



# VOCAL NEWS



## Welcome Americorps Members

On behalf of the board and staff of LVI, I extend a warm welcome to all as we begin this new program year. We are entering our 15th year of the VOCAL\*Americorps program and are excited to have each of you - member, host site, program supporter - a part of it.

As we begin this program year we acknowledge and give our thanks and appreciation to the Corporation for National and Community Service for the State Competitive funding we were once again awarded. The competition for this national "pot of money" is always stiff with hundreds of programs from throughout the country vying for it, so it is a great honor to us and a true testament to all of you for the work being done in the communities by the staff and past members of all of our host sites. We thank also the Serve Illinois Commission for their continued support and look forward to another dynamic year of our members "getting things done for America".

Though we are just two months into the program year - which began September 1<sup>st</sup> - much has happened and much lies ahead. We kicked off the year with a member orientation on September 11<sup>th</sup> (right) which was quickly followed by two days of tutor training on September 15<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>, and our first "First Friday" training of the year on October 6<sup>th</sup> – *Best Practices for Working with ESL and LD Learners*. Two of our trainers extraordinaire returned for repeat performances – Filtod Walker for the tutor training and Marlene McLeod for the Best Practices session.



*Kewanee members after taking the oath.*

The following week saw us heading to Springfield for the October 12th National Service Recognition Day sponsored annually by the Serve Illinois Commission. It was an early and long day for LVI staff and members in northern and southern Illinois as we set out from these two points at 7:00 a.m. and returned to those same locations a little over twelve hours later. The trip was a little shorter for our central Illinois contingency coming from Kewanee who met up with us at the Springfield Convention Center, sans VOCAL t-shirts. The quick trip to the van to retrieve them had all of our members properly clad for the 11 a.m. parade to the Old State Capitol, but, alas, led to a few awkward moments for the Serve Illinois Commission who were forced to delay their announcement of a special award.

While we kicked off the year with fewer members than anticipated by October 23rd, we were up to near full speed as we welcomed sixteen members to our second member orientation. With just a few more member placements to go we will soon be at 100% enrollment !



*New members take the AmeriCorps pledge*



**STAFF**

Dorothy M. Miaso  
*Executive Director*

Melissa Auer  
*Program Coordinator  
IYC-St. Charles*

Julie Copher  
*Program Coordinator  
IYC-Harrisburg*

Alex Dunbar  
*Program Coordinator  
IYC-Chicago*

Wayne Stiles  
*Program Coordinator  
VOCAL*

Teresa Urfer  
*Program Coordinator  
IYC-St. Charles*

**AMERICORPS MEMBERS**

Nina Corley  
*Literacy Specialist*

Larry Durfee  
*Literacy Specialist*

Chase Tsui  
*Program Associate*

Timothy White  
*Program Associate*

**BOARD MEMBERS**

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Blake Dunphy  
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New to our program this year, is a pilot project that we are undertaking with the Sunshine Community Services Center (SCSC) in Kewanee, Illinois. In that program, 8 part-time AmeriCorps members will offer after-school programming for 150 at-risk youth and social service referral for 40 veterans and military families. We have been working with the SCSC for the last three years, most notably with our Summer of Service programming and now hope to “incubate” the project to help them become their own AmeriCorps program in the coming two years.

As we move forward, I welcome not only new and returning members and host sites, but a new VOCAL program coordinator – Wayne Stiles – who joined us in September. Wayne will be the first point of contact for members and will join with me in working with host sites. I will be around and look forward to mixing it up with our members as we work to not only fulfill program goals and meet performance measures, as outlined below. but stay true to the principles embodied in the AmeriCorps Pledge -

*AmeriCorps Pledge*  
*I will get things done for America -*  
*To make our people, safer, smarter and healthier.*  
*I will bring Americans together, to strengthen our communities.*  
*Faced with apathy I will take action.*  
*Faced with conflict, I will seek common ground.*  
*Faced with adversity, I will persevere.*  
*I will carry this commitment with me this year and beyond.*  
*I am an AmeriCorps member and I will get things done.*

**Performance Measures**

**Focus area: Economic Opportunity**

Interventions: One-to-one and small group tutoring in basic literacy skill development; Classroom instruction in ESL, GED, pre-GED and ABE

Output: 2,100 Economically Disadvantaged Adults<sup>3</sup>

Outcome: 1,300 will increase their literacy skills by at least one level.

Interventions: Structured job seeking and job placement sessions and job clubs; One-to-one assistance with job applications, resume development, job searches, mock interviewing and education and career transition counseling.

Output: 500 Economically Disadvantaged Adult

Outcome: 275 individuals will be placed in jobs.

**Focus Area: Education**

Objective: K-12 Success

Interventions: One-to-one tutoring on at least a weekly basis; Tutor/student matches will continue for as long as the student is in the Illinois Youth Center or they receive their high school diploma or GED.

Output: 300 Incarcerated Youth

Outcome: 200 Youth will improve their academic performance in literacy and math by at least one grade level.

## Member Perspective - 2017 National Service Recognition Day

On Thursday October the 12<sup>th</sup>, at the early hour of six thirty in the morning, Literacy Volunteers of Illinois and Chicago HOPES for Kids staff and AmeriCorps members boarded two vans and headed to the state capital of Illinois: Springfield. National Service Recognition Day - which is what we were headed to - symbolizes the vital and selfless work that AmeriCorps members do throughout our state and country, and reinforces the idea that change can be achieved for our whole nation through service and volunteerism in each community.

When the vans arrived at the Bank of Springfield Convention Center, we



joined with crowds of AmeriCorps organizations from across Illinois. Scott McFarland, Executive Director of the Serve Illinois Commission opened the morning ceremony with remarks about the wonderful service that AmeriCorps members bring to their community and country as well as honoring the veterans who have served in protecting our country. Akila Davis, from WICS –TV Springfield served as the day's emcee, thanking all the organizations for their dedication to community service and inspiring members to spread the message of service. Various awards were

presented during the opening session and Military Veterans were asked to step forward and receive a medal recognizing them for their service. Larry Durfee, Janet Pilarski and Timothy White proudly represented Literacy Volunteers of Illinois.



We then departed the arena for our parade to the Old State Capitol building where we assembled on the steps for our swearing in ceremony to become an AmeriCorps member. But, before proceeding to the swearing-in Serve Illinois Executive Director Scott McFarland asked Dorothy Miaso to step forward and receive the very first Serve Illinois Lifetime Achievement Award. In presenting the award he said, "In creating this award, we wanted to make sure it had a name that went along with a lifetime of service and so we named it the Dorothy Miaso Lifetime Service Award."

Chester Spellman, Director of AmeriCorps, then spoke and commented on the work being done by AmeriCorps members throughout the country. He then led members in taking the "oath of office" with LVI members standing shoulder to shoulder to pledge together to "Get Things Done".

During lunch, participants were treated to a montage of short videos contributed by the many AmeriCorps host programs throughout Illinois. Participants then attended several breakout sessions to inform their service work through skills, methods, and techniques provided by current and former AmeriCorps members and professional experts in social services.

This Recognition Day was an amazing reminder for me of the honor and responsibility of becoming a member of AmeriCorps, surrounded by so many others with the same goal of changing our communities.



- MaryChase Tsui, Literacy Volunteers of Illinois

# Member Spotlight

**Marychase Tsui** grew up in San Francisco and eventually made her way to Evanston, Illinois where she lives along the north shore of Lake Michigan. She attended the University of Arizona, receiving her Bachelor of Arts in International Economics and Women and Gender Studies. Before joining AmeriCorps, Mary held positions in marketing and sales, and supply chain management. Her most recent endeavor was teaching ESL to women and children at the Indo American Center in Chicago's West Rogers Park neighborhood. For these efforts, she was recognized as an Outstanding Tutor at LVI's 2017 On the Road to Literacy Conference.



Mary said she joined AmeriCorps because she “wanted to bring about change and advance literacy for all Chicagoans and saw the great benefits of AmeriCorps and its strong emphasis on community involvement.”

Mary serves at as a Program Associate at LVI. Her duties include answering inquiries about volunteering and upcoming activities, assisting with in-kind solicitations for prizes, food and silent auction items for LVI events, spearheading LVI's social media strategy and serving on LVI conference planning committees. One day a week, she will also be tutoring at the Illinois Youth Center in Chicago.

Future plans include attending graduate school to study Public Administration and Policy, as well as Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) so that she could open up her own organization and bring literacy and adult education internationally to women in need.

In her free time, Marychase enjoys choreography, singing, and learning languages. She currently speaks 6 including English, Mandarin Chinese, Russian, Tamil, Hindi/Urdu, and Malayalam.



**Timothy White** was born on Chicago's south side and attended Thomas Kelly High School in Brighton Park. After graduation Timothy joined the US Marine Corps for a 4-year stint. He did Boot Camp training in San Diego and amphibious vehicle crewman training at Camp Pendleton. He was then stationed at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina and from there was deployed to Camp Dwyer in Afghanistan's Helmand River Valley. Following his four years of service and honorable discharge as a Corporal, Timothy returned to Chicago and enrolled at Roosevelt University to study Sociology, where he is close to completing his Bachelor's degree.

Timothy learned of AmeriCorps by seeing a listing for LVI's Jump Start program on Volunteer Match. He joined because he said he “enjoys helping youth and saw this as an opportunity to be an advocate and mentor for those needing a second chance”.

Timothy is a program associate in LVI's Jump Start program. While the program primarily works with incarcerated youth, Timothy's role is to work with formally-incarcerated youth in LVI's “Unbound: College Bound” program component. In that capacity he is working with youth in aftercare, assisting them in completing college and financial aid applications, counseling them on school choices and helping them sort out next steps, post-release.

Timothy's future plans are to stay in the social services/juvenile justice field to provide help and direction to helping youth who live in at-risk communities that suffer from drug abuse, low education, low employment, and trauma and violence.

In his free-time, Timothy enjoys playing basketball, listening to music and going to concerts, taking in art and craft shows, viewing art exhibitions and spending time with his 8-year old nephew.



Literacy Volunteers of Illinois (LVI) is a statewide organization committed to developing and supporting volunteer literacy programs that help families, adults, and out-of-school teens increase their literacy skills. LVI is a leader in the national service movement and has, through AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps\*VISTA programs, placed over 900 national service members in over 150 adult, family literacy, and Head Start programs throughout the state. LVI is also the founder of the Jump Start program which recruits, trains and matches volunteers to serve as tutors and mentors to incarcerated and formally-incarcerated youth.

## Recognition and More @ National Service Recognition

An Awards Ceremony, appropriately enough, kicked off National Service Recognition Day. And, on hand to assist Serve Illinois' Executive Director Scott McFarland in presenting the awards and addressing the multitude of members in attendance were two of the very top officials of the Corporation for National and Community Service - Acting Chief Executive Officer Kim Mansaray and Chester Spellman, Director of AmeriCorps. Three alums were recognized by the trio of presenters along with a Program of the



From left—Jeneen Thomas, Marta Salas and Ruby Camacho with Scott McFarland.

### AmeriCorps Alum of the Year

Travis Imad Moor-Murray  
Public Allies

### AmeriCorps\*VISTA Alum of the Year

Tori Collins

### Veteran Alum of the Year

Tranaine Lewis  
First Defense Legal Aid

### Program of the Year

Project MORE

Year. LVI was excited to see that its longtime partner—the UIC Center for Literacy captured the Program Of the Year Award for its Project MORE - Making Opportunities for Reading Enhancements - which places AmeriCorps members in the Center for Literacy's Head Start programs and Family STart (FAST) Learning Centers. Project MORE staff have ably served as mentors for the staffs of numerous new programs, as well as new staff at continuing programs. MORE staff also serve each year as trainers at Serve Illinois' program directors' training. Congratulations to Project MORE !

## Dorothy Miaso Lifetime Achievement Award

The Serve Illinois Commission announced the creation of a new Lifetime Achievement Award at their National Service Recognition Day and In announcing the award and its first recipient, Scott McFarland, Executive Director of the Serve Illinois Commission, said "it is being presented to someone who has been long been involved in volunteer efforts locally in Chicago as well as statewide and has been involved in AmeriCorps programming from the beginning, which has included service as a Serve Illinois Commissioner, a board member of America's Service Commission representing Illinois, and an AmeriCorps program director. More importantly ... she is someone who serves as a mentor to her members and everyone who serves in national service in Illinois and has been a great friend to me and the Serve Illinois Commission." He concluded by saying "in creating a Lifetime Achievement Award we wanted to make sure it had a name that went along with a lifetime of service and so we named it the *Dorothy Miaso Lifetime Achievement Award*."



Abe joins Scott and Dorothy for a quick pix on the steps of the Old State Capitol.



Dorothy addressed the assembly with Abe and Chester Spellman, who would soon lead the AmeriCorps pledge looking on.

In accepting the award, Dorothy said she was "overwhelmed by the honor" and thanked Serve Illinois for the creation of the award and being named the first recipient. She said she had been involved with AmeriCorps since its inception and witnessed at Chicago's Navy Pier via a satellite feed President Clinton leading the first group of members in taking their "oath of office" in the Rose Garden. She congratulated the sea of members before her who were about to take the AmeriCorps pledge on committing this next year of their



Chester Spellman (left), Kim Mansaray (right), Pat Rivera (front right) Exec Director, Chicago HOPES for Kids with newly sworn-in HOPES members.

life to service and noted that she was sure it would be one of the most rewarding of their lives. She thanked the Serve Illinois staff for their continuing support of the programs assembled, and especially, the Commission's Executive Director Scott McFarland, for his leadership and friendship.

# Upcoming Dates

**Thursday & Friday, November 26th & 27th**  
Thanksgiving Holiday  
**(Office Closed)**

**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

**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.

Links to both social media are also on  
the LVI homepage.

## Fun Things to Do!

**November 23, 2017**

**McDonald's Thanksgiving Parade**  
Parade steps-off at 8am  
State St. from Congress to Randolph  
Featuring the nation's best marching bands, giant  
popular inflatable balloons, spectacular  
performance acts and much more ! Or tune into  
WGN America to watch it on TV!

**November 17, 2017-March 4, 2018**

**McCormick Tribune Ice Rink**  
**Millennium Park**  
Kicking off Chicago's winter season, the  
McCormick Tribune Ice Rink in Millennium Park  
will open November 17 and will remain open  
through March 4, 2018 (weather permitting).

**Fridays, November 24–December 15, 2017**

**Caroling at Cloud Gate**  
**Millennium Park**  
Bundle up and get ready to belt out some holiday  
classics at these festive events that are part  
concert, part sing-along. Local choral groups lead  
hundreds of celebrants in song.

# ★HAPPY★ BIRTHDAY!

Kaitlyn Cameron 11/10

Barbara Wilson 11/11

Odalis Curzio 11/22

**Belated Birthdays:**

Yadira Chavez 10/18

Miriam Perez 10/21

Iraida Patino 10/27