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MAYOR EMANUEL AND THE ILLINOIS DREAM FUND RECOGNIZE THREE CPS JROTC STUDENTS AS THE RECIPIENTS OF THE FIRST ROUND OF ILLINOIS DREAM FUND SCHOLARSHIPS; STUDENTS TO ENROLL IN CITY COLLEGES OF CHICAGO

Students Recognized During the Screening of the Immigration Documentary "The Dream is Now" that Shares the Stories of Undocumented Youth featuring an Undocumented Graduate of Marine, Math and Science Academy

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and the Illinois DREAM Fund recognized three undocumented Chicago Public Schools (CPS) students who are 2013-2014 recipients of JROTC Illinois DREAM Fund (ILDF) Scholarships at the Marine Math and Science Academy during a screening of the immigration reform documentary, *The Dream is Now*. The three students will enroll in City Colleges of Chicago. Last week, the ILDF announced that they awarded \$100,000 in scholarships in their first round.

"The time is now to support talented young people who have shown a commitment to serving their schools and communities, and are eager to serve in the military, but can't because of their immigration status," said Mayor Rahm Emanuel. "I have been a strong advocate for Illinois's Dreamers and we are excited to see these donations turn into scholarships for undocumented JROTC students that have studied hard, excelled in the classroom, and earned a place at a college or university."

In August of 2012, Mayor Emanuel announced that \$275,000 in private donations had been raised for the Illinois DREAM Fund. With this donation, nearly 100 DREAM youth would be able to complete their first year in City Colleges of Chicago's College to Career program; ensuring that they have the skills to meet the demand for careers in growing fields. In January 2013, Mayor Emanuel announced that \$100,000 of the \$275,000 privately raised donations to the Illinois DREAM Fund will be used to grant scholarships to undocumented JROTC students throughout the State of Illinois.

"The Illinois Dream Fund board is motivated through belief and trust to create access for a door, once closed, to undocumented students. To be here now is a blessing but we still need to financially

support these students once comprehensive immigration reform passes. We now know we have a pool of future leaders, and we must support them. We know that we must strengthen and broaden the intellectual prospects of these students by providing financial support for their college endeavors," said Tanya Cabrera, Chairperson of the ILDF Board of Directors.

"There are millions of people like me who want to contribute back to the only country they know as home, the United States of America," said Alejandro Morales. "Serving in the military is all I've ever wanted to do, but I can't because of my status. I joined this campaign because the time is now for America to fix its broken immigration system. I hope that by sharing my story with the public that more people will understand how reform can strengthen our country – and that as a result, Congress will pass immigration reform this year."

The Dream is Now, is a 30-minute documentary by Oscar-winning director Davis Guggenheim ("Inconvenient Truth" and "Waiting for Superman") that shares the stories of undocumented youth and their families who are desperate to earn their citizenship in the only country they've ever called home, the United States of America. The 30-minute film, which has been screened hundreds of times on college campuses and community gatherings, was created to keep the focus on Congress to pass immigration reform.

Alejandro Morales (featured in *The Dream is Now*) graduated from Marine Math and Science Academy in 2012, and has always dreamed of becoming a Marine Corps officer. He came to the US from Mexico when he was 7 months old. In high school, he participated in the Drill Team and as a junior he became the Drill Team Commander, earning numerous team and individual awards along the way. In 2011 he was Camp Commander for the Junior Cadet Leadership Challenge. As a junior, he joined the City Corps Staff and as a senior he became the Staff Commander. For the 2011-2012 school year, he was promoted to Cadet Brigadier General, the highest ranking cadet in the city, and leader of the city's 11,000 JROTC cadets.

To view the film and to learn more about the Dream is Now campaign, visit www.TheDreamIsNow.org and to view the trailer, go to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tUx62UBoOoU>.

The Illinois DREAM Fund is a non-profit organization utilizing private dollars to award scholarships to undocumented immigrants throughout Illinois. The Illinois DREAM Fund Scholarship seeks to create access to financial resources to further the growth and development for the immigrant leaders of tomorrow. With the generous offering of private donors and in-kind donations, the Illinois DREAM Fund scholarship provides scholarships for undocumented students throughout Illinois, who are incoming freshmen or current undergraduates that possess at least a 2.5 GPA (on a 4 point scale). For more information on the Illinois DREAM Fund please visit: www.illinoisdreamfund.org

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