



VOCAL NEWS

Literacy Volunteers of Illinois



Adult Literacy Community Seeing Stars !

All of the city's literacy coalitions, of which there are four, know something about, "Living and Learning for Life". Coalitions began as an initiative for literacy programs to come together to network and share resources, the culmination of which is *Night of 1,000 Stars*, an event where the spotlight shines bright on the students.

For those of you who may not know, *Night of 1,000 Stars* (also known on the south side as Drama Read-a-Rama) is an annual event coordinated by members of each of the Coalitions to celebrate the achievements of the students in their programs and receive appreciation from the broader adult literacy community. This year was no different. The awe inspiring tradition kicked off with the West Side Literacy Coalition (WSLC) on Thursday, March 14th at United for Better Living. Everyone was seeing green perhaps because of the St. Patrick's Day theme as the WSLC members were greeted at the door. Students took center stage as family, fellow students and staff applauded their various talents on display.

Then the South Side took their turn on Wednesday, April 17th at St. Sabina Church with Father Michael Pflieger stopping by to pose for pictures and wish everyone well for the evening. VOCAL member Dominique Davis of Mercy Housing Lakefront had the hottest ticket in town, raffle prize tickets! Everyone stopped when she took to the stage because they were sure to hear their lucky number called. Betsy Rubin of Literacy Works aptly named our resident photographer because she is very congenial and gets all of the best photos, snapped 2013 On the Road to Literacy's keynote speaker Rob Schindler with his group of Literacy Chicago Students! SSLC Chair Charlotte Rutledge welcomed everyone and instructed us to enjoy food by Tavas Event & Catering.

"What else did the two of these events have in common besides raffle prizes and bountiful meals?" the Honorable Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White, of course. Secretary White is a personal friend to all of the adult literacy programs and makes it his mission to attend as many of the *Nights* as he can each year !



Dominique Davis calls ticket number...



St. Sabina's Father Pflieger and VOCAL Coordinator Chamala Travis at South Side's Night of 1,000 Stars



Secretary White is surrounded by students as they pose for pictures at SSLC's Night of 1,000 Stars at St. Sabina Church.



Participants look on as students from West side programs present.



Left - Shirley Jenkins - SSLC, Kathy Allison - WSLC and Susie Karwowski pose with Secretary White at West Side's Night of 1,000 Stars.



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And Yet Another Night Full of Stars !

On the heels of the Westside and Southside *Nights* came the North Side Literacy Coalition's (NSLC) *Night of 1,000 Stars* at amazing space provided by the Anixter Center. The date was Thursday, May 3rd. The purpose of the event – like the two that came before it – was for stellar students from NSLC member agencies to showcase their hard work. The event also helped to give them confidence and recognition for all the hours they dedicate to their learning, and it gave the agencies a chance to share unique dishes. This year guests were treated to a potluck of everything from brownies, to quinoa dishes, to samosas and chicken wings.



VOCAL member Abbey Reynolds and her students pose for pictures.



Bottom Left – VOCAL member Liz Brice celebrate one of many students at the North Side's Night of 1,000 Stars.

VOCAL member Liz Brice of the Howard Area Community Center kicked off the night as the effervescent MC and Corps Member Annie Scott of World Relief Chicago acted as the resident photographer. Liz invited 12 students from 8 different programs to the stage to perform. Most students read short excerpts from pieces they had written. Faiza and Razia from the Indo-American Center sang beautiful songs in their native languages. Evelyn from Pui Tak Center performed a magic trick that blew the crowd away. Each student told their stories in their own personal way. Often, they spoke of struggle. They discussed the hardships of immigrating to a new country and learning a new language, or in the case of Germaine who was put in a coma after a severe beating, learning your native language all over again. Yet, they also discussed the hope and motivation they gain from their families, their tutors and their programs. As the students exited the stage they were handed an award certificate by Liz and they flashed big smiles as Annie snapped their photo.

VOCAL Members Win Top Awards !

Congratulations to two of our VOCAL members at the Illinois Youth Center in Harrisburg both of whom were recognized for their service. Evelyn Martinez (top photo) was one of five AmeriCorps members to receive a Governor's Service Award at a ceremony at the Mansion in Springfield on Thursday, April 18th. With Evelyn (center) are (from left) Brandon Bodor, Executive Director, Serve Illinois Commission, and Commissioners Merri Dee, Fred Nettles (Chair) and Barb Tubekis.



One week later on Thursday, April 25th, Cherie Eller Ferrell was named the IYC-Harrisburg Volunteer of the Year at their annual Volunteer Banquet. Pictured with Cheri is the Center's Chaplain and Volunteer Director Lee Jewett.



Nuts and Bolts of Fundraising

As VOCAL Members took their seats in the LVI conference room on Friday, April 5th, they were greeted by a familiar face. LVI's Executive Director, Dorothy M. Miaso was presenting the training on Grant Writing and Resource Development. The training would span throughout the day with a step by step breakdown of effective grant writing and other means of developing resources.

Dorothy began the morning session discussing governmental grants on the Federal, State and Local levels, and addressed other grant sources such as Family and Corporate Foundations. She described in detail the necessary components of a grant - Executive Summary, Statement of Need, Project Description, Budget, Organizational Background, and Evaluation. Ms. Miaso brought in examples of AmeriCorps and State Literacy Office grants to give members an idea of what a grant looks like. Other sources of funding such as individual donations, online auctions, grassroots fundraisers and in-kind donations were also highlighted.



Top – A familiar face...Executive Director, Dorothy Miaso gets right down to business with members on Grant Writing and Resource Development .



At the end of the day when members had a thorough understanding of grants, they were asked to design their own grant proposal. The group came up with the hypothetical organization PiCL (Pathways in Computer Literacy), which would help students in adult literacy programs acquire computer skills in order to transition to college or career. There was also brief mention of a pickle-based rewards system for students, which some members thought would be a motivator and others a deterrent. They then laid the foundations of how the program would meet its goals, what the evaluation process would look like, and how it would budget funds. Detailed explanations and hands on practice helped members gain an understanding of writing grant proposals and developing funds for non-profit organizations.

Visit www.lvillinois.org/MOTraining04-05-13.asp in the Members Only section of the website to download the PowerPoint Presentation from the training.

- Lauren Thompson, LVI

How Learning is Achieved

Learning to Achieve training, presented by Barbara Babb and Marlene McLeod, was held on Friday, April 19th at LVI's downtown office. The training focused on how reading disabilities present themselves in the classroom. Ms. Babb highlighted some categories that are used to determine if an individual has a reading disability, such as phonemic awareness or decoding. She explained that phonemic awareness means students can break down words based on sounds, while decoding involves making specific sounds connected to letters. I took note that in order for disabilities to be diagnosed, students must be assessed to see if they can perform certain tasks. Ms. McLeod stressed the importance of assessment noting that "assessment drives instruction".

At my site, I work in the ESL department and tutor one-to-one. Although my students are administered the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) in my ESL class, I don't have access to additional information about them prior to class. Since each student is different, utilizing the techniques presented will help me to better tailor my instruction in the future.

I found the workshop very helpful because I have a better understanding of why assessment is important. I used to think "Oh here is a test that determines where a student belongs. That's it. We all have to do those." But in ESL, it is a little different. The assessments that Ms. Babb and Ms. McLeod covered not only point teachers and students in the right direction, but they also determine their academic success.

- Mimi Torrance, District 214

Another Terrific Tale Story Time !!!

Have you ever heard, “The Story of Frog Belly Rat Bone?” Well, I certainly did not until Saturday, April 20th at Terrific Tales Story Time with the Storybook Mom. The theme for this session was, *April is Showers to Flowers, Change is in the Air*. What better way to celebrate the coming of springtime flowers than to read books about change!

Though it has an unusual title, The Story of Frog Belly Rat Bone by Timothy Basil Erring illustrates a very good point. In the gray and gloomy place, *Cementland*, a young boy finds a box of specks that he must put in the earth and find a treasure. The boy creates *Frog Belly Rat Bone*, the protagonist, to protect the specks thieves. He teaches them to plant the specks and take care of them. At the end of the story, *Cementland* is no more. Instead it is filled with an array of beautiful flowers. Frog Belly Rate Bone teaches the readers to turn a negative into a positive.



The Storybook Mom, Nili Yelin also captivated the audience by reading the classic The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle. Instead of just reading the words on the pages, Nili and the story time participants became part of the story. When the caterpillar ate one apple, two pears, and three plums, they pretended to as well, and gobbled up their imaginary fruit.

Overall this was definitely a fun-filled and engaging event! I was pleased to see many returning faces and one new parent. Each child was able to take home 3 books, since we had an intimate group of 5 children and 3 parents in attendance. And of course we had delicious snacks available throughout.

If you missed out on April’s session, don’t worry! We’ve extend the story time sessions through July. Please join us at the next Terrific Tales Story Time on **Saturday, May 18, 2013 from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at West Englewood Library 1745 W. 63rd Street**. All ages are welcome to attend. *We also have two Wednesday and two Saturday sessions this summer!* To register for the next session, please call me at 312.661.1010 or visit our website at www.companies-that-care.org/tt-story-time-registration !

- Tanika Richardson, Center for Companies that Care

I attended a **Night of 1,000 Stars**, which was presented by members of the **South Side Literacy Coalition**. The event was a culminating year-end celebration to highlight the achievements and accomplishments of the students from the participating agencies that comprise the SSLC. It was my first event and it was a pleasure to see so many students excited to participate. I was impressed with their level of comfort in presenting in front of an audience. The students were engaged and eager to show what they had been working on throughout the year. Students presented writings, personal testimonies and played the piano. One student’s sole purpose for wanting to be literate was to learn how to read the bible. He learned how to play the piano from hearing the notes and now he is learning how to read music. This was a testament to the various reasons of why our students seek the help of such agencies to assist with resources to fully engage in literacy services. This was a wonderful display of the hard work that the agencies and students put in to improving themselves.



VOCAL member Dominique Davis serves dinner at the South Side’s Night of 1,000 Stars event.

- Dominique Davis, Mercy Housing Lakefront

Member Spotlight: Centers for Companies That Care

Max is from the south suburban area of Chicago and recently moved back to Dolton, where he grew up. He attended Roosevelt University where he majored in psychology. He is Program Coordinator for AIM High at the Centers for Companies that Care. His responsibility is to facilitate communication between high school students and their mentor in the business world. Max joined AmeriCorps in December 2012. Before joining he was a student and worked part time at a law firm that specialized in civil rights.



**Max
Frazier**

Max says the biggest reward of his job is exposing students to a world outside of their immediate neighborhood. The students who range from 14 to 18 learn how to speak professionally to their mentors many of whom are drawn from Fortune 500 companies. He holds weekly meetings with the students and arranges monthly events with the mentors. Max says that the students receive the kind of information and knowledge they would never get if they were not part of the program.

For his future, Max says that he wants to go to law school, specifically the Illinois Institute of Technology's Kent College of Law. His goal is to become a juvenile defense attorney. Max says his cousin is an attorney and that's how he got interested in making it his own career. Max really likes AmeriCorps and is particularly proud of the work he is able to do through it with young adults. He is enthusiastic about his work with students, especially young Black males. The biggest challenge, says Max, is getting them to trust. He says he has learned that you have to move slowly and let them know that you are going to be there for them for a long time. As to hobbies, Max likes archery, martial arts and baseball. Max has a full plate and he says that's just the way he likes it.

Tanika is from Summit, a small town near Midway Airport. She attended Illinois State University where she majored in Elementary Education. Before joining AmeriCorps, she worked at Christopher House with children aged five to twelve in an after-school program that in the summer turned into a full day summer camp. Tanika decided she did not want to teach any longer and so joined AmeriCorps in September 2012.



**Tanika
Richardson**

Tanika works at the Center for Companies that Care. She has no specific title but her service involves working on two initiatives: Invisible Differences and Terrific Tales. Her role with Invisible Differences is to work with high school students with disabilities and she goes to high schools in the Chicago area to facilitate workshops that help students transition from high school to college. She handles all the marketing materials, designs the curriculum and also does data analysis and the scheduling of the workshops. Tanika says they have just begun to offer a social skills workshop and she has been doing all of the marketing and outreach to get it started. Her job with Terrific Tales is to promote literacy initiatives and once a month she plans story time sessions at the West Englewood Library in Chicago. She creates the flyers and posts articles on select neighborhood forums to increase awareness of the sessions.

Tanika enjoys her work immensely. She says her passion is to motivate people, encourage positivity and good self-love. Her creativity has propelled her to write short stories, poems and children's books. She says that she sets goals for herself and the biggest reward of her service is to see people benefit from her workshops. Her future plans include attending cosmetology school. Tanika says that her passion is hair and how important it is for young women to know how to take care of themselves and know that their hair reflects their self-esteem.



Companies That Care

Mercy Housing offers a variety of services where residents have opportunities to gain the skills needed to change their lives and improve their communities. Resident services include after-school and summer programs for youth, GED and English courses, financial education programs, health classes, health care services for seniors and more.

Member Spotlight: Pui Tak



Abbey Reynolds

Abbey is from Chesterton, Indiana. She attended Moody Bible Institute in Chicago and her major was Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. She joined AmeriCorps in September 2012. She had been volunteering at The Pui Tak Center and when the AmeriCorps service position was posted, she immediately expressed interest. Her title is Assistant Adult ESL Tutoring Coordinator and her role is to communicate and train volunteers. She creates and provides resources for the volunteers and, she says happily, “Anything else I’m asked to do.”

Abbey’s love is teaching. She says it’s what she’s studied and where her heart is. Whatever the future hold, she says, it has to include teaching. She has no definite plans yet, but will probably look for a teaching position somewhere in the United States or perhaps, abroad. The biggest challenge of her work is the fact that most of their volunteers are college students who have spring and summer breaks. Abbey says they lose 90 percent of their tutors because of the vacations and it’s a challenge to maintain a regular and consistent schedule when they are so short-handed.

The rewards of her job are many, she says. A big benefit is that they are located in Chinatown with its amazing Chinese food and great people. She is pleased that she sees her students on the street and has developed a nice friendship with many of them. Another benefit she says is the people she works with who have a big heart for people. Abbey says it’s a joy to be part of the program. It’s a great job she says.



Jacquie Goeking

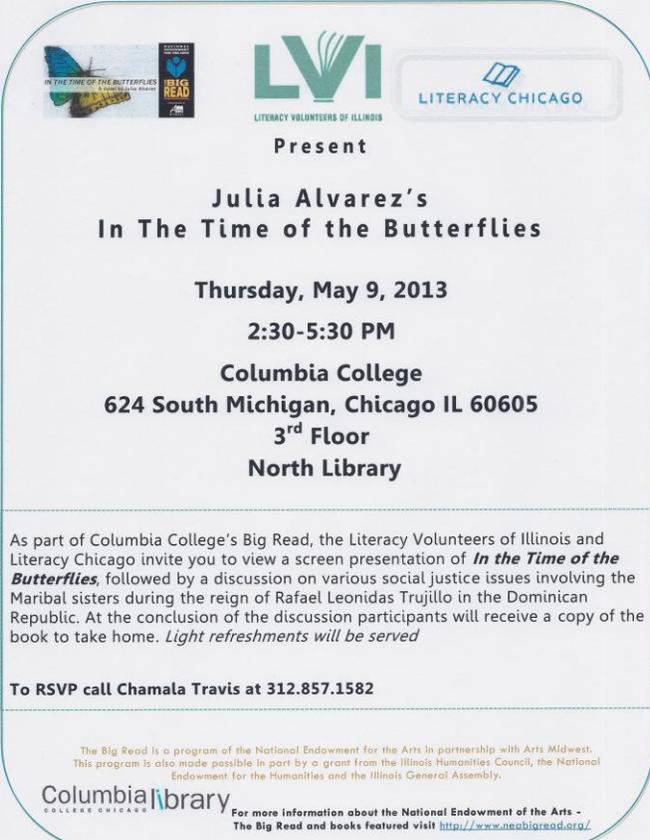
Jacquie is from Raleigh, North Carolina but has strong ties to Illinois. Her sister lives in Wheaton with her family and Jacquie graduated from Wheaton College in May 2011 with a major in biology. In September 2011, she joined AmeriCorps; Jacquie’s title is Assistant Adult ESL Tutoring Coordinator at The Pui Tak Center. She joined AmeriCorps with a desire to give back. Her role at the Center is to train volunteers, help coordinate volunteers with students, supervise tutoring and some administrative tasks. She says that she’s learned a lot of job skills, which will aid her in the future.

Jacquie’s host site, which is in Chinatown, is especially rewarding to her: She studied Chinese in high school and college. All things Chinese, she says, are her passion. This is her second year with AmeriCorps and when it’s over she plans on going to China to study Mandarin through an American Study program in Beijing. The rewards of her service are many. But she especially enjoys pairing volunteers with tutors and seeing the relationships grow. The greatest challenge is trying to manage the volunteers. Most of the volunteers are students and that means when spring break comes, it’s hard to maintain a consistent schedule with few of them on hand. Her hobbies are Irish dancing although she admits she hasn’t had much time for it lately. She’s also an avid reader.

Jacquie sees her future centered on volunteering. She says she’s not motivated at all by monetary gain and will probably look for a position in China or in a city with a large Chinese population working in non-profit or perhaps public health.

Established in 1994 by the Chinese Christian Union Church to be a Christian witness to Chinese in Chicago, the Pui Tak Center serves over 2,500 individuals each year through a variety of educational, family and community services that include a computer learning center, a music program, and a preschool through 6th grade school. The Adult ESL program offers six levels of English as well as citizenship preparation classes and one-to-one tutoring. Nearly 1,200 adults are served each year in their Adult Education programs.

Reminder - The Big Read



Present

**Julia Alvarez's
In The Time of the Butterflies**

Thursday, May 9, 2013
2:30-5:30 PM

Columbia College
624 South Michigan, Chicago IL 60605
3rd Floor
North Library

As part of Columbia College's Big Read, the Literacy Volunteers of Illinois and Literacy Chicago invite you to view a screen presentation of *In the Time of the Butterflies*, followed by a discussion on various social justice issues involving the Maribal sisters during the reign of Rafael Leonidas Trujillo in the Dominican Republic. At the conclusion of the discussion participants will receive a copy of the book to take home. *Light refreshments will be served*

To RSVP call Chamala Travis at 312.857.1582

The Big Read is a program of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest. This program is also made possible in part by a grant from the Illinois Humanities Council, the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Illinois General Assembly.

Columbia College Library
For more information about the National Endowment of the Arts - The Big Read and books featured visit <http://www.neabigread.org/>

Stay Connected !



Keep up-to-date on LVI goings on and more on LVI's social media pages. The LVI **Twitter** url is <http://twitter.com/LVillinois.com>



To fan us on **Facebook**, visit <http://www.facebook.com/lvillinois> and click the "like" button. Links to both social media are also on the LVI homepage.

Upcoming Dates

Thursday, May 9th

2:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

In the Time of the Butterflies
Movie Screening & Discussion

Columbia College
624 S. Michigan Ave.
3rd Floor – North Library

Monday, May 27th

Happy Memorial Day!
Office Closed

Thursday, May 30th

6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Literacy Showcase
Anixter Center
2032 N. Clybourn Ave.
Polk Conference Center

Change of Date

Friday, June 14th

9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Member Quarterly Meeting
LVI Office

June 19th – 22nd

National Conference on
Volunteering and Service
Point of Light Institute
Washington DC

www.volunteeringandservice.org

Happy Birthday !

Jenny Terrell

5/2

Ron Happach

5/29