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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 26, 2013

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**MAYOR EMANUEL AND CPS CEO BARBARA BYRD-BENNETT ANNOUNCE UP TO 50 LEARNING GARDENS WILL BE INSTALLED IN WELCOMING SCHOOLS FOR THIS FALL**

*A Total of 80 Learning Gardens Will Be Installed Across the City, Providing Students With Hands-On Nutrition and Science Education Opportunities*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Chicago Public Schools (CPS) CEO Barbara Byrd-Bennett announced today that up to 50 Learning Gardens will be installed in welcoming schools starting this summer, as part of the significant investments being made in schools that are receiving new students this fall. A total of 80 learning gardens will be installed in CPS schools across the city. Organized and implemented by the nonprofit organization The Kitchen [Community] (TKC), the gardens bring together parents, teachers, and community organizations to support student learning and provide students with hands-on nutrition and science education opportunities.

“Every student in every neighborhood deserves a high-quality education that prepares them to succeed. For too long, too many of our children have been trapped in underutilized, under-resourced schools,” said Mayor Emanuel. “These Learning Gardens will provide our students in ‘welcoming schools’ with hands-on education opportunities in science and nutrition that they otherwise would not have, and add to the investments that Barbara and her team are making to ensure that all of our city’s students, no matter where they live, have access to the resources they need to thrive.”

In addition to Learning Gardens being announced today, investments in the welcoming schools include: air conditioning in every classroom, a library in every school, Safe Passage for every school to provide increased security for students on their way to and from school, iPads for all students in grades 3-8, new and upgraded technology supports including expanded Internet bandwidth and computer, engineering, media and science labs.

“For too long children in certain parts of Chicago have been cheated out of the resources they need to succeed because they are in underutilized, under-resourced schools, and by consolidating these

schools we can focus on safely getting every child into a better performing school close to their home," said CEO Byrd-Bennett. "Installing these Learning Gardens as an additional resource at up to 50 welcoming schools will give many students the hands-on education experience they might not otherwise have. Welcoming schools will have the things that parents, teachers and CPS agree students need to ensure that every child in every neighborhood in Chicago has access to a high quality education that prepares them to succeed in life."

In December 2012, Mayor Emanuel announced that \$1 million in NATO legacy funds would go toward supporting the development of Learning Gardens at 60 CPS schools. TKC has worked with the Chicago philanthropic and business community to raise the funding to support 20 additional gardens for a total of 80. Thirty of these gardens will be installed this spring, and the remaining 50 will be installed in schools throughout the summer and fall for use starting in the fall.

"I want to thank Mayor Emanuel and the City of Chicago for coming together around the concept of Learning Gardens as a solution for outdoor garden-based learning," said Chef and The Kitchen Community co-founder Kimbal Musk. "Learning Gardens are easy, affordable and scalable, and we're thrilled to be planting more of them here in Chicago. Last year's Pilot Program yielded incredible results - children increased their likability of vegetables grown in the Learning Garden by 50 percent. We are thrilled for this next round of Learning Gardens in Chicago."

TKC's Learning Gardens are an extension of the classroom and an enhancement to playgrounds and other environments. They infuse healthy habits and instruction into everyday learning. The Kitchen Community has installed 14 gardens at CPS schools. These early TKC projects were jump-started with partnerships in Chicago's business and philanthropic community, including JPMorgan Chase.

"It is extremely important that our students learn about healthy eating at an early age. I know that these Learning Gardens will be a welcome addition to our neighborhood schools and I am excited that Calmecca Academy in the 12th Ward will be one of the schools receiving a garden. I applaud Mayor Emanuel and CPS on their efforts," stated Alderman Cardenas, 12th Ward Alderman and Chairman of the Committee on Health & Environmental Protection.

Learning Gardens have been installed at the following schools: Ruiz Elementary, Benito Juarez Community Academy High School, Jonathan Burr Elementary, Mildred I. Lavizzo Elementary, Carter G. Woodson South Elementary, Sir Miles Davis Magnet Elementary Academy, Dawes Elementary, Nathanael Greene Elementary, Carl von Linne Elementary, Southside Occupational, Paul Laurence Dunbar Career Academy High School, Neal F Simeon Career Academy High School, Oliver S. Westcott Elementary, Robert L. Grimes Elementary School. TKC has partnered with Chicago non-profits Openlands and Common Threads to work with schools and teachers to create innovative, school-by-school approaches to incorporate the gardens into student learning.

**About The Kitchen [Community]**

The Kitchen [Community] was established in 2011 as the philanthropic arm of a family of restaurants to connect kids to real food by creating Learning Gardens.

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