



PRESS RELEASE

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State Aging Director Touts Benefits of Intergenerational Program with Veterans and High School Teens

Event marked MLK Day of Service

CHICAGO - January 17, 2012. Illinois Department on Aging director John K. Holton, Ph.D., participated in an event to launch the next phase of a statewide initiative designed to improve the health and lives of older adults and increase their involvement in service, learning and work. Unity was the theme for Monday's event, held at the Chicago Cultural Center as part of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Day of Service.

The event was held as part of the statewide Generations Serving Generations program. Chicago area teens heard from a Chicago veteran about his experiences while in the military. Some downstate high school students and veterans also participated via Skype.

Director Holton said conversation between veterans and teens is just one example of documenting history through oral projects. "Gathering stories to document history benefits everyone. The project will also give the voices of an aging generation of veterans a permanent historical record."

Director Holton now serves as co-chair of the statewide initiative that started in 2008 when Illinois was selected to participate in the *National Governors Association (NGA) Policy Academy on Civic Engagement of Older Adults*. The Illinois members drafted a five year plan designed to mobilize the leadership and talents of older generations. Governor Pat Quinn proclaimed 2010 the *Year of the Engaged Older Adult* by making the call to action to get individuals and families engaged in efforts to benefit their communities and the state. The next step in the five year plan is a statewide survey of residents ages 50 years and older about the legacy they hope to leave for younger generations.

Gathering Stories to document history is an effort with potential for every age. To learn about the benefits, as well as reasons and ideas for gathering stories, log onto www.law.siu.edu/GenServeGen.

For more information about programs and services to assist older adults in Illinois and their caregivers, log onto <http://www.state.il.us/aging/> or call the IDoA Senior HelpLine at 1-800-252-8966 or for TTY (hearing impaired use only) call 1-888-206-1327.

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