



## Executive Summary

***"That's what Project Next Generation is all about – today's heroes shaping tomorrow's leaders"***

**--- Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White**

Jesse White, Secretary of State and State Librarian, is widely recognized for his commitment to improve the lives of Illinois' children. Secretary White continues this tradition of motivating children to new levels of achievement through Project Next Generation. Project Next Generation targets Junior High School students, and uses public libraries, technology, and mentoring as keys to motivate participating children to new levels of achievement and improved self-esteem. The goal is to inspire a generation of life long learners.

- ◆ **Project Next Generation is all about kids.** *Project Next Generation targets ten to twelve 6<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> grade students in each of the Project Next Generation programs. Project Next Generation provides participants with a "technology toolkit", opportunities for personal growth and a variety of essential life skills to enable future success.*
- ◆ **Illinois public libraries are in a unique position to fulfill a need for these participants.** *In its role as a community activity center, the public library blends educational, recreational, social, cultural, and informational experiences to address the changing needs of young adult participants.*
- ◆ **Project Next Generation offers experiences these students might otherwise never have.** *The reality is that today's 13 year olds will work in jobs that don't exist today. For them technology will be a necessary tool for the communication of ideas as well as a skill vital for tomorrow's jobs.*
- ◆ **Mentors guide Junior High School students as they explore life skills.** *The support systems for children that were in place even ten years ago don't exist today. The mentors and library establish a support system for participants. Together, they explore life skills such as effective communication, goal setting, and conflict resolution using technologies including computers, scanners, and digital cameras.*
- ◆ **Mentoring expands.** *Community leaders, senior citizens, and program participants are encouraged to share experiences and expertise resulting in intergenerational, multi-directional mentoring.*

Project Next Generation uses technology to motivate a generation of life long learners and make a difference in the lives of Illinois children. Project Next Generation results in skilled, confident, empowered students and young adults who are better prepared to face the challenges of the future.