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**MAYOR EMANUEL, CHICAGO PARK DISTRICT CELEBRATE COMPLETION
OF FIVE PLAYGROUNDS AS PART OF *CHICAGO PLAYS!* PROGRAM**

Mayor Rahm Emanuel, Chicago Park District General Superintendent Michael Kelly, Alderman Anthony Beale, Aldermen Will Burns, Alderman Leslie Hairston, Alderman Emma Mitts and community leaders celebrated the completion of refurbished playgrounds with ribbon cutting ceremonies today as part of Mayor Emanuel's *Chicago Plays!* program.

"These playgrounds provide Chicago kids with a safe place to play and be active, but they also help form the foundation for a stronger community," said Mayor Emanuel. "As part of the *Chicago Plays!* initiative, we aren't just building playgrounds – we're building a new Chicago, community by community."

Ribbons were cut at five rehabbed playgrounds at parks in neighborhoods across the City: Jackson Park in Woodlawn, Carver Park in Altgeld, Touhy Park in Rogers Park, Harold Washington Park in Hyde Park and Davis Park in Austin. Of the 103 playgrounds to be built or rehabbed this year, 20 have already been completed.

"Mayor Emanuel's *Chicago Plays!* plan was established to provide vibrant, accessible playgrounds to children across the city," said Chicago Park District General Superintendent Michael. "We are thrilled to have the opportunity to renovate more playgrounds and impact more communities than expected this year."

In March, 2013, Mayor Emanuel announced that over a five year period, the Chicago Park District will rebuild, repair and/or refurbish 325 playgrounds in communities across Chicago. Last year, 50 playgrounds were completely rehabilitated as part of Mayor Emanuel's *Chicago Plays!* playground renovation program. An additional 11 soft surface playgrounds were rehabbed by the Park District.

In order to prioritize equipment replacement, the Chicago Park District worked with the Friends of the Park organization to seek community input and determine those playgrounds in greatest need of repair.

Mayor Emanuel's *Chicago Plays!* program invests over \$125,000 in new playgrounds equipment at each park location for an estimate program cost of \$37,500,000, allowing to provide a broader investment in capital projects throughout the city.

Mayor Emanuel's *Chicago Plays!* program underscores the major announcements the Mayor has previously made regarding parks, including a comprehensive plan to build and improve parks throughout the city so that every Chicagoan is within a ten minute walk of a park, and the Summer of Learning and Earning 2014 to keep youth safe and engaged this summer. To register for the Summer of Learning and Earning, visit www.chicagocityoflearning.org.

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For more information about the Chicago Park District's more than 8,100 acres of parkland, more than 580 parks, 26 miles of lakefront, nine museums, two world-class conservatories, 16 historic lagoons, nearly 50 nature areas, thousands of special events, sports and entertaining programs, please visit www.chicagoparkdistrict.com or contact the Chicago Park District at 312/742.PLAY or 312/747.2001 (TTY). Want to share your talent? Volunteer in the parks by calling, 312/742.PLAY.