



VOCAL NEWS



Welcome Americorps Members

On behalf of the board and staff of LVI, I extend a warm welcome to all as we begin this new program year. We are entering our 16th year of the VOCAL* AmeriCorps program and our 22nd year of AmeriCorps programming and are excited to have each of you – member, host site, program supporter – a part of it.

As we begin this new program year we acknowledge and give our thanks and appreciation to the Corporation for National and Community Service for second year renewal of the Competitive three-year grant awarded last year. The competition for the national Competitive “pot of money” is always stiff, so it is a great honor to us to be chosen and a true testament to each and everyone of you for the work being done in your communities by staff, volunteers and past members at all of the sites. We thank also the Serve Illinois Commission for their continuing support and look forward to another dynamic year of “getting things done for America”.

Though we have just entered our third month of the program year - which began September 1st - much has happened and much lies ahead. We have had in the first two months four member orientations in Chicago, Harrisburg and Kewanee, where we welcomed a combined 37 new and renewing members. Had two days of tutor training in our west loop office with our longtime trainer extraordinaire, Filtod Walker, just days before he moved out west to Nevada to become an AmeriCorps member himself. And, along with our Literacenter colleagues Chicago HOPES for Kids went on a road trip to Springfield for Serve Illinois’ annual National Service Recognition Day, where we met up with eight members of

our Kewanee contingency along another 1,000 or so AmeriCorps members from other programs throughout the state. In the first two weeks of November we also had our annual fundraiser – which members both helped with and participated in, and planned for our annual Veteran’s Day Service activities – more on each of those activities to come in our next newsletter.

Still to come – monthly first Friday sessions that are a mix of training sessions and member meetings, Holiday Party, MLK Service Day activities, National AmeriCorps Week, the annual On the Road to Literacy Tutor and Adult Learner Conference, and a host of activities with which members will engage at their host sites. We hope to profile those activities in future newsletters as well.

Thanks for being a part !





LVI STAFF

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Member Coordinator

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IYC-St Charles*

Alex Dunbar
*Program Coordinator
IYC-Chicago*

Larry Durfee
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IYC-Warrenville*

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*Literacy Specialist
IYC-Harrisburg*

Katrina Mioduszewski
*Literacy Specialist
IYC-Chicago*

Carol Taylor
*Literacy Specialist
IYC-Warrenville*

Cheryl Turner
*Literacy Specialist
IYC-Harrisburg*

Timothy White
Program Associate

BOARD MEMBERS

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National Service Opening Day

Wednesday, October 17th was *Opening Day* for AmeriCorps programs in Illinois. Sponsored by the Serve Illinois Commission, which is the state entity charged with leading national service programming in Illinois, the day brought together over 1,000 Illinois AmeriCorps members from some 45-funded programs throughout the state, who took the pledge for a year of service at their respective sites. The event was held at the Bank of Springfield Convention Center in downtown Springfield. As members converged on the state capital, they were greeted at the Convention Center by Illinois' most beloved political figure *Honest Abe*, who participated in many a photo op—as show here with our Kewanee members.



The program kicked off with opening remarks from the Executive Director of Serve Illinois, Scott McFarland, which was followed by a Keynote Speech delivered by a former Public Allies AmeriCorps member, Donald Steplight, who shared a compelling story on his service year and events in his life that guided him to service.

Next up was the march to the Old State Capital that stepped off with a full marching band leading the throng. Once assembled at the historic site where both Abraham Lincoln (1858) and Barack Obama (2007) announced their candidacies for presidency. the members took the AmeriCorps Oath of Office, led by “Abe” committing to—among many other things—*bring Americans together, to strengthen our communities.*

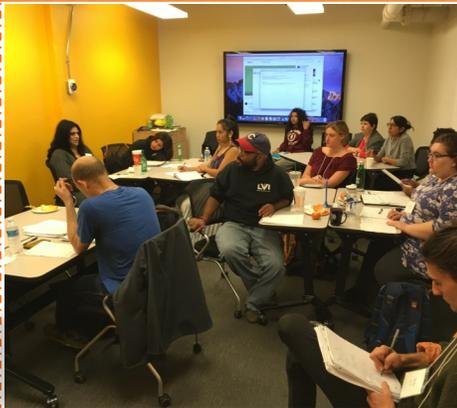
Before calling it a day in our state capital, members were able to participate in a variety of workshops back at the Convention Center presented by representatives of Serve Illinois programs. The



workshops ranged from Grant Writing to Yoga and everything else in-between. Each workshop was meant to inform members on possibilities during and after their service, preparing them for life with AmeriCorps and life after.

At the end of the day, VOCAL members left invigorated for their year of service, getting to feel like they were part of something bigger than just their host site. Members got to connect with the AmeriCorps community at large and on the bus trip down and back built relationships with their fellow LVI VOCAL AmeriCorps members.

Member Perspective



Two months into our year of service and LVI VOCAL AmeriCorp members already have an orientation and two trainings under their belt. It is true what LVI Executive Director, Dorothy Miaso, said at orientation that members would start their year of service running. Luckily, these orientations and trainings have given us great tools to tackle some of the issues we may already be facing or have yet to face.

During the two member orientations, members and LVI staff had a chance to interact with each other ahead of an intense year to come. LVI Members were not only introduced to each other but also to the Member Handbook: learning the do's, don't's, and must's of AmeriCorps service. LVI's Executive Director, Dorothy Miaso, gave members a presentation on the history of National Service and an introduction into the world of adult education. Her presentation was followed by Member Coordinator, Gabriel Perez, who led discussion on the expectations for the year.

Following the September 14th orientation, members met again on two consecutive Fridays – September 21st & 28th – for twelve-hours of tutor training to try to learn as much as we possibly could so that we could bring new skills and tools to our respective host sites. The 2018/2019 members were lucky enough to be Filtod Walker's last class before he headed out west. Filtod was able to impart some great tactics and theory from his 20 years of experience in the adult education field. Members learned how to best engage their students using proven methods while also being informed on the challenges some of their students may be facing.

Members were not only able to learn from Dorothy Miaso, Gabriel Perez, and Filtod Walker but ultimately learned from each other. This spirit of community learning is a precedent that LVI members will certainly continue to foster.



- Maria Alvarez, Literacy Volunteers of Illinois

2018/2019

VOCAL AmeriCorps Members

- Maria Alvarez, Literacy Volunteers of Illinois
- Linda Bolls, Abilities Plus - Kewanee
- Kaitlyn Cameron, YMCA Kewanee
- Loretta Coleman, Literacy Chicago
- Maddie Damron, YMCA Kewanee
- Emily Erland, World Relief Chicago
- Soledad Estrada, Sunshine Community Services Center, Kewanee
- Cecilia Garcia, Centro Sin Fronteras
- Colin Herzog, Chinese Mutual Aid
- Teresa Imhoff, LVI at IYC-Harrisburg
- Tonya Jones Watkins, D & H Literacy
- Diva Jordan, Centro Sin Fronteras
- Galina Khartulari, Waubensee Community College
- Olivia Landon, Instituto del Progreso Latino
- Amelia Lerch, Centro Sin Fronteras
- William Leslie, Centro Romero
- Aurora Lucas, Instituto del Progreso Latino
- Angel Lutz, Salvation Army Kewanee
- Patricia McClendon, Anixter Center
- Willie Meister, Association House
- Katrina Mioduszewski, LVI @ IYC-Chicago
- Mackenzie Mirocha, YMCA Kewanee
- Gabriell Mulder, Literacy Works
- Damian Neiryneck, Sunshine Community Services Center, Kewanee
- Iraida Patino, Centro Romero
- Desun Peoples, Chinese Mutual Aid
- Miriam Perez, Centro Sin Fronteras
- Janet Pilarski, YMCA Kewanee
- Timothy Potts, Chicago Citywide Literacy Coalition
- Alejandro Ramirez, Instituto del Progreso
- Jasmin Reyes, Centro Sin Fronteras
- Carol Taylor, LVI at IYC-Warrenville
- Kayla Thomas, Salvation Army Kewanee
- Esther Tschappler, World Relief DuPage
- Cheryl Turner, LVI @ IYC-Harrisburg
- Zilagi Velasco, Centro Sin Fronteras
- Timothy White, Literacy Volunteers of Illinois

Member Spotlight



Maria Alvarez is from the southwest suburbs of Chicago but moved to Hyde Park four years ago. She attended college at the University of Chicago and has a double major in Romance Languages and Literature and Germanic Studies. Before joining AmeriCorps, Maria was an intern for Folio Literary Management, assisting authors in developing their manuscripts. She joined AmeriCorps because she thought it would be an opportunity to get involved with the nonprofit sector of Chicago and have an impact in neighborhoods across Chicago.

Maria is a first term member serving as a program associate with Literacy Volunteers of Illinois. Her role includes overseeing the development and production of materials for LVI conferences and events, conference planning, and serving as a representative for LVI at various coalition meetings and events. One of the rewards of being in the program is the ability to sit in at LVI board meetings and get to be a part of the planning process for their conferences and events.

After AmeriCorps, Maria will be pursuing a Masters' Degree at Humboldt Universität in Berlin. Maria sees herself remaining in academia, going on to pursue a PhD and eventually teach.

Maria's outside interests are pretty varied. She is a freelance Graphic Designer and translator. She also runs her own online publication, Rogue, with a fellow UChicago student. Maria also loves photography and film and is always looking for people to shoot or new films to watch. She enjoys attending film festivals, her favorite has been seeing the premier of Isle of Dogs at Berlinale Film Festival this past year.



Literacy Volunteers of Illinois (LVI) is a statewide organization committed to developing and supporting volunteer literacy programs that help families, adults, and out-of-school teens increase their literacy skills. LVI is a leader in the national service movement and has, through AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps*VISTA programs, placed over 1,000 national service members in over 150 adult, family literacy, and Head Start programs throughout the state. LVI is also the founder of the Jump Start program which recruits, trains and matches volunteers to serve as tutors and mentors to youth incarcerated in the Illinois Youth Center and those formerly incarcerated.

Timothy White was born and raised on the Southwest side of Chicago in the Brighton Park community. He is now pursuing a Bachelor of Arts degree at Roosevelt University, majoring in Sociology with an interest in social justice, after having received an associate degree at Harold Washington College. Timothy is a veteran having served in the US Marine Corps from 2008-2012. He is a full time student who has held a couple of part time jobs, while going to school.



Timothy joined AmeriCorps to help serve at-risk youth and enjoys being part of a community that wants to make a difference in the world. He is part of LVI's Jump Start: Unbound College Bound program. His tasks are to provide youth within the Illinois Youth Centers (IYC) and those recently released with educational knowledge, success building, financial literacy and life skills. For example, Timothy assists youth with filling out FAFSA forms, scholarship filings, resume building, ACT preparation, life skill assessment, work opportunities, financial/college counseling, and other mentoring aspects. Timothy also does his best to keep in touch with youth he worked with on the "inside" to provide them all these services to help them reach their goals and to be successful on the "outside".

The rewards are being able to help incarcerated youth to succeed and have a future. "I let them know that they have a chance in life and that they can strive to be what they want to be," Timothy says. The challenges of working with the youth is that they are constantly moving to different places, whether they are being released or transferred to other centers. Other challenges are lack of space in the IYC, communication with the staff at the youth center, and long and involved background procedures.

Timothy wants to stay in the field of working with youth who are at risk in communities that suffer from drugs, education, employment, trauma, violence, and more, as either a mentor or part of a restorative justice facilitation. Timothy enjoys exercising, sports, music, and art.

Member Spotlight



Gabi Mulder is from Toledo, Ohio, a sister city to Toledo, Spain. She is a graduate of the University of Chicago and holds a double major in Sociology and Gender and Sexuality Studies. After graduation, Gabi worked at the Imagination Station as a reservationist, coordinating field trips and summer camps while also playing a role in visitor services. Gabi says she joined AmeriCorps because she wanted to gain more experience in the nonprofit world, hoping to foster that interest and her own professional development.

Gabi is the program associate at Literacy Works, where she coordinates their professional development and tutor essential trainings. She is also in charge of memberships and overall helps wherever she is needed. One of the rewarding aspects of the work she does with Literacy Works is the people she works with, both the people in her office and those she serves. She finds that one of the challenges is there's always so much to do and not enough time to do it.

Post-AmeriCorps, she plans to go to graduate school and pursue a Masters' Degree in Gender and Sexuality Studies. She also would like to continue her work with nonprofits, and eventually sees herself working at a nonprofit that focuses on issues concerning gender and sexuality.

In her free time, Gabi is a part of a book club and a craft circle and enjoys reading and cross-stitching. She is looking to join a choir in Chicago in the near future. Gabi is also a big fan of the theater and always going to plays, she most recently went to go see About Face's This Bitter Earth.



Literacy Works

Literacy Works is an organization that realizes the importance of speaking English, reading, and writing for daily tasks and long-term goals. Literacy Works helps prepare and train professionals and volunteer tutors for adults with low literacy. Through the network of Literacy Works and their members and partners, they help an estimated 20,000 adult learners annually receive the resources they need to build their skills and reach their goals.

Timothy Potts is from the Austin neighborhood on the West side of Chicago and is in his second year of serving as a VOCAL member with the Chicago Citywide Literacy Coalition (CCLC). He has an extensive background in IT, having dedicated his time before AmeriCorps to Information Technology. During his first term, Timothy was responsible for the founding of CCLC's Digital Literacy Advisory Board (DLAB).

Timothy has always been a community activist in some capacity throughout his life and believed that service with AmeriCorps would be a good way to foster this aspect of his life. He is a program associate with CCLC where he is using his technology and communications skills to empower adult learners he interacts with as well strengthening IT staff skills at his host site.



Timothy says that one of the most rewarding aspects of working at CCLC is working with the adult learners that his site serves. He finds them extremely attentive and open to learning. He finds the challenges to be the vast amount of projects he wants to take on in a limited period of time.

After AmeriCorps, Timothy hopes to continue to work in the adult literacy field, using his technical skills for the benefit of adult learners while pushing the definition of what it means to be literate today.

In his free time, Timothy is a spoken word artist. Apart from his creative practice, he is interested in technology: building, rebuilding, and just experimenting with different programs and computers. When he is not investing his time in technology, Timothy is an avid camper. He loves camping all over but the most interesting place he has camped in was a barnyard.



The Chicago Citywide Literacy Coalition advocates for and develops implementation strategies for improving adult literacy and the adult basic education system via a coordinated effort to: Improve the quality and build the capacity of adult basic education programs; foster an adult education infrastructure that adequately transitions learners into the workforce or post-secondary education; and, promote equitable access to quality education for all ages throughout the city.

Games People Play ... Every Night and Every Day !

It was an early and long day on Saturday, November 3rd, as LVI staged a one-of-a-kind fundraiser featuring three events in one: a nationally-ranked SCRABBLE Tournament, a SCRABBLE for Literacy Challenge and to top it off a Casino Night/ The full day of events took place at the west loop's Literacenter, which is a one-of-its-kind shared space for Chicago-area literacy programs, where LVI is a resident member. LVI staff, board, and VOCAL members along with several Project MORE AmeriCorps members from UIC, arrived early in the morning and then throughout the day to prepare for as well as stage the events of the day; the help was invaluable and helped to guarantee the success of the trio of events.

Activities kicked off at 9:00 am, with members of the North American SCRABBLE Players Association (NASPA) arriving for their ranked 7-game tournament, with five divisions of players. At 3:00 pm, a second group of SCRABBLE aficionados began arriving for the serious, but not too intense two-game SCRABBLE Challenge which had randomly paired players competing for cash and other prizes. On hand to help challengers become the Champ of the day, was the 1998 USA and 2001 World SCRABBLE Champion, Brian Cappalletto, who for a small donation provided "Ask an Expert" assistance, to all who sought it. During a 30-minute break brave players had the opportunity to challenge Brian one-in-one in a single-turn *Beat the Champ* competition, with one of the challengers succeeding. Also offered during the break were food and refreshments along with Word Play, which had attendees finding as many words as they could in the scrambled letters of—A B E E L N R . There are 43 acceptable words—how many can you find ?



While guests on the upstairs level of the Literacenter were in search of a perfect seven-letter word for a bingo, preparations for the Casino Night were in full swing in the lower level with playing tables, raffle prizes, and silent auction items being set-up to welcome a full house of attendees for the evening's festivities. At 7:30 pm it happened, with Casino and SCRABBLE players alike filing down to the transformed Lit Lounge where all were able to gamble for a good cause, hedge their bets on raffle prizes—totaling over \$5,000—or guarantee that they walked away with a prize by bidding on a silent auction item. They also had food and drink throughout

the night, which is always a winning combination. The Black Jack tables seemed to draw the most interest but poker, roulette and the craps tables drew their share of players as well. As the day drew to an end, SCRABBLE and Casino players alike were buzzing about the fun of the day & night with all agreeing that they are looking forward to next year.

All in all, it was a great day thanks to the many donors who provided items for the raffle and silent auction and food and beverages. A bonus of the day was the extra hour we gained, as fell back from daylight saving time.

A big "thank you" to everyone who played a role in the event be it as a donor, player and/or volunteer – it could not have been done without you! A very special "thank you" to the Chicago Literacy Alliance, the "landlord" of the Literacenter, for allowing us to host our event in this one-of-a-kind space that we are very proudly to be a part of.



For more pictures, and a list of our contributors go to—www.lvillinois.org

Upcoming Dates

Thursday, December 7th

1:00 pm—5:00 pm
Roombinson Crusoe

5:30 pm—7:30 pm
Holiday Party

Exchequer Pub and Restaurant
226 S. Wabash

Friday, December 8th

9:00 am—4:30 pm
Quarterly Member Meeting
Island of Dr. MoRoom

Friday, January 5, 2018

9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Member Training
Swiss Family Roombinson

Monday, January 21st

A Day On—Not Off
Multiple Service Locations

Literacy Works Training

Tuesday, December 11th, 2018

*I Can Read It, But I Don't Understand It -
Building Reading Comprehension*

6:00 pm – 8:30 pm
Literacy Works @ Literacenter

LVI's SOCIAL NETWORKS



www.Twitter.com/LVillinois

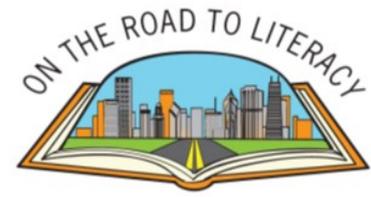


Visit www.Facebook.com/lvillinois and
click the "like" button.

Links to both social media are also on the
LVI homepage.

Mark Your Calendars !

28th Annual



Saturday, March 23rd
9:00 AM-3:00 PM

**27th Annual Tutor and Adult Learner Conference
And Awards Presentation**

UIC Center for Literacy
1040 W. Harrison
Chicago, IL

★ **HAPPY** ★
BIRTHDAY!

Damian Neurnynck 11/30

Belated Wishes !

September

Loretta Coleman 9/4

Linda Bolls 9/17

Temothy Potts 9/17

Diva Jordan 9/19

Desun Peoples 9/25

Janet Pilarki 9/28

October

Katrina Mioduszewski 10/13

Miriam Perez 10/21

Iraida Patino 10/27

November

Kaitlyn Cameron 11/10

William Leslie 11/12