



# VOCAL NEWS

Literacy Volunteers of Illinois



## The Lessons in Life - The Quarterly Meeting in Review

If the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator just wasn't enough for you to truly grasp your personality, you needn't be worried; there is a test for everyone. In the most recent endeavor to find a true sense of self, LVI members were presented with an unparalleled task, to draw a pig. No further instructions needed except, "don't look at your neighbor's pig." The lack of detailed instruction struck panic in us all, questions arose from all around; "Did you say PIG, or PIN? Should we draw a body? Do pigs have ears? Male or Female?" Never have there been so many concerned adults over the drawing of a pig. What was the outcome of all of this? LVI members learned that we are positive realists who have a tendency to be innovative, active, and analytical risk takers who are stuck on the ideal that we **are** living through a period of major change, listening to others who are satisfied as we with the quality of our social/sex life. Or maybe it was just an icebreaker to transition us into *Justice Talking*.

Rebecca Brown from the Illinois Humanities Council was back this quarter presenting "The Lesson" by Toni Cade Bambara. The focus started with "Miss Moore" and what her role was. What was she doing in the slums, feeling responsible for the education of the young children? What is her rationale for telling the kids that that they are poor and then taking them to a ridiculously priced toy store? What is the lesson that she is trying to teach? There was a good discussion on this piece and we never really know what the lesson is or why she does what she does. The author has left room for personal interpretation and is perhaps inviting the reader to explore that. If you have not yet read this piece in full, I recommend that you do and think about your role at your host site. How might those you are helping perceive you?

- Amparo Guerrero



VOCAL members Danielle, Dennis & Beth (above) and Martha, Amparo & Jose (below) discuss the selected reading for the *Justice Talking* component of the third Quarterly Member Meeting.

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**A Week of Celebration !**

National Volunteer Week is an annual celebration used to say “Thank You” to America’s volunteers. This year, National Volunteer Week is April 10-16<sup>th</sup> – a change from previous years when it was celebrated during the third week of April. The change from the second to third week was made so as not to conflict with the religious holidays of Passover and Easter – both of which fall this year the week of April 17<sup>th</sup>.



For those of us in the literacy field, National Volunteer Week is the perfect time for us to celebrate and say “thank you” to our tutors who, week after week, provide valuable services to our students, as well as thanking the many other volunteers who provide service in so many other ways that help us keep our programs and organizations strong and vibrant.

National Volunteer Week has been with us in the US since 1974 when President Richard Nixon signed the first proclamation declaring the third week of April Volunteer Week. Every president after him has followed suit. Most governors and mayors also take the opportunity to issue proclamations, as Governor Quinn will likely do.

At the national level, the week is co-sponsored by the Points of Light Institute and the Hands-On Network, which is the volunteer-focused arm of the Institute. Through them there is a website that offers a variety of materials for use during National Volunteer Week including downloadable logos (as the one shown above), flyers, banners and a “Toolkit” that offers Media Outreach Tips as well as sample Media Advisories, Proclamations, and Recruitment Messages - <http://www.handsonnetwork.org/nationalprograms/signatureevents/nvw>. Through the web site you can also share a story about your volunteers and the impact they have, or nominate one or more for a “Hero Award” (in case you missed submitting them for our Tutor Awards).

Many host sites may already have events planned for National Volunteer Week. If yours is not one of them, there is still time for you to plan something today.

Thank you to those who are using our On the Road to Literacy award venue to recognize your tutors. Hope to see all of you at the Conference on Saturday, April 9<sup>th</sup>.



Dorothy Miaso and the 2010-2011 VOCAL members meet at the LVI office for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarterly Member Meeting.

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

The following exercises emphasize event sequencing in order to strengthen overall comprehension skills. The exercises also develop students' other comprehension strategies, including making predictions, noting key words, and applying facts.

**Key Word Diagrams** help students identify the relationships among key words in a story in a way that will clarify thinking. You can use a story or an article for this exercise. After reading the story aloud, ask the student to retell the story in his or her own words while you listen for key characters, places, events, and circumstances. Write these key words down on blank cards. Then ask your student to make a diagram of the story by arranging the cards and applying the facts read. Have the student verbalize their reasoning involved in the process.

**Story Strips** asks the student to apply facts previously read to the remainder of the reading selection. Leaving the first one or two paragraphs intact, cut a copy of a short reading passage into strips. Have your student read the first paragraph(s) and then place the strips in order so that he or she may proceed with the passage.

Example:

### Lost cat returns home after seven years



**Sequencing Story Strips** lets a student manipulate portions of a passage to assist them in sequencing material. Copy a short passage at your student's reading level and have your student read it. Cut the story pieces into strips and mix them up. Ask your student to arrange the strips in order and help think through the process. Compare the student's arrangement with the original.

**Sequencing Cartoons** is similar to the above exercise. Cut a cartoon strip into frames and ask your student to put them in order. After considering the sequence, ask your student to discuss the reasons for choosing this order.

## Helpful Websites

Fire prevention and safety education materials are commonly written in English at a 6<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> grade reading level. **Keys to Safety** is a national campaign promoting fire prevention and safety education through local organizations which serve adults who have limited literacy or English language skills. Incorporate fire safety into your lesson plan – find free materials and support designed with your students in mind at [www.proliteracy.org/keystosafety/](http://www.proliteracy.org/keystosafety/).

**Skills Workshop** (<http://www.skillsworkshop.org/>) is an amazing website with an abundance of resources organized impeccably. There are two ways to search the site: you can start by selecting your subject area (for example, literacy), then search by selecting the skill level and specific subject in which you are interested. Or you can simply use the search box and type in what you're looking for (for example, math card games). Have fun!

The **Adult Literacy Tutor Flipbook** was designed by the Pennsylvania Literacy Corps to be used as a quick reference while tutoring. It is divided into five sections: Introduction, Reading Instruction, Writing Instruction, Math Instruction, and Teaching/Learning Strategies. Each section includes guidance for teaching a variety of skill topics. It's a great resource because it will carry you through an entire lesson, from discussion, to practice, to assessment. Find it (in PDF version) at [http://www.ed.psu.edu/isal/PDFs/Tutor\\_Flipbook.pdf](http://www.ed.psu.edu/isal/PDFs/Tutor_Flipbook.pdf).

## **Illinois Dome Day** **Thursday, April 7, 2011**



At Dome Day, members of AmeriCorps state programs, AmeriCorpsVISTA programs, students serving with Learn-and-Serve, Senior Corps Members, and committed Illinois volunteers unite in Springfield to tell our stories about service and raise awareness about the important work we do across Illinois communities. At Dome Day, members of these programs will inform state legislators about active citizen service here in Illinois; Increase awareness among legislators and state officials of Illinois service programs; Build familiarity around the concept of citizen service in Illinois; Network with other Illinois service organizations.

### Event Schedule:

9:00-12:00 Registration  
9:00-11:30 Meetings with Representatives  
12:00-12:30 Ceremony  
12:30-4:00 Meetings with Representatives

Please preregister for the event by April 4<sup>th</sup> at:  
[www.serve.illinois.gov](http://www.serve.illinois.gov)

For more information on Illinois Dome Day, please contact:  
Jeremy Bleier, Civic Engagement Manager, City Year Chicago  
jbleier@cityyear.org | 312.423.7188

## ***On The Road To Literacy Tutor & Adult Learning Conference***

Mark your calendars! On April 9<sup>th</sup> is the 20<sup>th</sup> annual *On The Road To Literacy* conference, hosted by LVI and the UIC Center for Literacy. Here's what you have to look forward to:

The audience will be composed of adult learners, tutors, teachers, and staff from the area. Presenters come from these same groups of people, making the workshops especially relevant. Over twenty workshops are planned to explore teaching & learning strategies, techniques, and materials in the subjects of vocabulary, pronunciation, conversation, comprehension, reading, writing and computational skills. Some of the titles are *Teaching Math through History & Culture* (round 1), *Click & Learn: Student-Friendly Websites* (round 2), and *Visual Arts Based Literacy Education in the ESL Classroom* (round 3).

A number of literacy organizations from the area will be represented, including Poder Learning Center, Family Start Learning Center (FAST), Literacy Volunteers of Lake County, Adult Learning Resource Center, Literacy Chicago, as well as colleges and libraries in our area.

During lunch you'll be able to peruse our information tables, where you'll see representation from the Chicago Police Department, UIC's Mile Square Health Center (which will be offering free blood pressure & glucose testing), and more.

The conference will end with our keynote speaker, Cyndi Colletti, the Literacy Program Manager of Illinois State Library.

Don't miss this opportunity to meet and learn from your fellow adult education community members. Registration for LVI VOCAL members is complimentary.

And don't forget to nominate a tutor for Tutor of the Year! All nominees receive complimentary registration. Find the nomination form on our website at [lvillinois.org](http://lvillinois.org).

### ***20<sup>th</sup> Annual On The Road To Literacy Conference***

**Saturday, April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2011**

**9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.**

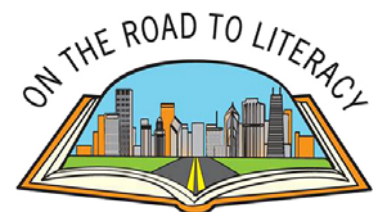
**UIC Center for Literacy**

College of Education, Psychology

and Social Work Building

1040 W Harrison (Lower Level)

Chicago, IL



## ***Strategies for Boosting Learner Persistence***

*Danielle Hammel, VOCAL member, was awarded a scholarship from LVI to attend the Midwest Regional U.S. Conference on Adult Literacy: Literacy and the Challenges of the New Economy, held in Milwaukee on the 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> of February. Read on for her perspectives of the conference.*



*Danielle Hammel reports on her experiences at the Midwest Regional U.S. Conference on Adult Literacy for VOCAL members at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarterly Member Meeting.*

As I'm sure you are all aware, working with adult learners presents a unique set of challenges as far as learner persistence and retention. Our learners are constantly facing obstacles to their continued participation in our programs- home and family responsibilities, emotional difficulties and financial struggles to name a few. Yet we know that learner persistence is directly linked to learner success;

the longer a student stays in a program, the higher the likelihood that they will achieve their goals. So how can we help our learners stick it out? How can we help them overcome the obstacles in their life to stick with us?

These are the questions I hoped would be answered by the "Student Retention through Student Success" workshop I attended at the Midwest Regional Conference on Adult Literacy in Milwaukee this past month. While obviously there is no silver bullet for all our learner persistence issues, this conference did present some important insights into why learners find it difficult to continue in an adult education program long-term, and offered some great examples on how to combat stop-outs.

The workshop was framed in terms of promoting self-efficacy among learners, and so it began by defining this concept and with a brief overview of the psychological research related to it. Self-efficacy refers to "one's belief in one's capability to organize and execute the course of action required to manage prospective goals." Basically, it's psychology jargon meaning "you think you've got what it takes" to achieve a certain goal. This is different than self-confidence, which is a more general idea about who you are as a person. The facilitator put the difference this way: "Self efficacy means "I think I can" while self- confidence means "I think I am".

Promoting self efficacy in our students is key to boosting learner persistence. According to the workshop facilitators there are three main ways to boost self efficacy. These are:

1. Provide "**mastery experiences**" – help your student to set short-term, achievable goals, in addition to their long term ones. We all know this is easier said than done with many highly motivated students who are just beginning the process. But this is also essential. If a student sets a goal that is simply unachievable in the short term, and then falls short of that goal, they are likely to become frustrated and give up. Similarly, if a student sets a goal for themselves that is not ambitious enough, the achievement of that goal is not going to contribute significantly to their sense of self-efficacy.
2. Provide "**vicarious experiences**" – allow your students to have access to other learners who have achieved the same goal they are hoping to achieve. This may mean inviting a former GED preparation student to speak about their experience to group of new students. Or it may mean establishing a mentorship program between current and former students. This allows students to see their peers achieving at a high level, and helps them to develop the idea "If they can do it, so can I."
3. Locate and identify "**social persuasion**" in a student's life. We all have people in our lives that support us and help us reach our goals. Our students are no different. Helping students to identify these support networks or "sponsors" allows them to get the most from these relationships. Teachers, fellow students, friends, family members, counselors, religious and community leaders, and even volunteer tutors can act as official and unofficial sponsors for a student, and can contribute immensely to a student's sense of self-efficacy.

These concepts are largely intuitive. Yet often our programs are not able to incorporate them because of a lack of time and resources. That's where we come in. We've been working in our positions for about 6 months at this point. Why not take some time to identify realistic ways to boost learner persistence in our programs and start to implement them? Identify leaders in your classes and programs and ask them to present on a topic they are familiar with so they can serve as a role model to other students. Suggest forming a student advisory board so that students can feel more directly involved in the decisions that affect their education. Why not ask your students to identify their support networks and discuss how these people help them meet their goals. Research has shown that these strategies help keep adults motivated and involved. We should begin laying the groundwork for these types of ideas now, so that we can begin to see their effects by summer!

- Danielle Hammel

## Member Spotlights: World Relief – Chicago



**Colleen Eck**  
World Relief  
– Chicago

Colleen Eck was born and raised in Chicago. She has lived here her whole life. She attended Northeastern IL University in Chicago; she majored in Interdisciplinary Studies and minored in History.

This past summer Colleen volunteered at Metro Achievement Center where she worked as a classroom aid and substitute-taught for some of their summer classes. Before that, Colleen taught preschool for the Chicago Park District. She joined AmeriCorps because she wanted to experience something different.

At World Relief, Colleen's title is ESL Tutor Coordinator. She likes working at World Relief because she has the opportunity to meet so many different people. Colleen says, "The job is challenging but our students are grateful, which makes all our hard work very rewarding. The general atmosphere is also really amazing. Everyone who works at World Relief is friendly and positive which helps to make the job that much more enjoyable."

After her service as a VOCAL member Colleen hopes to be able to find a job away from Chicago. She would like to do something that is challenging and allows her to travel. She hopes that in ten years she will have her own family and a job that she enjoys.

World Relief – Chicago's mission is to engage communities to foster dignity and wholeness for immigrants and refugees in transition. English language and literacy development to obtain employment and integrate more fully into the Chicago community is a key avenue that World Relief uses to accomplish its mission. Education services include intensive English Language Training part-time ESL programming, family literacy and in-home tutoring. World Relief also offers weekly employment preparation and cultural adjustment training.



**Jacob Mau**  
World Relief  
– Chicago

Today, the Kankakee area is known as the host of the Chicago Bears' summer training camp and the home of former Illinois Governor George Ryan. However, LVI member Jake Mau prefers to explain his home in terms of what it offered his ancestors, who migrated to the area from Pennsylvania, Ireland, Germany, and Holland in the years before the Civil War.

Jake's house in western Kankakee County, about 80 miles south of Chicago, sits on the edge of a field that was originally purchased by his Great Great Grandpa, Abraham Orwig. This is the quiet corner where Jake grew up. Like many Midwesterners of rural heritage, he was eventually drawn from the hinterlands into the city itself to pursue an education and career.

From 2005 to 2008 he attended Moody Bible Institute in Chicago to study theology and print media. While there he began working part-time at World Relief Chicago (WRC), a faith-based organization that contracts with the State Department to aid refugees arriving to the U.S. through the federal resettlement program.

For Jake, AmeriCorps provided a post-college opportunity to work full-time at WRC as the volunteer tutor coordinator. He continues this year in a second AmeriCorps term. Clients from Iraq, Burma, Nepal, and other countries remind Jake that he himself is only separated from the experience of being a newcomer to the United States by a couple of generations. Each day at his job, he reflects on the opportunities America continues to offer as well as the vices it nurtures in its people.

Outside of work, Jake pursues hobbies financially appropriate to his AmeriCorps income. He takes walks, reads books from the library, and plays guitar. This winter, a home brewing beer kit and an old rocking chair to refinish expanded his list of non-work-related activities. Jake plans to pursue an MA program for literature, and he daydreams about someday starting an agricultural ministry to help resettled refugees adjust to life in the United States.

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS:**  
**NATIONAL AMERICORPS WEEK**  
**IS**  
**MAY 14<sup>TH</sup> THROUGH MAY 21<sup>ST</sup> !**

**2010 – 2011 National Book Fund**

Applications for the 2010–11 National Book Fund awards will be available **May 2, 2011**. The deadline for applications will be **June 13, 2011**. ProLiteracy’s National Book Fund provides grants to local adult literacy programs in the form of books and materials from ProLiteracy’s publishing division, New Readers Press. In addition, grantees are given the opportunity to participate in online professional development courses.

Since the National Book Fund’s inception in 1995, ProLiteracy has distributed nearly 1,500 grant awards totaling more than \$2.6 million worth of materials to organizations in 50 states and the District of Columbia. More information about the National Book Fund can be found on the ProLiteracy website: (<https://www.proliteracy.org/NetCommunity/Page.aspx?pid=356>). If you have questions, please contact Michele Diecuch, Project Administrator, at [mdiecuch@proliteracy.org](mailto:mdiecuch@proliteracy.org).

**Alumni News**



Alumni News features updates on past members and their subsequent accomplishments. If you would like to include any Alumni in upcoming editions, please e-mail [ael-khoury@lvillinois.org](mailto:ael-khoury@lvillinois.org).

*Class of...2007 – 2008*

**Yen Tse** has worked for the Pui Tak Christian School, teaching 5<sup>th</sup>-graders, for the past two years. She has a degree in Elementary Education, and although she taught ESL at the Pui Tak Center, having the opportunity to work in her field has been the most rewarding. “Perhaps someday I’ll return to ESL, but for now, I enjoy where I am.”

**Ashley Hobbs** currently works for Heartland Community College as a GED Teacher for the Community Education Program in Normal, Illinois. After service, Ashley traveled to Sioux Falls, SD to work as a School-based Mentor, but the pull of the Midwest and her family has brought her back to Adult Literacy here in Illinois. She is also currently enrolled at ISU.

**Sarah McLaughlin** is an Adjunct Faculty Member at Harry S. Truman College in the Communication Arts and Skills department.

**Upcoming Dates**

**April 7<sup>th</sup>**

Illinois Dome Day  
9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.  
 Springfield, IL

**April 9<sup>th</sup>**



9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.  
 UIC Center for Literacy

**April 10<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup>**

National Volunteer Week

**April 19<sup>th</sup>**

Passover

**April 24<sup>th</sup>**

Easter

**May 14<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup>**

National AmeriCorps Week\*  
 \*note change of date

**May 16<sup>th</sup>**

Volunteer Information &  
 Recruitment Fair  
9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.  
 Thompson Center

**Happy Birthday!**

