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**MAYOR EMANUEL ANNOUNCES NEW LA CASA NORTE HOUSING AND COMMUNITY CENTER IN HUMBOLDT PARK TO SUPPORT AN ADDITIONAL 2,000 INDIVIDUALS IN NEED**

*Groundbreaking on future community center in Humboldt Park will expand affordable housing and support city's mission to prevent homelessness*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today joined La Casa Norte Executive Director Sol Flores and members of the community in announcing construction plans for the future La Casa Norte affordable housing development and community center. Located in the Humboldt Park Community, the new La Casa Norte facility will feature 25 new affordable housing units and a community center with wraparound services designed to serve homeless families, youth and disabled individuals experiencing or on the verge of homelessness in the Humboldt Park community and citywide.

This new center is expected to open in 2018 and, with 25 new affordable housing units and community service programs, will serve approximately 2,000 individuals each year with supports to prevent and eliminate homelessness among youth and families.

"We as a City are committed to addressing homelessness in a holistic, comprehensive and compassionate manner because Chicago cannot thrive until each and every one of our residents are thriving," said Mayor Emanuel. "I want to thank La Casa Norte for being a strong partner and for their ongoing commitment to supporting youth and our most vulnerable residents. This new center will be a great asset for the community as it helps ensure that every Chicagoan has a place to call home and the tools to build a bright future."

The new five-story mix-used development by La Casa Norte will establish Pierce House, providing 25 Supportive Housing Units (studios, 1- and 2-bedroom units) for youth and families that are homeless. All residential units will be affordable and made exclusively available to households earning no more than 30 percent of the area median income.

The development will also create a brand new community center to provide wraparound community services for new and existing clients and, in coordination with the housing units, will support the La Casa Norte organization in providing 2,000 individuals with services. The community center will provide youth and families to access the following services: a youth drop-in center, Community Healthcare Center, Café and Food Pantry, housing location and prevention services.

The future center will also house La Casa Norte's offices and administrative center, a large community meeting space, and an art gallery. The lower level will also provide space for adult education classes, a clothing closet, and other services for the homeless. La Casa Norte currently operates five other regional locations serving approximately 2,000 individuals each year. The new center in Humboldt Park will double the organization's capacity to deliver supportive services to a total of 4,000 clients across the city each year.

"We are so incredibly honored to walk alongside young people and families as they fight to end homelessness in their lives. The new center will provide resources, dignity and safety in the heart of the community. This is a victorious day for Chicago, as we put our most vulnerable residents first, in a position to heal, survive and thrive" said Sol Flores, Executive Director of La Casa Norte.

Mayor Emanuel was joined today by La Casa Norte leadership, 26th Ward Alderman Roberto Maldonado, 1st Ward Alderman Joe Moreno and members of the community to kick off demolition of two existing buildings to make way for the development. The future La Casa Norte Center, which will eventually assume a double lot located at 3533 W. North Avenue, will strengthen existing supports for the Humboldt Park community while also accentuating a long line of recent redevelopment projects on the thriving North Avenue corridor.

The \$18.5 million project includes nearly \$8 million in assistance by the City, in the form of \$3.5 million in TIF funding and a \$4 million loan. In total, the project will create 8 permanent and 26 temporary construction jobs.

The center's new housing development and others like it will expand affordable housing capacity and support the City's Five-Year Housing plan. Since its 2014 launch to increase affordable housing opportunities by more than 41,000 units citywide, the plan has successfully harnessed 18,646 affordable units for low-income families and residents to date. By supporting new construction, preservation and rehabilitation of affordable units for families through a combination of multi-family no interest loans, land sale and tax credits, the City of Chicago is working to ensure an adequate supply of both housing and service options that will accommodate the thousands of low-income and homeless families in need of affordable housing opportunities each year.

Since Mayor Emanuel took office in 2011, the City of Chicago has increased funding for homeless initiatives by more than 10 percent and invested in new programs targeting veterans, youth, families, and victims of domestic violence. To ensure that the City has enough affordable housing to support families and residents around the city, Mayor Emanuel has overseen the following improvements: passed the Affordable Requirements Ordinance (ARO) to create approximately 1,200 units of housing and generate \$90 million in funding by 2020; worked with housing advocates to pass the Single Room Occupancy (SRO) Preservation ordinance to retain 700 SRO units in gentrifying areas by the end of 2018; and leveraged new revenue through a \$2 million annual surcharge from the house sharing industry to serve as many as 300 homeless individuals with housing and wraparound services each year.

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#### **About La Casa Norte:**

La Casa Norte's is a nonprofit organization founded in 2002 with a mission to serve youth and families confronting homelessness. Based in Humboldt Park, La Casa Norte provides access to

stable housing and deliver comprehensive services that act as a catalyst to transform lives and communities. La Casa Norte has received numerous local and national awards for being an innovative and quality homeless service provider. For more information please visit the website at: [www.lacasanorte.org](http://www.lacasanorte.org).