

ILLINOIS LITERACY

SPRING 2015

Jesse White
Secretary of State
& State Librarian

This past November, literacy programs, libraries and schools statewide hosted events for Family Reading Night centered on the theme "Reading Rocks." Fun and creative programs were held by these organizations to encourage and inspire families to read and learn together. I want to thank everyone for making Family Reading Night 2014 another huge success.



Volunteers are a big reason why the Adult Volunteer Literacy Program continues to successfully improve the lives of many adult learners. I encourage all programs to utilize National Volunteer Week, April 12-18, to recognize the volunteer tutors in your program. Volunteer tutors selflessly give up their time to help adult learners educate themselves. In this issue, we feature an adult learner who has greatly improved her English capabilities with the assistance of a volunteer tutor from Literacy DuPage. National Library Week coincides with volunteer week and is a great time to celebrate your local public library.

I commend all of you for your commitment to improving the lives of Illinois citizens through literacy services. While the accomplishments are outstanding, the need continues to grow. With your assistance, my office will continue to provide these services to all those in need. Keep up the great work!

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Celebrate volunteers during National Volunteer Week in April

In Illinois, volunteer tutors play an important role in literacy programs by providing their unpaid time to improve the lives of adult learners and their families through education. Last year, 7,982 volunteer tutors provided 370,849 hours of tutoring to 18,675 students. Thank your volunteer tutors for all they do during National Volunteer Week, April 12-18. For more information, check the Points of Light website at www.pointsoflight.org (click events).

Volunteer tutors can also be recognized through the Spotlight on Service Awards event held annually at the State Library. Linda Buechting (center) of John Wood Community College in Quincy was one of 10 Spotlight on Service Award winners recognized at the 2014 event. This year's awards ceremony will be held May 13 in Springfield. Look for photos and stories of this year's winners in the summer issue of "Illinois Literacy."



Secretary of State Jesse White joined Dennis DeRossett of the Illinois Press Association in presenting volunteer tutor Linda Buechting with a 2014 Spotlight on Service Award last May.

CELEBRATE SERVICE

National Volunteer Week - April 12-18



Instituto del Progreso Latino,
Chicago



Aurora Public Library, Aurora

Literacy programs, libraries and schools around the state celebrated Family Reading Night last November with the theme, "Reading Rocks." Family Reading Night is celebrated each year on the third Thursday in November. The Secretary of State's office, the Illinois Center for the Book and the Illinois Reading Council's "Illinois Reads" initiative work together to promote Family Reading Night. The 2015 Family Reading Night celebration will be Thursday, November 19. For materials including posters and bookmarks, please complete the form at http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/publications/pdf_publications/Ida142.pdf.

Here are some highlights from the 2014 Family Reading Night events:

Aurora Public Library, Aurora – The library held its event at the Aurora Regional Fire Museum. Children made their own fire hats on arrival and were led by a library staff member in reading about brave firefighters. The evening ended with the families making fire engine crafts and touring the museum.

Howard Area Community Center, Chicago – Staff created several stations for parents and children to explore things related to this year's theme, "Reading Rocks." The stations included: making guitars, maracas and rattles, making rock candy, painting rocks, listening to music and reading books related to rocks.

Southwestern Illinois College, Venice – In conjunction with Venice Public Library's annual "Real Men Read" program, families came to the library to read with local male role models from the community and experience the importance of reading.

Fishes & Loaves Outreach, Springfield – Participants were greeted by a room decorated with musical instruments, books illustrating the theme "Reading Rocks" and colorful posters. Records and albums were designed with labels depicting titles such as "Read Around the Clock" and the Jackson Five's "ABC," with families dancing to the music and singing the modified versions of the songs.

Instituto del Progreso Latino, Chicago – Families enjoyed an event with activities, discussions and readings about nutrition and healthy lifestyles. The event ended with Zumba dancing to rock music to encourage families to exercise.

Lewis & Clark Community College, Godfrey – Going along with this year's theme, the event was a night of moving, clapping and tapping for the families attending. The book, "Saturday Night at the Dinosaur Stomp" by Carol Diggory Shields, was chosen to share with the families. This book has such a rhythmic reading beat that children became engaged almost immediately. Printable dinosaurs were available for the families to cut out and paste onto craft sticks creating their own set of dinosaur puppets. Play dough and objects to make fossils were available at another station for the families to enjoy. Each participant went home with a new book for their own personal library and a Family Reading Night bookmark.

Albany Park Community Center, Chicago – Families worked their way through a storytelling station, arts and crafts station, and a dance station during the night's festivities. At the end of the night, children were able to shop for and pick out their own books with each family leaving with a large stack of new books.



Township High School, Dist. #214 Community Education, Arlington Heights



Southwestern Illinois College, Venice



Fishes & Loaves Outreach, Springfield

C.E.F.S., Effingham – The family literacy program joined Effingham’s Helen Matthes Library at the Effingham Performance Center for Family Reading Night activities. Lorax mustaches were provided to all of the children — and one dad! A free-ticket drawing gave one winner a Dr. Seuss Lorax pop-up book. The night continued with magicians, glow-in-the-dark activities and lots of reading.

Bensenville Community Public Library, Bensenville – Families from the literacy program, as well as others from the community, gathered at the library for a night of read aloud sessions next to the library’s fireplace. The library then created “cozy corners” throughout the library with cushions and books for families to sit and read together.

Summer reading ideas

Summer is just around the corner, so plan to promote summer reading to adult learners and family literacy participants to help avoid summer learning loss, also known as “summer slide.” The benefits of summer reading are clear, as national research shows that individuals who participate in summer reading programs achieve higher scores on reading tests at the beginning of the next school year than those who did not participate. Develop your own theme and incentives to encourage summer reading or tap into statewide or nationwide initiatives.

Local libraries around the state host summer reading programs. The Illinois Library Association’s iREAD committee has selected “Read to the Rhythm” as this summer’s theme. Encourage families to get ready to sing, dance and read this summer. Summer reading programming includes activities, graphics, crafts, reading lists, incentives and much more for children, teens and adults. Contact your local library to see when they are kicking off their summer reading program or visit <http://www.ireadprogram.org/> for a listing of potential activities.

Another idea for promoting summer reading includes Scholastic’s “Reading Under the Stars” booklist. Books for all ages are offered on this list and can be accessed at <http://www.scholastic.com/summer>. Encourage adults and children to grab a book, head outdoors and create fun reading adventures outside.

Summer reading will not only expand our knowledge but also our minds; we only need to pick up a book to start our journey.

Helpful Links

Below are three organizations that can be utilized to recruit volunteer tutors:

Volunteer Match

<http://www.volunteermatch.org/nonprofits/>

Altrusa

<http://www.altrusa.com/Who-We-Are.aspx>

Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)

<http://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/senior-corps/rsvp>

Tutoring helps learner overcome fears

For many people, public speaking is their number one phobia. If that is the case, imagine how much courage it takes to speak in front of people when English isn’t your first language.

When a learner joined her husband in America five years ago, she was fairly confident of her ability to read and write in English. She was a good student back in Northern India, earning a master’s degree in Science. However, when it came to speaking with her children’s teachers, neighbors and store clerks, she found herself leaning on her husband for support.

“When my husband and I went to the Westmont Public Library, we noticed a poster about an English conversation group. After I joined the group, they gave me information about Literacy DuPage,” she said.

Through Literacy DuPage, the learner was paired with a tutor with whom she formed a very tight bond. “She learns by rote memorization,” says her tutor, “She can read fairly well, but idioms were challenging, as well as subject-verb agreement and using the correct tense in a sentence. Grammatically, we have so many exceptions to the rules, yet she worked hard to learn English to build her conversational confidence.”

When they started their tutoring sessions, the two met weekly at the public library. To better accommodate her busy schedule as the mother of two young children, the two started meeting at the learner’s apartment. In the two years since the tutoring began, this learner has advanced four levels in the literacy program. In the process, she has become much more confident about speaking up.

“Now our get-togethers are more conversational,” says the tutor, “she is curious and inquisitive; I am able to explain our American customs and address the questions she has as she acclimates to a new country.”

In addition to progressing through the literacy workbooks, their discussions often include real-life issues like navigating her son’s school website for information, reviewing park district activities and questioning the doctor about her daughter.

This learner has advanced so quickly that simple conversations are no longer a challenge. Instead of limiting herself to small-group conversations, she now has enough confidence to speak in front of an audience. This year, she was the featured speaker for Literacy DuPage’s Annual Recognition Luncheon, which is no small accomplishment for someone who was too nervous to converse with her neighbors a few short years ago.



Pictured from left to right are Carmen Higgins, Westmont Public Library; Kim Danielski, volunteer tutor; Pratima Rai, adult learner; Lynn Robertson and Karen Fuist, Literacy DuPage conversation group leaders.

National Library Week in April

Libraries are the educational cornerstones of Illinois communities and serve as integral partners to every literacy program in the state. Help celebrate the role these libraries play April 12-18 during the American Library Association's (ALA) National Library Week. First sponsored in 1958, this national observance is to recognize libraries and the communities they serve while promoting library use and library users.

The theme for this year is "Unlimited possibilities @ your library." Honorary chair of National Library Week 2015 is best-selling author David Baldacci. Baldacci's novels have been translated into more than 45 languages and have been adapted for film and television. More than 110 million copies of his books are in print worldwide. In addition, Baldacci is involved with several philanthropic organizations, including his family's Wish You Well Foundation®, which fosters and promotes the development and expansion of literacy and educational programs.

National Library Week provides an excellent opportunity to partner with your local library and other community organizations to build programs that support literacy students and their families. In Illinois, Mount Prospect Public Library will host the Community Organizations Fair on Tuesday, April 16. The fair will feature more than 20 community organizations offering information on their services that are available to the community. In California, the Salinas Public Library is turning public transit into bookmobiles by offering "book bags" for circulation on their public transit buses. More programming ideas can be found on the ALA website at <http://www.ala.org/conferencesevents/national-library-week-programming-ideas>.

WWW



http://www.writingresource.info/adult_literacy_resources.htm

This site contains information on tutor guidelines and training used at Portland Community College in Portland, Oregon. The site also provides numerous links to other adult literacy information and resource sites.

<http://iteslj.org/Articles/>

This site contains a large collection of articles and research papers on the teaching of English as a Second Language (ESL). Included are articles from all over the world on a wide range of topics concerning ESL instruction.

<http://americanenglish.state.gov/materials-teaching-english>

Produced by the U.S. State Department, this site has materials and resources for the teaching of English to speakers of other languages.

ON THE HORIZON

April 12-18 – National Library Week, www.ala.org

April 12-18 – National Volunteer Week, www.pointsoflight.org

April 15-18 – National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, Boston, MA, www.nctm.org

April 17-18 – PTA State Convention, Peoria, IL, www.illinoispta.org

April 18 – LVI On The Road to Literacy Conference, University of Illinois Chicago, Chicago, IL, www.lvillinois.org

April 21-24 – Commission on Adult Basic Education (COABE) Conference, Denver, Colorado, www.coabe.org

May 4-10 – Children's Book Week, www.bookweekonline.com

June 23-25 – CASAS Summer Institute, San Diego, CA, www.casas.org

June 25-30 – American Library Association Annual Conference, San Francisco, CA, www.ala.org

July 18-20 – International Literacy Association Annual Conference, St. Louis, MO, www.reading.org

August 13 – Illinois Conference on Volunteer Administration, Metcalfe Center, Chicago, IL, www.icova.info

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

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