



421 East Capitol Avenue, #100, Springfield, Illinois 62701-1789
Phone: 217-785-3356, Fax: 217-785-4477, Web: www.state.il.us/aging

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CONTACT:

Kimberly Parker 312/814.1577

Illinois Department on Aging Works with Local Colleges to Get Older Adults in Classrooms

Local discussions to boost graduation rates & promote healthy lifestyles

SPRINGFIELD – Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA) director Charles D. Johnson today commended 21 community college presidents who will host local discussions across the state, during November and December, to target solutions for two economic challenges: reduce dropout rates and promote healthy lifestyles through intergenerational partnerships. The discussions are the next step following the recent *Summit on Aging and Education* held in September. The first discussion is tomorrow November 6 at Highland Community College, in Freeport. For more information, log on to <http://www.solit.siu.edu/GenServeGen>.

The recent summit and subsequent local discussions are examples of efforts IDoA has coordinated as part of a yearlong campaign *2010: Year of the Engaged Older Adult*. The campaign serves as a component of a project developed with the National Governors Association called *Generations Serving Generations*. Illinois was one of 14 states selected to participate. Director Johnson has led the statewide initiative working with a core leadership team of individuals representing education, aging, business, foundations, retirees and policy-makers. The focus is to improve the health and lives of older adults and increase their involvement in service, learning and work.

“Research shows that everyone benefits when generations interact, for example children and older adults. These local discussions on how to enhance learning opportunities and decrease drop-out rates for Illinois students is truly important. Just one engaged older adult can make a difference to a child and the community at large,” said Director Johnson.

“We know that having older adults in the classroom positively impacts students’ lives and academic performance,” said State Superintendent of Education Christopher A. Koch. “This initiative is an exciting opportunity to build more bridges across generations to support student achievement and lifelong healthy habits. It couldn’t come at a better time as we launch more efforts to improve the rigor and relevance of education in schools across Illinois.”

Hosting these discussions at the local level allows participants the opportunity to share good ideas, best practices and stimulate new thinking. Although similar ideas may come up at several of the local discussions held across the state, there are probably many ideas that work for each region.

“We’re pleased to partner with the state to host these discussions to share ideas that will strengthen communication and promote an intergenerational exchange,” said Geoff Obrzut, president and CEO, Illinois Community College Board.

(A list of the schedule for the local discussions follows this release.)

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Schedule of Local Discussions

November 6

Highland Community College, Freeport

November 8

East St. Louis Community College Center

November 10

Morton College, Cicero

Prairie State College, Chicago Heights

November 12

Spoon River College, Canton

November 15

College of Lake County, Grayslake

DuPage Regional Office of Education, Lombard

November 16

Harper College, Palatine

Illinois Central College, Peoria

Southeastern Illinois College, Harrisburg

November 17

Shawnee Community College, Ullin

November 19

Harold Washington College, Chicago

November 22

John A. Logan College, Carterville

Triton College, River Grove

November 23

John Wood Community College, Quincy

November 30

South Suburban College, South Holland

December 2

Black Hawk College/Quad Cities Metro, Moline

Danville Area Community College, Danville

Heartland Community College, Normal

Kaskaskia College, Centralia

Southwestern Illinois College, Belleville