



VOCAL NEWS

Literacy Volunteers of Illinois



A Day On ... Not Off --- King's Legacy of Service Lives On !

January 17, 2011 marked the 25th anniversary of the national holiday honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Our members, like those before them, pressed the boundaries of service and honored Dr. King's legacy through three separate service projects. In two, LVI collaborated with other Serve Illinois AmeriCorps programs - Project YES and Project MORE - to help them have a greater impact in the communities they serve. The third, a vision of LVI's LeaderCorps representative, Chrissy Ruby, and former member Kelli Wilbert, was a project of our own – "Lasagna for Literacy" at the Lincoln Park Community Shelter. Through the three projects our members touched the lives of 175 individuals by donated books to students (Project YES), toiletries and food items to homeless shelters (Project MORE), and a hot lunch for transitional residents at the Lincoln Park Community Shelter. In addition to these activities, our members at the Illinois Youth Centers in Harrisburg and Kewanee carried out service in their areas. The articles that follow highlight this year's activities. Thank you, members, for your service above and beyond your day-to-day duties ! - *Dorothy M. Miaso, Executive Director*

We Are MORE VOCAL – A Good Way to Be !

VOCAL members joined members of Project MORE (Making Opportunities for Reading Enhancements), a program of UIC's Center for Literacy, at their 10 S. Kedzie Service Site for their annual Homeless Shelter Drive. After introductions and morning snacks the corps divided into groups that were shuttled to various homeless shelters. Cornerstone Community Outreach Center and Good News Partners Shelter were the two sites where VOCAL went with MORE members. The project's objective was to help brighten the day for those residing in the shelters by conducting a variety of activities on site, securing toiletry donations from local businesses, and a non-perishable food or clothing item from each member. LVI provided two drivers for the day, as well as the supplies for the *I Have A Dream* bookmaking project.



Cornerstone Shelter, which is located on the north side of Chicago, was one of our destinations. If you ever had a preconceived notion about shelters like I did, Cornerstone will dispel that. Our group walked in to set up and shortly thereafter the families assembled. They were the liveliest bunch you'd ever want to see. The parents were not apprehensive nor were the

continued on page 4

Inside this issue:

- Lasagna for Literacy...pg. 2*
- Literacy Fair...pg. 3*
- Kewanee Care Home...pg. 3*
- Tutor Tips...pg. 4*
- Member Perspectives...pg. 5*
- Member Spotlights...pg. 6*



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Lasagna for Literacy ... A Recipe for Success !

Under softly falling snow, eight VOCAL members in purple t-shirts were welcomed through the red door of the basement entrance of Lincoln Park Community Shelter, under Lincoln Park Presbyterian Church. Although

I had spoken with the good people who work to make the shelter such an inviting place, I didn't expect to be greeted by the smells of onions sautéing or warm smiles from the shelter guests working in the computer lab, reading books at tables scattered around the living area, and watching TV on comfy couches. VOCAL member Beth Hausler had already begun cooking the feast, and I am sure our meal would not have been so easily prepared and greatly enjoyed come lunch time had she not acted as the quiet organizer who kept everything moving.



As LVI members chopped, stirred, tasted and tried ever so hard to get that giant pot of water to finally boil, guests kept sniffing at the fragrances that spilled from the centrally located kitchen and wondering when they would finally get to taste the spoils of VOCAL members' hard work. Before that pleasure arrived, members



Ellen Werner and Ryan Deringer led an interactive workshop on interviewing tips and job search preparedness that they prepared. Shelter guests kept a lively discussion going throughout the session, asking great questions, giving one another good advice, and participating in the workshop with insight and enthusiasm that exceeded our expectations. Resume writing and job board resources as well as practice employ-

ment applications were distributed, and hearty thanks went to the workshop presenters before volunteers and guests alike sat down together to enjoy the delicious lasagna, green salad, and chicken and rice, the latter of which was a surprise addition prepared by a wonderful volunteer, Charlotte, who saw an online posting of the project and came out to help !

LVI members reflected that they were humbled by the drive and motivation of the shelter guests, who had all landed there after falling on some very difficult times in their lives, but who were all so positive and open to change. Before leaving in the afternoon, I was practically begged to sit down with a couple of gentlemen who were working together on some algebra homework from a class one of them was taking, so I finished my service day with a little old GED small group tutoring, as any good VOCAL member would.



VOCAL Members Ellen Werner and Chrissy Ruby soul stirring lasagna at LPCS.

- *Chrissy Ruby*

VOCAL Members Say YES to Literacy Fair !

VOCAL members teamed up with Northwestern University Settlement House's Project YES! AmeriCorps members for a Literacy Fair that invited elementary and high school students to their West Town location for literacy and writing workshops and activities. As the students began to arrive, we were split into groups to help facilitate the various workshops. I was put into a group that was working with the high school students and got the chance to participate in and assist with some truly wonderful workshops that deeply explored concepts of personal relationship to your community and to the work of Dr. King. The sessions gave the students, and me, a chance to do some creative writing activities that made us think a lot about our own role in changing our communities, and about our goals and dreams. We also participated in an improvisational acting game. Some students were a little nervous about loosening up while being put on the spot, but others proved to be actors at heart.



Other members worked with the elementary students, and Kelly Bradley was one of them. She said she really enjoyed her experience because she “got to work with kids, whom she really enjoys. Singing MLK songs set to the tunes of ‘Yankee Doodle’ and ‘Twinkle Twinkle Little Star’ was fun too,” she added.



Lunch and a reflection period followed those sessions, and after that VOCAL members took the day in a different direction with a workshop of our own for students from the Chicago Jewish High School. Kelli Wilbert and Joe Bruce had prepared an interactive presentation about the importance of reading with young children and the links between reading practice at home and becoming a good student. Joe reported that the high school students were very engaged in the presentation, asked a lot of questions, and were excited to put their new knowledge to use... because for the next part of the workshop, the

older kids marched over to the ongoing after care program and sat down with the younger kids and started reading with them. There were some problems – small space, crossed lines, and yes, some no shows, but the purpose of the workshop was to get the older students connecting with the younger students, and that is what they did, and very enthusiastically.. I loved seeing the students working together, and I think they took away the message that engaging with others inside and outside of their community is the meaning of service.

- Molly Weener

Peace and Camaraderie in Kewanee

Braving the blustery winter weather in central Illinois, Clara Hemphill, current VOCAL member, Phyllis Dotson, a past two-year member, and, Jump Start Program Coordinator Deb Sundberg, rendezvoused the morning of Monday, January 17th to visit with and distribute “goodie bags” to the residents of Kewanee Care Home, a skilled nursing facility. Thirty blue bags displaying a picture of the world, doves and the word “peace” were filled with an orange, a banana, individual tissue packets, mints and candy and given to bible study participants at the Home. Phyllis, Clara and Deb also spent time with residents individually and as a group, and speaking words of peace for the world with them. In summing up the day, Clara and Phyllis both remarked that they “felt MLK Day was an appropriate time to remember our elderly citizens and to let them know they are not forgotten”.



- Deb Sundberg, Jump Start Program Coordinator, IYC-Kewanee

continued from page 1

children so when we were ready, so were they. Project MORE members Geraldyn and Shell organized a raffle with prizes and gift bags containing books, toiletries, a Chicago Public Library t-shirt and crayons in advance of the day. VOCAL members Jake Mau and Dennis Gregory led the bookmaking project. I had the best job of all, reading aloud to the children stories about Dr. King. One of the sweetest sights to see is an audience that is fully engaged in listening to a story being read. Can you imagine telling elementary school children that former President Reagan signed a bill in 1986 to recognize the MLK's Holiday and then ask them, "Were you around in 1986?" Falling out giggles is the response. More impressive news about the children came at the end when Dennis and Jake were wrapping up their bookmaking project; a young boy no more than 10 years old wrote that his dream was to have ... "no more guns that hurt people" and "to be in the air force".

The second group of MORE VOCAL members met up with families at Breakthrough Urban Ministries in East Garfield Park and encouraged children and parents to be creative. Inspired by Dr. King's famous speech and armed with crayons and markers, participants doodled, sketched and essayed unique expressions of their personal and social dreams. Several authors shared their final products with the group: highlights included a 9-year old aspiring policeman who pledged to "help his wife cook" and a young man who hopes to become "the first 11-year-old to go to college". Members found parents to be well-spoken in their reflections on Martin Luther King's impact on their lives, and everyone participating found it to be a great opportunity for parents and children to come together and flex their creative muscles while sharing in the spirit of an American icon.

- Chamala Travis



**Tutor Tips from the
PULL Book:
Project for Unique Learners in Literacy
*a publication of the Literacy Volunteers of Illinois***

If you've noticed that your student struggles to stay with the task at hand or becomes easily distracted during your tutoring session, you may find the following activities helpful:

Paired Reading is great for adult learners, who are superior auditory learners, because it combines hearing, seeing, and touching. Obtain a recorded reading selection (or record yourself reading). If the selection includes images, have the student first imagine what the images mean before listening to the tape. Then play the tape while the student listens along, following with his or her finger. Do this until he or she feels comfortable reading aloud with the tape. Repeat the last step several times.

Take A Break. Simply stand up and stretch, pause to doodle, or close your eyes and daydream. These activities should be brief but they will rest the language center of the brain, relieve tension, and help learning.

Edu-Kinesthetics merges applied kinesiology (the study of body movement) and learning theory; this activity increases the integration of the two brain hemispheres. Have your student stand and do the "cross-crawl": touch one hand to the opposite knee. The left hand on the right knee with eyes looking up to the left activates the right side hemispheres.



Member Perspectives - The Quarterly Meeting in Review

What's Your Type ?

Members gathered together the afternoon of Thursday, December 9th to partake in a one of a kind Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) workshop led by LVI's very own Board of Directors President, Debbie Parker, PhD, who is a psychologist, and, in her day job, a partner in RHR International, a worldwide Human Resources Consulting firm.

The workshop included an extensive and interactive Myers-Briggs assessment of both individual and group personalities. Prior to the workshop, each attendee was asked to complete a 93-question survey online to assess their personality type. The survey electronically evaluates your personality type based on your answers and reactions to the questions. Debbie had us interactively discover some of our personality traits before we even knew our calculated Myers-Briggs scores. At the end of the workshop we all got to see each of our individual personality types. We learned that variety is indeed the spice of life – there were many different types in our group!

The Myers-Briggs helps you to evaluate things like where you focus your attention, the way you take in information, the way you make decisions, and how you deal with the outer world. Understanding your personality traits and your Myers-Briggs “type” allows you to not only enhance your own working and social performance, but accentuate the personalities of those around you. From direct tutoring and teaching to volunteer coordination, we will certainly be able to use what we learned about our personalities at our respective sites.

- Kelly Bradley



Board president and MBTI facilitator Dr. Debra Parker

LVI's Rocking Annual Holiday Party on Thursday Night !



Reports and More on Friday !

The morning session of our quarterly member meeting on Friday, December 10th consisted primarily of member reports. It was great to hear about the challenges and successes that VOCAL members have experienced this fall. We heard about struggles with recruitment and retention, as well as some amazing achievements, from starting book discussion groups to creating a family library--not to mention all the tutoring and teaching going on! We also talked about changes in trends towards job-oriented literacy programs, students' strong interest in working on computers, and bridge programs.

After lunch, we all participated in a Justice Talking discussion with facilitator Rebecca Brown from the Illinois Humanities Council with the Meaning of Service program. We read a poem and discussed what it means to have relationships and connections with the people we serve, as well as volunteers and coworkers at our sites. We also considered the role of discomfort and expectations in situations, and talked about what it means to recognize the dignity and humanity in everyone.

We wrapped up with a report on MLK Day of Service plans and selecting our service projects, which everyone seemed enthusiastic about. All in all, it was a busy and productive day!

- Ellen Werner

Member Spotlights: Howard Area and Albany Park Community Centers



Lida McDaniel
Howard Area
Community Center

Lida was born and raised in Chicago, specifically, Rogers Park. Having attended Chicago Public Schools her entire life, she decided to leave the city to go to college and ended up going to Southern Illinois University (SIU) in Carbondale, which is about 5 ½ hours south of Chicago, and surrounded by the Shawnee National Forest, so the area is beautiful. At SIU, Lida majored in Foreign Language International Public Service. Prior to her current service, she served a year in the American Red Cross of Greater Chicago's AmeriCorps program. Before that, she taught ESL at a public school in Spain. She feels that AmeriCorps is a good option to get your foot in the door, and gain experience right out of college.

Lida's service site is the Howard Area Community Center, where she is the Literacy Tutor Advisor. Her time is divided between teaching an ESL class, tutoring an ABE student, recruitment and retention of tutors, and matching tutors with students, as well as various administrative type duties, such as data collection and the monthly newsletter. Recently, she has been post testing the "tutor-only" students and declares that every single one of them has made progress and, in some cases, students made over 3 years progress in just a few months. "This has been, by far, the most rewarding experience here and makes up," she goes on to say, "for one of the biggest challenges of seeing that the tutor-student matches to meet regularly."

As far as my goals after service, she has two ideas in mind: the Peace Corps and graduate school for a master of social work program and has submitted applications for both. "I am not entirely sure that I will do either," she says, "but it is always good to have options. My goal in life is to live simply and hopefully in another country."



Hannah Vis
Albany Park
Community Center

Hannah was born and raised in Grand Rapids, Michigan and studied for five years at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo where she focused her studies on Cello Performance and graduated with a Music degree in May 2010. She also majored in Spanish and in 2008 studied in Spain. After graduating she spent the summer working and thinking about what to do next. That's when she decided to join AmeriCorps in Chicago for a chance to work closely with other people in a large diverse community. She felt that in college she did not get to explore and develop all of her strengths and felt that through AmeriCorps there is a lot she can offer.

Hannah is serving as an Employment Literacy Volunteer at Albany Park Community Center. This is a new position, so it has advantages and disadvantages. For the most part, she works along with her supervisor assisting in Job Skills classes, helping students create resumes, fill out job applications, and practice interviewing. "It is an interesting because I have the freedom to introduce new ideas and projects, but it can be difficult because I am not following a developed curriculum," she said. She is also tutors Pre-ESL and Math students, and facilitates an English/Spanish Conversation Group. The most rewarding part of serving at APCC is "building relationships with the students ... I really love the people that come here for classes."

After AmeriCorps, Hannah hopes to continue working in Chicago, because she loves the city, or travel to another country and teach English. "At this point in my life, I'm not quite sure what my 'long term' goals are, but 'short term', I hope to continue meeting interesting new people and learning new things," she concluded.



Elizabeth Hausler
Albany Park
Community Center

Elizabeth was born and raised in Chicago. She attended DePaul University and graduated with a degree in Accounting and Economics. She worked in public accounting and as an internal auditor for a large firm. After having her children she decided to work as an independent consultant, providing accounting, payroll, and tax services for small businesses.

Beth, as she is usually called, has volunteered in several community organizations, schools, youth programs and a local literary arts organization. She has always had a passion for reading and wanting to help people improve their literacy skills she became a volunteer tutor at the Albany Park Community Center. After a year, she became one of their AmeriCorps members. In addition to working with students, both ABE and ESL, she helps with volunteer support, which includes tutor recruitment, conducting initial orientations, developing tutor resource materials, and planning and implementing recognition events.

Beth says she really enjoys working with both the staff and students at APCC and after her time with AmeriCorps has ended she will continue to volunteer and work with literacy issues.



Nick Gottschall
Albany Park
Community Center

Nick hails from the rural northwestern paradise of Walla Walla, Washington. Nestled in this idyllic region is Whitman College, a dinky little liberal arts school, he says, where he studied history of religions and music. In 2007 Nick sojourned to a faraway city 600 times the size of his hometown to study abroad for a semester in Delhi, India. After graduating in 2009, he took off for Chicago to serve an AmeriCorps year with a residential scholarship program where he also lived with, tutored, and coordinated community service projects for eight teenage boys.

Nick's serving his second year in AmeriCorps in the Adult Education program at Albany Park Community Center. At APCC he tutors several students in ABE and beginning ESL and assists in the ESL classrooms. He also runs an English conversation group and family library.

Nick says that he enjoys participating in the incredibly diverse multicultural atmosphere of the Center and building relationships with people of various backgrounds from all over the world. After service and for the rest of his life, he plans to execute some very elaborate plans involving traveling, reading, wandering and exploring.

The Albany Park Community Center, is a non-profit, community-based agency located in the multi-ethnic, working poor neighborhood of Albany Park. The Center operates a range of programs and, since its inception, has been the largest social service agency exclusively serving the Albany Park neighborhood. Adult education programs offered include - ESL, ABE, GED and GED Test Preparation classes, Citizenship Test Preparation in English and Spanish, Family Literacy, Adult Literacy Tutoring for ESL, pre-GED, and Adults with Special Learning Needs, and, a Community Technology Center that offers free internet and computer access.



The mission of the Howard Area Community Center is to assist low-income individuals and families in and near Rogers Park to stabilize their lives and develop the skills necessary to become productive community members. To that end a network of progressive programs responding to short and long-term issues of poverty community including hunger, the shortage of affordable child care, low educational achievement, and limited work experience and skills are offered. Adult education programs offered include - ABE, ESL, and GED Instruction, an Employment Resource Center, Computer Instruction and Family Literacy.





U.S. Conference on Adult Literacy: Midwest Regional LITERACY AND THE CHALLENGES OF THE NEW ECONOMY

On February 24th and 25th the ProLiteracy national organization will be sponsoring a regional conference in Milwaukee. The conference is expected to bring together Midwest constituents from all fronts of the adult literacy effort—student learners, instructors, volunteers, managers, and advocates—to build national and regional support networks, exchange the latest professional development information, and learn cutting-edge approaches to address the challenges facing adult literacy programs. An opening session featuring national and local speakers

LVI will award two scholarships to VOCAL members interested in attending this conference. Transportation and lodging will also be covered. If you are interested in attending this conference and applying for the scholarship, please visit Members Only on our web site and complete the application. For a full conference schedule and workshop descriptions, visit proliteracy.org.

Opening Session

Literacy and the Challenges of the New Economy

David Harvey, President and CEO, ProLiteracy

Success Stories from the Milwaukee Achiever’s literacy program

Tracy Loken Weber, Programs Director, Milwaukee Achiever

Rotary’s Commitment to Literacy & Volunteerism

Paul Decker, District Governor 6270

The Power of Education in Transforming Lives

Dr. Michael Burke, President, Milwaukee Area Technical College

Workshops - Choose one to attend

For adult learners and program staff

Leading in the Program, at Work, and in the Community

For program directors, administrators, and managers

Health Literacy Infusion: Meeting the Needs of Learners, Tutors and Literacy Agencies

For program directors, administrators, and managers

Connecting Literacy and Work: What Program Leaders Need to Know

For program directors, administrators, and managers

Strategic Messaging: Selling Your Program to Partners and Funders

For program managers, trainers, and instructional staff/volunteers

Student Retention Through Student Success

Upcoming Dates

February 4th

9:30 a.m. - Noon

Using Real-Life and Authentic Materials

1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Using Games in Tutoring and Classrooms

LVI Office

February 18th

9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Grant Writing and Resource Development

LVI Office

February 24th & 25th

Literacy and the Challenges of the New Economy

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

March 4th

9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Quarterly Member Meeting

LVI Office

April 9th



9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

UIC Center for Literacy

Happy Belated Birthday !

Jacob Mau

January 7

Ryan Deringer

Danielle Hammel

January 19

Happy Birthday!

Ellen Werner

February 9

Amanda El-Khoury

February 16

