

LITERACY

Summer
2013

ILLINOIS

Jesse White
Secretary of State
& State Librarian

While I have always been proud of the work we do through the Adult Literacy Grant Program, this issue illustrates that my pride is justified. You will read about the Waukegan Public Library, which was honored with a National Medal for Library and Museum Service for its innovative strategies in serving its English as a Second Language learners. You also will read about Mary Ellen Lesniak, family literacy coordinator at the Tolton Center in Chicago, who was runner-up for the national Toyota Teacher of the Year Award for her work in our Family Literacy program. And, last, but not least, you will read about our Spotlight on Achievement and Spotlight on Service winners — the learners and tutors throughout the state who have put forth tremendous effort and overcome personal obstacles to accomplish their goals. Congratulations to all the winners and may your hard work bring you continued success!

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“English Under The Arches”

“English Under The Arches” is a unique literacy program that teaches English as a Second Language to shift managers so they can advance successfully up the corporate ladder at McDonald’s Corporation. In this instructional model they use traditional classroom instruction, teacher-led classes via web-conferencing, independent computer-based learning and on-the-job practice.

The Illinois State Library Literacy Office’s Workplace Skills Enhancement program awarded a grant to The Center: Resources for Teaching and Learning in Arlington Heights to use this model to train McDonald’s employees from Joliet, Northbrook, Chicago, Crystal Lake and Aurora in one class. Local restaurants do not have enough employees at one location to provide a class onsite, so this model provides training to several employers in one grouping. About 80 percent of the restaurants are franchises, so the training needs of multiple employers are met at one time.

With stronger English language communication skills, participants will have increased opportunity to advance in their careers. For instance, in FY13, the Workplace Skills Enhancement grant offered the class “Shift Basics,” which provided eight weeks of introductory English based on the vocabulary needed to work at McDonald’s. A class to improve writing skills also allowed employees to use the in-store communication system.

The employees’ increased English proficiency help the restaurants provide more effective operations and better customer satisfaction while increasing profits. On a personal level, the employees’ improved English skills help them outside of work

as family and community members. It’s a win-win situation for all!



Karen Fuist, a trainer with The Center: Resources for Teaching and Learning in Arlington Heights, demonstrates the virtual training offered to McDonald’s Corporation through the Illinois State Library Literacy Office’s Workplace Skills Enhancement program.

FY12 Workplace Skills Enhancement Program Statistics

- 56% of the businesses were small with less than 300 employees
- 25% of the businesses were unionized
- 72% of the businesses were manufacturing
- 865 employees assessed
- 744 employees instructed
- 3,692 instructional hours were held at the businesses
- 89% of the employees received instruction in English language skills
- 65% of the business saw major improvement in the employees’ ability to communicate
- 65% of the businesses saw major improvement in employee morale
- 31% of the businesses saw moderate improvement in productivity

South Side Literacy Coalition's "Night of a Thousand Stars"



Adult learners, literacy program staff and volunteer tutors attended the South Side Literacy Coalition's "Night of a Thousand Stars" in Chicago along with Secretary of State Jesse White in April.

Tolton Center's Lesniak recognized as Toyota Teacher of the Year runner-up

Since 1991, Toyota has partnered with the National Center for Family Literacy to promote family literacy in the United States. The Toyota Teacher of the Year award recognizes individual teachers' contributions to improving literacy among youth and adults.

This year, Mary Ellen Lesniak was named Toyota Teacher of the Year runner-up. Mary Ellen is the ESL and Family Literacy coordinator for the Tolton Center of the De La Salle Institute in Chicago, a State Library Family Literacy grant recipient. As runner-up Mary Ellen received a \$2,500 grant, which she plans to use to purchase iPads for her classroom, as well as a scholarship to attend the conference in Louisville.

The Tolton strategy is to empower poverty-level adults through academic achievement. This strategy recognizes that overcoming the illiteracy cycle must begin with the

adult who is the center of the family. The State Library has been supporting family literacy since 1992 with competitive grant funding for local agencies like the Tolton Center.



Wilbert W. James, Jr., president of Toyota Motor Manufacturing Kentucky, Inc., recognized Mary Ellen Lesniak of De La Salle/Tolton Center, Chicago, as Toyota's Teacher of the Year runner-up.

Waukegan Public Library wins national award

The Institute of Museum and Library Services recently announced the recipients of the 2013 National Medal for Museum and Library Service. The medal is the nation's highest honor conferred on museums and libraries for service to the community. The medal celebrates institutions that make a difference for individuals, families and communities.

The Waukegan Public Library is one of 10 libraries and museums nationwide to be recognized with this award. Waukegan has a Hispanic population that is three times higher than the state average. The Promotoras Ambassador

Program at the library empowered an outreach worker to be responsible for raising awareness about library resources in the Hispanic community and understanding the needs of Spanish speakers. One of the first initiatives was creation of a culturally sensitive Conversational ESL Program, which incorporates relevant curriculum that places the learner at the center to ensure his or her success in daily life.

After one year, 255 students have participated in the Conversational ESL Program with most moving on to a GED program. Congratulations to the Waukegan Public Library on its award!

2013 Spotlight on Achievement and Service Awards

Secretary of State Jesse White along with Dennis DeRossett, executive director of the Illinois Press Association (IPA), presented awards to adult learners and volunteer tutors at the annual Spotlight on Achievement and Service Awards ceremony in May. Spotlight on Achievement Awards are presented to adult learners who have shown tremendous growth as they worked to improve their reading skills or to learn the English language. Spotlight on Service Awards are presented to 10 adult literacy volunteer tutors who have shown great dedication as they assisted adult learners to reach their reading goals.

Adult learner winners received \$200 from the IPA Foundation, a plaque and a personalized *Illinois Blue Book*. Volunteer winners received \$200 from the IPA Foundation for the literacy program where they tutor as well as a plaque and a personalized *Illinois Blue Book*.

Leatrice Saffore, a former adult learner from De La Salle/Tolton Center in Chicago, spoke at the awards ceremony telling her life's story. She was born on the west side of Chicago and had many tragedies and obstacles to overcome before her life got back on track. She now has an associate degree in sociology, a bachelor's degree in elementary education, a master's degree in theology and received a Certificate in Spiritual Direction in May 2013. Leatrice will be continuing her education to complete her doctorate in ministry. Her goal is to teach children and adults in both school and religious settings. She was truly inspiring to all that attended the ceremony.

Five state legislators including Reps. Kelly Cassidy, C.D. Davidsmeyer, Sue Scherer and David Harris, and Sen. Sam McCann, attended the awards ceremony and honored their local winners. Following are highlights of some of the winners. All the winners' stories are available online.

Adult learner winner highlights:

Emmitt Cole, Richland Community College's Project READ, Decatur — Since he was in grade school, Emmitt had tried to hide the fact that he couldn't read. To avoid being called upon to read in class, he would start talking or put his head down on his desk. He left his textbooks in his locker so he wouldn't have to read them aloud. If he was disruptive, he would be sent to the dean's office and wouldn't have to take tests. Without the ability to read, he became discouraged and dropped out of school. Continuing to hide his reading problem, Emmitt found lots of jobs, but problems still plagued him. When he joined Project READ, he was embarrassed and wouldn't make eye contact. But as his reading and math skills improved, his confidence increased. For the first time, he is excited about learning. He started a new job that required him to take a math test and he had one of the best scores of the group. It is a work in progress but his life looks promising as he continues to study at Project READ.

Jim Niehoff, Arlington Heights Memorial Library — Imagine waking up one day and discovering you are no longer you. Once you were a respected, accomplished communicator. Now you have to relearn basic words in order to speak, read and write. This is what Jim faced when he suffered a stroke as a result of an accident at age 44. The doctors were not sure he would live, much less walk and talk. Jim faced extensive rehabilitation and speech therapy. When therapy ended, he needed to find other resources; that's when he found the Arlington Heights Memorial Library. His first goal was to speak and

write sentences. Through Jim's hard work week after week, he began to make progress. As Jim recovers his ability to read, his frustrations are lessening and he feels less isolated and alone.

Volunteer tutor winner highlights:

Cheryl Stolz, C.E.F.S. Literacy Center, Effingham — Ever since Cheryl took a class called "Teaching Adults to Read" in graduate school, she has wanted to teach adults to read. She was also inspired by her four sisters who dropped out of high school but then worked

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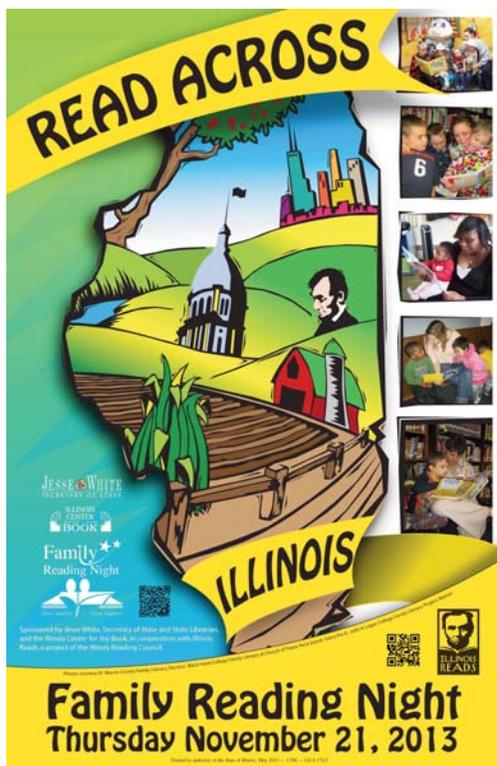


2013 Spotlight on Achievement Winners — Standing left to right: Dennis DeRossett, executive director of the IPA; Xiao Ying Zhang, Regional Office of Education—Monroe/Randolph Counties, Chester; Nathan Watson, Frontier Community College, Fairfield; Vonda Ottwell, John Wood Community College, Quincy; Jim Niehoff, Arlington Heights Memorial Library; Anna Moran, Albany Park Community Center, Chicago; and Secretary White. Seated left to right: Tennie Fitts, South Suburban College, South Holland; Gloria Crosby, De La Salle Tolton, Chicago; Angelica Cortes, Corazon a Corazon, Chicago; Emmitt Cole, Richland Community College's Project READ, Decatur; and Sadia Bachir, Albany Park Community Center.



2013 Spotlight on Service Winners — Standing left to right: Dennis DeRossett, executive director of the IPA; Leatrice Saffore, former adult learner at De La Salle/Tolton Center, Chicago, and guest speaker; Robert Boone, Oaktown Community College, Skokie; Barbara Worner, YWCA Adult Literacy, Pekin; Norman Weinberg, De La Salle/Tolton Center; and Secretary White. Seated left to right: Cheryl Stolz, C.E.F.S. Literacy Center, Effingham; Audrey Colby, Albany Park Community Center, Chicago; Laurie Tyler, Black Hawk College, Moline; and Linda Berry, Kaskaskia College, Centralia. (Not pictured: Stuart Harris and Eugene Swedo, Township High School Dist. 214 Community Education, Arlington Heights, and Alice Mora, Corazon a Corazon, Chicago).





Family Reading Night, sponsored by Secretary of State Jesse White, the Illinois State Library and the Illinois Center for Book, is an annual statewide event that encourages families to spend quality time reading together. This year's Family Reading Night is November 21, 2013, with the theme, "Read Across Illinois." To order posters and bookmarks, complete and return the online form. Materials will be mailed out this summer. For ideas on how to celebrate Family Reading Night, visit <http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/library/public/frn.html>. For questions, please email Bonnie Matheis at bmatheis@ilsos.net.

Spotlight on Achievement (continued from page 3)

very hard to earn their GEDs. Cheryl has been a volunteer tutor for 31 years, spending 10 of those years with C.E.F.S. She also provides language and writing skills to a small group of learners once a week. She has worked with several learners ranging from an ABE learner who did not know the alphabet to an ESL learner who wanted to improve her communication with her children's teachers and doctors. She encourages potential tutors to "enjoy what you are doing and remember how important this commitment is for the student. They may be sacrificing a lot more than your volunteer time."

Barbara Worner, YWCA Adult Literacy, Pekin

After moving back to central Illinois, Barbara read in the newspaper about a volunteer opportunity at the YWCA Adult Literacy Program in Pekin. After completing the training, she was matched with a doctor from Bolivia. He had given up his medical practice to bring his 12-year-old stepson to the U.S. where he would have more opportunities. Barb soon was also working with the doctor's wife, his two adult daughters and the 12-year-old boy. She made the 80-minute round trip drive to Pekin twice a week while also establishing a successful after-school and summer program for low-income children in her community. In late 2009, Barb was diagnosed with cancer. She left her paid and volunteer jobs to undergo treatment. She returned to tutoring in June 2012 when her cancer was in remission. Unfortunately, that fall a different cancer returned. Barb is never without a smile and words of hope and continues to tutor despite her illness.

FY14 Adult Literacy Grant applications received

The State Library Literacy Office received 177 FY14 Adult Literacy Grant applications — 99 Adult Volunteer Literacy; 51 Penny Severns Family Literacy; and 27 Workplace Skills Enhancement — requesting a total of \$7,124,146. This amount exceeds the FY13 total appropriation of \$5,518,300 by more than \$1 million.

WWW



www.1-language.com

Excellent website for learning English! Available in several languages, the site provides audio with accompanying exercises and a Free English Course for ESL students with dialogues, grammar explanations and exercises.

projectcare.worlded.org

Audio and video for listening practice, vocabulary development, project ideas and links to related-health information. Topic areas covered are depression, Alzheimer's disease, alcohol abuse and alcoholism, and death and dying.

www.mathisfun.com

Visually attractive exercises and good explanations of basic math. Many of the exercises are interactive.

Illinois Literacy is a publication of the Secretary of State, Illinois State Library Literacy Office; Jesse White, Secretary of State and State Librarian; Anne Craig, Director, Illinois State Library; Cyndy Colletti, Program Manager, Literacy Office. Produced by the Communications Department.

To subscribe to *Illinois Literacy*, call 217-785-6921 or 800-665-5576 (Illinois only), #3.

ON THE HORIZON

August 8 — Illinois Conference on Volunteer Administration, Chicago, www.icova.info

September 8 — International Literacy Day, www.reading.org

October 2-4 — Sharing a Vision Conference, Springfield, <http://sharingavision.org>

October 10-11 — National Refugee & Immigrant Conference, Chicago, www.thecenterweb.org/alrc/refugee.html

October 15-17 — Illinois Library Association Annual Conference, Chicago, www.ila.org

October 31-November 2 — U.S. Conference on Adult Literacy, Washington, D.C., www.proliteracy.org/uscal

November 5-8 — American Association for Adult and Continuing Education Annual Conference, Lexington, KY, www.aaace.org

November 6-9 — International Dyslexia Association Conference, New Orleans, LA, www.interdys.org

November 14-15 — 2nd Annual Joint Central and Southern Regional Fall Conference, Effingham, www.siue.edu/SIPDC

November 22 — Adult Education Conference-Northern Region, Bloomington, www.thecenterweb.org