNTY

SUCCESS STORY



"I wanted to become a citizen to sponsor my daughter, and to vote. I gave up T.V. to study and listened to practice tests in the car. I watched so many videos with interviews and questions. I met with my class on Zoom, reading, writing, listening and conversation.

On the day of the test I was ready. When he asked a question, I knew the answer. He told me not to be nervous, to calm down and relax. After the interview, he said congratulations, you passed. I was so happy!

I went to work, everybody was surprised and happy. I bought pizza and chicken to celebrate, and the next day in my church with one hundred people."

- Eisa, May 2023

STUDENT
GOALS:

CITIZENSHIP

Eisa came to America in search of religious freedom. His participation in the EL Civics class helped him to succeed in passing the U.S.

Naturalization Interview and Test. He is now closer to fulfilling his dream of being permanently reunited with his daughter. As a citizen, he can now sponsor his daughter to immigrate to America.



LITERACY VOLUNTEERS OF RENSSELAER COUNTY

SUCCESS STORY

STUDENT
GOALS:

EMPLOYMENT



Lirong found her first job in the U.S. in June 2023. As a member of the housekeeping team at Hilton Garden Inn, Troy, Lirong practices the communication skills she has learned in LVORC's EL Civics class.

"I have good news for you. I have been hired at Hilton Garden Inn. Today is my first day of work. I work six hours a day and five days a week. I need to learn a lot as a room attendant for the first time. Tara is the manager of housekeeping, she is very kind to me and my co-workers are very friendly. Thank you for helping me get my first job in the U.S.!"

– Lirong, June 2023

