



# Jesse White

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## SECRETARY OF STATE

# NEWS

### ILLINOIS SECRETARY OF STATE

#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

- **May 16, 2002**
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#### **White Awards Penny Severns Summer Reading Literacy Grants**

**SPRINGFIELD** — Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White has awarded 55 grants that will allow almost 2,000 Illinois families to participate in this summer's Penny Severns Summer Reading Enrichment Program.

The program, one of six literacy grant programs administered by the Secretary of State's Literacy Office, is named in honor of the late State Senator Penny Severns (D-Decatur). It provides literacy services to parents and children during the summer when many traditional educational programs close. Students receive instruction that enhances basic reading, math, writing or language skills. Individual grants are awarded to educational agencies, including libraries, community colleges, community-based organizations, school districts and volunteer organizations.

"The Penny Severns Summer Reading Program provides positive, interactive reading and learning activities in which families participate together during times when many reading programs are not in operation," White said. "It is important that adult learners and children seeking to improve their literacy skills have access to educational programs year round, and this program meets that need while strengthening the bond between parents and children.

"Our success in addressing literacy needs in Illinois is dependent upon the outstanding work performed by local providers. Illinois' network of community-based literacy programs, offered by libraries, community colleges, school districts and others, is making a profound impact on the lives of citizens who want to achieve their utmost potential by improving their reading, writing, math or language skills. I am

extremely grateful to the men and women, especially our volunteer tutors, who make time to work with literacy students.

"My dear friend Penny Severns truly believed that public service was a noble profession, and that government could make a positive impact on the lives of citizens. Her selflessness, sense of purpose and compassion is reflected in the literacy program bearing her name."

[List of Penny Severns Summer Reading Literacy Grants](#)