



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**** Media are invited to attend**

**** Students available for interviews at 10:30 a.m.**

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3,000 CPS High School Seniors GEAR UP for College

CHICAGO – More than 3,000 Chicago high school seniors will be honored by Northeastern Illinois University – Chicago Teachers’ Center and Chicago Public Schools at a graduation event celebrating the culmination of their successful participation in GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs). The celebration will be held at 9:45 a.m. on Wednesday, June 8 at Hanson Park Stadium, 5501 W. Fullerton in Chicago.

The Chicago GEAR UP Alliance, the largest project of its kind in the nation, has helped 5,100 students in Chicago neighborhood schools graduate from high school this year. The GEAR UP initiative, funded by the U.S. Department of Education and matching funds from local partners, prepares students from low-income communities for success in college and careers.

Some **notable achievements** of the Chicago GEAR UP Class of 2011:

- They **earned more than \$17 million in scholarships** including 12 out of the 24 Gates Millennium Scholarships awarded in Chicago.
- They **submitted more than 10,000 college applications**.
- They **received more than 5,000 letters of acceptance** from postsecondary institutions.
- **More than 87 percent have completed FAFSA forms**, an important step in qualifying for financial aid. This compares to an average of 80 percent for CPS overall, including the highly selective high schools.

Many of these students have been a part of the program since they were sixth graders. They hail from Farragut, Clemente, Roosevelt, Foreman, Fenger, Hancock, Hope, Wells, Little Village Lawndale, Curie, Kelly, Clark, Dunbar, Harlan, Kelvyn Park, Hyde Park, Kenwood and UPLIFT high schools.

Many sports figures and musicians will join parents and teachers in honoring the students. They include Matt Forte, Earl Bennett and Corey Wooton from the Chicago Bears, Shannon Brown from the Los Angeles Lakers, Connie Williams from WGCI, DJ Happy, hip-hop artists Shawn Brown Artists Renaissance, RP Rich Ruiz, Rotimi, Avery Smith, Toonz, the Roosevelt High School Concert Band, and representatives from the Chicago Sky and Chicago Fire.

Partners in the Chicago GEAR UP Alliance include Northeastern Illinois University (the Chicago GEAR UP Alliance lead institution), Loyola University, the University of Chicago, Roosevelt University, National-Louis University, Truman College, the Chicago Education Alliance, Youth Guidance, and the Chicago Public Schools. Sponsors of this event include State Farm Insurance and BALL’N Athletics.