MAYOR DALEY ATTENDS OPENING OF INSPIRATION KITCHENS IN GARFIELD PARK AS PART OF NEIGHBORHOOD APPRECIATION TOUR  
Also Announces Vacant Property Agreement with Bank of America

Mayor Richard M. Daley today attended the opening of the new Inspiration Kitchens location in Garfield Park and thanked the residents of the 28th and 29th Wards for their help in moving the City forward.

Mayor Daley also announced an agreement with Bank of America to help return condo units as affordable housing rental units and remove vacant and abandoned buildings that plague communities throughout the city.

"We are here today to mark the new location of a successful job-training program that has been operating in the Uptown Neighborhood.  Inspiration Kitchens offers a transitional job training program for those who have barriers to employment; especially ex-offenders and the homeless population," Daley said.

The new restaurant will provide another site for Inspiration Kitchens transitional jobs training program, which has helped more than 500 homeless and low-income men and women gain the skills and experience they need to succeed in the food service industry.

"The key to ending homelessness is giving people training, social support and an opportunity.  I am proud to say that the City helps fund programs like this in our effort to help end homelessness," Daley said.

In addition to much needed training, students receive help in job placement and retention, and assistance with job-related needs like clothing, ID’s and housing.

The East Garfield Park program is a replication of Inspiration Too in Uptown, which has been around since 2000.  It is a 13-week culinary skills training program that is conducted in the context of an operating restaurant that is open to the public, so students have a very real work experience.

This front-of-house training that will be offered here was developed at the Uptown location and was funded in part by stimulus money.

100 people are expected to enroll in the first year at this site, with 10 students already enrolled in the program.
Inspiration Corporation has received support and funding from the City during the past six years, and the Department of Family and Support Services will work to help place 26 residents in this facility in 2011.

"The hard work and dedication of this group has impact on lives of so many people who are homeless or are close to being homeless. As Mayor, I thank them for their efforts to help tackle this issue," Daley said.

In addition to funding from the City, Inspiration Corporation also receives funding from the private sector. In 2010, Inspiration Corporation received the Bank of America Neighborhood Builder Award along with a $200,000 grant and leadership training.

"In addition to helping support social efforts, Bank of America is working with the City to help protect residents and communities from the dangers posed by vacant properties," Daley said.

The City and Bank of America have come to an agreement under which up to 150 vacant and dilapidated buildings will be demolished by the city, with Bank of American paying $10,000 for demolition and then transferring the land to the city for future use.

Bank of America has also agreed to identify and donate foreclosed and vacant condominium units to the Community Investment Corporation (CIC) for its Troubled Condos Initiative, which is a partnership with the City to upgrade, preserve and stabilize management of affordable rental housing.

“A perfect example of this is a 17-unit building just around the corner from here – at 3550 W. Franklin -- where CIC is working to turn those units into affordable housing and Bank of America has donated two of those condos,” said Daley.

Bank of America has already donated 26 condominium units to CIC to expedite their rehab and re-use as affordable rental housing for the city.

To help protect neighborhoods even further, Cook County Chief Judge Timothy Evans has established a new "Vacant and Abandoned building Foreclosure Call" that will reduce the amount of time necessary to get an abandoned building through foreclosure.

These foreclosure cases will proceed quicker through the system, as calendars will not be overburdened with contested matters. This will allow financial institutions to take control of these properties much quicker and as a result, the properties will be protected and then returned as viable housing.

"This agreement and the work being done by Inspiration Corporation are perfect examples of public-private partnerships. In my 22 years in office, I have always said that government works best when it works with private sector to accomplish mutual goals," Daley said.
Daley thank the many people, block clubs, community groups and businesses to improve the 28th and 29th wards, and highlight some the improvements in these wards to make them more vital and more prosperous than they were 22 years ago.

The City of Chicago has been awarded $168 million in Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) funds to assist 29 community areas that have been affected by foreclosure.

The goal of the program is to stabilize neighborhoods by getting vacant foreclosed homes up-to-code and occupied as quickly as possible. The City has been working in the 28th Ward with partners like the Community Male Empowerment Program (CMEP) to make this program successful.

The city has turned over six units in three properties to CMEP for rehabilitation and sold one of these homes.

These NSP homes are a great value – they’re affordable and energy efficient and have been carefully restored by some of Chicago’s most experienced and committed developers and trades people.

Other NSP projects include:

- The Heritage Pointe development includes 10 affordable two-flats part of the City Lots for City Living program on the 0-100 block of South Whipple Street.

- More than 20 affordable units of housing in the Nehemiah Homes and The Homes of East Garfield Park developments.

- Parkside Estates have provided 21 units of affordable housing in a mix of single family homes and condominiums.

- Quincy Homes provide 31 units of affordable housing under the New Homes for Chicago Program.

- Focus Apartments, located at 165 North Central Avenue, provide fully furnished apartments for 10 low-income ex-offenders, many of whom were incarcerated for drug-related crimes and need substance-abuse treatment. These individuals would otherwise be homeless after their release from prison or jail.

- Mount Vernon Apartments is a 61-unit affordable rental building located at 18-26 N. Waller Ave. where Chicago’s seniors are able to live independently and enjoy the quality of life they deserve.

- The City conveyed 10 city-owned parcels under the New Homes for Chicago program for the construction of the New Homes for Chicago on West Monroe, 12 new, affordable single-family homes on scattered sites in the 5200 and 5400 blocks of West Monroe and West Van Buren Streets.
"These buildings make an important addition to the affordable housing stock in the neighborhood," Daley said.

The city has dedicated $182 million in TIF-generated public infrastructure, schools and business-related improvements throughout the 28th and 29th wards, including:

- The new Westinghouse High School, which includes state-of-the-art science labs; computer labs; a 500 seat auditorium; a courtyard, a pool and kitchen.
- Laborers Union Trade Training school at 5700 W. Homer Street.
- Al Raby School for Community and Environment
- Streetscape project on Madison Street from Pulaski to Cicero
- Lighting on Congress, Van Buren and Adams streets
- Viaduct improvements along the Green Line at Mayfield Avenue and Ogden Avenue and California Avenue

The City also allocated $13,500 in New Market Tax Credits for the construction of Christ the King College Prep School, 5058 W. Jackson Blvd.

The City sold two vacant parcels at 334-338 N. Lotus Ave. to PCC community Wellness Center for $1 to provide for patient and staff parking at the Austin Family Health Center in 2010. The City also alloacted $11 million in New Market Tax Credits to the center at 5425 Lake Street.

The City also supported the re-development of the northwest corner of Lake and Pulaski as a Transit-Oriented (TOD) development with a mix of uses and sustainable features. This development is now anchored by Bethel New Life Center.

"It is no secret that I believe manufacturers are the backbone of our local economy, and the products they produce and the jobs they provide keep Chicago competitive with the rest of the world. We also use TIF funds as Small Business Improvement Funds to help owners of commercial and industrial properties to repair or remodel their facilities for their own business or on behalf of tenants," Daley said.

For example, Mastercraft Metal Spinning used TIF funding to replace their roof, gutters and front door.

And Fun Incorporated, a manufacturer of toys and novelties, used TIF funds for roofing repair and masonry tuckpointing.

"But supporting businesses is not enough. We need to help provide training to workers, so that our businesses have a talent pool from which they can hire," Daley said.

The City created TIFWorks, which stimulates business success by funding workforce-training costs for companies located in tax increment financing (TIF) districts.
- Cloverhill Pastry located used almost $23,000 to implement a Safety Program that includes CPR & First Aid, Equipment and Facility Sanitation and OSHA training.

- National Power Rodding Corporation was granted almost $64,000 to train 25 employees in Field Operations, TV Operators Technical Enhancement, Pipeline/Manhole Assessment Certification and Grout Rehabilitation Operator Training.

The City also created programs to train those who are out of work or are looking for a better opportunity, including WorkNet, a citywide workforce services system that consists of five one-stop employment centers and 22 affiliates that offer opportunities for employment training, educational certifications and job placement.

For many job seekers, the program has trained them in a specific trade or sector and lifted them out of poverty. For employers, the public workforce system has provided qualified, well-trained job candidates reducing human resources and job placement costs for business by providing a pipe-line of qualified talent to Chicago’s businesses. Over 60,000 Chicagoans were served in 2010, many out of the Garfield Workforce Center located at 10 South Kedzie.

While TIF funds help train current employees and keep our residents working in good jobs, they also help build schools, such as Westinghouse High School, so that the next generation of workers starts out with a good education.

To help improve education in these communities, the City has built three other new schools, additions to four schools, and new play lots or campus parks at 21 others schools.

Schools are the not the only place children can learn. To help encourage a culture of learning, the City has built or renovated 57 libraries across the city, including two in these communities.

The Legler Branch Library underwent a major renovation and the North Austin Branch Library was also renovated to include a reading garden. These renovations provide more space and more opportunities for children to grow and learn. They also demonstrate the commitment the City has to providing all children with a quality education.

For seniors, the Austin Senior Satellite Center boasts an award winning fitness program with a personal trainer and state-of-the-art fitness equipment, a Health Promotion and Wellness Education component with medical providers and massage therapist, computer training classes, life enrichment activities and trips and tours.

By working together, the Park District and the City have pooled their resources to develop state-of-the-art recreational facilities that are enjoyed by children, families and adults.

More than 20 major park improvement projects have taken place in these communities, including site improvements and facility rehabs at Hubbard, Mason, Moore, Cottonwood, Gladys, Levin, Amundsen, Columbus, Austin Town Hall and Garfield Parks.
Columbus Park in Chicago’s Austin neighborhood is the site of the “Boundless Playground,” a fully accessible, rubberized playground designed so that children of all abilities can play together on one space.

In 1994, the Chicago Park District embarked on a multi-million dollar restoration plan that has brought vast improvements to the Garfield Park Conservatory. We also created the Garfield Park Conservatory Alliance, a private organization that has raised millions of dollars for educational programming, community relations, and visitor services.

Attendance and interest in the historic facility has grown tremendously in the last decade, and the Conservatory is recognized as one of Chicago’s premier cultural institutions.

The communities in these three wards have also come together to create nine community gardens.

"We have carried out our commitment for preserving the character of our communities while providing new and affordable housing. We understand that while we want the city to move forward, the foundations that make our neighborhoods great need to remain. As such, we work to keep our historic buildings and neighborhoods so that future generations can appreciate the rich history of Chicago," Daley said.

As such, there have been six landmark designations in these communities, including the Third Unitarian Church and Garfield Park Fieldhouse.

In addition, there are 16 green roofs in these communities.

For low-income residents, the CHA has undergone a transformation that includes Westhaven Park, a mixed-income community built on land which was the original site of Henry Horner Homes that offers 1,100 new units.

The CHA has also rehabilitated two senior buildings -- the Fannie Emanuel Senior Apartments and the Irene McCoy Gaines Senior Apartments. The Fannie Emanuel includes 181 rehabilitated senior units.

The Irene McCoy Gaines Apartments has 151 rehabilitated units that include studios and 1-bedroom apartments.

Plus, these wards offer 93 unites of scattered site, public housing for low-income Chicagoans.

One aspect that ties these communities together is the availability and reliance on public transportation.

The CTA has undertaken big projects that have benefited these West Side communities over the past 22 years.
▪ One of the CTA’s largest capital improvement projects occurred on the Green Line. The line was completely renovated at a cost of $406.2 million. Work on the century-old line included installing new rail and structural steel along the 20-mile-long structure.

▪ The $482.6 million renovation of the Cermak (Douglas) Branch of the Blue Line changed it to the Pink Line. Structure work included replacing five miles of track, rail ties and foot walks and the support structure and installed a new signal communications system.

The Chicago Department of Transportation has invested $19 million into the Central Avenue Viaduct Reconstruction Project. The 1930’s viaduct had reached the end of its useful life and a new shorter span viaduct spanning the railroad was constructed.

Plus, we’ve marked more than five miles of new bike lanes in these communities, providing a healthy, safe, green alternative for transportation.

"And to help keep our streets and neighborhoods safe, we started the CAPS program," Daley said.

Since the inception of the CAPS program in the early 1990s, the strong partnership between the Police, the Community and the City has resulted in a decrease in crime and disorder and is the result of a greater quality of life for the residents in these wards.

The City also built the 15th District Police Station, located at 5701 West Madison.

The $15 million state of the art station replaced one built in 1917. At 42,000 square feet it is more than double the size of the old station.

"These projects represent only the highlights of what we have accomplished in the 28th and 29th Wards," Mayor Daley said. "And it is easy to identify the reason for improvements: cooperation."

“Thank you for participating in the process. Thank you for your ideas, your input and your time,” he said. “Working together we’ve brought Chicago into the 21st century, and given it a bright future. It’s been a joy and an honor to be your Mayor.”

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