

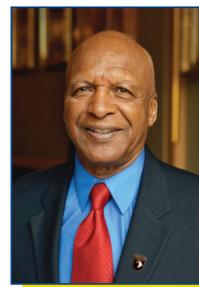
LITERACY

SPRING
2020

ILLINOIS

Jesse White
Secretary of State
& State Librarian

I would like to encourage literacy programs across the state to use National Volunteer Week, April 19-25, as an opportunity to recognize the volunteer tutors in your program. The contributions these dedicated individuals make in changing the lives of adult learners are vital to the success of our Adult Volunteer Literacy Program. In this issue, we recognize one such volunteer who continues to make lasting impressions on her students. Please let all of our tutors know how much we appreciate them during this special week of recognition.



As the chair of the Illinois Complete Count Commission, I would like to remind everyone of the importance of the upcoming 2020 Census. Adult educational agencies, along with public libraries, have an opportunity to reach groups that tend to be the most undercounted during the census. I encourage these agencies to help ensure these vulnerable populations are properly represented in the count.

National Library Week will be held April 19-25. Libraries are and continue to be one of the most important places in every community. Take time to stop into your local library, thank those who work there and help them celebrate this special week.

Jesse White

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Secretary of State & State Librarian

Celebrate National Volunteer Week

Last year, more than 5,000 Illinois residents donated their time and made a commitment to help adults in our state who have difficulties in basic reading, math, writing or language skills. It is an annual tradition to honor and celebrate volunteer tutors during National Volunteer Week that will be held April 19-25, 2020.

National Volunteer Week is an opportunity to celebrate the impact of volunteer service. The power of volunteers can tackle society's greatest challenges, build stronger communities and transform individuals. Volunteers' actions and stories can help inspire others to serve. The National Points of Light Foundation proclaimed this year's theme for the week as Celebrate Service — an opportunity to shine a light on the people and causes that inspire us to serve.

Throughout the state, literacy programs rely on the generosity of individuals to donate their time and talents to adult learners. According to the Independent Sector, volunteer service equates to \$26.89 per hour in Illinois. In 2019, volunteer tutors provided a



Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White (left) and Karen Egan (right), Illinois State Library associate director of grants and programs, recognize volunteer tutor Shirley Blount (center) with a Spotlight on Service Award.

value of more than \$6 million of service hours to Secretary of State Adult Volunteer Literacy Grant programs.

National Volunteer Week was established in 1974 and has grown each year, with thousands of volunteer projects and special events scheduled throughout the week. Be sure to celebrate and

recognize the service of your program's volunteers.

For more information on volunteering at an Illinois literacy program or to refer potential adult learners, please call the Illinois Adult Learning Hotline at 800-321-9511, or visit <https://adultlearninghotline.org>.

Volunteer tutor highlight

Rosemary Shiels came to Corazón a Corazón in Blue Island to become a tutor because she saw a great opportunity to help others. She has an energetic, vibrant and a contagious personality. She advocates the rewarding experience of helping others so that they can better integrate themselves in their community.

"I volunteer at Corazón a Corazón because helping people learn to speak and improve their English is something that I think will contribute to the strength of our community and our country," says Rosemary. "I also think that because I am a native English speaker, I can share some ideas on why English is the way it is and how our learners can become better English speakers. Most importantly, I volunteer at Corazón a Corazón because it is so enjoyable; the students are anxious to learn and unfailingly grateful to the tutors. Who could pass that up?"

Rosemary also participates in many different activities in the neighborhood — from learning tai chi and singing in her church choir to volunteering at a food pantry and, of course, teaching English as a second language. She leads an exciting and a purposeful life and inspires others to do the same.

Rosemary dedicates some of her tutoring session time to conversation, as this helps her become familiar with her learners and gives them the opportunity to practice their new skills.



Rosemary Shiels (right) and one of her adult learners study during a tutoring session at Corazón a Corazón.

One of her learners explained, "My tutor, Rosemary, is very patient. She helps me correct any errors in my pronunciation when speaking English and this means she really cares about my learning. She's punctual, has a great positive attitude and always has a smile. She's the perfect tutor because she looks for different examples for me to better understand. She's charismatic, sweet and so smart."

Literacy programs, libraries and schools celebrate Family Reading Night



A mother and daughter participate in FRN activities in Alton.

Last November, literacy programs, local libraries and schools all across the state celebrated Family Reading Night (FRN). The events were highlighted with activities to promote and encourage a night of read-

ing together as a family. This year marked the 29th year the Secretary of State's office has sponsored FRN.

"The importance of families turning off electronic devices and spending time reading together is immeasurable," said Secretary of State & State Librarian Jesse White. "Reading together creates a positive learning environment and helps children develop language skills, comprehension and a love for reading that can last a lifetime."

The following are descriptions of a few events held in commemoration of the event:

Lewis and Clark Community College, Penny Severns Family Literacy Grant project, Alton

The evening was filled with fun activities based on the book, "There was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly." The program used a puppet that let the children have the opportunity to "feed" the insects to the old lady during each part of the story. Several stations were set up so families could retell the story over and over again to help with retaining and learning the story. One

station included pictures of each item the old lady swallowed, and the families put them in sequential order as they happened during the story. Another activity station had families match the colored pictures with the corresponding word. Participants snacked on delicious "spider" cookies, and each child received a book and a soft cuddly stuffed cat to take home.

Princeton Public Library, Princeton

The library celebrated FRN with a pajama party and stuffed animal sleepover where families were invited to come to the library with their stuffed friends for storytime with hot chocolate and cookies. The children and families were then invited to find a bedtime storybook to read to their stuffed friend before tucking them in for the night. The families all selected books together before tucking their friends in for a good night's sleep at the library. Each returned to the library the next day to pick up their stuffed friends and were given a souvenir booklet with photos of their stuffed friend's overnight adventures at the library.

(cont. on pg. 4)

Census 2020 — Make sure Illinois counts

Every 10 years, a census is taken of all persons living in the United States. It is important that every Illinois resident be counted so the population accurately reflects all of the current needs of the state. While many Illinoisans will answer the census questionnaire when it arrives, some demographics are consistently undercounted due to low participation. Here are a few groups that are historically undercounted in the census:

- Foreign born residents (documented and undocumented) living and/or working in Illinois.
- Minority communities.
- Persons living in large housing units or apartment complexes.
- Children under age 5.
- Homeless population.

Although there are other undercounted groups, those listed will most likely interact with and receive services from literacy provider agencies.

April 1st is Census Day, but in mid-March, residents of the state were mailed notices from the Census Bureau with instructions for completing the census online. This is the first time the census will be conducted primarily online. Paper census forms will be mailed to those who do not respond online, and enumerators will canvas door-to-door to capture information from those who do not respond online or submit a paper form. The collection of citizen information will continue until the end of July to ensure everyone has the opportunity to be counted.

“Literacy agencies along with public libraries will play a vital role in the census,” says Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White. “The two entities are considered trusted institutions in the community and are being asked to promote the importance of the census to their clients and patrons, as well as making their computer labs and public access terminals available to people to enter their census information.”

Many residents think census data is only used to determine the number of legislative seats Illinois has in Washington or Springfield. This is only part of what is determined by census results. Census participation and results also determine the amount of federal money Illinois receives each year to support:

- Schools and school districts.
- Social services programs that provide assistance for senior citizens, veterans and low-income families.
- Hospitals and emergency healthcare centers for the insured and uninsured.



- Infrastructure needs, such as road construction and repairs.
- Companies to expand corporate offices or factories, bringing employment opportunities to communities.

What can literacy and other community agencies do to help?

- Educate the community about the 2020 Census and the importance of participation with census takers who will be visiting local neighborhoods.
- Encourage trusted community partners, such as churches and neighborhood organizations, to motivate their members to respond to the census questionnaire.
- Engage grass roots organizations in the community to reach out to residents in hard-to-count groups and those who are not motivated to respond to the census questionnaire.
- Stress that each census questionnaire is kept confidential by the U.S. Census Bureau and that the information is not shared with other federal or state government agencies.

More information about the census is available at the Illinois Complete Count Commission's website at <https://www.illinoiscensus2020.com>.

IACEA conference scholarships awarded

Illinois State Library's Literacy Office gave individuals who work for literacy programs the opportunity to apply for scholarships to attend the Illinois Adult and Continuing Educators Association (IACEA) conference held in March in Springfield. Each award covered the registration fees, lodging for two nights at the conference hotel, and a one-year membership to both IACEA and the Commission on Adult Basic Education (COABE).

Applications for the scholarships were received from literacy programs across the state covering a wide range of staff positions. Scholarships were awarded to:

- Taylor Fox, Kankakee Community College
- Steffen Gordon, Southtown Youth Program Center, Mt. Vernon
- Sheila Vaughn, Lewis & Clark Community College, Godfrey
- Lori Koch, YWCA Pekin
- Marie Hilst, YWCA Pekin
- Laura Wickramasinghe, Literacy DuPage, Glen Ellyn
- Jennifer Brown, Hana Center, Chicago
- Mary Cerutti, World Relief, Carol Stream
- Charlene Choi, Hanul Family Alliance, Chicago
- Addie Placedo, Urbana School District – Adult Ed
- Harry Kent, St. Joseph Services, Chicago

The conference provided literacy program staff professional development opportunities as well as the chance to meet and network with fellow literacy practitioners from around the state. Many programs are unable to send staff to conferences due to limited funds. Winners would not have been able to attend this informative conference without the awarded scholarship.



Wilmot Grade School, Deerfield

The kindergarten FRN had 57 students attend with their parents participating in a fun night of reading and activities. School staff members volunteered their time to participate in the evening and seven fifth-graders were entrusted with leadership responsibilities during the event. Families spent time together reading many books and were introduced to a variety of youth services available at the Deerfield Public Library. Relationships with the school and the broader community were strengthened, and the students felt celebrated with an event “just for them.” The school is hoping to make the kindergarten FRN an annual tradition.

Meridian School, Buffalo Grove

The school’s FRN was based on a discussion of the 2020 Rebecca Caudill Young Readers’ Book Award nominee, “The Night Diary” by Veera Hiranandani. The families gathered to discuss the events that took place in 1947 when India, newly free from British colonial rule, was divided into two countries: Pakistan and India. Participants wrapped up the night by partaking in traditional Indian food that included samosas, kheer, mango candy and gulab jamun.

National Library Week — April 19-25

Libraries are the educational cornerstones of a community and serve as integral partners to every literacy program in the state. Help celebrate these libraries April 19-25 during the American Library Association’s (ALA) National Library Week. First sponsored in 1958, this annual celebration highlights the valuable role libraries, librarians and library workers play in transforming communities and improving lives.

The library is a place where all people are welcome regardless of age, interests or background. From audio books and job-seeking resources to cooking and yoga classes, the library has something for everyone.

“It is important that we celebrate libraries and how they have long served as a trusted and treasured institution where people of every walk of life can gather together, connect and learn,” says Secretary White. “National Library Week is also a perfect time for libraries to showcase to their community what is new at the library.”

National Library Week provides an excellent opportunity for literacy agencies to partner with local libraries and other community organizations to build programs that support literacy students and their families. Visit ALA’s website at <http://www.ala.org/conferenceevents/national-library-week-tools> for free tools to help collaborate and celebrate the week.

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

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Greg McCormick, director, Illinois State Library**

Produced by the Communications Department.

ON THE HORIZON

- **April** – National Autism Awareness Month, <https://www.autism-society.org/get-involved/national-autism-awareness-month/>
- **April 18** – On The Road to Literacy Conference, Chicago, <http://www.lvillinois.org/home.aspx>
- **April 19-25** – National Library Week, <http://www.ala.org/conference/sevents/celebrationweeks/natlibraryweek>
- **April 19-25** – National Volunteer Week, <https://www.pointsoflight.org/nvw>
- **April 24-25** – PTA State Convention, Naperville, <https://illinoispta.org/events/>
- **May 4-10** – Children’s Book Week, <https://everychildareader.net/cbw/>
- **June 10-12** – Points of Light Conference, Washington, D.C., <https://www.pointsoflight.org/points-of-light-conference/>
- **June 23-25** – CASAS Summer Institute, Orange County, CA, <https://www.casas.org/training-and-support/SI>
- **June 25-30** – American Library Association Annual Conference, Chicago, <https://2020.alaannual.org/>

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

WWW



<https://library.cityvision.edu/32-ways-recognize-volunteers>

Courtesy of City Vision University is a list of 32 ways to recognize and motivate your volunteer tutors.

<https://www.kiwanis.org/news/newsitem/news/newsitem/have-you-said-thank-you-today?>

Kiwanis International suggests tips on how to express gratitude to your volunteers.

<https://www.unitedwaygmwc.org/UnitedWayMilwaukee/Volunteer-Resources/13cRecognitionToolbox.pdf>

The United Way provides this toolbox of ideas to recognize volunteer tutors, to organize recognition events and to understand what motivates tutors.

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