

ILLINOIS LITERACY WINTER 2004

Jesse White
Secretary of State
& State Librarian

This issue of *Illinois Literacy* highlights the partnerships that energize and enhance our literacy programs. We all are aware that Community Literacy is a partnership between volunteer tutors and adult learners, that Workplace Skills Enhancement involves partnerships between businesses and educational agencies, and that Family Literacy programs depend on partnerships between libraries and educational agencies. In addition to these important partnerships, churches, local community groups and the Illinois Arts Council also work closely to support literacy in the state.



Communities that support literacy invest in the education of their residents, and these partnerships benefit all of us. The stories in this newsletter illustrate the wonderful things happening in literacy as a result of these partnerships. I commend all the individuals, business leaders, civic and faith-based organizations, local arts advocates and other community leaders who support our libraries, educational institutions and literacy practitioners in ensuring that each person within Illinois' borders has access to quality literacy programs.

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Literacy programs change lives

A 55-year-old female new reader entered the literacy program at Rend Lake College in Ina at the third-grade reading level. She has been employed by the same company for the past 20 years, with most of her duties consisting of manual labor. When she entered the program, she had no confidence in her reading abilities; the mere mention of a book was disturbing to her, and the sight of a book actually frightened her.

The tutor with whom she was placed selected the book — the song *America the Beautiful* in a pop-up format — and used the lyrics for the reading passage. The new reader was immediately attracted to and fascinated with this instrument for learning. Ultimately, it was this and other pop-up books that "hooked" her on reading and allowed her to begin to build confidence and admit that she could indeed read and learn.

The volunteer tutor was sensitive to the learner's needs and approached the task of tutoring by choosing a book with less print and an enticing visual layout. Each learning session takes place at the public library. At some point, the learner realized that the librarian was approachable for assistance. Astonished, the new reader said, "You mean you can talk to the library lady?" She is now comfortable talking to library staff.

With each lesson, this adult learner has improved her ability to read and demonstrated a growing desire to learn. As a result of her enhanced literacy, she was able to apply for and receive a different position in the company. The transfer required reading the notice on the board and putting in a written bid, which she was able to do. A true inspiration to adult learners at any age!

Photo courtesy of Pat Chapel, The News-Gazette, Champaign



Champaign-Urbana International Humanitarian Award

The Urbana Adult Education (UAE) program received the Organization Award in Education as part of the first annual Champaign-Urbana International Humanitarian Award. This award is given for education and humanitarian relief. The UAE program was chosen for creating ways to improve the quality of life for Champaign County's international residents, who often find it difficult to acclimate to American culture. For the past 26 years, the dedicated staff at the UAE program has provided life skills training for adult learners. Pictured are Deb McDermott, UAE staff member; Fernando Tapia (center), cook at the Champaign Country Club and UAE program participant; and John Muirhead, UAE director.

The *Illinois Literacy* newsletter is now available at www.cyberdriveillinois.com

Community organizations support literacy programs

Community involvement in literacy programming has come a long way. Local churches, civic organizations and businesses offer anywhere from space and volunteer tutors, to monetary support and in-kind services. Below are a few examples of partnerships that have enhanced community, workplace and family literacy programming across the state.

Messiah & St. Bartholomew Church, Chicago

Since 1988, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.'s community literacy program has received support from Messiah & St. Bartholomew Church on Chicago's southside. Father Darryl James is always singing the praises of this dedicated group of volunteers. The church provides space, tutors and emergency help. Olivia Amos, program coordinator for Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, the staff and tutors are very grateful to Father James and the church for their support and involvement in the program.

St. Agnes Church, Chicago

Father Mathew Foley, pastor of St. Agnes Church, is delighted with the wonderful program that Universidad Popular has brought to the church. Since the partnership began in 2001, 100 young mothers have learned English and life skills while their children attend on-site day care. The church provides a large space for classes in citizenship, ESL, GED and adult basic education. Olivia Flores-Godinez, director of the Universidad program, is elated over this dynamic partnership with the church.

Many literacy programs also have reported significant support from local Rotary, Kiwanis, Zonta, Altrusa and other civic organizations. These partnerships often result in monetary contributions, eager volunteers or connections to local businesses.

Delta Kappa Gamma Society

The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International, Lambda State (Illinois) organization — an organization for key women educators — collected more than 1,300 books last spring, which were distributed to Penny Severns Summer Family Literacy projects statewide.

A Workplace Skills Enhancement project involves a partnership between a business and an educator to improve employee reading, math or English skills. These partnerships focus on education, but have a much wider overall impact. A Workplace program may give an employee the encouragement and confidence to seek a promotion or obtain further education within the community, but it also can result in enhanced family and social involvement.

Excel Corporation, Beardstown

The Workplace Skills Enhancement project at Excel Corporation is a prime example. In addition to the job-related benefits of the training, employees become better equipped to help their children with homework or to participate in a community organization.

At another Illinois company, when an economic downturn last year resulted in layoffs, the company completed its Workplace Skills Enhancement project before laying off employees so they would have a better chance of finding new jobs.

Nomination forms for Spotlight on Achievement and Spotlight on Service Awards are available at www.cyberdriveillinois.com (click Programs then Literacy) and are due to the Literacy Office Feb. 16, 2004.

Achievement awards are given to adult literacy students who have overcome major obstacles to learn to read. Service awards recognize volunteer tutors for their outstanding commitment to their literacy students. Awards will be presented to 10 students and 10 volunteer tutors in Springfield, May 21. For more information, contact Diane Manning at 217-524-3005 or 800-665-5576, ext. 3.

Arts-in-Literacy

Literacy students have been experiencing the unique skills and talents of Illinois artists through the Illinois Arts Council's Arts-in-Literacy Grant Program. Art activities are directly related to literacy education because learning takes place through all the senses. Many adult students in literacy programs were not successful in traditional school settings that relied primarily on classroom lectures. The arts grants allow literacy practitioners to use their imaginations and the talents of Illinois artists to ignite student interest in learning.

One program brought in a storyteller to lead students in telling tales from home in the students' native Spanish. Another program used a textile artist to teach students how to use fabric in their lives. In yet another program, the students made a ceramic mural illustrating their journey toward literacy.

These valuable partnerships offer students experience in both language and art education. This cooperative effort between Secretary of State funded literacy projects and the Illinois Arts Council energizes literacy students and adds another dimension to learning. For more information on the Arts-in-Literacy Grant Program, contact Anne Bustamante at 312-814-8715.

Summer Family Literacy Grant applications due March 1

FY 2004 Penny Severns Summer Family Literacy grant applications are available at <http://literacy.kent.edu/illinois/grantinfo.htm>. Applications are due by 4 p.m., Mon., March 1, 2004, at the Illinois State Library/Literacy Office, 300 S. Second, Springfield. For more information, call 217-785-6921 or 800-665-5576, #3.

Mini Grants help fund online materials

Nine Illinois literacy programs recently received "mini grants" to develop Internet materials for adult learners and volunteer tutors. The mini grants were made possible through a LINCS grant (Literacy Information and Communication System) to the Illinois State Library/Literacy Office. For more information on the mini grant projects below, visit <http://literacy.kent.edu/illinois/ilteach.htm>, with the exception of the Poder Learning Center, which can be accessed at <http://literacy.kent.edu/illinois/illearners3.htm>.

Albany Park Community Center, Chicago, developed The Computer Tutor program, an online library of how-to flyers and booklets to aid students in understanding basic computer concepts. Booklets range from basic computer use to using Microsoft Word and the Internet to improving job skills, and are available in both English and Spanish.

Carl Sandburg College, Galesburg, updated its online volunteer tutor training to enable tutors to access required training online as well as in class. This has proven to be an effective way of reaching more isolated volunteers or those with irregular work and family schedules.

Inspiration Corporation, Chicago, developed four different lesson plans on math topics and a workplace program to practice reading, writing, math and presentation skills.

Lewis & Clark Community College, Godfrey, adapted the workbook, *Adventures in Library Use; A Scavenger Hunt*, to an Internet lesson. This accompanies the program's *Easy Guide to Library Services* manual already posted on LINCS, and promotes library usage through creative interactive activities using the guide.

Lincoln Land Community College, Springfield, has placed its tutor training manual information on the Internet, providing volunteer tutors and adult education instructors with monthly topics, tips, lesson plans, ideas, advice and resources.



GED students at Albany Park Community Center are learning the intricacies of Microsoft Word with "The Computer Tutor."

Poder Learning Center, Chicago, developed an online lesson to help ESL students make the transition to their new city. Students learn new vocabulary as it relates to obtaining and following directions on the Internet.

The Literacy Connection, Elgin, designed, implemented and promoted a special link to their Web site for tutors and students. The link helps tutors access materials and provides students already in the program and those waiting for a tutor additional sources of study materials and practice.

Township High School, Dist. 214, Arlington Heights, developed eight instructional online skill packs. The lessons are taken from everyday living situations and can be used by tutors or students. Skill pack topics include 911, Car Accidents, Police On the Road and Eating Out, with each one available for both beginning and advanced reading levels.

Waubonsee Community College, Aurora, placed a collection of tutoring experiences and words of wisdom from seasoned literacy volunteer tutors on the Internet. The writings are designed to motivate and encourage potential volunteers. The collection includes guidance, do's and don'ts, what works and what doesn't work, and provides answers to frequently asked questions by new tutors or tutors from other literacy organizations.

VISION USA-free vision care program

For the second year, VISION USA is offering free basic eye health and vision care services to those who may not qualify for government aid or private health-care assistance. Visit www.aoa.org, or call 800-766-4466.

Libraries partner with community literacy programs

Fiscal year 2003 final narrative reports* show the following involvement by Illinois public libraries in literacy programs funded by the Secretary of State:

- 593 libraries offer the library as a tutoring site
- 373 libraries house a high/low reading collection
- 62 libraries donate a high/low reading collection
- 287 libraries offer training for volunteer tutors
- 400 libraries help advertise the literacy program
- 552 refer prospective students and volunteer tutors to literacy programs

(*67% of Illinois public libraries participated)

www.nifl.gov/lincs/hotsites/hotsites.html

A guide to "Hot" Web sites for adult education and literacy sites. Promote your favorite literacy site by completing the Recommend a Site form.

www.kidspoint.org

Includes book reviews, self-quiz on books you read, homework help, program scrapbooks, activities, Web links and a younger children section.

www.literacyconnections.com

Offers support, advice, resources and opportunities for reading volunteers. Participate in discussions, suggest resources, and join an online community of people doing the same good work you are.

www.kneeboancers.com

Created by parents for babies and toddlers, children can hit any key to make it work and choose from several activities.



FEB. 19-20

Networking Equals Results Conference, Bloomington • Contact the Center for Adult Learning Leadership, 309-454-3329.

MARCH 1-3

National Conference on Family Literacy, Florida
www.famlit.org

MARCH 10-12

Illinois Adult & Continuing Educators Association 25th Annual Statewide Conference, Springfield • www.iacea.net

MARCH 27

Illinois Authors Book Fair, Illinois State Library, Springfield • 217-785-6925

APRIL 24-28

Commission on Adult Basic Education and Ohio Association for Adult & Continuing Education Annual Conference, Columbus
www.coabe04.org/geninfo.html

MAY 19

Illinois Family Literacy Institute, Springfield
Contact the Adult Learning Resource Center, 847-803-3535, ext. 343.

MAY 20-21

Illinois Family Literacy Conference, Springfield
Contact the Illinois Literacy Resource Development Center, 217-355-6068, www.ilrdc.org/

FY2003 Literacy statistics

Final reports submitted by Secretary of State funded literacy programs revealed the following statistics:

Community Volunteer Literacy Program	Students served	37,779
	ESL students	46%
	Average last grade completed	9.72
	Average age	36.26
	Students employed	27%
	Females	56%
	Males	44%
	Students served in correctional setting	3,716
	Volunteers	14,922
	Average age	44
Females	75%	
Average initial training hours	12	
Additional in-service training hours	12	
Average hours of instruction	130	
Family Literacy Program	Adults served	960
	Average age	29.2
	English not first language	42%
	Average last grade completed	9.1
	Employed full-time or part-time	33%
	Females	87%
	Males	13%
	Children served	1,628
	Average age	10.1
	Recruited through Head Start, Even Start, Pre-K or Title I	43%
Average adult/child activity time	17.85 hrs.	
Average child alone time	362	
Females	54%	
Males	46%	
Workplace Skills Enhancement Program	Employees assessed and/or instructed	1,246
	Males	50%
	Average age	38.81
	Average last grade completed	9.64
	Average years with company	5.58

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