

**For Immediate Release:**  
July 25, 2017

**For More Information Contact:**  
Henry Haupt

### **Illinois Literacy Foundation Hosts Literacy Event for Underserved Youth**

Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White presented art supplies and the book “Reading with Pictures” by Illinois author Josh Elder to 10 area children. Elder spoke to the kids via Skype. The Illinois Literacy Foundation (ILF) hosted the event at the YMCA in Springfield on Wednesday, July 19.

The children receiving the book and art supplies are from The Matthew Project, which serves Springfield School District 186. The Matthew Project assists homeless students within the district with clothing, food, tutoring, mentoring and life skills classes. The students are enrolled at the YMCA during the summer.

“I am proud to serve as chairman of the Illinois Literacy Foundation and to work with local organizations to ensure that every Illinois citizen has access to literacy and library services putting them on a path to lifelong learning,” said White, ex-officio chair of the ILF. “I applaud the Springfield YMCA and the Matthew Project for being critical to the development of these young students.”

The book “Reading with Pictures” highlights how graphic novels and comic books can provide that inspirational spark to a child, who may not be interested in reading. The children also received a small sketch pad and colored pencils to encourage their own projects. Elder, the author, spoke to the kids about how reading can change lives and open doors.

“I spent time on public assistance and lived in a converted garage until I was seven years old,” said Elder. “Comics opened up the world of reading to me and that opened up everything else.”

This event was supported by a grant awarded to the Illinois Literacy Foundation from the Dollar General Literacy Foundation.

###