

Jesse White
Secretary of State
& State Librarian

Each year the Spotlight on Achievement and Service Awards shine a very deserving light on several outstanding adult learners and volunteer tutors. These adult learners work hard to reach their educational goals despite the challenges that come their way. The volunteer tutors who spend countless hours with them are the cogs of the wheels that keep these learners on the track to success. I am always very proud to hand each of them their awards. This issue highlights the accomplishments of this year's Spotlight on Achievement winners, who are an inspiration for other adult learners and all of us in the literacy field.



Adult learners may learn through an adult volunteer literacy program, a family literacy program or a workplace program. In this issue we recognize the progress that's taking place at Skyline Manufacturing in Thornton, where many of its employees are enrolled in an on-site ESL program. With assistance from a Secretary of State Workplace Skills Enhancement Grant these employees have seen considerable personal gains at work as well as at home. The management at Skyline is commended for their commitment to their employees and their community.

Our literacy efforts don't stop during the summer months. For a wealth of summer learning opportunities, check out one of the Literacy Office's Adult & Family Literacy Resource Bins as well as a number of Google Web sites (see page 4). Have a great summer!

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"The Sky's the Limit" for employees at Skyline

Skyline Furniture Manufacturing in the village of Thornton in southeast Cook County has been in business for more than 60 years. The family-owned operation is largely self-sufficient in the furniture industry with its own woodshop, fabric-cutting, sewing and upholstering departments. More than 85 percent of Skyline's workforce consists of non-native English speakers.

Several years ago the owner and management decided to provide on-site, voluntary English as a Second Language (ESL) classes for their employees. They believed that the employees learning English would help improve their quality of life as well as improve communication in the workplace. With some business expansion and a new warehouse planned, the company had hoped to promote from within and demonstrate its commitment to employees.

Skyline management contacted South Suburban College about providing an ESL class and posted a voluntary class sign-up sheet. More than half of the workforce signed up for assessments and classes. Skyline partnered with South Suburban College's Business & Career Institute to offer two ESL classes on site. After providing the funds for instruction the first year, Skyline requested and received Workplace Skills Enhancement Grants



Employees enrolled in one of Skyline Furniture's ESL classes.

through the Secretary of State's Literacy Office to help continue the program.

The company has noted an increase in English language use and a greater sense of commitment and camaraderie among its employees. The employees now rely less on translators and have a better understanding of work forms such as inventory sheets, work orders, shipping labels and manuals. They also have improved their vocabulary for fabric colors. Several employees have earned promotions, such as Juan Morales, Jr., who started classes at a low English skill level a few years ago and is now fluent in English.

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"The Sky's the Limit" (continued from page 1)

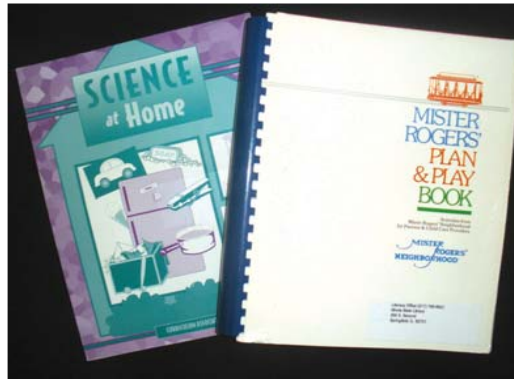
Skyline's grant project director Andy Doggett said, "We have not achieved an English speaking environment and need further English language improvement for employees at lower levels but we are well on the way. We have met many goals that we had when we started the program. We have additional benefits and gains we never thought of at that time."

Skyline's ESL participants have enhanced both their personal and work lives through the Workplace program, demonstrating that at Skyline, "The Sky's the Limit!"

Summertime PACT activities

The Literacy Office offers a variety of Adult & Family Literacy Resource Bins on loan free to libraries, literacy programs and schools. As you help adult learners plan fun activities with their families, consider checking out a bin devoted to Parent and Child Together Activities (Bin #21). The bin includes ideas for families to make a book together; math activities to engage the whole family; messy, fun science experiments and much more.

Mister Rogers' Plan & Play Book has 635 activities that can be tied to a variety of themes. An oral hygiene theme could be developed around the "Brushing Your Teeth," "A Pretend Dentist" and "A Cardboard Mouth" activities in the book. Then, from the *Science at Home* book, use the recipe for making your own toothpaste!



To request a Resource Bin, please call the Literacy Office at 800-665-5576, ext. 3. More information about the bins is available at <http://literacy.kent.edu/illinois/illteach.htm> (click Resource Bins).

National Literacy Facts

- 42 percent of adults between ages 25 and 67 have, at most, a high school education (U.S. Census 2000).
- In 2004, high school graduates earned 38 percent more than those with less than a high school education. The average annual earnings for full-time workers age 25 or older without a high school diploma was \$22,232, while those with a high school diploma made \$30,640, those with some college made \$35,970, those with an associate's degree made \$37,480, and those with a bachelor's degree made \$53,581. (www.wisconsinliteracy.org)
- 66 percent of high school graduates do not have the skills and qualifications necessary to attend college (Center for Civic Innovation at the Manhattan Institute, 2005).
- American businesses are estimated to lose more than \$60 billion in productivity each year due to employees' lack of basic skills (National Institute for Literacy).

Literacy Works Tutor Roundtable Award

At its 3rd Annual Tutor Roundtable in April, Literacy Works honored Dorothy Whitney, a literacy consultant for the Secretary of State Literacy Office, for her inspiring service to volunteer-based adult literacy tutoring programs in Chicago.

Literacy Works' training programs serve tutors and coordinators at 50 agencies across the Chicago area. The Roundtable is an opportunity for volunteer tutors and coordinators to share ideas and resources. This was a fitting audience to applaud Dorothy for her steadfast support of adult literacy programs; her constant presence at literacy coalition meetings and events; and the inspiration she provides to coordinators, tutors and adult learners in the Chicago area.

Congratulations Dorothy!



Dorothy Whitney
State Library Literacy Consultant, Chicago

ILLINOIS ADULT LEARNING HOTLINE

To locate a literacy program or volunteer as a tutor, call 800-321-9511. You also may register at www.thecenterweb.org/alrc/index.html.

2009 Spotlight on Achievement and Service Awards

Secretary of State Jesse White, along with Sue Montalvo, director of the Illinois First Amendment Center representing the Illinois Press Association, presented awards to 12 outstanding adult learners and 10 volunteer tutors at the annual Spotlight on Achievement and Service Awards ceremony in May. This year, two families shared two of the Achievement Awards. Student winners received \$200 from the IPA Foundation, a plaque and a personalized *Illinois Blue Book*. Volunteer tutor winners received \$200 for the literacy program where they tutor as well as a plaque and a personalized *Blue Book*. Following are highlights of the Spotlight on Achievement Award winners.

- Sisters **Cholena** and **Kachina Dabney** were home-schooled and isolated for many years. When they entered the GED program through Oakton Community College in Skokie, they faced many challenges but adapted very well. They both have bloomed from shy, unfocused dreamers into confident young women with goals. They have worked hard and increased their reading scores considerably.
- **Armando** and **Mariela Mayorga** fell in love after rediscovering each other at an English as a Second Language (ESL) class at Toman Library. They were married in Mexico and Armando continued his ESL classes after returning to the United States. Once he was a U.S. citizen, he began the long process of bringing his wife and baby back to the states. They were reunited last September and attend the family literacy program at DeLaSalle/Tolton in Chicago. Their daughter speaks Spanish but her parents read English books to her daily. By the time she's ready for school, she will be bilingual.
- **Ron Draper** has been in and out of adult education programs for many years. This time Ron is more motivated to succeed because he is raising his stepson who has similar learning difficulties. Ron wants to be able to help his stepson with homework so he doesn't end up in a special education program like Ron did. He is working toward a better job but first he had to improve his reading and writing. Within a short time working with a tutor through the YWCA Adult Literacy Program in Pekin, Ron read his first novel and was able to read his own mail and newspaper.
- **Marc Girouard** was diagnosed with dyslexia at a young age. When he graduated from high school he read at the second-grade level. This contributed to low self-confidence and kept him from finding a job. Everything changed when he began working with tutor Norma Barnwell through John Wood Community College in Quincy. A Spotlight on Service winner this year, Norma taught Marc the fundamentals of reading using phonics. In a few years he raised his reading level, got a full-time job, completed the Electrical Mechanics Program at the college and was able to move away from home.
- **Richetta Harris-EI** had never read a book when she enrolled in the literacy program at Lawrence Education Center in Springfield. As a mother of four children, she did not want them to follow in her footsteps. Richetta met Barbara from Lawrence at the local restaurant where Richetta works. Barbara encouraged her to attend classes at Lawrence and in a few months after enrolling Richetta's confidence improved along with her literacy. Now her family makes regular trips to the library and Barnes & Noble.



2009 Spotlight on Achievement Winners — Standing left to right: Sue Montalvo, director of the Illinois First Amendment Center; Domenico Iannucci, YWCA Adult Literacy, Pekin; Richetta Harris-EI, Lawrence Education Center, Springfield; Marc Girouard, John Wood Community College, Quincy; Ron Draper, YWCA Adult Literacy, Pekin; Kachina and Cholena Dabney, Oakton Community College, Skokie; Freddie Williford, John A. Logan College, Carterville; and Secretary of State Jesse White. Seated left to right: Lulu Mae Qualls, Blue Gargoyle, Chicago; Jesse Veach, Common Place, Peoria; Oscar Ruiz, Instituto del Progreso Latino, Chicago; Armando and Mariela Mayorga, DeLaSalle/Tolton, Chicago.



2009 Spotlight on Service Winners — Standing left to right: Sue Montalvo, director of the Illinois First Amendment Center; Norma Barnwell, John Wood Community College, Quincy; Becky Price, YWCA Adult Literacy, Pekin; William Summers, Kaskaskia College, Centralia; Shirley Turbov, Township High School District 214 Community Education, Arlington Heights; Panda Turner, Carl Sandburg College, Carthage; and Secretary of State Jesse White. Seated left to right: Veronica Pacheco, Waubesa Community College, Aurora; Steven Monroe, Lester and Rosalie Anixter Center, Chicago; James Himmelpach, McHenry County College, Crystal Lake; Bob Gilbert, Lawrence Education Center, Springfield; and Mary Berger, Township High School District 214 Community Education, Arlington Heights.

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2009 Spotlight on Achievement (continued from page 3)

- **Domenico Iannucci** arrived in the United States from Italy at age 71 not knowing a word of English. He was entirely dependent on his English-speaking wife to navigate him through his new culture. In just a few years of participating in the YWCA Adult Literacy Program in Pekin, Domenico received his driver's license, learned to read food labels and grocery advertisements, and purchased a house. He also learned to use the computer, which enabled him to communicate with his family in Italy.
- **Lulu Mae Qualls** had no formal education as a child. She moved to Chicago with her husband and raised 10 children. Even though she had successfully raised a family and worked many jobs, Lulu Mae refused to sit back and watch her dreams of improving her reading and writing pass her by. At age 76, Lulu Mae navigates public transportation to and from school, taking two separate buses across Chicago's south side to Blue Gargoyle four days a week. She has gained a new level of self-confidence and is determined to learn to read.
- **Oscar Ruiz** attended school in Mexico up to fourth grade. Difficult life situations made it hard to study in Mexico. Once he arrived in the United States he began taking classes to improve his Spanish, learn English and work toward obtaining his GED. A busload of his classmates from Instituto del Progreso Latino of Chicago joined Oscar at the Spotlight ceremony to see him receive his award.
- **Jesse Veach** was the oldest of 12 children. He had to quit school after sixth grade to help support his family. He retired from Caterpillar after 30 years. With a desire to volunteer at the American Red Cross as a driver, Jesse's reading level was too low to enroll in the commercial driver's license program. He was referred to Common Place in Peoria for help with his reading. Learning to read enabled him to volunteer as a driver and two years ago he was offered a full-time paid position. At age 76, Jesse proves that you are never too old to learn.
- **Freddie Williford** lost his job at a local manufacturing plant where he had worked most of his life. With only a fourth-grade education, he felt lost even as he pursued another job. Freddie was offered a chance to go back to school but he couldn't fill out the paperwork. He got help through John A. Logan College's Adult Basic Education class in Carterville and is now able to read the newspaper, books and instruction manuals. He is working toward taking the GED test so he can enroll in the Small Engine Repair course at the college and start a business.

For more information on Spotlight Awards, visit www.cyberdriveillinois.com (click Programs, then Literacy) or contact Diane Manning at 800-665-5576, ext. 3, or dmanning@ilsos.net.

ON THE HORIZON

August 15 — Application deadline for books for small rural public libraries offered by The Libri Foundation, www.librifoundation.org.

September 8 — International Literacy Day, www.nifl.gov/nifl/literacy_day/ild_current.html.

October 6-9 — Illinois Library Association Annual Conference, Peoria. Check www.ila.org/events or call 312-644-1899.

October 22-23 — Central Illinois Adult Education Service Center Fall Conference, Bloomington, www.cait.org/ciaesc/conference/index.jsp, 800-672-9033.

November 4-6 — Southern Illinois Professional Development Center Fall Conference, O'Fallon, www.siu.edu/SIPDC, 618-650-2254.

November 19 — Family Reading Night, www.cyberdriveillinois.com, 217-785-6921.

December 4 — Adult Education Fall Conference, Northern Region, Bloomington, www.thecenterweb.org, 224-366-8500, ext. 8633.

More literacy event information is available at <http://literacy.kent.edu/illinois/calend.htm>.

WWW



Check out these free Google Web sites:

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Create and share documents, presentations and spreadsheets online.

reader.google.com

Read a newspaper with only the stories you want to see.

calendar.google.com

Create calendars online.

sites.google.com

Create an entire Web site.

translate.google.com

Translate in 34 languages

maps.google.com and earth.google.com

Get directions and a real-life street view.

www.google.com/goog411

Get free 411 information on a business by calling 800-466-4411.