

Jesse White
Secretary of State
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Adult literacy benefits many aspects of a person's life. Personal lives benefit, as is evident in Erie House's program where Spanish-speaking learners teach Spanish to their English-speaking tutors. As you read about the Chicago Citywide Literacy Coalition's successful Career Opportunities Fair, you'll see how adult literacy positively affects people's professional lives. Adult literacy also helps families as highlighted in the 2007 Penny Severns Summer Family Literacy projects. All these programs are a testament to the power of literacy.



This issue marks the retirement of a valued Literacy Office employee who has given her talents to the adult literacy field for many years. We are going to miss Myra Johnson's passion, knowledge and experience in literacy. I thank Myra for her steadfast commitment to literacy in Illinois and wish her well in her retirement.

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Longtime literacy advocate retires

Myra Johnson, a Family and Adult Literacy consultant with the Illinois State Library's Literacy Office, retired in December. Myra has spent many years in the literacy field throughout Chicago, including a stint as executive director of Literacy Chicago. She worked in the Literacy Office as a consultant before joining the office full time in 1998.



Asked how she became involved in literacy, Myra says, "I saw an ad for the Literacy Council of Columbus, Ohio, while visiting and thought we must have one in Chicago, so I called up and became a volunteer tutor in 1982. I had no idea we had adults who couldn't read or write. I thought I'd be helping high school students write better paragraphs. What an awakening!"

Her fondest memories are seeing the look on her students' faces when the light bulb goes on and their whole expression is saying, "Oh, my goodness! I get it! I can do this!" We extend our best wishes to Myra for good health and a happy retirement.

Language Exchange Program

Erie Neighborhood House in Chicago created the Language Exchange Program so Spanish-speaking adult learners could teach Spanish to English-speaking volunteer tutors.

The adult learners learn how to teach Spanish from an instructor with the Dominican University. Learners are given a copy of *Curriculum ¡En Español!*, by Harcourt Brace and Associates, Levels 1, 2 and 3, and taught how to use the book, movies, transparencies, tapes and other materials to teach Spanish to their tutors. Adult learners and tutors are matched according to their ESL levels and scheduled for a minimum of three hours a week for eight weeks. A volunteer tutor and adult learner work half the time in English and half the time in Spanish. Adult learners also teach the techniques to peers who reach the advanced ESL level.

This cycle of teaching helps Erie House maintain a cooperative team of adult learners and volunteer tutors. The program promotes leadership, social justice and a greater level of empathy among all participants as they discover the challenges of learning a new language.

For more information, please contact Susana Ortiz at 312-432-2257.

Career Opportunities Fair in Chicago

The Chicago Citywide Coalition sponsored a Career Opportunities Fair in October at Allison United Foundation. Area adult literacy provider agencies, including The Learning Center/House of Connections, De La Salle Tolton Center, Erie Neighborhood House, Literacy Chicago, Alpha Temple and Blue Gargoyle, to name a few, brought hundreds of adult learners to the event.

Adults learned about résumé preparation and then prepared their own résumés with the help of a typist. They also talked to representatives from various training programs and explored career options. A room full of clothing for job interviews also was available. The Coalition hopes to make the Career Fair an annual event.



June Porter of Literacy Chicago provides assistance to an adult learner at the Career Opportunities Fair.

Penny Severns Summer Family Literacy — 2007

For nine years, grants have been awarded for the Penny Severns Summer Family Literacy program through the State Library Literacy Office. This unique literacy effort promotes learning during the summer months, and offers parents and children opportunities to participate in field trips and other educational activities together. Fifty-three projects served 1,787 adults and 3,040 children in summer 2007. Following are highlights:

Kishwaukee College, Malta —

The Families In Summer Having Enjoyable Reading (FISHER) project included a traveling van that went to all class sites and to local churches after a Spanish church service or mass. The van was filled with art activities and games as well as books and goodie bags for families to take home. Family activities included English and Spanish readings of either *Rainbow Fish* or *Swimmy* and art projects. Children played with a parachute, aquatic-themed animals and fish beach balls.



A family works on an art project at the FISHER program at Kishwaukee College.

Peoria Citizens Committee For Economic Opportunity Early Head Start Program —

During a trip to the Lakeview Science Center, families explored the discovery center, watched a planetarium show and had a picnic lunch. Parents took pictures with disposable cameras. The photos were developed, put on disk and used later in PowerPoint presentations. The grant also provided books for the families to take home.



Children who read 10 books during the PCCEO summer program got to choose a new book to take home.

Frank Bertetti Benld Public Library, Benld —

Parents used a Klutz "Build A Book" kit consisting of a wire-bound book, foam pieces, wig-gly eyes and a glue stick to write and illustrate a story for their child. Creating the books helped parents build their vocabulary and writing skills as well as their self-confidence. The parents were very excited about writing their books and sharing them with their children.

El Instituto del Progreso Latino, Chicago —

Parents and children made posters with the theme "What I Want to be When I am Big." The children expressed themselves in either English or Spanish. They cut out images of their future careers and added them to the poster. They drew another picture of themselves in the future doing their jobs when they were big. PACT facilitators photographed each family and put the photos on the posters. The adult learners then wrote a paragraph about their families in English and added it to their posters.

Penny Severns Summer Family Literacy — 2007 (continued)

Kaskaskia College-Germantown —

Parents were given disposable cameras to take pictures during field trips. The pictures were processed and given back to the families along with photo albums, which were updated after each field trip. With the grant theme of "On the Road Again," families enjoyed a field trip to DuBois Center, a wooded camping area in rural Illinois. Families explored different modes of travel, and learned about boating safety while taking a pontoon boat ride to the rustic camp area, where many adults and children enjoyed horseback riding.



Families from Kaskaskia College-Germantown enjoyed a boat ride at DuBois Center.

Jane Addams Hull House Association, Chicago —

After reading *The Subway Mouse*, an animal-themed scavenger hunt was organized to go along with the week's theme of animals. Animal facts were hidden throughout the school, which corresponded with questions on the families' answer sheets. The families worked together to solve the clues and find the animal facts. Literacy staff members were available throughout the school to help the families with hints when needed.



A mom from the Pui Tak Center shows the boat her family made using recyclable materials.

Pui Tak Center, Chicago — A field trip to the Park District's 31st Street Beach along Lake Michigan was an opportunity for families to learn about boats and the environment. Prior to the field trip, parents and children worked together to design a boat using recyclable materials, and a contest was held for the most creative and most durable boats. Each boat underwent a wind and turbulence test. The beach was closed to swimming that day due to high E-coli levels, so the instructors used the opportunity to talk about water pollution and protecting the environment.



Families read together at the Joliet Public Library's Lapsit summer program.

Joliet Public Library, Joliet — Grant funds were used to expand services for infants and children up to age 3. The library purchased materials to add a hands-on exploration component to the Lapsit program, as well as bilingual board books and other bilingual materials for families. As a result of its success, the Lapsit playgroup



"Nitro Joe" shows a child how to use a hovercraft at the Herrin City Library.

became a permanent library program. Families also participated in a special "Wing" program presented by DuPage Children's Museum staff, where they learned about symmetry and created wings, which were put on display at the museum.

Herrin City Library, Herrin — "Nitro Joe" made science come alive while exploring the principals of air with young people. Demonstrations included trying to separate two suction cups with the air removed, adding air to a wooden disk lined with plastic to create a rideable hovercraft, and releasing air in a tube filled with confetti. Families read about Otto Von Guericke's vacuum experiment performed for the Keiser in Magdeburg, Germany, using his specially designed devices. They also learned that Englishman Christopher Cockerell invented the first hovercraft in 1956.

For more information about the Penny Severns Summer Family Literacy grant program, visit literacy.kent.edu/illinois/grantinfo.htm. To be notified about future grant applications, please e-mail jhughes@ilsos.net or dmanning@ilsos.net.

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Feb. 29 – March 1 — Illinois Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages Convention, Naperville, www.itbe.org

March 5-7 — 29th Statewide Conference of the Illinois Adult & Continuing Educators Association, Springfield, www.iacea.net

March 30 – April 1 — National Conference on Family Literacy, Louisville, KY, www.famlit.org, 1-877-FAMLIT-1

April 27 – May 3 — National Volunteer Week, www.pointsoflight.org

April 28 – May 1 — Commission on Adult Basic Education National Conference, St. Louis, MO, www.coabe.org

More literacy event information is available at <http://literacy.kent.edu/illinois/calend.htm>.

WWW



www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/fine/resources/storybook

Harvard Family Research Project designed a storybook, *Tomasito's Mother Comes to School/La Mama de Tomasito Visita La Escuela*, with vibrant illustrations about a bilingual family's involvement in school, which can be read online or downloaded and printed free.

www.famlit.org

The Celebrate Literacy calendar provides suggestions for fun activities to do with children throughout the year.

abeflorida.org/resources.html

An extensive list of practical lessons for English learners of all ability levels.

STATISTICS

Adult Volunteer Literacy FY07

- 23,569Adult learners served
- 36.5Average adult learner age
- 47%Adult learners employed
- 54%Adult learners studying ESL
- 8,640 ...Volunteers serving adult learners
- 45Average adult volunteer age

Family Literacy FY07

- 1,331Adults served
- 89%Female
- 79%Adults studying ESL
- 30Average adult learner age
- 87%Obtained a library card
- 1,977Children served
- 48%Female
- 4Average child age

Workplace Skills Enhancement FY07

- 1,736 ...Employees assessed and/or instructed
- 50%Female
- 37.9Average employee age
- 91%Employees studying ESL

For more statistical information, visit <http://literacy.kent.edu/illinois/factstat.htm>.