

**Jesse White**  
Secretary of State  
& State Librarian

“Helping your fellow man” is a way of life that I have always tried to live and stress to others throughout my career as both an educator and a public servant. In this issue, you will discover an Illinois business that continues to enable their workers to learn English in order to help them succeed in both their careers and personal lives. You also will read about the Spotlight on Service winners who have dedicated their time to help their fellow man, and the Spotlight on Achievement winners who have benefited from those volunteers who have provided this invaluable service. Both groups have put forth tremendous effort and overcome personal obstacles to accomplish their goals. I’m also pleased to recognize the achievements of the adult learners honored at the South Side Literacy Coalition’s “Night of 1000 Stars” event held in Chicago in April. Their desire to better their lives through education is commendable and an inspiration to others. Congratulations to all the winners and may your hard work bring you continued success.



*Jesse White*

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## Sky's the limit at Skyline Furniture Manufacturing

Skyline Furniture Manufacturing is a unique Illinois company that for more than 65 years has manufactured upholstered furniture in Thornton. The company has seen continued growth in recent years and has expanded its product line to more than 1,000 different items. With these expansions, the company's workforce also has grown from around 50 employees in 2002 to more than 250 employees today. These employees are as diverse as the company's product line.

As a recipient of a Secretary of State Workplace Skills Enhancement Grant, Skyline has partnered with South Suburban College in South Holland since 2002 to provide English language classes to employees during work hours. The company's goals are not only to give their employees the ability to help the company grow, but to also provide an opportunity to improve their lives as a whole. The company is seeing across-the-board improvements in English speaking levels as a result of the classes.

“Many of these employees would not have the opportunity to attend classes if they were not offered here at work due to the many family and personal commitments they have,” said Dianne Needles, manager of South Suburban College's Workforce Development Program. “These classes reflect a fi-

nancial investment by the company since as part of the grant program they must match dollar-for-dollar the amount of grant money awarded. The classes most assuredly benefit the company by helping create a more skilled workforce, but the classes also provide these employees the chance to learn English, which will create more opportunities for advancement as well as providing them with the ability to communicate outside of work.”



A Skyline employee assembles furniture at the company's facility in Thornton.

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 held in Springfield in May. Spotlight on Achievement Awards are presented to adult learners who have shown tremendous growth as they work to improve their reading and math skills or learn the English language. Spotlight on Service Awards are presented to adult literacy volunteer tutors who have shown outstanding dedication as they assisted adult learners in reaching their reading goals.

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

State Sen. Mattie Hunter from Chicago joined Secretary White at the awards ceremony and honored her local winners. Following are highlights from some of the winners' stories, which are available online.

#### Adult learner winner highlights:

**Sabra Dawson, Frontier Community College, Fairfield** — Having Down's Syndrome, Sabra has struggled to learn her entire life. She earned a special education high school diploma but is still challenged with certain everyday life skills in addition to reading and math. Sabra works every day while also meeting with her tutor weekly, which is the highlight of her week because her tutor makes her feel special and encourages her to learn. Sabra is learning to do things that most of us take for granted like handling her own money. As a learning exercise, her tutor takes her shopping and they practice with "fake money" to increase her money management skills. She can do some of her own shopping now and continues to improve her reading skills and overall confidence. When Sabra achieves a goal she immediately sets a new one. Her goal this year was to work hard and win the Spotlight on Achievement Award.

**Amy Golke, De La Salle/Tolton Center, Chicago** — Amy was born with cerebral palsy and though she was mainstreamed in school, her teachers did not encourage her. Eventually, at age 16, she dropped out of high school. Several years later, she began attending GED classes at an adult education center and passed all but the math section on the GED exam. She joined the Tolton Center a year ago to improve her reading even more plus work on her math skills. After several tries, Amy passed the math portion of the GED and is thrilled to have met her goal of completing all parts of the GED. Amy credits her tutor's help with her recent success and says none of it would have been possible without her help. She is looking forward to attending Daley College to study computer technology and plans to give back to the Tolton Center by becoming a volunteer reading tutor.

**Corey Hibbler, Southwestern Illinois College, Belleville** — When Corey was growing up his mother was an addict and his father was not around so he was raised by his grandmother. Corey struggled in school because of behavior problems and was placed in classes with students who had learning disabilities. While he objected to the diagnosis he stayed in school where he was able to play high school

sports. Although his teachers "pushed him aside," he was determined to graduate and he did. After high school Corey began working in a hotel laundry department. Despite being unable to read, he became known as one of the hotel's most reliable, hard-working employees. In 2011, he learned of the St. Clair County Adult Literacy Program and began attending weekly reading classes at the Belleville Public Library. His inner drive and determination continue to grow despite the daily challenges he faces. In addition to studying, he works full time and helps his sister with her young children. Corey's success is due to his relentless pursuit of self-improvement and his contagious positive attitude.

#### Volunteer tutor winner highlights:

**Dr. Carolyn J. Kampe, Prairie State College Adult Literacy Institute, Chicago Heights** — As a deaf child, Dr. Kampe learned to read and spell words with her mother's help. In her last year of college, the education staff told her that she could never be a teacher because of her deafness, but she was determined. Her first connection with Prairie State College was organizing the BIG READ Project. She devised a plan that included reading Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* and watching the movie to accommodate various reading levels. Thanks to Dr. Kampe, the BIG READ Project was a huge success. After the project ended, she was asked to work with a small group of adult learners with special needs. More than three years later she has worked with students for many hours and has recruited five volunteers to assist her in providing literacy services for adult learners with special needs. A 62-year-old man joined Dr. Kampe's Life Skills Reading class, and he learned to print his name and recognize the alphabet and vowel sounds for the first time in his life. Dr. Kampe inspires, motivates and empowers her students to succeed.

**Victor Zamora, YWCA of Pekin** — After retiring from Caterpillar, Vic was looking for something constructive to occupy his time. Through a newspaper article about the Retired & Senior Volunteer Program, he learned that volunteers were needed to tutor reading and math at the YWCA in Pekin. Vic received training and began tutoring in both reading and math. His first learner was Julie Andrus, who was a Spotlight on Achievement winner this year. Julie struggled with math but began to gain more confidence as her grasp of math concepts became easier and she retained what she learned. Another adult learner sent Vic a picture of herself holding her GED diploma with a smile that said it all. To see and hear their happiness when they achieve their goals is very rewarding for Vic. He is always ready for a new assignment and has driven 32 miles round-trip to make tutoring sessions more convenient for his learners. He doesn't wait to be paired with learners who live close to his home. "Let's get them going," he says and then they begin.

**John and Marilyn Walker, Township High School Dist. 214 Community Education, Arlington Heights** — John and Marilyn are a husband and wife team who joined the Read to Learn program in 1997. Before Marilyn retired, she worked in the educational field for more than 40 years as a teacher, counselor and administrator. Marilyn has continuous communication with her students throughout the week by email or telephone, and supplements lesson plans with other resources to ensure her adult learners' success. John finds sat-

(continued on page 3)

isfaction in tutoring students who want to learn English while learning from his students about their native country, customs and educational history. He also tutors American-born students who did not finish high school or learn what they needed to from school. One of his adult learners was gainfully employed and wanted to go to the community college, but she wasn't ready academically. John focused on helping her improve her reading and writing skills to become better prepared for college.



**2014 Spotlight on Achievement Winners** — Standing left to right: Dennis DeRossett, executive director of the IPA; Telesforo Villasenor, Zitalitl Vargas and Erasmo Vargas, De La Salle/Tolton Center, Chicago; Secretary White; Guadalupe Vargas, De La Salle/Tolton Center; Em Thu Tran, Literacy Volunteers Fox Valley, St. Charles; and Corey Hibbler, Southwestern Illinois College, Belleville. Seated left to right: Doris Wright-Simmons and Amy Golke, De La Salle/Tolton Center, Chicago; state Sen. Mattie Hunter; Sabra Dawson and Kayti Carter, Frontier Community College, Fairfield; and Julie Andrus, YWCA of Pekin.



**2014 Spotlight on Service Winners** — Standing left to right: Dennis DeRossett, executive director of the IPA; Peter Barclay, Common Place Family Learning Center, Peoria; Marilyn and Don Walker, Township High School Dist. 214 Community Education, Arlington Heights; Victor Zamora, YWCA of Pekin; and Secretary White. Seated left to right: Joyce Philpott-Moore, De La Salle/Tolton Center, Chicago; Dr. Carolyn Kampe, Prairie State College Adult Literacy Institute, Chicago Heights; Ruth Hurley, School and Tutors on Wheels, LaGrange Park; Samuel Byndom, accepting on behalf of William Curry, Urbana Adult Education Center; Linda Cesario, Arlington Heights Memorial Library; and Linda Buechting, John Wood Community College, Quincy. (Not pictured: Carole Shegog, Corazon a Corazan, Chicago).

## Illinois Adult Learning Hotline

### Connecting volunteers to literacy programs

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's *American Community Survey*, an estimated 2.2 million Illinois adults, or 18 percent of our population, have poor skills in reading, writing, math or English proficiency. Thankfully, throughout Illinois there are adult literacy programs that provide services to help adults improve their reading, writing, math and English language skills. These programs need volunteer tutors to help adult learners reach their goals. Volunteer tutors are trained and supported by their local adult literacy programs. Volunteers may be retired people who want to keep active, stay-at-home parents who want to keep their skills sharp, college or university students building résumés, or working people who want to give back to their communities. Volunteer tutor opportunities are available weekdays, weeknights and weekends.

You can help an adult learner reach their academic and life goals. Pick up the phone and call the **Illinois Adult Learning Hotline toll-free today at 800-321-9511**, or visit [www.thecenterweb.org/alrc/hotline/index.html](http://www.thecenterweb.org/alrc/hotline/index.html).



**IACEA CONFERENCE SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS** — Five Secretary of State Literacy Office scholarship winners attended the Illinois Adult and Continuing Educators Association conference in Springfield in March. Winners from left are: Karen Avalos, Carl Sandburg College; Meghan Green, Aquinas Literacy Center; Karen Parrillo, Albany Park Community Center; Cecilia Hernandez, Poder Learning Center; and Melanie Sampson, Howard Area Community Center. Another round of scholarships will be offered in the fall for the March 2015 IACEA conference.

## FY13 Workplace Skills Enhancement Program statistics:

- 26 businesses received grant funding
- 50% of businesses were small with less than 300 employees
- 64% of businesses were manufacturing
- 602 employees were instructed
- 2,856 instructional hours were provided at the businesses
- 99% of employees received instruction in English language skills
- 64% of students were female
- 43 was the average age of employees who received instruction



**"NIGHT OF A THOUSAND STARS"** — Secretary of State Jesse White attended South Side Literacy Coalition's "Night of a Thousand Stars" event in Chicago in April, which showcased the success of adult learners in the area.

## ON THE HORIZON

**August 14** — Illinois Conference on Volunteer Administration, Chicago, [www.icova.info](http://www.icova.info)

**September 8** — International Literacy Day, [www.reading.org](http://www.reading.org)

**October 14-16** — Illinois Library Association Annual Conference, Springfield, [www.ila.org](http://www.ila.org)

**November 4-7** — American Association for Adult and Continuing Education Annual Conference, Charleston, SC, [www.aaace.org](http://www.aaace.org)

**November 6-7** — 3rd Annual Southern & Central Illinois Regional Fall Conference, Effingham, [www.siue.edu/SIPDC](http://www.siue.edu/SIPDC)

**November 12-15** — International Dyslexia Association Conference, San Diego, CA, [www.interdys.org](http://www.interdys.org)

**November 21** — Northern Region Adult Education Fall Conference, Bloomingdale, [www.thecenterweb.org](http://www.thecenterweb.org)

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

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# WWW



[www.learnamericanenglishonline.com/index.html](http://www.learnamericanenglishonline.com/index.html)

Grammar lessons for native and non-native English speakers are delivered through short videos with simple, direct explanations. Seven levels are offered with multiple lessons in each level. Tutors and learners can select a lesson based on the needs of the learner.

[www.manythings.org/lulu/](http://www.manythings.org/lulu/)

This site is part of *Interesting Things for ESL Students*. There are seven games for each set of nine words. The tutor/learner pair may choose the game that reinforces the skill needed.

[www.tv411.org/math](http://www.tv411.org/math)

TV411 offers educationally sound and entertaining multimedia learning resources. Videos teach first- through eighth-grade math skills as well as algebra and geometry lessons.

For more information on how you can support literacy efforts in Illinois, visit [www.illinoisliteracyfoundation.org](http://www.illinoisliteracyfoundation.org).