



Jesse White

SECRETARY OF STATE

NEWS

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White Selects Nine Public Libraries to Host New Mentoring Program

SPRINGFIELD — Secretary of State Jesse White today announced the selection of nine community libraries that will be sites for a new mentoring program called Project Next Generation. The program is the culmination of a pledge made by White in his campaign for Secretary of State.

"As a former schoolteacher and founder of the Jesse White Tumblers, I have had the privilege of working with kids for more than 40 years," said White, who as Secretary of State also serves as State Librarian. "Through my own personal experiences, I have found that kids need mentors. That's what Project Next Generation is all about – providing new opportunities for children in need."

Project Next Generation will help teach sixth through ninth grade students how to properly use state-of-the-art computers, the Internet, modems, scanners and digital cameras. Qualified mentors will be hired at each location to teach a mix of technology experiences and other vital skills necessary for lifelong success.

Initially, each site will limit the number of participants to 10 to 12 students to maintain an optimum ratio of one mentor per three or four students. A statewide curriculum has been created for programmatic consistency, but individual sites will be given the flexibility to evolve based on the needs of the participants. Available on-line, curriculum will undergo continuous development and expansion.

"The use of technology has become extremely important

for educational and professional success," said White. "Project Next Generation will provide children with the technical knowledge and communication skills to excel."

White announced that the following public libraries would begin mentoring students this year:

- Bloomington Public Library
- Carlinville Public Library
- Grand Prairie of the West Public Library District, Virden
- Marrowbone Public Library District, Bethany
- Quincy Public Library
- Elmwood Park Public Library
- Chicago Public Library, Kelly Branch
- Chicago Public Library, Portage-Cragin Branch
- Rockford Public Library

"I want to thank the legislators, librarians and the mentors from these areas," said White. "They have been instrumental in helping us get this program started. With the wonderful support we have received from them and through their communities, I'm certain Project Next Generation will be a great success."

More information about Project Next Generation may be obtained by calling 1-800-665-5576 or through the program's website at <http://findit.sos.state.il.us/nextgen/index.htm>.