



VOCAL NEWS

Literacy Volunteers of Illinois



Summer Fun with the Pride of the South Side Chicago White Sox !

White Sox baseball games are a must see on the south side of Chicago. And, what better way is there to spend a summer evening than eating brats, hot dogs, and burgers (meat and meatless) with all the fixings and various side dishes ? Well, thanks to the generosity of LVI and our evening grill master, Joe Vega, that is exactly how we spent our time right before attending the White Sox versus Royals game on Tuesday, July 22nd, courtesy of the Community Initiative Program of Major League Baseball and the Chicago White Sox.

As our parking Lot A neighbors celebrated Greek Heritage Month with plenty of their native foods and music, LVI staff and board mixed and mingled with host site staff, friends of LVI, and VOCAL members, some of whom were attending their last event before completing their term of service.

Executive Director Dorothy Miaso always the consummate host, introduced the newest member of the LVI Board, Madison Palmer, to the group while Treasurer John McLeod and President Alex Crevi and his wife, Gina, made sure everyone was enjoying themselves and having their fill of food and drinks.

Speaking for myself and, I think, others I was elated when the ominous dark clouds that hovered above us part of the evening rolled past without leaving a drop of rain. After nearly two hours of food, drink, and fellowship, the party made its way to US Cellular, where we boarded escalators and headed to the upper deck. Our rows of seats above right field offered a great view of the playing field and the Chicago skyline. While it was a fun night for us, it was bad news for the home team as they ended the game on a score of Royals – 7 and Chicago White Sox – 1.

- Chamala Travis



Joe Vega, waves "Hello" while Dorothy, John and Joe's son, Thomas, wait for the grill to heat



The upper deck seats provided a great view of the ball field and Chicago skyline.



Food and Soft Drinks are served !



And, now it's time to "Play Ball"

End of the Year Member Celebration
Friday, August 22nd - 4:00 p.m.
Roditys Restaurant



LVI STAFF

Dorothy M. Miaso
Executive Director

Chamala Travis
Program Coordinator
VOCAL AmeriCorps

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Program Coordinator
IYC-St. Charles

Debra Sundberg
Program Coordinator
IYC-Kewanee

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Literacy Volunteers of Illinois

Josh Barrile
Tim Downen
Leonard Stadler
George Wright
Pat Wright
IYC-Harrisburg

Ron Happach
Etta LaFlora
IYC-Kewanee

Steffanie Stuckey
IYC-St. Charles

BOARD MEMBERS

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From the Executive Director ...

As we near the end of another program year, I once again extend, on behalf of our board and staff, our thanks and appreciation to all who made this another dynamic year for us and the VOCAL program. While we will not have our final figures for the year for another two months, we know from our mid-year report that we will surpass our goals in tutors recruited, clients served, and, educational gains made. Great job !

To the host sites, we hope the contributions made by this year’s members have a lasting effect on the community you serve. To our members, we hope that this year of service has been as rewarding for you, as it has been for the agencies at which you served and the clients you served. To our funding bodies, the Serve Illinois Commission and the Corporation for National and Community Service, we thank you for recognizing the needs of the adult literacy field and providing us with the resources to address them. To the many individuals who contributed both time and money to help us advance our goals and train our members, we thank you too.

As we shared with you a few months earlier, we were once again selected for “competitive” funding from the Corporation for National and Community Service. What competitive funding means is that we successfully competed against programs from throughout the country for funds from a national pool. This brings more money into Illinois and allows the Serve Illinois Commission to fund more programs through their “formula” funds, and is a great honor to us knowing that our work has received attention at the national level.

With the new program year comes change at the LVI office. We will soon be moving. We will be staying in the building, but come October we will be on the 6th floor rather than the 11th. All of September’s training activities will be in our current offices.

Another change for this program year is that the Serve Illinois Commission which has been “housed” in the Illinois Department of Human Services for the past 15 years is moving as well. As of July 1st they have a new home with the Illinois Department of Public Health. This move will have little impact on host sites, but will affect member reporting in the coming year. We will have greater details on that after attending the Program Director’s Training that’s scheduled for mid-August.

Final reminders for this program year – Final Service Reports are due from host sites on September 30th. Forms have been previously sent and are also available on our web site. Great Stories are due from members by the end of service. The stories should be entered into OnCorps and are a requirement for successful completion of service. Finally, our end of the year celebration is the last Friday of August, and I hope I will see many of you there.

Member Spotlight

Ron Happach lives in Sheffield, which is a small town in north central Illinois, not far from Kewanee. He has been tutoring at IYC in Kewanee since November 2009, first as a community volunteer and later as a minimum-time AmeriCorps member.



Ron has a Bachelor's Degree in Engineering and a Masters in Industrial Education and he tutors in the areas of reading, GED preparation and math. Ron says his favorite aspect of the program is interacting with the young men who remind him of his grandkids. In addition to his volunteer work with the Jump Start program, Ron is a Eucharistic Minister, lector and alter server at St. Patrick's Church in Sheffield. He is a member of the Marine Corps Legion and assists with the yearly Toys for Tots drive during the holiday season. He is a handy craftsman and provides maintenance, repairs and up-keep for the Sheffield Food Pantry. As Chaplain with the American Legion, Ron assists in providing military rites at burial ceremonies for veterans.

Ron says there have been many experiences that he would list among the rewards of his work at the IYC. A stand-out and unforgettable remembrance is the time when a boy asked if he could return. Ron treasures those times when he can see the effect his teaching has on youth needing guidance and a helping hand. When not at the Center, you can find him enjoying his retirement by playing round of golf. Or, perhaps being honored with a Governor's Service Award, as he was this past April at the mansion in Springfield.

Etta LaFlora was born in Memphis, TN, but has lived in Kewanee, IL since the age of seven. She attended Black Hawk College after high school majoring in business. She graduated with a two-year degree after landing a job at the telephone company where she worked for 15 years. When the office closed due to consolidations, she went back to college and earned an associate's degree in Child Development. She also worked part time for a family literacy program for 8 years and a social service agency subcontracted by DCFS for 13 years until both fell victim to budget cuts. Desiring to continue to make a change in her community, a small group in 2008 started a nonprofit agency to provide a variety of educational and empowerment support programs called the Sunshine Community Services Center of which Etta became the executive director. The Center has done several programs over the years, but the most successful has been the Step Ladder Tutoring Program, which utilizes a network of adult, peer, high school and college student volunteers to tutor middle school students at two public schools during the school year and at the public library for a summer session.



Etta heard that Literacy Volunteers of Illinois was looking for AmeriCorps members at IYC-Kewanee, and she decided to apply. She knew about the link between crime and low literacy and she too wanted to help make a difference in the lives of incarcerated youth. She suggested a partnership with LVI, Black Hawk College Community Education and Sunshine Services to share volunteers to improve literacy outcomes for students at IYC-Kewanee, GED and pre-GED students at Black Hawk and middle school students in the Step Ladder Program. Etta tutors and helps to coordinate tutors to work at three locations. She says the rewards for her are seeing the smile on the student's face when they understand a new concept, can complete assignments, can answer questions with little or no assistance, or complete their high school diploma or GED. Etta says, "At IYC-Kewanee, the challenges are sometimes as simple as waiting to hear the buzz for the doors to unlock, but as complex as trying to help students to believe in their ability and the courage to give themselves a second chance."

Etta plans to continue working with nonprofits to implement programs to help our youth and their families to make changes in the community. She is involved in church activities likes spending time with her two grandchildren, dog-Chico, working in the yard and painting if or when she gets the chance.

Jump Start at Illinois Youth Centers



George Wright is a native of Harrisburg, Illinois. He is a graduate of SIU-Carbondale where he earned bachelors and master's degree in special education. George has a bit of

historical attachment to his host site: he was a teacher for the mentally disabled at the Bowen Center which after closing became IYC-Harrisburg. When Bowen closed George and his family moved to Missouri where he taught at a center similar to Bowen. He then taught in a Texas public school before moving back to Harrisburg and becoming a Math teacher in Special Education at IYC-Harrisburg, a position from which he eventually retired. He later became a VOCAL member to stay active and continue to help youth. For George the rewards are seeing youngsters solve problems that they had trouble with. After service he plans to continue tutoring as a community volunteer as well as explore more of Illinois, Kentucky, and Missouri on his Harley Davidson. George has a book collection and has enjoyed motorcycling with his wife of 40+ years Pat, who is also a VOCAL member (see December profiles). He has taken various cross country trips, including traveling from Southern Illinois through Canada to Fairbanks, Alaska.



Leonard Stadler is from Waupaca, Wisconsin. He has two associates' degrees, the first from Milwaukee School of Engineering in Electronics and the other in Welding from Southeastern Illinois College (SIC).

He is currently studying Criminal Justice at SIC and hopes to get his degree in the near future. Before AmeriCorps he served in the Air Force as a youth and for a time did television repair in Wisconsin as an adult. He joined AmeriCorps to help those who have fallen onto the wrong track in life. His main goal is to tutor anyone who wants to obtain their GED or High School diploma.

At the Illinois Youth Center in Harrisburg he tutors Math, Science, and History. He says his satisfaction comes from seeing students whom he's helped graduate. For Leonard the challenges are when students guess on answers instead of trying to work them out. Leonard may go into a drug abuse organization as a counselor. He says some of his interests include collecting tools, repairing homes, and setting up repair shops.



Jump Start is a program of LVI that recruits retirees, especially retired teachers, to serve as tutors and mentors for youth incarcerated in the Illinois Youth Centers. The program was founded by LVI in 1995 with private funding from the Retirement Foundation. Current funding comes from School District #428 of the Illinois

Department of Juvenile Justice, the Literacy Office of the Illinois State Library and private companies, foundations and individuals. While the program targets retirees, the program welcomes as volunteers all individuals over the age of 21.

Anna Simmons is from Sandwich, Illinois. Currently, she is a student at Illinois State University pursuing a degree as a learning & behavior specialist in special education. Before joining AmeriCorps, she says she focused on her studies and worked part-time at a local Jimmy Johns. When she was given an opportunity to become a tutor and join AmeriCorps during the summer, she believed it would provide a great experience to further her teaching experiences as well as an avenue to help in the community.

Anna is tutoring at the Illinois Youth Center in Warrenville. "It is rewarding to be able to tutor full time during the summer and to provide guidance as a mentor. Having daily conversations with the students has help build trusting relationships that benefit our teaching experience", she says. Some challenges include, when the students are reluctant to meet and having to attempt new ways to motivate them when they may be having a stressful day. After AmeriCorps, she will start student teaching in the fall and is planning to graduate from Illinois State University in December. After graduation, Anna looks forward to beginning her teaching career as a special educator. Outside of tutoring and being a college student, she says that she enjoy spending time with family and friends and also keeps busy by staying active, by running and exercising.

Tutor Tip

K-W-L Activity

K - What I know

W - What I want to know

L - What I learned or still need to learn

You can help learners use their prior knowledge by trying the K-W-L activity. This activity draws on what the learner already *knows*, what the learner *wants* to know, and recalling what the learner *learned* by reading the material.

Before the reading:

1. Prepare a form similar to the example provided.
2. Ask what the learner already knows about the reading material. You or the learner writes the answers in the first section.
3. Ask what the learner wants to find out by reading this material. You or the learner records these questions in the second section.

During the reading:

4. The learner refers to the K-W-L chart while reading the material. As questions are answered, you or the learner writes the answers in the third section.

After the reading:

5. You or the learner adds to the third section whatever information the learner still wants to know about the reading material. Discuss where the learner can find that information.

Example:

Topic/Idea/Title: A Healthy Heart

What I know: Too much fat is bad for the heart

What I want to find out:

How to cut down on fat in my diet. What foods are bad for the heart?

What I learned (or still want to learn):

Red meat and cheese are high in fat.

Exercise can help my heart.

From D.M. Ogle, "K-W-L: A Teaching Model That Develops Active Reading of Expository Text," The Reading Teacher, 39 (1986), 564-570.

Thursday, August 14th

*Illinois Conference on Volunteer
Administration – ICOVA*
9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Metcalf Federal Building
77 West Jackson Blvd.
Chicago, IL

Friday, August 22nd

End of the Year Celebration
4:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
Roditys Restaurant
222 South Halsted Street
Chicago, IL

Saturday, August 31st

End of 2013
Program Year

Thank You !



Happy Birthday !

Phoenix Forbes
8/13

Chamala Travis
8/13

Anna Simmons
8/15