



VOCAL NEWS

Literacy Volunteers of Illinois



End of the Year Celebration



Board Members: Dorothy Miaso, Blake Dunphy, John McLeod, Chamala Jordan, and Neisha McNeal



VOCAL member: Miriam Perez

On August 23rd, members from the 2018-2019 VOCAL AmeriCorps program as well as site supervisors and LVI staff gathered at Su Casa in River North to celebrate and commemorate the end of the year. This was the last LVI sponsored event where members would be all together. It was especially a great opportunity for members to ensure they could stay in touch with one another after the service year was over.

The afternoon started with lunch centered around a couple different Mexican dishes and even included vegetarian friendly options. Members were able to talk with one another over food and drinks about the past year and the one to come. Members across different host sites shared their highs and lows in a more relaxed environment than past quarterly member meetings with not only members alike but LVI staff, board members, and even some host site supervisors. It was easy to see from conversations that members had great years and stories to accompany these great years. Members were particularly excited to see Gabe, the member coordinator, after a medical leave. It was a great chance for members to reconnect with Gabe as well as for Gabe to reach out to members after his absence.

Members, staff, and site supervisors moved to a private room after the lunch part of the program. The awards presentation started off with a few words from LVI executive director, Dorothy Miaso, where she recapped a successful year for the program from onboarding to retaining members. She thanked members for their dedication throughout the year as well as thanking host sites for their support.

Members were able to see a Year in Review slideshow that highlighted individual members and events from the 2018-2019 service year. Members enjoyed providing their own takes on memories from the year. The slideshow spanned from the first member event, the march to the capitol in Springfield, to the end of the year celebration in Kewanee and the most recent White Sox game.

After the slideshow presentation, members were presented with their certificates of completion and a parting gift by LVI president Blake Dunphy and treasurer John McLeod. The awards presentation was followed by some speeches from board members. The board members told members how grateful they were for their year of service, the necessity of volunteering beyond their year of service, and keeping the volunteering mindset. Members were also able to hear from their host site supervisors who were grateful for their dedication to their individual host sites. It was a great way to officially end the year.



LVI STAFF

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BOARD MEMBERS

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Volunteers Make the Difference



LVI Executive Director and ICOVA conference chair, Dorothy Miaso, giving the opening remarks at the ICOVA Conference



Jenee Meyers, Chief Executive Officer of Chicago Cares, giving the Keynote Speech at the beginning of the day.

This year's Illinois Conference on Volunteer Administration, ICOVA, took place on Friday, August 9th. This conference, which is co-sponsored by the Corporation for National and Community Service and Serve Illinois, took place in the Metcalfe Federal Building in downtown Chicago. The one-day event centered around the theme: Volunteers Make the Difference. Given this theme, the keynote speaker for the conference was Jenee Meyer from Chicago Cares. Jenee is a lifelong volunteer and is now the Chief Executive Officer of Chicago Cares. Workshop presenters came from a wide array of volunteer-led organizations from the Medical Reserve Corps to the Shedd Aquarium. Not only were the presenters themselves diverse but so were their sessions. Workshop topics ranged from connecting with your volunteers to turning volunteers into leaders at your organization. The workshops received very favorable reviews from attendees praising the insight they were given to the group activity style of workshops.

The organization gave attendees an opportunity to network with one another. VOCAL*AmeriCorps members were even able to participate in the conference as attendees; members from Anixter Center and the Literacy Volunteers of Illinois office. LVI staff members from the Jump Start programs in the IYC-St. Charles, IYC-Chicago, and IYC-Warrenville were also able to attend the conference this year. It was great to see LVI represented among so many organizations at this year's ICOVA Conference. Attendees are already looking forward to next year's conference. Make sure to mark your calendars for next year's conference on Friday, August 14th, 2020.

Annual Tailgate and White Sox Game



IYC-Chicago members and staff

One of the last Literacy Volunteers of Illinois' events saw members come together to celebrate their year of service at the annual White Sox Game and Tailgate on August 1st. This would be one of the last times members would come together, members far and wide. Not only were members from nearby host sites able to join LVI for tailgating and the game but members from Kewanee also took part in the fun.

The day started with LVI based members and staff arriving Guaranteed Rate Field early to secure a space in the soon to be filled parking lot. Literacy Volunteers had a wide array of classic tailgating foods from brats to veggie burgers to accommodate vegetarians in the group. LVI members and staff along with friends and family members started to arrive around midday to tailgate before heading into the game. The game and tailgate proved to be the perfect place to celebrate one of LVI's member's birthday. Patricia McClendon from Anixter Center celebrated her birthday among fellow members and family. Not only was the annual game specially

marked by a birthday but it was also the first baseball game for some members.

After some tailgating, members headed into the game where the Chicago White Sox would play the New York Mets. Despite it being a loss for the Chicago White Sox that afternoon, it was a big win for the LVI group. LVI members were able to spend some time with members before ending their year. It was a great way to spend a summer afternoon out of the office. Members stayed until the very end enjoying the game and company of some members whom they would see for the last time. This was a much anticipated event and definitely lived up to the anticipation of members, a home run.



Board Members, Blake Dunphy and Chamala Jordan, at the pregame tailgate.



VOCAL*AmeriCorps Members from Kewanee and Waukegan Public Library.

Member Spotlights



Caitlyn Cameron is a second term VOCAL *AmeriCorps member serving in Kewanee, Illinois. She serves at the YMCA of Kewanee as a Program Assistant. This is her first full time term, having completed a part time term last year.

Kaitlyn received her associates degree from Carl Sandburg College in Galesburg and went on to pursue her bachelors degree in Recreation from Western Illinois University. While at Western, she heard about the AmeriCorps program from a classmate and decided to pursue it.

In her current role, Kaitlyn holds multiple positions at the “Y” from being a leader in afterschool programs to being an instructor at the tumbling center. She says her duties have remained fairly consistent from her previous service year to her current service year. Kaitlyn believes the challenges and rewards of her role are pretty intertwined. She says working with after school program can be quite when there are students who have trouble following the rules. And yet, she says being able to help them work

through a difficult time is very rewarding.

After her current service year, Kaitlyn plans on pursuing a third term at her current site. Outside of AmeriCorps, Kaitlyn enjoys spending time at a church camp where she served as a camp counselor growing up. She also loves traveling and is particularly fond of Romania, having been there three times.



The Sunshine Community Services Center (SCSC) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that provides a variety of educational programming and other support services to children and families in the west central Illinois city of Kewanee. The SCSC is the sponsor of the Step Ladder Tutoring Program which operates in the city’s Middle Schools and through its CAPE-E (Communities Advancing Potential through Education and Empowerment) program, which is a collaboration with LVI, serves as a volunteer connector

for various community agencies in the city of Kewanee. As part of its CAPE-E program, SCSC has nine AmeriCorps members serving in educational and empowerment capacities in the Step Ladder Tutoring Program, Salvation Army, YMCA and Abilities Plus, which is an agency service individuals with disabilities. A small but mighty force, the SCSC earned for Kewanee a Governor’s Hometown Award in 2017.



Kayla Thomas is a first term VOCAL *AmeriCorps member at a Kewanee host site and is even originally from Kewanee. She serves at the Salvation Army. Kayla holds many roles at her host site from running the cash register, recycling clothing to socializing with the public.

Kayla has found her service year has been packed with activities and duties and often finds the challenging aspect of her role to be the large amount of work. However, despite this challenge, she says she has enjoyed her service year because of the people with whom she has been able to work. Kayla notes she has a boss to whom she can say anything.

After her current service year, Kayla plans on renewing her service for another year with the Salvation Army. Outside of AmeriCorps enjoys recreational activities: watch Netflix, go shopping, go bowling, and hanging out with friends.



ANNUAL SCRABBLE FOR
LITERACY CHALLENGE
SATURDAY
OCTOBER 12TH, 2019
AND
CASINO NIGHT
SATURDAY
NOVEMBER 3RD, 2019

★HAPPY★
BIRTHDAY!

August

Patricia McClendon - 08/01

William Meister - 08/22

Colin Herzog - 08/27

Soledad Estrada - 8/29

LVI's SOCIAL NETWORKS



@literacyvolunteersofillinois



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Thank you to our Kewanee Members



Linda Bolls-VOCAL Member
Samantha Culver-VOCAL Member
Maddie Damron-VOCAL Member
Soledad Estrada -VOCAL Member
Angel Luts -VOCAL Member
Mackenzie Mirocha-VOCAL Member
Molly Mirocha-VOCAL Member
Kayla Thomas-VOCAL Member