

Summer
2020



JUMP START

Eye on IYC



New Model for IDJJ

On August 1st, Governor Pritzker along with IDJJ Director Heidi Mueller and other state officials announced a new plan for youth in the Department's care - the 21st Century Illinois Transformation Model which focuses on reducing the harm of incarceration. At the heart of the Model is transitioning youth to small, regional residential centers, investing significantly in community wraparound support and intervention services and increasing financial support for victim services in communities that are disproportionately impacted by violence.

The new model will be created in three phases.

Phase I, slated to start this year, marks the beginning of increased community investment in wraparound support, intervention services, and reentry programs for justice-involved youth. Additional investments are planned for victim services in communities that are disproportionately impacted by violence and disinvestment.

Phases II & III, scheduled to begin next year, will continue the regional reinvestments and start the process of transferring DJJ's larger facilities to the Illinois Department of Corrections.

Currently there five Illinois Youth Centers. Three are located in northern Illinois – Chicago, St. Charles, and Warrenville. Two are in southern Illinois – Harrisburg and Grafton (Pere Marquette). None are in central Illinois, where the Department estimates 40% of the youth committed to their care are from.

Future facilities under the new model are to be small regional residential centers that will be restorative, and developmentally appropriate for youth while allowing them to be housed in the region they are from. The Department estimates that currently 15% of youth have easy access to frequent family visits; under the new model they estimate that 75% will.

The new facilities will have a capacity of 30-40 youth housed in dorm-like settings that are to be bright, safe, calming, child-centered and welcoming.

We'll provide you with updates as they become available.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Heidi Mueller'.

What have you been up to during COVID?



Gloria Hill (IYC-STC) with Chester the Rescue Dog, in Sandwich, IL



Teresa Urfer (IYC-WRV) first time kayaking!



Cindy Jerger (IYC-STC) has been gardening



Volunteer Spotlight

Jerry Bernardi

Jerry Bernardi is a Network Engineering Specialist in Telecommunications with a desire to help others reach their potential. He holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Electrical Engineering from the University of Illinois, Urbana- Champaign. He has been tutoring at the Illinois Youth Center in St. Charles since 2016. He loves working one-on-one with the students – to help them understand, practice, and independently apply new skills – ultimately making the complicated look simple.

In 2019 Jerry went on a service trip to Costa Rica with a church group. The purpose was to assist a small church in San Jose with the expansion of their building. Not much larger than Melissa's office at IYC-STC, with a small upper room for children's activities, this church aspired to expand their entire second floor. This required a new roof, flooring, walls, electrical, windows, and siding - all on a very limited budget. The service team worked four straight days - preparing roof/floor supports, (a lot of) painting, and rebuilding children's desks from leftover materials.



Jerry and his wife Corline live in Streamwood with their two cats. He enjoys spending time as a musician – playing drums in a local rock ‘n roll band – and taking walks around the neighborhood with Corline. He also volunteers as a Building Operations Engineer at his church in South Barrington.

What Is Juneteenth ?

June 19, 1865, or Juneteenth, marks the day all slaves learned they were free. Although President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, which is the date most people believe slavery ended, it wasn't until 2 years later that Union soldiers marched into Galveston, Texas and announced the end of the Civil War and slavery, to the remaining slaves.

Juneteenth has been celebrated by Black Americans since the late 1800's but has more recently become a nationally celebrated and discussed date commemorating the end of slavery. At first, the day would be spent praying and bringing families together. Some men and women who had been enslaved would make annual pilgrimages back to Galveston. Though not a national holiday, 47 states and the District of Columbia recognize Juneteenth as a state or ceremonial holiday. The only three states that do not recognize the day are North Dakota, South Dakota and Hawaii. Texas was the first state to recognize it as a holiday in 1980.



This year, Juneteenth carried a deeper meaning. It is difficult to celebrate freedom in a country where Black lives continue to be lost to police brutality and are disproportionately affected by inadequate access to medical treatment during COVID. There is a lot more work to do and this year as we celebrate the progress our country has made, we cannot forget that there is still much more to be done.

- Katrina Mioduszewski, AmeriCorps Member



from the Centers ...

COVID Strikes Again

IYC-St. Charles has had its ups and downs this summer, due to COVID-19. After a long hiatus during the spring, volunteers were able to return to the Center and resume tutoring in June, but there was an uptick in coronavirus cases in July among youth and staff and volunteer programs were again put on hold. The school at the Center has been completely closed for the past several weeks, but IDJJ and Center officials hopes to re-open mid-August. Volunteers will most likely not be allowed to go in until sometime after that date – so remote tutoring is once again being explored. A challenge in making that work is that while being tutored each student must have access to a computer that has both a camera and a microphone, which most computers in the Center do not have, and the student must be supervised. Top that off with physical distancing and there are indeed challenges to making remote tutoring work !



Because family visitation has been suspended along with the school being closed, the youth have lots of time on their hands. As a result, Mr. Lloyd the Leisure Time Supervisor, is looking for donations of games, puzzles, and art supplies. In particular donations of drawing paper, blank greeting cards, journals (black and white composition notebooks) and colored pencils would be appreciated. Certain things are not allowed, such as games with pretend money, glass minute timers, pencils with metal strips by the eraser, and anything that could easily be used as – or fashioned into - a weapon. Puzzles should contain 300 pieces or less. Mr. Lloyd is also looking for donations of gift cards for Walmart (for purchasing supplies) or for fast food restaurants (so they can bring in special meals for the kids). Donations can be dropped off at my hone (I am in St. Charles), to minimize the number of people going to the Center. We've already received some terrific donations, and a big thank you to those who have already donated ! If you would like any further information or if you would like to make a donation, give ne a call at 630/338-2519.

- *Melissa Auer, Program Director*

Applied Learning Put to the Test

A peaceful protest was held by the youth at **IYC Chicago** as part of learning about the Black Lives Matter movement. They made creative signs and posters and marched in solidarity throughout the school.

Restrictions on entering have been eased, and volunteers are being allowed to enter and tutor, however space continues to be at a premium due to physical distancing requirements. The Resource Room, formerly used for tutoring, is now being used as a classroom, so most tutoring is taking place directly after school. There are 15 youths currently at the Center, with 8 enrolled in school.



According to the IDJJ website, there have been a total of 8 staff members and 2 students who have tested positive for COVID-19; this is a cumulative number and not the number of current cases. Mask wearing and effective handwashing have helped keep the total down.

On May 23rd, IYC-Chicago held their annual Volunteer Banquet, virtually this year, at which they recognized our program coordinator, Alex Dunbar, as the “volunteer” of the year in recognition of his many activities at the Center above and beyond his Jump Start work.

News from the Centers *(continued)*

Training and Chicken Enchiladas

During the past three months, **IYC-Harrisburg** has focused heavily on training with staff participating in a wide variety of training presented on site. Since Marc have completed sessions on Connexus, Special Education, PREA (Prison Rape Elimination Act), Ethics, Harassment and Discrimination Prevention, and Security Awareness.



But it wasn't all work and no play! In June, school started back in full swing, and staff members celebrated a Facility-wide Appreciation Day and an Education Appreciation Day. In July, the party continued when staff members with birthdays threw a luncheon for the education staff...chicken enchiladas were served. YUM!

- *Larry Durfee, Program Coordinator*

Earth Day Activities Abound at IYC-Warrenville

In Warrenville, LVI's presence has been felt even though restrictions have kept us away from the center. For Earth Day, we sponsored an essay and poetry contest. The Essay winner picked a treat from Dairy Queen. She was also given the opportunity to invite a friend to choose one too. Both youth enjoyed Blizzards and the beautiful weather that day. LVI also donated ingredients for edible Earth Day treats and supplies for Earth Day collages.



LVI created 4th of July packets with short history of the holiday, fun facts, crossword puzzles, coloring pages and candy for prizes.

Additionally, LVI donated student dictionaries for youth on all five cottages. We also provided inspiring/motivating posters for the "youth center" that the facility hopes to open soon.

Jump Start Tutoring resumed on the 22nd of June. We had two tutors coming in during the day and one at night. Youth were assisted with Math, Language Arts, Earth Science, Prep for GED and COD entrance exams.

- *Teresa Urfer, Program Coordinator*

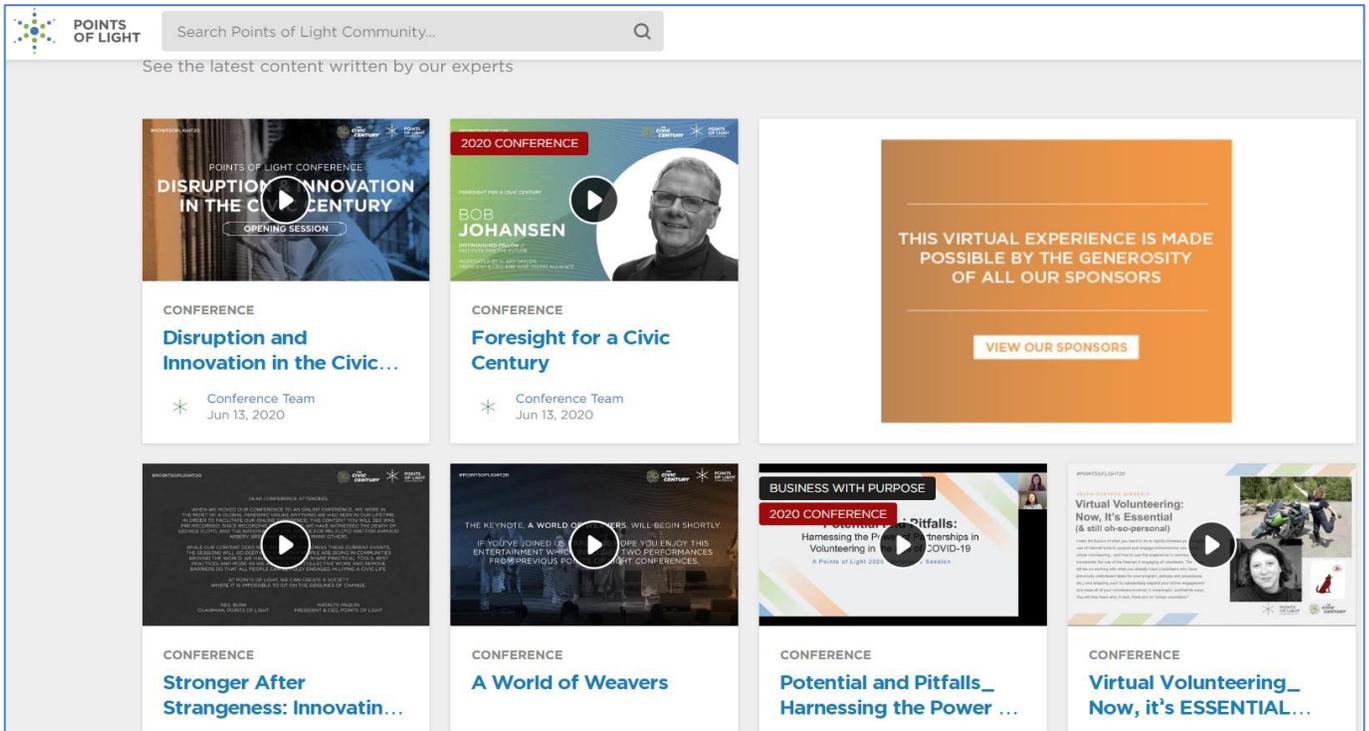
Interested in a Fuller Volunteer Experience ?

Become a member of LVI's VOCAL*AmeriCorps program. The central goal of the VOCAL - Volunteer Outreach for Community Action in Literacy – AmeriCorps program is to expand literacy services to at-risk populations by training individuals to serve as tutors and tutor recruiters in community-based literacy programs, of which Jump Start is one. LVI offers various opportunities for AmeriCorps service from minimum-time of 6-8 hours a week to a full-time commitment of 35 hours a week. A monthly stipend ranging from \$200 to \$1,200 a month is provided, along with an education award at the end of service ranging from \$1,300 to \$6,195. The award can be used to pay student loans or future tuition. Individuals over the age of 55 can also transfer the award to a child or grandchild. Our new program year begins September 1st; positions are available at all of the IYCs. Join yourself or refer a friend or family member. For further info check with your program coordinator.



National Volunteer Conference – A Virtual Affair

From Wednesday, June 10th to Friday, June 12th, LVI staff and AmeriCorps members attended the National Conference on Volunteering, sponsored by the Points of Light Foundation. Due to the pandemic, this year the conference had to adjust their plan to host it in Washington D.C.; instead, they opted to create an online conference where instead of live streams they pre-recorded many of their sessions and made them all available so that attendees could review them at their own pace. Additionally, they opted to make registration free for attendees. During the registration process you could select specific panels, but once logged in they were all open to check out at your leisure.



The LVI team was able to explore panels about virtual volunteering, collaborating with the private sector, volunteer engagement, organizational communications, and more. Popular among the LVI team was “Virtual Volunteering—Now, It’s ESSENTIAL” by Jayne Cravens. This session discussed how the pandemic has so severely impacted service, how we interact with and recruit volunteers, and the avenues for opportunities to further assist our communities.

Other standouts were “Foresight for a Civic Century” by Bob Johansen, “Turning the Titanic—an Organizational Change Story” by Ellen Ray, and “Game On! Playing for Keeps with Volunteers,” by Todd McMullin, Dana Litwin, and the National Alliance for Volunteer Engagement. Despite some minor difficulties logging in, the LVI team greatly appreciated the opportunity to attend the conference and found some valuable insights that can be utilized in the future.

Likewise, with the changing landscape, the team also was able to learn lessons that could be applicable for our own conferences and collaborations, whether it be for the upcoming ICOVA conference, which will be a virtual event, or possibilities for next year’s On the Road to Literacy Conference, it was a learning experience for all involved, and one that was a great success.

- Colin Herzog, AmeriCorps Member, Program Associate, IYC-Chicago

In-Service and Program Updates

Join me on **Saturday, August 15th from 10:00 – 11:30 a.m.** for a few tips on how to make math engaging and fun for our students and ourselves. You only need to bring a positive mathitude and maybe some paper and a pencil (yes, you will be doing a little math!). Can't wait to see what we can do together!



Heather Carlson, Volunteer - IYC St. Charles Elementary Math Specialist IRL (in real life)

On Saturday, June 20th more than 20 tutors and LVI staff attended a virtual in-service led by **Jenny Siegfried**, an ESL/HSE Instructor at Waubensee Community College. Masterfully utilizing the Zoom platform, which included breaking out into rooms, she presented on **Effective Writing Correction**, highlighting three areas: prioritizing corrections, giving feedback, and teaching tools. This very interactive session was well-attended and well-received with knowledge gained by all.

- Danielle Johnson, Senior Program Associate

Program Year – A Quick Review

June 30th marked the end of our program year. Here's a snap shot of our work in the IYCs for July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020.

Youth Served - 239

Chicago – 65
Harrisburg – 53
St. Charles – 72
Warrenville – 49.

Volunteer Count - 58

Chicago – 9
Harrisburg – 2
St. Charles – 35
Warrenville – 12

Hours of one-to-one instruction - 2,618
Hours of prep time donated - 445
Total hours donated to IYC youth - 3,063

Coming soon...

In September, Dr. Danielle Johnson of Literacy Volunteers of Illinois will be presenting an in-service on trauma-informed teaching and Hope Theory.

Stayed tuned for more details.

Staff Changes

The month of June brought several staff changes in both the School District and LVI.

Alex Dunbar, our program coordinator at IYC-Chicago left us at the beginning of the month to return to England, his homeland. Alex and his family were here for the past six years, the last three of which he was on our Jump Start staff. We are sorry to lose him. Colin Herzog, our AmeriCorps member at IYC-Chicago, and, Melissa Auer, our program director, are available to assist Chicago volunteers.

Sandi Ivemeyer, our program assistant at IYC-St. Charles, left mid-month to tend to health issues. Sandi has been involved with LVI in various capacities since 1994, so we are sure we will continue to see much of her !

Danielle Johnson, who heads up our Lit for Life initiative, has increased her hours to take over the assistant responsibilities at St. Charles, where she will now be based.

Dr. Sophia Jones-Redmond, Superintendent of School District #428 for the past three years and Assistant Superintendent of the District prior to that, left at the end of June. She is the new Superintendent of Thornton Fractional High School District 215, a 3,400 student district serving the south suburbs.

Dr. Tresa Dunbar, Assistant Superintendent of SD #428 for the past three years, has assumed the Superintendent's responsibilities. We look forward to continuing our work with Dr. Dunbar, who has been a great supporter of Jump Start and the efforts of each and every tutor.

Virtual Discussions – *Just Mercy* First Up

Based on factual events, *Just Mercy* is the story of Walter “Johnny D”, McMillan. In 1987, McMillan, played by Jamie Foxx, was falsely accused, arrested, and convicted for the murder of an 18-year white girl in Monroeville, Alabama. He received the death sentence and was placed on death row. This film is based on a memoir written by McMillan’s defense attorney, Bryan Stevenson. Stevenson is a compassionate, Harvard educated black lawyer who moves from the northeast to Alabama to defend clients like McMillan, poor minorities who are behind bars and on death row because they have been wrongly condemned and/or could not afford proper representation. Due to Stevenson’s tireless efforts to prove McMillan’s innocence, his client was finally found not guilty. Bryan Stevenson continues as visionary leader in criminal justice reform. This story is a chilling account of how racism remains prevalent today.

Just Mercy’s release on Christmas Day, 2019, is uncanny because no one could have predicted the national Black Lives Matter outcry and protests surrounding the death of George Floyd, a victim of police brutality.

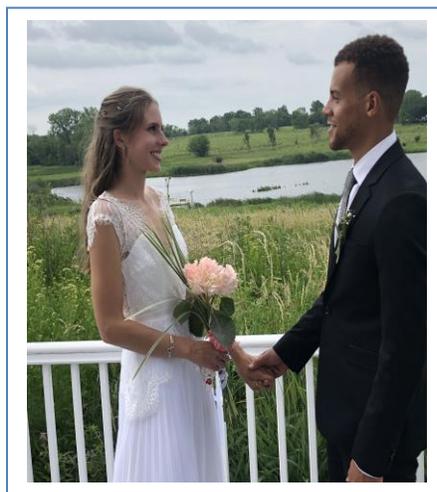
Since then, Warner Brothers says it’s hoping to use the movie as an educational tool to help people learn about systemic racism and its effects on individuals.

Recently, LVI staff along with school staff from IYC-St. Charles, participated in a guided virtual discussion group about the movie. If you would like to be involved in future virtual discussion groups, please let Ms. Auer know and she will add you to the list.

Since the COVID-19, technology has become an increasingly important way to stay connected. To that end, the JumpStart program has created a new private Facebook group. The page is designed for people who tutor at the IYCs. The hope is to build a group where we can share tips, ideas, questions, supportive messages, (AND pictures of our pets). If you are interested in joining this group simply type “Jump Start at the IYCs” in the Facebook Search bar.



Nina Massion (IYC-STC) in San Diego with Laker



Sara Vasicek's (IYC-STC) daughter got married (Shelby and Royce) at a small socially distanced wedding.



Vally Dikovitskaya's (IYC-Chicago) reading list



*Heather Carlson (IYC-STC)
golfing with her husband.*



*Betty Rae Smith (IYC-WRV)
is baking no-knead whole
wheat bread.*



*Ann Hyler (IYC-STC)
has been gardening*

*Unless someone like you cares a whole
awful lot, nothing is going to get better.
It's not.*

- Dr. Seuss

Questions? Suggestions? Or, Refer a friend to volunteer ...

Melissa Auer, Program Director
IYC-St. Charles
3825 Campton Hills Road
St. Charles, IL 60175
mauer@lvillinois.org

Larry Durfee, Program Coordinator
IYC-Harrisburg
1201 W. Poplar
Harrisburg, IL 62946
618/252-8681 ext. 122
ldurfee@lvillinois.org

Teresa Urfer, Program Coordinator
IYC-Warrenville
30W200 Ferry Road
Warrenville, IL 60555
630/983-6231
turfer@lvillinois.org

IYC-Chicago
139 North Western Ave.
Chicago, IL 60612
mauer@lvillinois.org

Literacy Volunteers of Illinois
641 West Lake Street, Suite 200
Chicago, IL 60661
312/857-1582
www.lvillinois.org

Dorothy M. Miaso
Executive Director
dmiaso@lvillinois.org

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