Spotlight on Achievement (continued from page 3)
very hard to earn their GEDs. Cheryl has been a volunteer tutor for 31 years, spending 10 of those years with C.E.F.S. She also provides lan-
guage and writing skills to a small group of ESL learners who wanted to improve her communication with their children’s teachers and doctors. She encour-
gages potential tutors to “enjoy what you are doing and remember how important this commitment is for the student. They may be sacrificing a lot more than your volunteer time.”

Barbara Worner, YWCA Adult Literacy, Pekin
After moving back to central Illinois, Barbara read in the newspaper about a volunteer opportunity at the YWCA Adult Literacy Program in Pekin. After completing the training, she was matched with a doctor from Bolivia. He had given up his medical practice to bring his 12-year-
old stepson to the U.S. where he would have more opportunities. Barb soon was also working with the doctor’s wife, his two adult daughters and the 12-year-old boy. She made the 80-minute round trip drive to Pekin twice a week while also establishing a successful after-school and summer program for low-income children in her community. In late 2009, Barb was diagnosed with cancer. She left her paid and volunteer jobs to undergo treatment. She returned to tutoring in June 2012 when her cancer was in remission. Unfortunately, that fall a different cancer returned. Barb is never without a smile and words of hope and contin-
tues to tutor despite her illness.

FY14 Adult Literacy Grant applications received
The State Library Literacy Office received 177 FY14 Adult Literacy Grant applications — 99 Adult Volunteer Literacy; 51 Penny Severns Family Literacy; and 27 Workplace Skills Enhancement — requesting a total of $7,124,146. This amount exceeds the FY13 total appropriation of $5,518,100 by more than $1 million.

With stronger English language communication skills, participants will have increased opportunity to advance in their careers. For instance, in FY13, the Workplace Skills Enhancement program awarded a grant to The Center: Resources for Teaching and Learning in Arlington Heights to use this model to train McDonald’s employees from Joliet, Northbrook, Chicago, Crystal Lake and Aurora in one class. Local restaurants do not have enough employees at one location to provide a class onsite, so this model provides training to several employers in one grouping. About 80 percent of the restaurants are franchises, so the training needs of multiple employers are met at one time.

The employees’ increased English proficiency helped the restaurants provide more effective operations and better customer satisfaction while increasing profits. On a personal level, the employees’ improved English skills help them outside of work as family and community members. It’s a win-win situation for all!
**South Side Literacy Coalition’s “Night of a Thousand Stars”**

Since 1991, Toyota has partnered with the National Center for Family Literacy to promote family literacy in the United States. The Toyota Teacher of the Year award recognizes individual teachers’ contributions to improving literacy among young and adults.

This year, Mary Ellen Lesniak was named Toyota Teacher of the Year runner-up. Mary Ellen is the ESL and Family Literacy coordinator for the Tolton Center of the De La Salle Institute in Chicago, a State Library Family Literacy grant recipient. As runner-up, Mary Ellen received a $2,500 grant, which she plans to use to purchase iPads for her classroom, as well as a scholarship to attend the conference in Louisville.

The Tolton strategy is to empower poverty-level adults through academic achievement. This strategy recognizes that overcoming the illiteracy cycle must begin with the adult who is the center of the family. The State Library has been supporting family literacy since 1982 with competitive grant funding for local agencies like the Tolton Center.

Waukegan Public Library wins national award

The Institute of Museum and Library Services recently announced the recipients of the 2013 National Medal for Museum and Library Service. The medal is the nation’s highest honor conferred on museums and libraries for service to the community. The medal celebrates institutions that make a difference for individuals, families and communities.

The Waukegan Public Library is one of 10 libraries and museums nationwide to be recognized with this award. Waukegan has a Hispanic population that is three times higher than the state average. The Promotoras Ambassador Program at the library empowered an outreach worker to be responsible for raising awareness about library resources in the Hispanic community and understanding the needs of Spanish speakers. One of the first initiatives was creation of a culturally sensitive Conversational ESL Program, which incorporates relevant curriculum that places the learner at the center to ensure his or her success in daily life.

After one year, 255 students have participated in the Conversational ESL Program with most moving on to a GED program. Congratulations to the Waukegan Public Library on its award!

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 in May. Spotlight on Achievement Awards are presented to adult learners who have shown tremendous growth as they worked to improve their reading skills or to learn the English language. Spotlight on Service Awards are presented to 10 adult literacy volunteer tutors who have shown great dedication as they assisted adult learners to reach their reading goals.

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

Leatrice Saffore, a former adult learner from De La Salle/Tolton Center in Chicago, spoke at the awards ceremony telling her life’s story. She was born on the west side of Chicago and had many tragedies and obstacles to overcome before her life got back on track. She now has an associate degree in sociology, a bachelor’s degree in elementary education, a master’s degree in theology and received a Certificate in Spiritual Direction in May 2013. Leatrice will be continuing her education to complete her doctorate in ministry. Her goal is to teach children and adults in both school and religious settings. She was truly3996828hing to all that attended the ceremony.

Five state legislators including Reps. Kelly Cassidy, C.D. Davidsmeyer, Sue Scherer and David Harris, and Sen. Sam McCann, attended the awards ceremony and honored their local winners. Following are highlights of some of the winners. All the winners’ stories are available online.

Adult learner winner highlights:

Emmitt Cole, Richland Community College’s Project READ, Decatur — Since he was in grade school, Emmitt had tried to hide the fact that he couldn’t read. To avoid being called upon to read in class, he would start talking or put his head down on his desk. He left his textbooks in his locker so he wouldn’t have to read them aloud. If he was disruptive, he would be sent to the dean’s office and wouldn’t have to take tests.

Without the ability to read, he became discouraged and dropped out of school. Continuing to hide his reading problem, Emmitt found lots of jobs, but problems still plagued him. When he joined Project READ, he was embarrassed and wouldn’t make eye contact. But as his reading and math skills improved, his confidence increased. For the first time, he is excited about learning. He started a new job that required him to take a math test and he had one of the best scores of the group. It is a work in progress but his life looks promising as he continues to study at Project READ.

Jim Niehoff, Arlington Heights Memorial Library — Imagine waking up one day and discovering you are no longer you. Once you were a respected, accomplished communicator. Now you were a person who could not read or write sentences. Through Jim’s hard work after week after week, he began to make progress. As Jim recovers his ability to read, his frustrations are lessening and he feels less isolated and alone.

Volunteer tutor winner highlights:

Cheryl Stolz, C.E.F.S. Literacy Center, Effingham — Ever since Cheryl took a class called “Teaching Adults to Read” in graduate school, she has wanted to teach adults to read. She was also inspired by her four sisters who dropped out of high school but then worked... (continued on page 4)
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Spotlight on Achievement  (continued from page 3)

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guage and writing skills to a small group of ESL learners so they can improve their
communication skills and the students. Cheryl claims that she helps the
students improve their communication abilities and she enjoys seeing the
students improve their communication skills.

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about a volunteer opportunity at the WYCA Adult Literacy Program in
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in Bolivian. She had given up his medical practice to bring his children
to Bolivian. The doctor had 80-year-old stepson to the U.S. where he would have more opportunities. Barb
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The State Library Literacy Office received 177 FY14 Adult Literacy Grant
applications — 99 Adult Volunteer Literacy, 51 Penny Severs Family Literacy,
and 27 Workplace Skills Enhancement — requesting a total of $7,124,145. This amount exceeds the FY13 total appropriation of $5,158,300 by more than $1 million.

With stronger English language communication skills, participants will have increased opportunity to advance in their careers. For instance, in FY13, the Workplace Skills Enhancement program awarded a grant to The Center: Resources for Teaching and Learning in Arlington Heights to use this model to train McDonald’s employees from Joliet, Northbrook, Chicago, Crystal Lake and Aurora in one class. Local restaurants do not have enough employees at one location to provide a class onsite, so this model provides training to several employers in one group. About 80 percent of the restaurants are franchises, so the training needs of multiple employers are met at one time.

While I have always been proud of the work we do through the Adult Literacy Grant Program, this issue illustrates that my pride is justified. You will read about

the Waukegan Public Library, which was honored with a National Medal for Library and

Museum Service for its innovative strategies in serving its English as a Second

Language learners. You also will read about Mary Ellen Lesnai, family literacy coordi-

nator at the Tolton Center in Chicago, who was runner-up for the national Toyota

Teacher of the Year Award for her work in our Family Literacy program. And, last, but

not least, you will read about our Spotlight on Achievement and Spotlight on Service

winners — the learners and tutors throughout the state who have put forth tremendous

effort and overcome personal obstacles to accomplish their goals. Congratulations to all

the winners and may your hard work bring you continued success!

Jesse White

Secretary of State & State Librarian

“English Under The Arches”  is a unique literacy program that teaches English as a Second Lan-

guage to shift managers so they can advance suc-

cessfully up the corporate ladder at McDonald’s Corporation.

In this instructional model they use traditional classroom instruction, teacher-led classes via web-conferencing, independent computer-based learning and on-the-job practice.

The Illinois State Library Literacy Office’s Workplace Skills Enhancement program awarded a grant to The Center: Resources for Teaching and Learning in Arlington Heights to use this model to train McDonald’s employees from Joliet, Northbrook, Chicago, Crystal Lake and Aurora in one class. Local restaurants do not have enough employees at one location to provide a class onsite, so this model provides training to several employers in one group. About 80 percent of the restaurants are franchises, so the training needs of multiple employers are met at one time.

With stronger English language communication skills, participants will have increased opportunity to advance in their careers. For instance, in FY13, the Workplace Skills Enhancement grant offered the class “Shift Basics,” which provided eight weeks of introductory English-based on the vocab-

ulary needed to work at McDonald’s. A class to improve writing skills also allowed employees to use the in-store communication system.

The employees’ increased English proficiency help

the restaurants provide more effective operations and better customer satisfaction while increasing profits. On a personal level, the employees’ improved English skills help them outside of work

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Karen Fuist, a trainer with The Center: Resources for Teaching and Learning in Arlington Heights, demonstrates the virtual training offered to McDonald’s Corporation through the Illinois State Library Literacy Office’s Workplace Skills Enhancement program.