National Adult Education Week

The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White, and the State Library’s Literacy office along with the Illinois Adult and Continuing Educators Association, the voice of adult education, invite you to join in a celebration recognizing September 23-29, 2013 as National Adult Education and Family Literacy Week. Adult Education programs throughout the state will have special activities commemorating this national event. This observation is intended to raise awareness of the need for programs and services to this adult population as well as to highlight the successes.

Statistics reveal that over 93 million American adults have Basic or Below Basic literacy skills that limit their ability to advance at work and in education. In Illinois alone, more than 1.7 million adults do not have a high school diploma and approximately 2.34 million immigrants speak a language other than English in their homes. According to the U.S. Census –Index of Need for Illinois, the number of adults with less than nine grades of education has increased by approximately 26% since 2001.

Adult Education and Family Literacy programs funded by the ICCB, and Adult Literacy Grant Programs funded by the State Library Literacy Office, serve adult students who need to improve their basic literacy and math skills and/or improve their oral and written English. “Adult Education has a greater role today in the preparation of individuals to succeed in postsecondary education. It goes beyond a high school diploma or its recognized equivalency”, says Dr. Karen Hunter Anderson, Executive Director of the Illinois Community College Board. “Through programs such as intensive Bridge programs which contextualize basic skills instruction to specific employment and labor market needs as well as through integrated instructional programs that provide students with a blend of both basic skills and Career and Technical Education courses, adult education students will be better prepared for the high wage jobs of the future.”

The Office of the Secretary of State and Illinois State Library Literacy Office funds more than 163 grants to Illinois literacy programs serving nearly 25,000 adult learners. “I want to make sure every citizen of Illinois has access to quality literacy programs that help them reach their utmost potential and put them on a path to lifelong learning,” said Jesse White, Secretary of State and State Librarian. “Our local literacy programs are among the finest in the nation. I encourage citizens wanting to enhance their literacy education to reach out to these local providers.”

Approximately 90 programs in Illinois receive funding from the ICCB to provide comprehensive instruction to more than 96,000 adult education learners each year. 78% of those who are enrolled and enter employment retain employment. Additionally more than 27,000 individuals take the GED tests annually. “With the staggering statistics in literacy, it is critical that students have the skills that will further their growth in education leading to greater career opportunities in the workforce”, says Jennifer Foster, Associate Vice President for Adult Education and Workforce Development. “In order to meet the future needs of the workforce, we must work diligently to help adult learners raise their basic literacy skills while focusing on careers that will lead to family sustaining wages.”

IACEA, the voice of adult education in Illinois, is a professional adult education organization whose mission is to provide leadership, representation and advocacy for adult education and literacy practitioners in order to advance, unify and professionalize the field. IACEA works closely with the
Illinois Community College Board and the State Library Literacy Office to ensure quality programming for Illinois students.
For more information about Illinois Literacy and national adult education facts, visit the following websites:

- IACEA: www.iacea.net

State Library Literacy Office:
http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/library/who_we_are/literacy/home.html

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ICCB Press Release

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