

**Secretary of State Jesse White Hosts Second National Forum: “Targeting Autism”**  
*New York Times best-selling authors present their work at forum*

Illinois Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White hosted the second national “Targeting Autism” forum today at the State Library in Springfield. The “Targeting Autism” program, launched last year by Secretary White and The Autism Program (TAP) of Illinois, is an innovative program designed to develop and implement creative ways to address the needs of Illinois residents impacted by Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

“The need for libraries and local providers to collaborate to better serve those with ASD is more important than ever in Illinois as the state’s budget impasse has negatively impacted many service providers,” said White. “Working with local families and ASD providers, libraries can provide resources and supportive environments that will help those with ASD achieve their full potential. I am happy that we have been able to continue this important program.”

More than 70 library professionals, autism providers and advocates from across Illinois along with professionals in other states came together in March 2015 for the first national forum. Attendees gained a better understanding of the diverse needs of people with ASD and their families and ways libraries can support these patrons. Since then, forum participants have developed local collaborations and implemented a variety of programs and services.

At the second forum, attendees shared their experiences over the past year with each other. In addition, they had an opportunity to hear from parents and ASD experts as well as two young students with ASD who hosted their own weekly Internet television show to increase autism awareness in their community.

New York Times best-selling authors John Donvan and Caren Zucker were on hand to discuss their book, “In a Different Key: The Story of Autism,” and sign personal copies for those in attendance. Donvan and Zucker were also awarded the Illinois Literary Heritage Award at the event for their lifetime of remarkable journalistic achievements. The award was established by the Illinois Center for the Book to recognize and acknowledge extraordinary contributions to literary culture.

“Targeting Autism” was made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services through a National Leadership Forum Grant.

###