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**Chicago Teenagers Shine at 6th Annual After School Matters
Gala**

Gala at O'Hare International Airport raises funds, highlights importance of extracurricular opportunities for Chicago youth in underserved communities

CHICAGO—Chicago teenagers showcased a series of vocal, dance, instrumental and theater performances before an audience of more than 2,000 people at the sixth annual After School Matters Gala. The teens performed on a stage built especially for them on Runway 9 Left/27 Right, O'Hare International Airport's first new runway since 1971.

"This year's gala is in a setting where you can literally reach for the stars – and tonight we have the opportunity to highlight some of the best and brightest stars of our program," said Maggie Daley, founder and chair of After School Matters. "The success of this program speaks volumes to the teens' longing to be involved in something positive, to develop skills they weren't even aware they had, and to simply have a safe outlet where they can have some fun. But what I see, even more significantly, is that it allows our teens to envision a bright future with what I hope seems to be unlimited opportunities."

The annual After School Matters gala raises funds to support the organization's mission of creating a network of after school opportunities for teens in underserved communities. After School Matters is one of the only programs of its size and scale in the country that provides after school activities specifically for teens in the fields of arts, sports, science, technology and communications.

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“This year, After School Matters provided our teens with a variety of unique experiences, from creating an art studio in Millennium Park to performing for large crowds at Pritzker Pavilion, and tonight’s gala at O’Hare is another memory they will always remember,” said David Sinski, executive director of After School Matters. “I’m so proud of our teens whose success would not be as great without the gracious support of Chicago’s residents and businesses.”

The evening’s entertainment included “Laudate Dominum” sung by the Vocal Arts Ensemble; “Black or White” performed by the Dance Company Choreography Ensemble and “Tornado” by the Joffrey Ballet Intensive; “Ladybird” played by the Jazz Big Band and “Tonight” from West Side Story performed by Projectheater.

In addition to the performances, teens from the After School Matters visual arts apprenticeships displayed their artwork in various mediums, including metalwork, furniture, painting, photography and soft sculpture. Teens in the culinary arts program assisted professional caterers and passed hors d’oeuvres during cocktail hour.

After School Matters thanks Events Creative for leading the production of this spectacular event, and thanks the O’Hare Modernization Program for hosting the gala, an event that is critical to the funding of Chicago’s after school programs for teens, added Mr. Sinski.

The O’Hare Modernization Program is Mayor Richard M. Daley’s vision to build a 21st century airport. The program modernizes O’Hare’s intersecting runway system into a new, parallel configuration that will reduce delays and increase future capacity. Runway 9L/27R, will primarily be used for bad weather

arrivals, addressing one of the biggest causes of delay at the airport. Upon completion, a modernized O'Hare will move people and goods more efficiently, create new jobs for residents and growth opportunities for local businesses throughout the region.

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Funding for After School Matters directly benefits Chicago teenagers. Studies show that teens who are not involved in after school activities are 57 percent more likely to drop out of high school. They are also more likely to get pregnant, use drugs or alcohol, and become perpetrators – or victims – of crime.

As a result of After School Matters, between the hours of three and six p.m. during the school year, Chicago teens have 28,000 opportunities across 63 campus sites, anchored around public high schools, parks and libraries, and more than 100 community-based organizations, to work alongside skilled professionals and develop marketable job skills.

Founded by Chicago's First Lady Maggie Daley, After School Matters is a non-profit organization that offers Chicago teens innovative after school activities through science³⁷, sports³⁷, tech³⁷, words³⁷ and the nationally recognized gallery³⁷ programs through our many public and private partnerships. These partnerships include the City of Chicago, Chicago Public Schools, Chicago Park District, Chicago Public Library and more than 100 community-based organizations throughout the city. Our hands-on programs expose teens to rewarding careers and help them to develop marketable job skills.

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