



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 5, 2011

CONTACT:

Kimberly Parker 312/814.1577

IL Department on Aging Hosts Senate Forum to Promote Intergenerational Leadership to Encourage Reading

Dept on Aging Director leads initiative to encourage interaction among generations

SPRINGFIELD - Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA) Director Charles D. Johnson today convened the fourth Senate Forum on Intergenerational Leadership. The purpose of the daylong forum is to emphasize the importance of generations working together to promote a world class education system. Director Johnson was joined by George Reid, Executive Director of the Illinois Board of Higher Education, to explain how generations working together can benefit communities. The focus of today's intergenerational leadership forum was to discuss literacy and promote student success in reading.

Reading is important for children's academic success. However, the importance of reading goes far beyond childhood. The development of reading skills is a lifelong process. Adult reading is important for keeping citizens informed and engaged. Readers are more likely to pursue social and civic activities such as volunteering.

Some of today's forum participants have been instrumental in a statewide initiative to get older adults active in their communities by volunteering. In June 2008, Illinois was selected to participate in the National Governors Association (NGA) Policy Academy on the Civic Engagement of Older Adults. Since then, IDoA Director Johnson has led this statewide effort working with a core team and advisory team who have developed strategies to address the needs of older adults and promote ways to increase their participation with particular emphasis of benefitting communities through service, learning, and work.

"I am pleased to work with this team of dedicated professionals who have been working to map out the best strategies to get older adults involved in community and to encourage more interaction between the generations. Older adults have so much to offer and by encouraging them to assist students with reading benefits both generations," said Director Charles D. Johnson.

Today was the fourth Senate forum held of this type to develop strategies to get older adults in Illinois engaged in activity in their communities. The forum, which promoted generations working together to promote student success, was held in cooperation with the Senate Higher Education Committee, the Senate Education Committee, the Senate Human Resources Committee, the Illinois State Board of Education and Illinois Community College Board.

Stakeholders in attendance of today's forum will also draft a resolution on "Reading Across the Generations" to be presented to Senate President John J. Cullerton and Senate Republican Leader Christine Radogno.

###