



# VOCAL NEWS

Literacy Volunteers of Illinois



## Tales of Service: Serving Those Who Served

VOCAL members and staff marked Veteran's Day with several events over the course of the first two weeks of November. On November 8<sup>th</sup>, VOCAL member and Marine veteran Timothy White joined two other former service members on a visit to the residents of the **Illinois Youth Center in St. Charles** to discuss their own service, what Veteran's Day means to them and what young people might find beneficial in service to their country. Chuck Young and Bruce Green joined Timothy, discussing their years in the Navy and Air Force, respectively. All three shared their motivations, lessons learned, and skills gained while members of the military. Mr. Young served 2 years of active duty in the Navy, preceded by 4 years as a Navy reservist. His duties as a communications and radio operator took him to the Mediterranean Sea and helped him achieve a master's degree in electrical engineering. Mr. Green began service in the National Guard, then was inspired to join the Air Force through his love of aircraft. He flew many missions to provide midair refueling of military aircraft over the Atlantic Ocean, which then led to a long career as a commercial pilot. Many of the youth were extremely curious about their experiences and asked many questions about the specifics of their service. The students were able to see the significance of Veteran's Day through the lives of three men not much different from themselves.



The following week, AmeriCorps members made two visits to the **Rhine Veterans Of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 2729**, on the southwest side of Chicago. On Monday, November 13<sup>th</sup> they joined with members of the Post to participate in a program the Post was presenting for students from nearby Gloria Dei School on the meaning of Veteran's Day and service to country. The program began with a presentation of arms followed by members of the Post representing the **Army, Air**



**Force and Marines**, speaking to the students about their service experience and the role the armed forces play in protecting our country. The formal presentation was followed by a Q & A with the students asking very thoughtful questions. LVI's Executive Director also got to speak about national service, as she accepted a donation from the Post made by the group's Commander Charles Johnson. The morning program concluded with LVI members treating the students to a hot dog lunch with the veterans.



With the holidays coming up and a variety of family activities slated to be held, a second group of members converged on the Rhine VFW Post on Wednesday, November 15<sup>th</sup> to provide some deep-cleaning service to the veterans, who normally would have had to undertake these tasks on their own. While a great deal of cleaning was done, providing some much-needed respite for the regulars, great conversations were also had between VOCAL members and their veteran hosts, with each sharing their own stories of service and the power of giving back to their community and nation.



**LVI STAFF**

Dorothy M. Miaso  
*Executive Director*

Melissa Auer  
*Program Coordinator  
IYC-St. Charles*

Alex Dunbar  
*Program Coordinator  
IYC-Chicago*

Wayne Stiles  
*Program Coordinator  
VOCAL*

Teresa Urfer  
*Program Coordinator  
IYC-St. Charles*

**AMERICORPS MEMBERS**

Nina Corley  
*IYC-Warrenville*

Eliza Buckner  
*IYC-Chicago*

Larry Durfee  
*IYC-Harrisburg*

Chase Tsui  
*Literacy Volunteers of Illinois*

Timothy White  
*IYC-Chicago*

**BOARD MEMBERS**

Alex Crevi  
*President*

Blake Dunphy  
*Vice President*

John McLeod  
*Treasurer*

Madison Palmer  
*Secretary*

Reynaldo Dumas  
Chamala Jordan  
Don Singer

**Literacy Volunteers of Illinois**  
641 West Lake Street, Suite 200  
Chicago, IL 60661  
P: 312.857.1582  
F: 312.587.1586  
lvillinois.org  
[info@lvillinois.org](mailto:info@lvillinois.org)

*From the Executive Director ...*

*Holiday Message*



*Happy*

*Holidays*

*to all of our*

*AmeriCorps members,*

*site supervisors, trainers,*

*public and private contributors*

*and program and agency supporters*

*who have aided and assisted us in ways*

*too numerous to enumerate. Your positive*

*attitudes and giving spirits are inspirations to us*

*and we are very thankful to have each of you as a*

*part of us. May your holiday season be filled with*

*the many blessings of family and friends and may*

*you have a happy, healthy and*

*extremely rewarding 2018.*

*The*

*Staff and*

*Board of Literacy*

*Volunteers of Illinois*



*Coming up Soon...*



**MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.  
DAY OF SERVICE**

*Monday, January 15, 2018 – A Day On–Not Off*

## Member Spotlight ... Centro Romero

---

**Clarissa Donnelly-DeRoven** comes from a small suburb near Detroit, MI. Recently she graduated from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor with a BA in Women's Studies and Arts & Ideas in the Humanities. During her studies, she volunteered as a sexual health peer educator, and facilitated workshops on sexual health promotion and sexual violence prevention.



Currently Clarissa serves as an AmeriCorps member in the VOCAL program as an ESL teacher at Centro Romero. Clarissa was drawn to the work of AmeriCorps and specifically LVI by her aunt's experiences as a nonprofit director in California. The organization had many AmeriCorps members throughout the years and this made an impact on Clarissa. After graduating, Clarissa knew she wanted to provide social justice work in some form and the position with VOCAL at Centro Romero seemed like a perfect option, providing an entry into social services while providing real-world learning experiences with a diverse population.

On her work at Centro Romero, Clarissa finds value in her experiences and adds "I've learned that I really like teaching, and that it takes a really long time to lesson plan. I've discovered it's best to vary your teaching methods so you catch everyone through introducing the same material in different ways." Clarissa is currently in the process of applying to master's programs in Journalism and has an interest in writing on the intersections of gender, race, and reproductive justice.

---



**Iraida Patino** was born and raised in Chicago. She went to Lane Tech High School and then achieved a Bachelors in Business Management from the University of Illinois at Chicago. She is the first in her family to graduate from college. Iraida's first encounter with literacy was when she started school in kindergarten. "I remember it being hard at first", she said, "because the only language that was spoken to me at home was Spanish so it was difficult for me to understand." She was drawn to AmeriCorps because she saw it as a great opportunity to gain valuable work skills, while at the same time satisfying her interest in giving back to her community,

At Centro Romero, Iraida serves as a coordinator for the Family Literacy Program, working with mothers who have children ages two through five who want to learn English, but who can't afford childcare. The program offers the mothers an opportunity to learn English by providing them child care during the time that they are in class.

On her service experience at Centro Romero, Iraida says "I enjoy working with the mothers and kids in my program. It's a great feeling when you know that you were able to answer questions that they have or help them when they have an issue, not only those in my program but also everyone that I encounter on a daily basis who visits the center."

Outside of service, Iraida's interests include sports, especially baseball, listening to music, hanging out with friends and family and going to museums. After her year of service, Iraida plans to go back to school and pursue a master's degree to continue to gain the tools to help those in her community.

# Host Site Spotlight: Centro Romero

---



For over 30 years, the community-based Centro Romero organization has been serving the refugee and immigrant population on the northeast side of Chicago. Named for Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero, a leading social justice advocate in El Salvador who was assassinated in 1980 for speaking out against government human rights violations, Centro Romero's interrelated programs include Youth Learning and Leadership, Adult Education, Domestic Violence Prevention, Public Benefits and the New Americans Initiative. These essential services support healthy personal and social development of participants. The center's long-

term organizational goal is to bridge a disenfranchised community of immigrants and refugees into mainstream American society and improving their opportunity for upward social mobility. Centro Romero's leadership and staff strongly believe this goal is achieved only through education, leadership development, advocacy, and service.

The center's Adult Education Program provides instruction for life-long learning while encouraging upward socio-economic mobility through education. Offering 180 hours of instruction per week through 27 classes, including GED preparation, English language acquisition, and preparing for citizenship Centro Romero's team of experienced instructors and more than 100 volunteers make this mission possible every day. All of their students, whether learning English, seeking citizenship or studying for the GED, are empowered to build a strong community.

Katie Maranzana, Centro Romero's Director of Adult Education, and a VOCAL alum (Class of 2015 & 2016) herself, recognizes the efforts that AmeriCorps members play in the center's work - "VOCAL members here are incredibly impactful. Clarissa teaches three unique classes and assists our instructors in creating lessons that are learner centered. She helps implement our Health Literacy curriculum and teaches parents in our Family Literacy program. Iraidia is essential in keeping Family Literacy afloat. She works with our Student and Outreach Coordinator to keep the program running smoothly by planning activities, library time, and field trips and keeps things organized which is really helpful to me in making my program reports!"

Maranzana goes on to share that "LVI members have been essential to Centro Romero for many years. They bring fresh takes on education and advocacy when the program gets stuck in a rut. Apart from the individual work that LVI members do, it is just good to have the spirit and energy of the members around".

## Commitment to Lifelong Learning

First Fridays at the Literacenter, where LVI is headquartered, means a time for VOCAL members to join together and continue their learning process. Throughout the year, trainings are held to advance the skills of AmeriCorps members as they provide specialized literacy skills to the many adult literacy centers that LVI serves. Members cover such topics as effective methods in tutoring, strategies in working with diverse learners, and how to care for oneself while caring for others.

In November, members attended a workshop presented by Filtod Walker on *Surviving and Thriving in Your Life and Career*. Participants discussed their own goals, both personal and professional, and how to achieve those goals in a positive manner and avoid the experience of burnout. AmeriCorps members have a unique calling, many times doing more with less, conveying hope to struggling learners, and providing high quality education experiences to a diverse audience. With LVI's commitment to help its members achieve not only new skills, but also the confidence of being a leader, VOCAL members can spread the power of adult literacy and learning with ease and professionalism.

## Upcoming Dates

**Thursday, December 7th**

1:00 pm—4:30 pm

*True Colors*

Roombinson Crusoe

5:30 pm—7:30 pm

*Holiday Party*

Exchequer Pub and Restaurant

226 S. Wabash

**Friday, December 8th**

9:00 am—4:30 pm

*Quarterly Member Meeting*

Roombinson Crusoe

**Friday, January 5, 2018**

9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

*Stress Management 101: Vowing to Not Burn Out*

*Classroom Games for Growth*

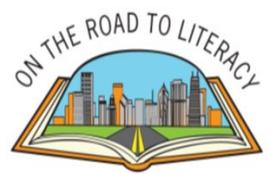
Swiss Family Roombinson

**Monday, January 15th**

*A Day On—Not Off*

Multiple Service Locations

### Mark Your Calendars !



Saturday, April 21st

9:00 AM-3:00 PM

**27th Annual Tutor and Adult Learner Conference  
And Awards Presentation**

UIC Center for Literacy

1040 W. Harrison

Chicago, IL

## LVI's SOCIAL NETWORKS



[www.Twitter.com/LVillinois](http://www.Twitter.com/LVillinois)



To fan us on **Facebook**, visit  
[www.Facebook.com/lvillinois](http://www.Facebook.com/lvillinois) and click  
the "like" button.

## Fun Things to Do!

**December 4th through 10th**

**Adler Planetarium**

**1300 S Lake Shore Dr, Chicago**

Illinois Resident Discount Days

Free general admission for Illinois residents

**Thursdays – 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.**

**Art Institute of Chicago**

**111 S Michigan Ave, Chicago**

Free Admission for Illinois residents

**Tuesdays – 12:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.**

**Chicago History Museum**

**1601 N. Clark Street, Chicago**

Free Admission for Illinois Residents

**Note: Illinois ID required at above venues**

**November 24th through January 7th**

**4:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.**

**Zoo Lights @ Lincoln Park Zoo**

**2001 N Clark St, Chicago,**

Free admission

Download a program at -

[http://www.lpzoo.org/sites/default/files/pdf/events/ZL17\\_Program\\_v6.pdf](http://www.lpzoo.org/sites/default/files/pdf/events/ZL17_Program_v6.pdf)

# ★ HAPPY ★ BIRTHDAY!

Zilagi Velasco = 12/2

Nina Corley = 12/5

Aurelio Mendez = 12/12

Margie Taylor = 12/15

Eugenio Brito = 12/23

### Literacy Fact of the Month

Children of parents with low literacy skills who do not receive intensive academic intervention in pre-kindergarten are 60% more likely to require costly special and remedial education.