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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 8, 2017

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MAYOR EMANUEL CONGRATULATES YOUTH ON COMPLETING 2017 SUMMER JOBS PROGRAM

Program goes beyond a job to provide mentoring and life skills to 31,000 participants

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today joined One Summer Chicago youth working at an urban garden job site to congratulate them on completing the 2017 jobs program. For the past seven weeks, 31,000 youth ages 14-24 have been working at similar work sites across the City in opportunities ranging from food service to hospital work to computer programming and more.

"These opportunities were more than a job. It was the chance to learn valuable life skills the youth will carry with them long after the summer has ended," said Mayor Rahm Emanuel. "I want to congratulate all of the kids who participated in the program. You made a commitment; put in the time and have taken an important step forward on your path to future success."

About 30 youth participated in the Growing Power urban garden program at Roosevelt Square Farm this summer. Managed by After School Matters, the program allowed youth to plant organic vegetables, herbs, and flowers. By participating in all phases of production: watering, weeding, harvesting, pest management, data collection, packaging, and sales; the youth learned the importance of and skills required to create sustainable food systems. They also took part in nutrition, hunger, and food advocacy activities to help cultivate good stewardship of community environments.

This season, One Summer Chicago opportunities were offered at nearly 3,000 jobs sites, like Growing Power, with new private sector partnerships including Rush University Medical Center and Potbelly's. For several youth, employment in the private sector will extend beyond the summer with Potbelly's hiring about 25 of its youth participants and the Hilton hiring five youth who graduated from their 30-hour hospitality curriculum.

"Not only are youth gaining summer employment and life skills, but some private sector businesses are stepping up and hiring our youth on a more permanent basis," said Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) Commissioner Lisa Morrison Butler. "This shows that One Summer Chicago is so much more than just a summer jobs program.

The Infrastructure Team, a subset of One Summer Chicago, employed nearly 600 youth again this summer. Through DFSS, the Department of Streets and Sanitation (DSS), and the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT), youth were provided with leadership and other skillsets by involving them in daily work to help beautify Chicago neighborhoods.

The team collectively:

- painted over 200 viaducts;
- mulched nearly 2500 trees;
- used more than 260 Cubic yards of mulch;
- collected over 600 bags of debris;
- cleaned nearly 225 City blocks, parkways and lots;
- assembled and maintained over 615 bikes
- created and supported nearly 145 Gardens

This year, One Summer Chicago went beyond a job program to also provide youth with additional opportunities that included a text message campaign that was focused on safety, financial literacy education and a mobile app geared toward providing positive alternatives outside of work.

LRNG/Chicago partnered with One Summer Chicago to provide youth-facing digital activities called Playlists to help youth make the most of their summer jobs and expand their 21st Century skills. Youth successfully completed over 7,000 digital badges, or shareable, digital credentials, that provide evidence of a meaningful learning achievement.

“I am so appreciative for the opportunity to work, learn, network and create some amazing experiences this summer,” said One Summer Chicago Participant Karinton B. Triplett. “I have learned that researching issues and addressing the issues that I care about are extremely important to understanding the issues and finding solutions.

LRNG works with cities and organizations to connect learning experiences to career opportunities, ensuring that all young people, especially those from underserved communities, have inspiration and guidance to prepare them for life and work in the modern economy.

Earlier this summer, a University of Chicago Urban Labs study found by providing a summer job, through the One Summer Chicago Plus (OSC+) program reduced the number of violent-crime arrests for participants by 33 percent over the subsequent year. Launched in 2012, OSC+ connects youth who are at a higher risk for violence involvement with a 25-hour per week summer job, a mentor, cognitive behavioral therapy and social skill building.

Since 2011, Mayor Emanuel has significantly expanded the summer program, more than doubling opportunities while diversifying work opportunities for youths around the city. Each year, the Mayor hosts various round table discussions with the youth to hear about their experiences, gather feedback on the programming and learn more about how to improve the summer jobs program.

For more information on One Summer Chicago visit www.onesummerchicago.org.