

# LITERACY

FALL  
2014

# ILLINOIS

**Jesse White**  
Secretary of State  
& State Librarian

I am proud of the work being done in our Adult Literacy grant programs across the state. Last year, more than 22,000 learners were assisted in improving their literacy skills. This issue highlights success stories of several adult learners who made the life-changing decision to improve their literacy skills and their lives. I applaud each and every one of these adult learners.



In hopes of encouraging new learners to discover the joys of reading, last year my office developed the New Reader's Book Club. The demand for these books was so great that more titles have been added to the collection. This issue showcases the entire collection.

I invite everyone to participate in this year's Family Reading Night on Thursday, November 20, and encourage the adults in your program to spend some time with their children. In this issue are ideas on how to make Family Reading Night a success.

*Jesse White*

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Secretary of State

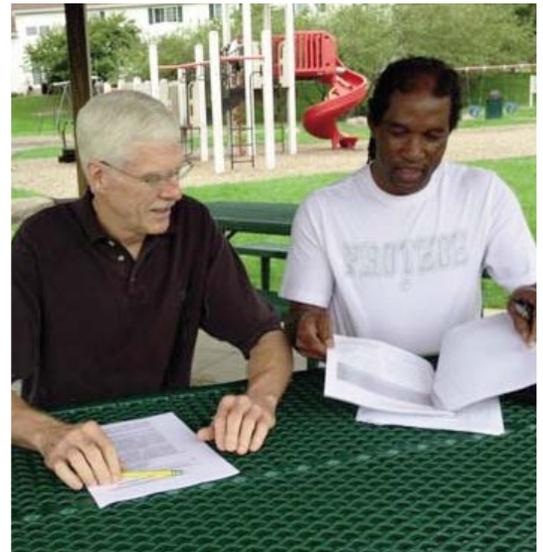
## Secretary White awards \$5.7 million to literacy projects

Secretary of State Jesse White awarded more than \$5.7 million to 154 literacy projects throughout Illinois. Following are descriptions of those awards along with personal success stories resulting from literacy projects funded last year.

**Adult Volunteer Literacy** — \$3,940,901 awarded to 85 programs to provide training for volunteers who tutor adults over age 17 who read, write, compute or comprehend below the 9th-grade level or score below SPL 7 speakers of foreign languages.

**FY14 Success Story: McHenry County College, Crystal Lake** — A young Jamaican man visited McHenry County College four years ago seeking literacy tutoring. Inverted and reluctant to talk, college staff assisted him in completing his intake form and assessment because he could not read and had a grade equivalent of zero. Matched with a wonderful tutor, a retired commercial pilot who also served as a strong male role model, they worked together to develop reading skills. He now has a full-time job and is able to live on his own.

This past April, the man and his tutor spoke at the annual Volunteer Tutor Appreciation Brunch. The tutor complimented him on his remarkable progress, telling the audience he was an intelligent person who never had the opportunity to learn. The student, in turn, complimented his tutor for changing his life, making it possible to happily live and work in the U.S. He was grateful that the tutor took the time to help him read, acquire math



McHenry County College Adult Volunteer Literacy success story student and tutor meet in the park during a tutoring session.

skills and assist in many other tasks that led him to become an independent and productive person.

For the staff who assisted in those initial visits, the change has been dramatic. This student who once could barely communicate with anyone was now speaking in front of a large audience, thanking the Adult Literacy Program and its volunteers for giving him a chance at a wonderful life.

**Penny Severns Family Literacy** — \$1,582,627 awarded to 48 programs to provide parents and children — both individually and together — instructional services to enhance

their basic reading, math, writing or language skills. Grants are awarded to partnerships that include an adult literacy provider, a public library and a child-at-risk organization.

**FY14 Success Story: Universidad Popular, Chicago** — Husband and wife Jorge and Ana attend programs at Universidad Popular in Chicago — Ana and their daughters participate in the Families Learning to Teach morning program while Jorge, who works during the day, attends evening English classes. This arrangement allows them to learn together while still having time for family activities and the girls' homework.

The result is a better understanding of the English language, being able to assist their children at school and other outside activities and allowing Jorge to communicate more effectively at work. For Ana, parenting skills workshops have helped her learn more about nutrition and how to prepare healthier foods at home. She also participates in digital literacy programs which have allowed her to help her children, especially with the trend toward computer-based school work. Every family member now has a library card and uses the public library on a regular basis, and for the first time, one of the daughters made the honor roll at school.

### Workplace Skills Enhancement

— \$234,550 awarded to 21 businesses and educational providers to offer employees onsite-instructional services to enhance their basic reading, math, writing or language skills, maintain their employment and increase their eligibility for promotion. Grants are matched by the businesses at least one-to-one.

**FY14 Success Story: Decatur Foundry, Decatur** — Decatur Foundry, Incorporated (DFI), whose objective is to increase the education level of its employees, is a first time recipient of a Workplace Skills Enhance-



Universidad Popular Penny Severns Family Literacy Program participants Jorge and Ana with their family.



Decatur Foundry, Inc. employees who participated in the Workplace Skills Enhancement Grant along with staff from Richland Community College.

ment Grant. A leader in manufacturing iron castings that can weigh from 100 to 15,000 pounds, DFI serves customers across the U.S., Mexico and Canada.

Partnering with Richland Community College, the company provides instructional opportunities to workers who can then take on more responsibilities and perform higher-level tasks with the opportunity for promotion.

DFI employees were receptive to the opportunity, even attending classes in

less than ideal conditions. These workers have significantly improved their math and reading skills and many have the ability to continue with other training. There has been a positive end result with increased employee morale and confidence in their work. Two employees have received their GED, three are transitioning to higher level courses and another student has seen his adult children begin post secondary education, motivated by their father's class attendance.

## Adult New Reader Book Club Collections

In 2013, the Illinois State Library Literacy Office introduced its first nine Adult New Reader Book Club Collections. The office was pleasantly surprised by the overwhelmingly positive feedback received from literacy programs and the adult new readers who participated in the book clubs. The demand for these collections exceeded expectations. Based on the great response, additional titles have been added, including a second collection of the most popular titles that were first introduced in 2013.

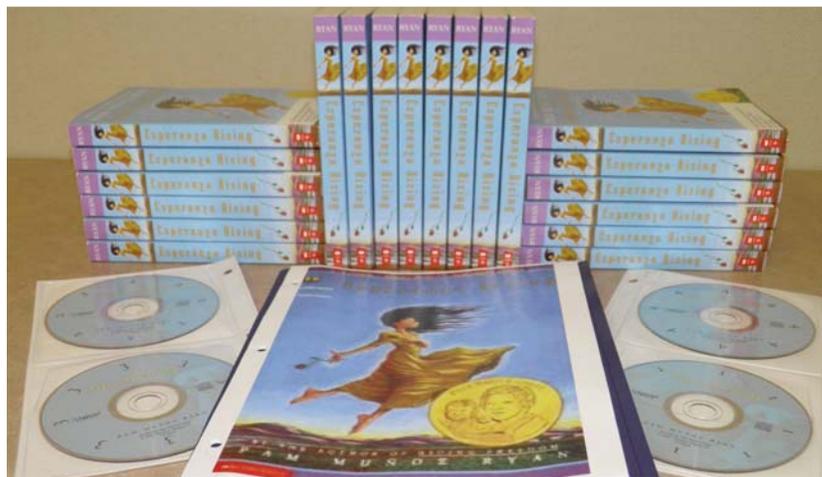
Titles were selected based on reading level, topics that would allow for rich discussion, topics that appeal to a broad range of ethnicities and the ability to get adult learners excited about reading. The entire collection now includes 21 titles:

*The Barrio Kings* by William Kowalski  
*The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros  
*Just Gone* by William Kowalski  
*The Spider Bites* by Medora Sale  
*The Way It Works* by William Kowalski  
*Gifted Hands: The Ben Carson Story* by Ben Carson  
*Seedfolks* by Paul Fleishman  
*Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck  
*DK Biography: Mother Teresa* by Maya Gold  
*DK Biography: Nelson Mandela* by Lenny Hort

*Hope Was Here* by Joan Bauer  
*Bud, Not Buddy* by Christopher Paul Curtis  
*Esperanza Rising* by Pam Munoz Ryan  
*To Kill A Mockingbird* by Harper Lee  
*Three Little Words* by Ashley Rhodes-Courter  
*Abraham Lincoln: Photobiography* by Russell Freedman  
*Of Beetles & Angels* by Mawi Asgedom  
*An Invisible Thread* by Laura Schroff  
*The Buddha in the Attic* by Julie Otsuka  
*The Other Wes Moore* by Wes Moore  
*The Twelve Tribes of Hattie* by Ayana Mathis

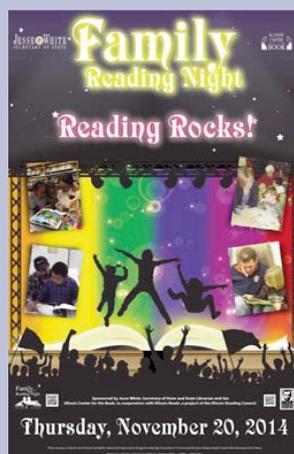
These books range from the 2nd to the 9th grade reading level. More information on the collections can be found at [www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/library/literacy/book\\_clubs.html](http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/library/literacy/book_clubs.html). The information provides a recommended reading level, short description of each book, the format of the book and the audience to whom each book would appeal.

Each collection contains 20 copies of the book, a discussion leader's guide and most titles contain an unabridged audio book. For more information contact the Literacy Office at 217-785-6921.



Pictured above is one of the latest additions to the Adult New Reader Book Club Collections, *Esperanza Rising* by Pam Munoz Ryan.

## Family Reading Night ideas



Once again Illinois Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White and the Illinois Center For The Book in cooperation with the Illinois Reading Council are teaming up to present Family Reading Night. Held annually the third Thursday of November, it is *the* premier literacy event in the state. Every

year families across the state spend an evening of family time, reading, talking, and enjoying the pleasures of literature together. This can create an atmosphere rich for future family bonding and happy memories of the times spent together reading.

This year's Family Reading Night is Thursday, November 20, with the theme "Reading Rocks!" For more information visit the Secretary of State's Family Reading Night website at [www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/library/public/frn.html](http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/library/public/frn.html).

Here are a few suggestions:

- "I Scream, You Scream, We All Scream For... Books!" — This is a great idea for a reading party. Children earn scoops of ice cream based on reading goals and at the end of the evening, everyone gets a sundae!
- "Tell Me About Your Favorite Song" — Adults and children write a short paragraph about their favorite song, then read them back to one another, which will encourage more conversation and curiosity on why they chose that particular song.
- "Family Reading Club" — In early November, families pick up a bag with five books to read at home (based on ages of family members) along with juice boxes and microwave popcorn.
- "Draw Pictures" — Ask children to draw a picture about a book that is read aloud. The drawings could then become part of an art display highlighting Family Reading Night.



## Literacy Office welcomes new staff member

The Illinois State Library Literacy Office is happy to announce that Tom Huber (left) has joined our staff. Tom previously served on the State Library staff in various departments. We know his professional skills will serve him well in the new position. He will be taking on the responsibilities of general grant management. Join us in welcoming Tom.

## MAKE A DIFFERENCE DAY

Saturday, October 25, 2014, has been named "Make a Difference Day" by the Points of Light organization and USA Weekend. Join millions of volunteers around the country and take this opportunity to make a difference in the lives of people in your community by volunteering at a local literacy program. Make a difference year-round by becoming a volunteer literacy tutor. Call the Illinois Adult Learning Hotline at 800-321-9511 to find a literacy program near you.

# WWW



### [www.familieslearning.org](http://www.familieslearning.org)

The National Center for Families Learning, formerly known as National Center for Family Literacy, since 1989, has helped millions of families make educational and economic progress with their family literacy programs.

### <http://getcaughtreading.org>

Get Caught Reading is a nationwide campaign to remind people of all ages how much fun it is to read.

### <http://fen.com>

Family Education Network encourages you to explore its online and mobile resources crafted specifically for kids, parents and teachers to encourage learning, growth and exploration.

## ON THE HORIZON

**October** — Domestic Violence Awareness Month

**October 1-4** — Illinois Reading Council Conference, Springfield, IL, [www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org/](http://www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org/)

**October 14-16** — Illinois Library Association Conference, Springfield, IL, [www.ila.org](http://www.ila.org)

**November 4-7** — American Association for Adult and Continuing Educator's Annual Conference, Charleston, SC, [www.aaace.org](http://www.aaace.org)

**November 6-7** — 3rd Annual Central and Southern Illinois Regional Fall Conference, Effingham, IL, [www.wiu.edu/coehs/ciaesc](http://www.wiu.edu/coehs/ciaesc)

**November 12-15** — International Dyslexia Associations' Annual Conference, San Diego, CA, [www.interdys.org](http://www.interdys.org)

**November 20** — Family Reading Night, visit "Reading Rocks" for more information

**November 21** — Northern Illinois Adult Education Conference, Bloomington, IL, [www.thecenterweb.org/alrc](http://www.thecenterweb.org/alrc)

**January 28-30** — 2015 Illinois Comprehensive Literacy & Reading Recovery Conference, Chicago, IL, [www.nl.edu/readingrecoveryconference](http://www.nl.edu/readingrecoveryconference)

**February 27-28** — IL TESOL-BE Annual Convention, Naperville, IL, [www.itbe.org](http://www.itbe.org)

**March 16-18** — National Center for Families Learning Summit, Houston, TX, [www.familieslearning.org](http://www.familieslearning.org)

More literacy event information is available at [www.cyberdriveillinois.com](http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com) (click Departments, Illinois State Library, Literacy, Calendar of Literacy Events).

## ILLINOIS ADULT LEARNING HOTLINE

To locate a literacy program or volunteer as a tutor, call **800-321-9511**.

You also may register at [www.thecenterweb.org/alrc/hotline/index.html](http://www.thecenterweb.org/alrc/hotline/index.html).

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