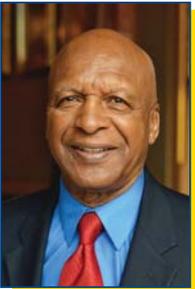


Jesse White
Secretary of State
& State Librarian

Active military personnel and veterans are the backbone of our great nation. Their service to our country provides us the many rights and freedoms we enjoy each day. As a fellow veteran, it is my honor and privilege to recognize those who have served our country and those veterans who continue to serve their communities. I am proud to share the stories of some exceptional veterans in this issue of Illinois Literacy.



The FY16 Adult Literacy Grant projects throughout the state provided necessary and valuable education to adult learners. I am pleased to include remarkable stories of groups and individuals who benefited from these projects in this issue.

Jesse White
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Secretary of State & State Librarian

Honoring veterans who serve their community



Left: Paul Wilson, volunteer literacy tutor at Spoon River College. Center: Marilyn Shalloo (left) with one of her adult learners. Right: Gert Vutz, volunteer tutor at Literacy DuPage.

The country honors our veterans each year on Nov. 11 with ceremonies, public events and parades to commemorate and demonstrate gratitude for their service. Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White, as well as the Illinois State Library Literacy Office, would like to recognize select individuals who not only served our country through active service, but also contribute selflessly to their community by volunteering to the education of individuals. Below are the stories of three distinguished veterans.

Paul Wilson — Spoon River College, Canton
Paul served in the U.S. Navy from September 1964 to August 1968. He is a retired teacher who tutors at the Spoon River College evening Adult Education Class. He also teaches reading and English at the Western Illinois Correctional Center in Mt. Sterling.

Paul demonstrates generosity and flexibility with his time and talents by volunteering to teach a variety of subjects and works one-on-one with an adult learner or tutors a group of learners. His wealth of knowledge allows him the ability to specialize in dividing concepts

into smaller segments. This allows subjects, especially math, to become much less intimidating and easier for students to understand.

The soft-spoken, caring and compassionate personality of Mr. Wilson quickly puts learners at ease, which allows him to form special bonds with each student. He is not only an academic tutor, but serves as their advocate, encouraging them throughout their educational and life experiences.

Marilyn Shalloo — Dominican Literacy Center, Aurora

Marilyn began her military career in 1966 serving as a flight nurse in the Air Force Reserve. She later served as an admissions liaison officer for the U.S. Air Force Academy until her retirement following nearly 30 years of service. Her duties at the academy included working with students, parents and high school counselors to assist them in determining admission requirements, and arranging recommendations for potential cadets.

FY16 grant project highlights

FY16 grant project highlights

Secretary of State Jesse White awarded more than \$2 million to 57 literacy projects throughout Illinois last fiscal year. Below are descriptions of the projects that were presented grants, as well as personal success stories.

Adult Volunteer Literacy — \$1,210,228 was awarded to 28 programs to provide training for volunteers who tutor adults age 17 and over. These students read, write, compute or comprehend below the ninth-grade level or score below SPL 7 for speakers of foreign languages. Over 3,200 volunteers provided tutoring to more than 6,100 adult learners.

FY16 Success Story: Richland Community College's Project READ, Decatur

An adult learner explained to the staff of Project Read that she felt as though she was "dangling from the end of a rope, tying knots and trying to hang on." She had experienced years of teasing and being called names because of her abilities and had ultimately accepted this characterization. The years of being told that she was not intelligent — even by members of her own family — had an adverse effect on her psyche, and manifested into nightmares, an inability to maintain a job and eventually divorce.

Christine made the decision to improve her life and enrolled in a high school equivalency class. Unfortunately, she soon found that she had trouble understanding the material because she could not read or comprehend a bulk of the language that was used in her classes. She worked hard in an attempt to keep up with the lessons, but soon dropped out due to the embarrassment of her perceived failure. Christine was later introduced to a program at the Decatur Public Library for adults wanting to learn to read and improve themselves through education. She joined Project READ in May 2015 and met with the program's literacy specialist who noted that Christine was insecure about every subject, particularly math. Christine did not lack the intelligence necessary to succeed but the knowledge of how to attain success.

She was soon matched with a tutor named Theresa and started her journey of learning. She began with math and learned basic addition. Theresa soon noticed that Christine loved working with numbers. Despite her initial struggle, she quickly advanced into more complex math problems such as percentages, ratios and proportions. Her success with math changed her educational perspective, and Christine

decided to continue with her high school equivalency class upon her completion of courses at Project Read.

Teresa says that "She [Christine] has blessed me and I love watching her grow. She has always been open, eager and ready, but I can't believe how far she has come in one year. I love seeing how her problem-solving and critical thinking skills have developed and her success with math has changed her whole being." Thanks to Project Read and the opportunity to get the one-to-one tutoring she needed, Christine has progressed nearly three and a half grade levels in a single year.

Penny Seaverns Family Literacy — \$772,769 was awarded to 24 family literacy projects to provide parents and children, both individually and together, instructional services that enhance their basic reading, math, writing and/or language skills. Grants are given to partnerships that include an adult literacy provider, a public library and a child-at-risk organization.

FY16 Success Story: Asian Human Services, Chicago

A Pakistani mother and first-grade son enrolled in the School Age Family Literacy Program. They each have been positively impacted by the program throughout the course of the year. The mother was enrolled in morning intensive ESL classes, striving to improve her reading and writing skills. She has made great progress since she enrolled and raised her performance on the CASAS a SPL level, to a high beginning from an intermediate low.

The son entered the Family Literacy Program with academic and behavioral challenges. He was reading below grade level and the tutors of the program, as well as his elementary school teacher, struggled to manage his behavior so that he could begin to improve his reading skills. The tutors, program coordinator, his teacher and mother all worked together during the school year to share teaching strategies and provide consistent expectations for his work and behavior. The program coordinator even assisted the mother in starting the process of having her son evaluated by his school for special education services. Throughout the process his mother remained engaged in every way possible in order to act as an advocate for her son. She researched private tutoring options, asked his teacher questions and was involved with conferences with the program coordinator. Both mother and child have engaged in each of the five components of the School Age Family Literacy Program.

(Cont. on pg. 3)



Adult learner Christine (left) with her Project Read volunteer tutor Teresa (right).



Mom and son reading together.



Carl Buddig and Company employees who attend the ESL class are joined by their supervisors and the class instructor.

Due to the relationships built and partnership formed from the different stakeholders in this case, the mother and child have made great changes. The child's teacher and tutors now report that his behavior has improved and he is reading basic early fluency books. He is excited about reading. The mother continues to improve her reading and writing skills, as well as supporting her son.

Workplace Skills Enhancement — \$67,000 was awarded to five businesses and educational providers to offer employees on-site instructional services to enhance their basic reading, math, writing and/or language skills. The instruction assists these employees in maintaining their employment and increases potential eligibility for promotion. Grants are matched by the businesses at a minimum of one-to-one.

FY16 Success Story: Carl Buddig and Company, South Holland

For more than 73 years, Carl Buddig and Company has been a family-owned company. Today it ranks as the third largest selling brand of luncheon meat with distribution in the U.S., Canada and Puerto Rico. In collaboration with its educational partner South Suburban College, the company has participated in the Secretary of State's Workforce Skills Enhancement program consecutively for the last 11 years.

The company's objective is to offer consistent and continued training and education to its associates in an effort to increase communication skills and opportunity for advancement. The company continues to expand its workforce and provide current associates the opportunity to assume more responsibility, which translates into higher pay. The impact of training within the company has been beneficial and allowed associates the opportunity to learn while at work. Statistics collected by the company show that as a direct result of the program, fewer production errors have been recorded and there is an increased understanding and knowledge of English.

An associate, Antonio, was recently promoted to crew leader. In the past he felt a reluctance to accept promotions because his communication and comprehension in the English language was not proficient enough to handle the increased responsibilities of a new position. Antonio explains that the ESL course helped him improve his overall understanding of English and gave him the confidence and knowledge to effectively communicate with other associates as well as management. He looks forward to being able to continue to advance his career and increase his responsibility at the company.

The company's day manager noted in a report that many Spanish and Polish speaking associates have benefited from the ESL classes at work and also in their personal lives. They have shared that their ability to help their children with homework, attending doctor's appointments and other life events has been greatly improved. Many of them have expressed the profound difference it has made in their lives and are appreciative for the opportunity to participate in the classes.

Carl Buddig and Company continues to expand and adds additional product lines on a regular basis. This growth has allowed the company to continue to expand its already diverse workforce. A majority of new hires of this company do not use English as their primary language. The company contends that its ability to communicate successfully with a new employee strengthens its hiring program and aids in employee retention. The continuity of ESL training is key to helping the company, as well as its employees, achieve their goals.

ON THE HORIZON

Nov. 30-Dec. 3 – Literacy Research Association, Nashville, TN
www.literacyresearchassociation.org

Jan. 18-20 – Annual Illinois Comprehensive Literacy & Reading Recovery Conference, Chicago, IL
www.nl.edu/readingrecoveryconference/

Feb. 16-19 – Learning Disabilities Association Annual International Conference, Baltimore, MD
<http://ldaamerica.org/>

Feb. 24-25 – Illinois TESOL-BE Annual Convention, Naperville, IL
www.itbe.org

More literacy event information is available at www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/library/literacy/home.html (click Calendar of Literacy Events).

Literacy Foundation

The Illinois Literacy Foundation has worked to support literacy programs throughout the state since 1999. The foundation is committed to ensuring that every Illinoisan has the reading skills to achieve his/her utmost potential. The current strategy is focused on preschool children and developing reading readiness. Recent efforts include a revamped website, a Facebook page and planned public service announcements. Upcoming planned events include participation in the McDonald's Thanksgiving Day Parade in Chicago and a luncheon to coincide with the American Library Association Convention in June 2017. Please "Like" the foundation's page on Facebook and forward posts to spread the word about the message of the organization.



In 1997, Marilyn began volunteering at the Dominican Literacy Center in Aurora as an ESL tutor. She has spent nearly 20 years tutoring immigrant women. She spends her time educating, assisting and encouraging these women to become empowered as individuals, parents, employees and active community members. Her kindness and patience is a calming presence for her students. Marilyn's years of service in both the military and the community make her the ideal mentor and role model for her adult learners.

Gert Vutz — Literacy DuPage, Naperville

In 1961, Gert immigrated to the United States from Germany in search of more lucrative job prospects. He was drafted into the U.S. Army and began his military career with the 5th Army, 52nd Signal Battalion in 1962. Although he had a basic knowledge of the English language, he struggled to communicate in his military and personal life. Over time, his English improved and he eventually became a language instructor for the Army.

Following his honorable discharge in 1964, Gert earned an MBA and enjoyed a long and successful career in technology sales. Upon retirement, he wished to spend his time giving back to the community and helping those who struggle to live in a country where their birth language is not primarily spoken. Gert had lived through this experience and wanted to connect with those who sought understanding and wisdom he had to give. He chose to devote his time and skills to Literacy DuPage as a volunteer tutor to help recent immigrants improve their English language skills.

Gert found himself teaching an adult learner named Elva, who was struggling with learning English. "Elva epitomizes the barriers that many immigrants face while trying to settle in the U.S. She experienced a lack of tolerance and acceptance and was bullied for not speaking English well," he explained. After working with Gert, Elva has achieved goals of improving her writing skills and confidently conversing with others without fear. She has made extraordinary strides and even passed her GED exam. Gert and Elva continue to meet regularly as their tutor/student relationship has blossomed into a lasting friendship.

WWW



<http://www.familyreading.org>

Based in Ithaca, New York, the Family Reading Partnership is a broad-based, locally grown coalition of individuals, businesses, schools, libraries and other organizations that joined forces to "create a culture of literacy" by promoting family reading practices throughout the community. The partnership has created more than 12 programs and initiatives aimed at connecting children with the joy of reading.

<http://www.theharrispoll.com/health-and-life/Family-Reading.html>

The link provides access to a Harris poll showing the results of 2,193 U.S. adults surveyed online between Jan. 13-18, 2016, regarding the connections between family reading time and achievements later in life. The results of the poll show strong evidence of a correlation, as well as many other benefits.

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/raising-readers-writers-and-spellers/201510/the-do-s-and-don-ts-family-reading>

This article gives tips on ways to encourage reading at home as well as some things to avoid. It also includes a list of book titles on how to "raise a reader."

***Illinois Literacy* is a publication of the Secretary of State, Illinois State Library Literacy Office.**

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