



Illinois Library Association  
33 W. Grand Ave., Suite 401  
Chicago, IL 60654-6799

Phone: 312.644.1896  
Fax: 312.644.1899  
E-mail: [ila@ila.org](mailto:ila@ila.org)

## Press Release

**The Waukegan Public Library is the recipient of the 2017 Illinois Library Association's Demco Library Innovative Award. This award recognizes a library's achievement in planning and implementing an innovative or creative program or service, which has had a measurable impact on its users. The award is sponsored by Demco, Inc.**

First launched in 2013, the Waukegan Public Library's Functional Health Literacy Program (FHLP) was designed to improve health literacy in adults with low English proficiency and/or low literacy levels and to provide service navigation for a community especially impacted by language, educational, cultural and social barriers to accessing health services.

FHLP runs year round, with adults participating in four week series of classes at the library and community based locations. The workshops increase participants' understanding of relevant diseases/topics such as hypertension, diabetes, high cholesterol, obesity, nutrition and exercise, along with learning about disease prevention and self-care. The Library also identified and trained (using recognized, certified health literacy trainers) trusted members of the Latino community to serve as Community Health Workers (CHW)- volunteer peer educators. The CHWs serve as liaisons within the community to facilitate access to health information, health services and improved self care, as well as help build individual and community capacity by increasing health knowledge and self-sufficiency.

Through the FHLP, Waukegan Public Library has built strong community partnerships with the Lake County Health Department, Rosalind Franklin University, Mano a Mano Family Resource Center, Erie Health Reach, Vista Health System, Advocate Condell, Health Connect One, YWCA, Metropolitan Breast Cancer Association, Waukegan Township, Northwestern University, Walgreens and NAMI. The Library has also become a key member of a greater health literacy initiative, the *Live Well Lake County Health Literacy Task Force* which is focused on improving health literacy and reducing the occurrence of chronic medical conditions by 2025.

Now in its third year, the FHLP has served over 800 adults, with 589 adults increasing their health literacy through peer education and 213 adults engaged in preventive screenings at health fairs, and is expanding to offer its multifaceted services to the broader Waukegan community in service of the Library's broader goals to improve the quality of life in Waukegan.

The Demco Innovative Award will be presented at the Awards Luncheon held on Tuesday, October 10, during the 2017 Illinois Library Association Annual Conference in Tinley Park.

For further information, contact the Illinois Library Association.

For Immediate Release