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Chicago Teens Celebrate Success on Prestigious Arie Crown Stage

Chicago, IL—On April 24, nearly 600 Chicago public high school teens will sing, dance, drum, perform jazz music, and demonstrate many other talents on the prestigious Arie Crown Theater stage, located at McCormick Place East, Lakeside Center, 2301 S. Lake Shore Dr., from 6:30 to 9:30 PM.

The 1st annual Citywide Closing Celebration showcases skills that teens acquired and honed in After School Matters (ASM) programs, which provide young Chicagoans compelling, challenging, and rewarding apprenticeships and club activities during the critical out-of-school hours.

“Chicago teens who participate in our programs immerse themselves in diverse disciplines such as culinary arts, video making, mural painting, website design, flamenco dancing, swimming, poetry, and robotics, among many others,” explained ASM executive director David Sinski. “This event gives them the unique opportunity to shine in front of friends and family in a world-class performance venue.”

In addition to the evening’s performances, ceramics, textiles, paintings, prints, and other works created by arts apprentices will be displayed throughout the theatre. Culinary arts apprentices, working in conjunction with executive chefs from renowned Chicago restaurants such as 160 Blue, Timo, and Orso’s, will provide food and refreshments for the event’s nearly 4,000 guests.

By partnering with the very best professionals available, ASM provides opportunities that enrich teens’ lives, enabling them to discover their own unique voice, build confidence, acquire marketable job skills, and explore careers that previously may have seemed out of reach.

Today, ASM is the largest after-school initiative of its kind in the country. By partnering with Chicago Public Schools, the Chicago Park District, and the Chicago Public Library, as well as over 100 community-based organizations throughout the city, ASM has grown from nine programs in three high schools serving 180 teens in 2000 to over 700 programs in thirty-five schools serving nearly 23,000 teens in 2005-2006.

For more information about the wide range of meaningful programs and activities offered by After School Matters, please visit **www.afterschoolmatters.org**.

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