



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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URBAN GATEWAYS LAUNCHES MUSICIANCORPS PROGRAM IN CHICAGO Sept. 22 Concert Marks Start of National "Musical PeaceCorps"

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS –Urban Gateways: Center for Arts Education will announce the Chicago launch of the national **MusicianCorps** program on Tuesday, September 22 at 6:00 p.m., as part of an all-ages concert event and launch party in Homan Park, 2140 S. Homan Avenue.

MusicianCorps is a "musical Peace Corps" that is being piloted in four cities: Chicago, New Orleans, Seattle and the San Francisco Bay Area. It was established by the service organization Music National Service (MNS), which is headed up by CEO & Founder Kiff Gallagher, a successful musician and national service veteran who served in the Clinton White House and on the Obama campaign's National Arts Policy Committee. In Chicago, the MusicianCorps program will be managed locally by Urban Gateways, a non-profit that has worked to provide Chicago-area children with equitable access to the arts since 1961.

Drawing inspiration from other service programs such as AmeriCorps and Teach for America, MusicianCorps recruits and trains talented musicians to provide a year of music-driven service in low-income communities and under-resourced public schools. Chicago's six MusicianCorps Fellows will serve the following communities: Back of the Yards, Bucktown, Englewood, Garfield Ridge, Humboldt Park, North Lawndale and South Chicago.

"At Urban Gateways, we believe that creative expression enriches the learning process and therefore all children should have the opportunity to engage in meaningful artistic experiences on an ongoing basis. That is why we have partnered with MNS to bring MusicianCorps to Chicago. The Fellows will improve the quality of life within the communities they serve and prepare our young people with the creativity and innovation they'll need to succeed in the 21st century," said Julie F. Simpson, Urban Gateways Executive Director.

As an MNS affiliate organization, Urban Gateways is responsible for raising \$300,000 to fund Chicago's MusicianCorps program. Currently about two-thirds of that money has been raised through individual donations, foundation funding and contributions from other local partners that support MNS. The local partners include: Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE), Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs, Chicago Park District, Chicago Public Schools, Columbia College Chicago and the YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago.

Chicago's MusicianCorps Launch Party will include an official announcement by Urban Gateways and MNS representatives, a performance by Chicago's MusicianCorps Fellows and a World Music Festival concert sponsored by the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs featuring Cameroon soul artist Blick Bassy.

Media interested in attending the event should contact Becky Schneck Allen at Urban Gateways – bschneckallen@urbangateways.org / 312.445.2749.

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