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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

August 26, 2022

**Carbondale Public Library Awarded \$38,060 For Project Next Generation Grant**  
*Funds provide technology and mentors to help youth for the 24th consecutive year*

Carbondale Public Library (CPL) is pleased to announce its award of \$38,060 from Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White for Project Next Generation (PNG). PNG grants provide for mentors to work with students to develop technological and life skills. PNG has been an integral part of CPL's youth programming since the inception of the grant program, and this year marks an exciting addition.

CPL's 2023 PNG grant, *PNG from A-to-Z*, broadens the program initiative by offering STEM/STEAM workshops to high schoolers for the first time. For decades, PNG has provided a safe and stimulating environment for 5th-8th grade students lacking access to technology and mentorship, and now that same service can be provided to 9th-12th graders. PNGers gain exposure to the arts, sciences, and technology through a variety of interdisciplinary projects that engage all senses and address all learning styles. Guidance and encouragement is provided by mentors and subject specialists as students solve challenges while developing a peer network.

"PNG has meant so much to our son," said one parent. "He wanted so much to meet other kids like him and that's exactly what happened." Said one PNGer, "I like how everyone was working together and helped each other with projects."

*PNG from A-to-Z* will offer several workshop series throughout the year, divided into 2 separate age groups, *PNGA* (grades 5-8) and *PNGZ* (grades 9-12). The first series begins in September. High schoolers will meet with SIU Professor Najjar Abdul-Musawwir, an internationally-acknowledged artist, to paint and install a Little Free Library in Attucks Park in partnership with the City of Carbondale. The art will be informed by PNGers' research of local history and Crispus Attucks.

Registration for September PNG is now open. For more information, visit [carbondalepubliclibrary.org/png](https://carbondalepubliclibrary.org/png).

Funding for this grant (23-3029-PNG) was awarded by the Illinois State Library, a Department of the Office of Secretary of State, using funds provided by the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services, under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA).

**Contact:** Elizabeth C. Hartman, CPL Teen & Youth Librarian / PNG Director

**Email:** [ehartman@carbondale.lib.il.us](mailto:ehartman@carbondale.lib.il.us)

*The Press is invited to contact the PNG Director to schedule a visit to a PNG workshop.*