

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**After School Matters® Adds Three New Program Locations
Where Teens Can Thrive During Out-of-School Time**

After School Matters serving more than 25,000 teens in 2010

CHICAGO—As Chicago’s After School Matters® organization embarks on its spring cycle of unique and educational out-of-school-time teen programming, it is adding three Chicago public high schools to its list of sites where programming is offered.

After School Matters will add John Hope College Prep, located on the (northeast) border of the Englewood neighborhood; EPIC Academy High School, located in the South Chicago neighborhood; and Jones College Prep, located in the South Loop, to its roster of more than 150 sites at which professionals provide quality, out-of-school-time activities and job opportunities for Chicago teens, offering hands-on project based programs in the arts, science, sports, technology, and communications.

By anchoring out-of-school-time opportunities around community organizations and “campuses”—each consisting of a public high school and a nearby park and library—After School Matters maximizes the use of existing public infrastructure and invigorates the surrounding neighborhoods.

These out-of-school-time programs are free and open to all Chicago teen residents, allowing them to explore new interests and socialize with peers and professionals in safe, structured environments, while finding rewarding careers and developing marketable job skills. Program opportunities are offered as clubs, apprenticeships and internships, and teens in apprenticeships and internships receive stipends as financial incentive and as reinforcement of the accountability of a job. This year, After School Matters will offer 25,000 program slots to Chicago teens.

At John Hope College Prep, teens in the Steps to Success program will learn the intricate art of stepping--a dance in the style of historically African American fraternities and sororities, the heart of which is group cohesive movement and rhythm. Teens will perform complex rhythms using only their hands and feet, gaining skills such as precision, teamwork, communication and the importance of committing to excellence. They will also have the opportunity to showcase their creativity within the various routines, as they contribute nuances and “flare.”

EPIC Academy’s Web design program will provide teens with an introduction to image manipulation, coding and the opportunity to redesign a Web site for a non-profit

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organization in their community. Throughout the spring, teens will build their personal interactive portfolio while gaining general workplace skills, such as time management, which will prepare them for future career opportunities.

At Jones College Prep, the new digital photography program will offer an intensive, hands-on experience for students to explore creative ideas, develop photographic and printing skills, and engage in class discussions and trips to art spaces throughout the city. Teens in this program will come away with a well-rounded understanding of the extensive possibilities of hobbies and careers in photography.

“Since our inception in 1991 as the gallery37 summer arts program, the opportunities we offer to Chicago teens has grown exponentially,” said David Sinski, executive director of After School Matters. “As we approach our 20th anniversary in 2011, After School Matters looks forward to continuing to add exciting programs and expand our reach, with a long-term goal to offer out-of-school-time programming to every teen in the city of Chicago.”

After School Matters believes providing a safe environment for teens after school is vital, as violent crimes soar between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. – just after the school day ends and before parents return home from work.

According to a 2007 study by the University of Chicago’s Chapin Hall Center for Children, teens who participate in After School Matters for four or more semesters are nearly two-and-a-half times more likely to graduate from high school than teens who did not participate. Students who spend no time in extracurricular activities are 49% more likely to use drugs and 37% more likely to become teen parents.

For more information about After School Matters, including teen registration, volunteer, donation and instructor opportunities visit www.afterschoolmatters.org and follow the organization on Twitter @afterschoolmttrs.

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### **About After School Matters**

After School Matters is a nonprofit organization that offers Chicago teens innovative out-of-school activities through its science37, sports37, tech37, words37 and nationally-recognized gallery37 programs. Programs are provided through a network of public and private partnerships that include the City of Chicago, Chicago Public Schools, Chicago Park District, Chicago Public Library and community organizations across the city. Hands-on, project-based programs introduce teens to rewarding careers and help them develop marketable job skills. After School Matters was founded as the gallery37 summer arts program in 1991 by Chicago First Lady Maggie Daley, who still serves as chair of the organization.

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