



LITERACY LINKS

Spring 2019

**Services for
All Seasons &
All People**

Haverstraw Literacy Zone Family Welcome Center

Community Calendar/Info

- Literacy Solutions
Rockland Headquarters
(845) 499-5464
- HLZ English Classes
(845) 825-6141
- Rockland Office for
New Americans
(845) 826-5022
- Haverstraw Collaborative
1st Wednesday of the
Month
(845) 429-5731
- North Rockland Central
School District Info
(845) 942-3000
- Haverstraw Elementary
School
(845) 942-3400
- Immigration Coalition
1st Friday of the Month
peacepoet@aol.com
- BOCES Information
(845) 348-3500

IMMIGRATION ENRICHES COMMUNITIES & CHANGES LIVES

The way a community accepts or rejects its immigrant population is greatly influenced by its leader. And the Village of Haverstraw is a classic example of that premise. Mayor Michael Kohut extends a warm welcome to all new arrivals who choose to make their home in the Village; and the residents follow suit. He recently explained that this community has always been an "opportunity zone" for immigrants because of its "urban town setting", —a walkable downtown, small apartment buildings, houses in close proximity to each other, small storefronts suitable for "mom & pop" businesses, houses of worship supported by the new arrivals and its history of plentiful entry level employment opportunities.

Mayor Kohut has been in office over 11 years. His ancestors arrived from Ireland and Eastern Europe, and he is proud of his heritage and his village.

Mayor Kohut understands the immigrant experience and does all in his power to create a welcoming atmosphere for new arrivals. The Village of Haverstraw sits on only 2 square miles and is home to over 12,000 people 38.3% of whom are foreign born.

Through the years, immigrants from across the globe have made their way to New York and settled in Haverstraw. For many years, people from Europe, Asia and Africa have arrived in New York and found their way to Haverstraw. They hailed from Italy, Greece, Ireland, Eastern Europe, and a host of other countries. More recently, the majority of new arrivals in Haverstraw have come from Central America, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic. Many of the newcomers made their homes in Haverstraw for a time and gradually moved on. According to Mayor Kohut, the new arrivals from Central America seem to establish deep roots

in the Village and make a commitment to building their new American lives here.

The Mayor has many anecdotes about the perseverance of immigrants, but one that stands out for him is a young man who, 20 years ago at 17, worked as a busboy in a Nyack restaurant. He had no money and few prospects, but was determined to make a good life in this county. Today, he is a US citizen; he is raising his own children in Haverstraw in the home he owns; has a successful career; and owns 2 apartment buildings that he rents for a fair price to today's new arrivals. He has grown from an immigrant to an all-American success story!

To quote Mayor Kohut "We are a community that cares about our neighbors and our town. We welcome everybody".

[We at Literacy Solutions thank Mayor Kohut for welcoming us to Haverstraw in 2013!](#)

Community Resources in Haverstraw

Haverstraw residents live in a community filled with great resources. Here are just a few!!

Haverstraw Center
50 West Broad Street
(845) 429-5731

Children /youth, educational programs, counseling, sports & recreation, and family services.

Head Start of Rockland
117 Route 9W
Haverstraw, New York
(845) 429-4122

Rockland County Career Center
37 West Broad Street
Haverstraw, NY
(845) 406-6450

Haverstraw King's Daughters Public Library
Main Branch
10 West Ramapo Road
(845) 786-3800
Village Branch
85 Main Street
(845) 429-3445

Take Advantage of the Resources Available to You!

Meet County Clerk Paul Piperato

Paul Piperato has been in the Office of the Rockland County Clerk for 26 years, 14 years in his elected position as Rockland County Clerk, and 16 years as the Deputy County Clerk. He knows every aspect of the duties of the County Clerk's office, enjoys fulfilling the responsibilities of his office, and works diligently to meet the needs of his constituents. But his favorite activity as County Clerk is swearing in new citizens at the bi-monthly ceremony held at the Rockland County Fire Training Center. As the descendent of immigrants, it gives him the unique opportunity to experience second-hand the thrill his relatives enjoyed when they swore allegiance to the United States of America many years ago.

During his 14-year tenure as County Clerk, Mr. Piperato has sworn in 14,000 new American citizens!! He has sworn in people in hospitals, and recently swore in a woman who missed the ceremony, but was so anxious to become an American citizen that she was sworn in privately in the presence of a judge and Mr. Piperato.

Swearing-in ceremonies used to be held in local schools as a civics lesson for local students, but that ceased 2 years ago due to parental and community opposition. Mr. Piperato said he looks forward to the day when schools will once again open their doors to offer this unique civics lesson to students and welcome to new Americans.

As part of his initiatives to assist Rockland County residents, the County Clerk is working to bring a citizenship test and face-to-face interview site to the area. Not only would this assist prospective citizens, it would bring new employment opportunities to the County.

In addition, Mr. Piperato has worked to relocate NYS employment tests to the Fire Training Center in Pomona, as well as to offer professional courses for adults such as Notary Public, Real Estate, Investing, Beautician and Cosmetologist at the site.

Mr. Piperato stated that although "Rockland is the smallest county in New York State, it is rich in services for new arrivals and native-born alike." He spoke about educational opportunities here and stressed that everyone needs to be literate in the English language to function successfully in this country. He urged new arrivals to take advantage of the opportunities available and enroll in English language courses, many of which are offered free of charge. Thank you, Paul Piperato, for welcoming new citizens and serving Rockland residents.

No mention of the bi-monthly swearing in ceremonies would be complete without a salute to Debbie Vobroucek. She has been involved in the ceremonies for over 25 years and has participated in the swearing in of 25,000 new citizens. She coordinates the event, invites dignitaries and local agencies to attend, calms the nerves of those waiting to be sworn in, and makes sure each ceremony is conducted with the respect, dignity, and celebration that it deserves.

Debbie is thankful for all of our new citizens and we are thankful for her!

“The highlight of my job is swearing in new American Citizens.”

*Rockland
County
Clerk
Paul
Piperato.*

Thank You Jane Lemkin *Citizenship Specialist Extraordinaire*

In 2003, after assisting people with disabilities for 28 years, Jane Lemkin retired from her successful career with a major NYS agency. She was looking forward to “just relaxing and doing nothing”! “Doing nothing” is not part of Jane’s DNA, so it was only a few short months before she felt compelled to reach out and help people in need once again.

Seven months after retiring, Jane joined Literacy Volunteers of Rockland (now known as Literacy Solutions NY) as a tutor for people seeking to improve their English literacy.

During her first year, she worked with 3 students from different countries, including a special young woman from El Salvador who had only five years of schooling in her native country. This young woman not only wanted to learn to speak English, but also wanted to become an American citizen. Impressed by her student’s dedication to learning English and dream of becoming a US citizen, Jane decided that her second career would be assisting immigrants with English literacy and preparing them for the challenging US citizenship exam and oft-times intimidating face-to-

face interview.

Several years later, Jane’s special student achieved her dream and became an American citizen.

In 2005, Jane transitioned from volunteer to employee. Her new responsibilities included screening potential students and helping assign them to appropriate tutors, as well as working with agency staff to develop a citizenship curriculum designed to help students navigate the lengthy and complicated path from immigrant to new US citizen. Jane embraced her new role as a “Citizenship Specialist” and set about leading the way to citizenship for new arrivals.

Jane happily offered the first citizenship prep classes in Spring Valley. Word spread and demand increased.

Within a short time, classes were held in the Village of Haverstraw, and in libraries throughout Rockland County.

Jane’s ability to assist would-be citizens expanded in 2016 when she participated in a 40-hour training offered by the NY Immigration Coalition. The training enabled her to assist anyone in Rockland County seeking help with the citizenship

application process.

During her second career with Literacy Solutions, Jane has provided citizenship classes to over 450 people (approximately 85% of whom have become citizens) and completed over 150 citizenship applications.

Through the years, Jane has become a citizenship “guru” in the diverse immigrant communities throughout Rockland County. She has been the go-to person for immigration information, education and assistance for more than a decade. She has cheered at dozens of swearing-in ceremonies; applauded the perseverance of her students; and always gave extra time and assistance to those who needed just a little more help.

Literacy Solutions NY and the hundreds of immigrants whom we have served will miss seeing Jane on a regular basis, but appreciate all that she has done, and admire the example she has set for everyone that she has touched throughout the years!

Welcome *To* *America*



The flags to the left represent the homelands of the hundreds of immigrants and their families Jane has helped in her role as “Citizenship Specialist”.



Literacy Solutions NY, Inc.
Patricia Rajala
President & CEO

Westchester County Office
Yonkers Riverfront Library
1 Larkin Center
Yonkers, NY 10701

(914) 375-7964

Tutor/Volunteer Center
New City Library
220 North Main Street
New City, NY 10956

(845) 708-9072

Haverstraw Literacy Zone
63 New Main Street
Haverstraw, NY 10927

(845) 499-5464

ESOL Class Information
Contact Ana Diaz,
Academic Coordinator

(845) 825-6141

Rockland Office for
New Americans
63 New Main Street
Haverstraw, NY 10927

(845) 826-5022

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

**LITERACY
STUDENTS
and
CITIZENSHIP
HOPEFULS
ARE WAITING FOR
YOU**

**YOUR DONATION
OF TIME CAN
CHANGE A LIFE!**

**Contact Christina
at:
(845) 708-9072**

Literacy Solutions NY, a not-for-profit organization, is dedicated to providing student-centered adult literacy services in Westchester and Rockland counties. It offers specialized services through the Haverstraw Literacy Zone, the Tutor/Volunteer Center, and the Rockland Office for New Americans. Literacy Solutions NY, Inc. is a community resource for the advancement of literacy in both counties.

ALL ARE WELCOME AT THE HLZ FAMILY WELCOME CENTER!



Helping you towards a brighter future

SERVICES PROVIDED IN WESTCHESTER AND ROCKLAND

Literacy Solutions NY, Inc. has been providing services in Westchester County since 1983. In 2006, Literacy Volunteers of Rockland and Literacy Solutions NY joined forces to serve adult students in all areas of both counties.

Services offered by Literacy Solutions NY include:

- Citizenship Classes
- US Civics for Immigrants
- English Classes
- Basic Literacy
- One-to-One Tutoring
- Tutor Training
- Haverstraw Literacy Zone
- Office for New Americans Opportunity Center

Teresa Avila, Operations/Data Manager, and Jennie Mosquera, Yonkers Coordinator, work together to bring literacy services to all corners of Westchester County. Our students hail from many communities, and we offer services county-wide.

For Westchester information, please call Teresa or Jennie at (914) 375-7964.

Activities offered in Rockland County are similar to those in Westchester, but include the additional services offered by the Haverstraw Literacy Zone and the Rockland Office for New Americans.

HLZ and ONA activities include:

- ESOL Classes
- Job Readiness
- Community Workshops
- Case Management
- Citizenship Classes
- Skills Development
- Assistance with Citizenship Applications & Other Immigration Forms
- Legal Consultation Days
- Annual Citizenship Drive

**All Services Provided Free
of Charge & Without
Regard for Immigration
Status**

Rockland County Contacts:

Anne Carey-Colorado
Communications Manager
(845) 499-5464 ext. 3

Lisa Delmonico
Citizenship Navigator
(845) 358-3420

Ana Diaz
Academic Coordinator
(845) 825-6141

Evelina Lopez
ONA Program Manager
(845) 826-5022

Christina Mandara
Tutor Program Manager
(845) 708-9072

Gricelda Serrano
Lead Case Manager
(845) 323-3665