

Jesse White
 Secretary of State
 & State Librarian

There are many reasons people come to an adult literacy grant program sponsored by the Office of the Secretary of State. They may be a refugee from a war-torn nation, have struggled with crime and substance abuse, or had to overcome disabilities. But they come to the programs with the firm determination to learn to read, to write and to speak English. Mostly, participants come with a resolve to make a better life for themselves and their families. This issue highlights the stories of several courageous adult learners, like Mu Lei, a refugee; Candice Turnipseed, who left a life of crime and drug abuse; and Charles Williams, who overcame learning disabilities. Whether learners work with volunteer tutors like the Spotlight on Service winners or at their workplace, these individuals are making better lives for themselves through hard work, perseverance and hope for a better future.



Jesse White

Jesse White
 Secretary of State & State Librarian

A.J. Antunes equips workers with language skills

A.J. Antunes & Co. is an industry leader in food-service equipment, water-filtration systems, and original equipment manufacturer of electronic controls and switches. The company's employees are as diverse as its product lines. A Secretary of State Workplace Skills Enhancement grant is helping to increase the language skills of employees from India, Burma, Vietnam, Mexico, El Salvador and Ukraine.

The company has partnered with the University of Illinois Business Innovation Services to provide ESL classes to employees during work hours. The instructor, Laurel Wade, uses one of their recent vocabulary words to describe the employees at A.J. Antunes: "They are such a conscientious group of employees. They are very eager to learn and to improve their performance." Increasing the written and oral communication skills of its employees will help the company maintain its goal of effective communications to maintain quality standards, while also providing employees opportunities for career advancement.

Loyalty runs deep at this family-owned company. Many employees have years of service here and the company has hired many family members of its dedicated workforce. A.J. Antunes has made an investment in ESL classes since 1996. This year's Workplace Skills Enhancement grant has provided the needed resources for the company and its commitment to continuous improvement.

Benefits to Employers Participating in Workplace programs

- Employees are better able to communicate and contribute.
- Employees have a better understanding of manufacturing practices.
- Improved morale.
- Greater interest in additional training.
- Increased company profitability.
- Enhanced corporate image.
- Reduced error rate.
- Improved capacity of employees to solve problems.
- Higher success rate in promoting and transferring employees from within.
- Lower accident rates.



Adult learners participate in an ESL class at A.J. Antunes through the Workplace Skills Enhancement program.

Tips for setting short-term literacy goals

Setting reasonable, attainable, short-term goals with adult learners is important not only to the success of the learner, but also to a program's retention rates. Establishing short-term goals allows participants to recognize concrete progress. When working with an adult learner, link a short-term goal to the related academic skills. Help the learner understand that writing a grocery list, for instance, includes inventory skills, memory skills and writing skills. Long-term goals such as attaining a GED or landing a job promotion are wonderful, but may be distant. Achieving a short-term goal in three months or less provides the adult learner with a sense of accomplishment.

Following are a few examples of short-term goals. For more tips and ideas on goal setting, see *Lesson 13 – Goal Setting and Lesson Planning* of the Adult Volunteer Tutor Training.

- Write a grocery list.
- Write an e-mail to your tutor.

- Call or write your child's teacher and ask a question.
- Call the doctor's office to make an appointment.
- Read a book to your child.
- Read a newspaper article.
- Complete a job application (real or practice).
- Prepare a recipe from a cookbook.
- Use public transportation (bus or train).
- Attend a library program independently.
- Locate and borrow a book from the library.
- Register to vote.
- Send an e-mail to family/friends in your native country.
- Participate in a parent-teacher conference.
- Assist your child with a homework assignment.
- Go to a cultural institution (museum, park, theatre, zoo).
- Get a driver's license.
- Select a birthday (or other special occasion) card, sign and send it.

Literacy Volunteers Fox Valley addresses short- and long-term goal setting

First and foremost, Literacy Volunteers Fox Valley in St. Charles wants adult learners to set goals to help them read, write, speak and understand English more effectively so they achieve self-growth. Tutors tailor lessons so learners acquire English in the context of their lives. As they progress, they become more productive workers, more effective parents and engaged community members.

Assimilation is just as important. Tutors coach adults so they learn how to live successfully in Central Kane County. Key to

this process is the understanding that most residents give back to the community in some way. Caring attitudes are modeled by volunteers and emulated by learners.

Literacy Volunteers Fox Valley recently developed a video that features learners who have found ways to use their skills and abilities to "give back" to the community. The video is available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=kH4hdx3F45Y. For more information, contact Peg Coker, Literacy Volunteers Fox Valley at peg@lvfv.org.

Adult Volunteer Tutor Training

The Literacy Office offers an online Adult Volunteer Tutor Training course, which meets nearly all the tutor-training requirements for Secretary of State-sponsored literacy programs. (Volunteer tutors also must spend face-to-face time with a local program.) The online training is divided into modules on different topics, including Goal Setting and Lesson Planning. You may browse the online training at www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/library/who_we_are/literacy/oltt/home.html. For questions about the training or to access the Trainer's Notes, please contact Beth Paoli at bpaoli@ilsos.net, or Diane Manning at dmanning@ilsos.net.

ILLINOIS ADULT LEARNING HOTLINE

To locate a literacy program or volunteer as a tutor, call 800-321-9511. You also may register at www.thecenterweb.org/alrc/hotline/index.html.

Literacy grant updates

2011 Penny Seaverns Summer Family Literacy Program

- Received 40 applications
- Funded 38 projects
- \$169,668 in grants awarded

More information available at www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/library/who_we_are/literacy/seavernsgrant.html.

FY12 Adult Literacy Grants

- Received 176 applications requesting a total of \$7,140,303.
- Includes 90 Adult Volunteer Literacy projects, 54 Family Literacy projects and 32 Workplace Skills Enhancement projects.
- Award notification to be released upon legislative and gubernatorial state budget approval.

2011 Spotlight on Achievement and Service Awards

Secretary of State Jesse White along with Dennis DeRossett, executive director of the Illinois Press Association (IPA), presented awards to 11 outstanding adult learners and 10 volunteer tutors at the annual Spotlight on Achievement and Service Awards ceremony in May. Adult learner winners received \$200 from the IPA Foundation, a plaque and a personalized *Illinois Blue Book*. Volunteer winners received \$200 for the literacy program where they tutor as well as a plaque and a personalized *Illinois Blue Book*. Following are highlights of some of the winners. All the winners' stories are available at www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/library/who_we_are/literacy/spotlight_awards.html.

Adult learner winner highlights:

Mu Lei, Black Hawk College, Moline — Mu Lei was 10 when Burma erupted in civil war and her village was burned to the ground. Her grandmother grabbed her and they ran for their lives. After living in a refugee camp in Thailand for 12 years she came to the United States. Mu had only finished third grade, but after working with her tutor for a few months, she improved her English so much that she was asked to provide translation services for local social service agencies. She works part-time translating, refusing pay because she is happy to be able to help others. She has set a goal to get her GED in one more year. She also plans to get a job once her young sons are older.

Candace Turnipseed, De La Salle Tolton, Chicago — When Candace found out she was pregnant nine years ago she began to turn her life around. In her first year at the Tolton Center, she suffered the loss of both grandmothers and a brother. With her improved communication skills she was able to help her mom with the funeral arrangements, paperwork and phone calls. Candace is now a responsible 27-year-old woman who takes care of her 8-year-old daughter, four younger sisters, three younger brothers and her mom. She helps the children with their schoolwork, sings in the church choir, helps with the homeless shelter program and reads to other people. Candace passed the GED test in March and plans to continue her studies in Construction and Automotive Engineering.

Charles Williams, The Literacy Council, Rockford — When Charles began working with a tutor, he had just dropped out of a remedial reading course, was defeated and unsure where to go next. He had given up hope of ever being a reader. After working with his tutor, he began reading every chance he got, writing down the words that he didn't know, and became more proficient every week. When Charles heard about a job opening at his workplace, he had the confidence to apply for the promotion. Instead of playing pool with fellow employees during his breaks, he spent his breaks reading and writing. His hard work paid off and he got the promotion. He now plans to enroll in college and work toward a bachelor's degree in electronic engineering.

Volunteer tutor winner highlights:

Janet King, The Literacy Council, Rockford — Janet began as a tutor in 1994 with The Literacy Council after hearing a radio ad asking for volunteers to help adults learn to read. She always wanted to teach but she only had a GED. She decided to try volunteer tutoring and fell in love with the teaching process. Her first student was challenging, but she learned that she had the patience necessary to work with an adult

(continued on page 4)



2011 Spotlight on Achievement Winners — Standing left to right: Dennis DeRossett, executive director, IPA; Joanne Corwin (accepting for Willie Davis, De La Salle/Tolton Center, Chicago); Charles Williams, The Literacy Council, Rockford; Edward Whitt, Frontier Community College, Fairfield; Jacki Sprinkle (accepting for Lucia Virrueta, Instituto del Progreso Latino, Chicago); Carla Terry, YWCA Pekin; Secretary of State Jesse White. Seated left to right: Candace Turnipseed, De La Salle/Tolton Center, Chicago; Shellie Higley, Sauk Valley Community College, Dixon; Mu Lei, Black Hawk College, Moline; Mylan Nguyen, Township High School Dist. #214 Community Education, Arlington Heights; Eric Shenarult, Prairie State College, Chicago Heights.



2011 Spotlight on Service Winners — Standing left to right: Dennis DeRossett, executive director, IPA; Michael Murcia, Instituto del Progreso Latino, Chicago; Julie Hummert, Kaskaskia College, Centralia; Janet Wigodner, Waukegan Public Library; Dottie Gibson (accepting for Dan Weakley, Project U.P.W.A.R.D., Peoria); Secretary of State Jesse White. Seated left to right: Reta Strecker, Sisters of St. Joseph, LaGrange Park; Janet King, The Literacy Council, Rockford; Eunice Golden, Frontier Community College, Fairfield; Margaret Cribben, De La Salle/Tolton Center, Chicago.



2011 Spotlight Awards (continued from page 3)

with hearing and speech impairments. Janet's tutoring experiences compelled her to go back to school at age 40 and get a bachelor's degree in general studies specific to literacy in the community. She continues to volunteer as a tutor and has started her own business called "Back to Basics Tutoring."

Reta Strecker, Congregation of St. Joseph School on Wheels, LaGrange Park — Reta was a retired teacher who loved and missed teaching. When she read an ad about the School on Wheels literacy program, she thought that tutoring might fill that void. Five years ago she began with her first student, a woman with three young daughters. The learner was nervous about trying to speak English, but she learned quickly. After their first class, Reta loaned her children's books from the School on Wheels library. Because of the program, the learner has been able to instill a love of reading in her children. Reta's students are always very appreciative and receptive to her teaching style.

Michael Murcia, Instituto del Progreso Latino, Chicago — Michael came to the United States from Colombia as a teenager with his mother. He spent years studying English and went through the difficult but rewarding process of becoming a U.S. citizen. He joined the army shortly after high school, where he served as a medic for five years. He currently is a full-time college student working toward his goal of becoming a doctor. He learned that Instituto needed volunteers to assist with citizenship education, and because he had just gone through the process, he wanted to help others achieve this goal. The four adults Michael is currently working with are progressing quickly and respond very well to his teaching methods.

National statistics on literacy in the workplace

- In 2009, there were 24 million members of the labor force – more than one in seven – who were foreign born.
- Small- and medium-sized firms report 35% of the hourly workers – more than 10 million employees – have basic skills and language problems that impair work performance.
- 30 percent of manufacturers report they cannot reorganize work activities because employees are not able to learn new jobs.
- American businesses estimate losing \$60 billion per year due to literacy and language obstacles.

ON THE HORIZON

September 8 — International Literacy Day, www.reading.org (click Meetings and Events)

September 26-28 — Sharing a Vision Conference, Springfield, <http://sharingavision.org>

October 12 — Central IL Adult Education Service Center Fall Conference, East Peoria, www.cait.org/ciaesc/conference/index.jsp

October 18-20 — Illinois Library Association Annual Conference, Rosemont, www.ila.org

October 26-28 — Southern IL Professional Development Center Fall Conference, Fairview Heights, www.siu.edu/SIPDC

October 30 – November 4 — American Association for Adult and Continuing Education Conference, Indianapolis, www.aaace.org

November 7-8 — National Refugee & Immigrant Conference, Chicago, www.thecenterweb.org/alrc/refugee.html

November 9-12 — International Dyslexia Association Conference, Chicago, www.interdys.org

December 2 — Northern Region Adult Education Fall Conference, Bloomingdale, www.thecenterweb.org, click Adult Learning Resource Center

More literacy event information is available at www.cyberdriveillinois.com (click Programs, Literacy, Calendar of Literacy Events).

Illinois Literacy is a publication of the Secretary of State/Illinois State Library Literacy Office. Jesse White, Secretary of State and State Librarian
Anne Craig, Director, Illinois State Library • Cyndy Colletti, Program Manager, Literacy Office

To subscribe to *Illinois Literacy*, call 217-785-6921 or 800-665-5576 (Illinois only), #3.

WWW



lincs.ed.gov/lincs/resourcecollections/Workforce

The Workforce Competitiveness Resource Collection includes resources applicable to workforce basic skills education, English language acquisition and/or technology. Check out "What You Don't Know Can Hurt You: Literacy's Impact on Workplace Health and Safety."

www.gcflearnfree.org/everydaylife

Interactive lessons that provide practice in performing everyday tasks, including using an ATM, paying bills, counting change, measuring recipe ingredients, reading maps and much more.

www.proliteracy.org/NetCommunity/Document.Doc?id=40

ProLiteracy partnered with Verizon Communications in producing *Workforce Literacy: Equipping Your Workforce for the 21st Century*. The 16-page booklet makes the case for investing in workers' basic education and outlines how basic education planning and provisions can pay off for companies.