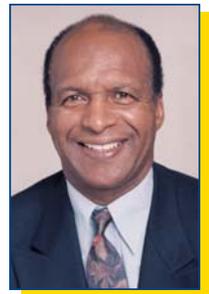


Jesse White
Secretary of State
& State Librarian

Each year, I have the great pleasure of recognizing the outstanding achievements of individuals who have made the decision to better themselves through education. I also have the pleasure of honoring those who volunteer their time to help these individuals learn. In this issue you will be able to read the amazing stories of the individuals who were recognized at the annual Spotlight on Achievement and Service Awards ceremony held at the State Library. Congratulations to the achievement award winners on their commitment to obtaining knowledge and to the service award winners for their generosity in sharing knowledge. You will also read about an Illinois business that has made the commitment to help improve the literacy levels of its workforce and a volunteer tutor's experience in helping someone learn. I am also pleased to recognize the achievements of the adult learners honored at the North Side Literacy Coalitions "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 of the winners and may your hard work bring you success.



Jesse White

Jesse White
Secretary of State & State Librarian

Investing in workers through literacy education

Pictured are participants who recently completed a Workforce English as a Second Language class held at C.E. Niehoff & Co. through a Secretary of State/Illinois State Library Literacy Office Workplace Skills Enhancement Grant awarded to Harper College for Business. Working together with C.E. Niehoff & Co. human resources staff, the college's business department provides instruction and program coordination to create customized course content and a positive learning experience for the participating employees.

With a workforce composed of employees from a wide variety of language backgrounds, C.E. Niehoff & Co. has shown dedication to improving communication and safety among employees by providing ESL instruction with the assistance of the grant and through a partnership with Harper College. The instructor-led classes are divided into two levels, meeting twice a week in the company training room. Both students and supervisors have given positive feedback about the results of the program. One student commented, "I'm glad that I attend the ESL classes because it helps me a

lot." The students have learned to use company-specific English, such as vocabulary for discussing quality and safety, and have also learned English for use in their daily lives. They received certificates of completion at the end of the spring session and held potluck celebrations, with several students bringing homemade dishes in the traditions of their countries of origin.

FY14 Workplace Skills Enhancement Program statistics:

- 26 businesses received grant funding.
- 62 percent of businesses were small with less than 300 employees.
- 77 percent of businesses were manufacturing.
- 403 employees were instructed.
- 4,031 instructional hours were provided at the businesses.
- 97 percent of employees received instruction in English language skills.
- 41 was the average age of employees who received instruction.



C.E. Niehoff & Co. employees who participated in a Workplace Skills Enhancement Grant along with their instructor from Harper College.

2015 Spotlight on Achievement and Service Awards

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 accomplishments as they strive 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 demonstrated outstanding dedication as they assist adult learners reach their educational 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."

Following are highlights from some of the winners' stories, which are available online.

Adult learner winner highlights:

Bobby L. Archie, Jr., Common Place Family Learning Center, Peoria — Bobby had always struggled in school and at an early age was diagnosed with a learning disability. After dropping out of school in the 9th grade, Bobby started hanging out with the wrong crowd and eventually wound up incarcerated several times. Vowing that he would never go back to prison, Bobby has made great strides to keep focused on constantly improving his life, from obtaining housing and employment to continuing his education. In spite of all the challenges he has faced, he does it all with a smile. "When I got out of prison, I wanted to make a change for the better and through Common Place I was able to make that change," says Bobby. He has increased his reading level and recently passed the Driver's License exam through Common Place's Next Step Program. He has found employment with Goodwill and has future plans of starting his own lawn care business.

Ronald Cluck, Lester and Rosalie Anixter Center, Chicago — Ron had a traumatic brain injury at age 17, which has impeded his learning ability and the ability to move his extremities as fast as he once did. His physical disability causes many challenges regarding communication and movement, but he has met those challenges head on by participating in creative writing groups and pursuing his biggest accomplishment, founding his own small business. Even though it can be incredibly time consuming for him to complete the different demands of his business due to his communication and movement challenges, he does not lose motivation. Where many others would grow frustrated and possibly not continue with literacy, Ron has taken the time he needs to accomplish the goals he has set. He continues to expand his idea of literacy through participation in creative writing. Ron recently joined a leadership group at Anixter Center Literacy. Together with other group members and staff, Ron helps create and implement ideas that benefit other literacy students as well as the program as a whole.

Lisette Lopez, Illinois Eastern Community College, Fairfield — Lisette immigrated to this country from Peru and settled in a rural area with minimal job opportunities. Not knowing the English lan-

guage and the lack of a high school diploma made finding gainful employment practically impossible. Her only options were working on a pig farm, factory work or as a cook in a local Mexican restaurant. Lisette wanted more for herself and her family than these limited options. Lisette enrolled in Illinois Eastern Community College's Adult Literacy Program. She studied hard, spent long hours with her tutor and turned her assignments in on time. She would bring forms to her sessions asking for help until she understood what she was doing or what was being asked. "I used to have no idea how to read or write English," she commented. "Now I am able to comprehend and read books." Lisette is now in her last semester of obtaining an Associate Degree in Art and Science at Olney Central College and is planning to transfer to the University of Illinois at Chicago to complete a degree in chemical engineering. She is very thankful that she was able to receive tutoring that provided the foundation for her future.

Volunteer tutor winner highlights:

Steve Friedman, Erie Neighborhood House, Chicago — Steve Friedman has demonstrated an extraordinary level of dedication, passion and quality during the three and half years he has volunteered as an adult literacy tutor. Steve lives to teach, and this fact is clearly embodied in the high caliber of his teaching. Anyone who has the privilege of observing one of his tutoring sessions is immediately struck by the degree of devotion, creativity and respect he exhibits in the classroom. Steve knows how to motivate individuals to learn, and he shows a remarkable aptitude for listening to his students and learning from their experiences as well. He is especially attentive to learners with special needs, and he goes to extra lengths to ensure that each of them can participate in his tutoring sessions regardless of their particular learning circumstances. Steve views literacy as an essential component to living a fulfilling life and therefore as a human right. Steve states, "In this country everybody must have the opportunity to learn how to read, speak and write in English, free of charge. I volunteer as a literacy tutor because of the students. As they sit in the classroom the very first day, they look at me with an expectation of future knowledge, a determination to learn English and all its nuances, and a trust in me that says please learn with me. As a teacher, my passion and goal is to give everyone the most precious gifts of all, the love of learning and the love of reading."

Phyllis Harmening, Kaskaskia College, Centralia — Phyllis has been a tutor for Kaskaskia College since 2005 and has tutored restaurant owners, airline pilot students, homemakers and out-of-work immigrants. Phyllis brings joy to the tutoring sessions with her ready smile and chuckle. Phyllis not only tutors, but she also mentors her learners and develops a lasting bond. The first learner she tutored still keeps in touch with Phyllis even though the learner has moved away. Phyllis demonstrates patience and flexibility in her method of tutoring and is a highly sought after tutor. She reaches out to the community and volunteers in nursing homes, churches and schools. "Volunteering as a Reading Link tutor for Kaskaskia College has been both a rewarding experience and a satisfying adventure," Phyllis remarked. "Tutoring the ESL learners is rewarding because they are eager to improve their English so they can move on in their chosen careers."

2015 Spotlight on Achievement and Service Awards *(Continued)*

RoseMary Sullivan, De La Salle/Tolton Center, Chicago — After 43 years in education, 24 of which involved teaching at a college preparatory high school, RoseMary now serves as a volunteer tutor and teaches small groups as well as one-on-one tutoring three days a week. She spends a great amount of time preparing for her classes and finding or creating materials that meet the needs of her learners. She is always willing to share these teaching materials with other teachers and volunteer tutors. These materials are often used agency wide and have led to overall improvements in the literacy program. She is often found helping a student even after her tutoring sessions. The students RoseMary tutors consistently show improvement in reading scores. RoseMary relates, "Working with the Tolton students, at least half of whom are adults over the age of 40, is the most rewarding and most challenging teaching I have ever done. Their perseverance inspires me to keep looking for materials and teaching techniques that will give them a sense of accomplishment and knowledge to better navigate the pathways of their lives."



2015 Spotlight on Achievement Winners — Standing left to right: Dennis DeRossett, executive director of the IPA; Nube Vidal, Albany Park Community Center, Chicago; David Tolen, Erie Neighborhood House, Chicago; Norma Sanchez, Regional Office of Education Peoria County, Peoria; Lisette Lopez, Illinois Eastern Community College, Fairfield; Venetta Hunt, De La Salle/Tolton Center, Chicago; Secretary White. Sitting left to right: Maria Reyna, Oakton Community College, Skokie; Carina Reyes-Carranza, De La Salle/Tolton Center, Chicago; William Grant, Literacy DuPage, Naperville; Bobby L. Archie Jr., Common Place Family Learning Center, Peoria; Ronald Cluck, Lester and Rosalie Anixter Center, Chicago.



2015 Spotlight on Service Award Winners — Standing from left to right: Dennis DeRossett, executive director of the IPA, Nancy Hahs, Rend Lake College, Ina; Phyllis Harmening, Kaskaskia College, Centralia; Jan Herman, Illinois Eastern Community College, Fairfield; Bill Slusser, Common Place Family Learning Center, Peoria; Secretary White. Sitting from left to right: Ira Goodkin, Literacy Volunteers of Western Cook, Oak Park; Steve Friedman, Erie Neighborhood House, Chicago; Barbara Denny, School and Tutors on Wheels, LaGrange Park; Olga Delgado-Cano, UIC Center for Literacy, Chicago; RoseMary Sullivan, De La Salle/Tolton Center, Chicago. Not pictured: Greg Mucci, Lester and Rosalie Anixter Center, Chicago.

A Tutor's Delight



Sharon Osinaike (left) from UIC Center for Literacy presents Margaret Oyeleye (right) with an Outstanding Tutor Award.

Being a volunteer tutor for adult learners is awesome because one gets to impact a student's knowledge in subject areas where he/she has some weaknesses. It is very rewarding when positive results and outcomes are achieved by an adult learner.

One of my adult learners who I tutor struggles with math, especially equations. Don't we all have our phobias in the area of mathematics! I have used a variety of different exercises along with coaching to help her overcome her fears and negative attitude towards math.

To her credit, she rewarded me with glowing increases in her test scores that not only brought a smile to my face but also a smile to her face when I told her of her improvement. Not wanting to stop the momentum of her progress, I quickly interjected that we are going to a higher and more difficult area in math - fractions. She left me with an open jaw in wild surprise when she happily said, "bring it on!"

Now that was a tutor's delight for me in seeing that her fears of math had been conquered. She has improved academically and achieved her personal goal of being "math whiz-grandma" to her grandchildren who need her help with their school work.

Margie Oyeleye
Volunteer Tutor
UIC Center for Literacy





“NIGHT OF 1,000 STARS”— The North Side Literacy Coalition in Chicago hosts an annual performance event in April, where adult learners from coalition member agencies come together to celebrate their achievements and receive appreciation from the adult literacy community. Adult learners read stories and gave speeches demonstrating their literacy achievements since participating in adult education. Pictured above are adult learners and staff from Centro Romero that performed and were recognized for their success.



IACEA CONFERENCE SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS — Six Secretary of State/Illinois State Library Literacy Office scholarship winners attended the Illinois Adult and Continuing Educators Association conference held in Springfield this last March. Winners from left are: Maureen Powelson, Literacy Volunteers of Fox Valley, St. Charles; Angela Dunlap, Illinois Valley Community College, Oglesby; Lesley Kartali, Anixter Center, Chicago; Dena Giacometti, Centro Romero, Chicago; Theresa Hale, Howard Area Community Center, Chicago; and Hannah Bonifacius, Lincoln Land Community College, Springfield. Another round of scholarships will be offered in the fall for the March 2016 IACEA conference.

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

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ON THE HORIZON

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

September 8 – International Literacy Day, www.internationalliteracyday.org

September 28-30 – Sharing a Vision Conference, Crowne Plaza, Springfield, IL, www.sharingavision.org

October 14-17 – ProLiteracy Conference on Adult Literacy, Charleston, SC, www.proliteracy.org/uscal

October 19-21 – National Conference on Volunteering and Service, Houston, TX, www.volunteeringandservice.org

October 22-24 – Illinois Library Association Annual Conference, Peoria, IL, www.ila.org

October 23-24 – National Refugee & Immigrant Conference, Chicago, IL, www.thecenterweb.org/alrc/refugee.html

November 11-13 – Low-Educated Second Language and Literacy Acquisition (LESLLA) Conference, St. Augustine, FL, www.leslla.org

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

WWW



Adult Basic Literacy Tutor Training Workshop —

<http://adulteracytutor.blogspot.com/>

Online tutor training workshop provided by the Virginia Literacy Foundation. The site provides tutors a good CE opportunity that can be completed from home.

Tutor Tips — <http://mnliteracy.org/tools/tutor-tips>

From the Minnesota Literacy Council, this blog provides strategies for tutors to teach, mentor and engage learners.

Breaking News English — <http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/>

This site provides free interactive English Lessons with seven different levels. Users have thousands of lessons to choose from that are based on today's breaking news stories.

For more information on how you can support literacy efforts in Illinois, visit www.illinoisliteracyfoundation.org.