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**Chicago Teens Pay Tribute to Maggie Daley at
7th Annual After School Matters® Citywide Showcase**

*High school students display talents in visual, performing
and culinary arts at The Chicago Theatre*

CHICAGO — After weeks of hard work and preparation, more than 200 Chicago teens took to the stage to proudly display their creative talents during the seventh-annual **After School Matters®** Citywide Showcase at the legendary Chicago Theatre.

Teens from across the city demonstrated skills developed during their participation in After School Matters programs this spring in an extraordinary presentation of performing, culinary and visual arts. Nationally recognized for offering hands-on, project-based programming focused on career readiness, After School Matters is the nation's largest out-of-school initiative for high school students.

The evening's performances underscored the variety of programming offered annually by After School Matters, including dance performances from the Kuumba Lynx Urban Dance Projex, Hip Hop Dance Ensemble, Move Me Soul and Madder Rhythms programs; vocal performances from the Chicago Opera Theater for Teens, Youth Theatre Ensemble and THA Music Lab programs; a spoken word performance from the Colored Girls are Cover Girls program; a drill routine from the South Shore Drill Team program; and a culturally-infused performance from the Flamenco Arts Project program.

The show's finale featured a heart-felt tribute to the late Maggie Daley, founder and former chair of After School Matters. Alumni and the instructors of THA Music Lab—an After School Matters program that teaches teens about songwriting and production—performed “The Heart of the City,” a song they wrote for Mrs. Daley. The rest of the Citywide Showcase teen performers held pink tulips, filling the aisles and stage of the theatre while the audience viewed a photo montage of Mrs. Daley.

“This year’s Citywide Showcase is evidence of the passion and determination of Chicago’s teens,” said Raymond Orozco, chief executive officer at After School Matters. “These talented young adults have shown us that with a little conviction, and a lot of hard work, we are all able to embody our greater talents. They have demonstrated that they are motivated and prepared for the next steps in life. Tonight would have made Mrs. Daley proud.”

An on-site gallery featured a variety of teen artwork, including jewelry, textiles, painting and photography—all of which were available for purchase, with proceeds benefitting the organization. Guests indulged in desserts prepared and served by teens in the After School Matters Culinary Artistry and South Shore Chefs programs.

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After School Matters positively impacts Chicago teens by offering them innovative out-of-school programming in the arts, communications, science, sports and technology. Last year, After School Matters served more than 15,000 teens across Chicago, exposing them to career readiness skills as well as hands-on skills in specific content areas to help them discover their potential and find their path to a meaningful life. Teens who participate in After School Matters consistently demonstrate better attendance, higher graduation rates and fewer course failures than their counterparts who are not in After School Matters.

“Before I joined After School Matters, I had no idea what career I wanted to pursue,” said Torres Hughes, the event’s featured teen speaker and a senior at Austin Polytechnical Academy. Torres has participated in the After School Matters Beverage Industry Products and Profits program, which gives teens hands-on experience in various aspects of the multi-billion dollar local and global non-alcoholic beverage industry. He was recently selected as one of only 11 Youth Leadership Institute Ambassadors in the country. “My involvement in After School Matters has shown me career options that I never knew existed. Next year, I hope to attend college and study engineering and law. I can’t overstate what an impact this program has had on my life and I hope that more Chicago teens can take advantage of this program in the future.”

Applications for After School Matters Summer program cycle, which begins June 18, will be available to teens in mid-April at www.afterschoolmatters.org. This summer, After School Matters will have the capacity to provide nearly 6,000 program opportunities to teens from across the city.

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### **About After School Matters®**

Founded in 1991 by former Chicago First Lady Maggie Daley, who served as its Board chairperson until her passing in 2011, After School Matters® is a nonprofit organization that offers Chicago high school teens high quality, out-of-school-time opportunities to explore and develop their talents, while gaining critical skills for work, college and beyond. Over the past two decades, more than 100,000 teens have participated in our hands-on, project-based arts, communications, science, sports, and technology programs at Chicago public high schools, community locations across the city and Downtown at Gallery 37 Center for the Arts. After School Matters programs are developed and delivered through a network of public and private partnerships, including Chicago Public Schools, the Chicago Park District, the Chicago Public Library and a wide range of community organizations.

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