



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT ANNOUNCES SHOWTIME® IS DONATING \$500,000 FOR SOUTH AND WEST SIDE NEIGHBORHOOD BEAUTIFICATION AND ARTS PROJECTS**

*Donation to Greencorps Chicago green job training program and Chicago Public Art Group focuses on Chicago neighborhoods where the network's critically acclaimed drama series "The Chi" is filmed*

**CHICAGO** – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot joined Puja Vohra, Executive Vice President of Marketing and Strategy for SHOWTIME, and cast members from its Chicago-based hit show "The Chi," along with community leaders, today to announce a \$500,000 donation from the network to the City's Greencorps Chicago green job training program and the Chicago Public Art Group. The funding will support and invest in the City's South and West sides, which have served as key locations for the SHOWTIME drama series "The Chi," created by Lena Waithe, for four seasons. The grant will pay for the clean-up and beautification of 32 empty lots and six accompanying art installations in Bronzeville and North Lawndale, areas that are part of Mayor Lightfoot's INVEST South/West initiative that is designed to revitalize community areas in Chicago that have suffered from a legacy of under-investment.

"From vibrantly depicting our city's neighborhoods on 'The Chi' to now investing in our city's sustainability, employment and art initiatives, SHOWTIME has demonstrated its commitment to supporting and uplifting our residents," said Mayor Lightfoot. "This donation will make a real difference in our communities and strengthen two of our greatest community-based programs, which are doing incredible work to improve Chicago. I want to thank SHOWTIME for their investment and for continuing to play an important role in the resurgence of our city's TV and film industry, which remains one of the largest and most diverse in the country."

Mayor Lightfoot made the announcement at a lot that is being cleaned and greened on Ogden Avenue in North Lawndale. One of the six new art installations, created by artists Damon Lamar Reed, Dorian Sylvain, and Delilah Salgado, was unveiled during the event. The city-owned lots being beautified were selected based on SHOWTIME filming locations for "The Chi." The grant will also pay for maintaining the lots for



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several years.

“For four seasons, Chicago has been a gracious home to our drama series ‘The Chi,’ and we wanted to find a way to give back to the city,” said Vohra. “We hope that the grant announced today will meaningfully contribute to this diverse and vital neighborhood as well as its vibrant arts community.”

Showtime Networks Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Viacom CBS Inc., owns and operates the premium service SHOWTIME®, which features critically acclaimed original series, provocative documentaries, box-office hit films, comedy and music specials and hard-hitting sports.

The Chicago Film Office continues to strengthen the City’s TV & Film industry as a key component of the mayor’s economic recovery strategy. Filming in 2019 resulted in an economic impact of \$560 million, and 51% of local crew hires were women or minorities.

The Film Office is part of the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) and leads the City’s efforts to attract and enhance the production of feature films, television series, commercials, documentaries, and all forms of local screen entertainment. For filmmakers, it is a one-stop liaison for all City of Chicago production needs, including permits, City services, and logistical support. For more information, visit [chicagofilmoffice.us](http://chicagofilmoffice.us).

Greencorps Chicago is the City’s paid, green industry training program for individuals with barriers to employment that is run by the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT). The mission of Greencorps is to empower residents from Chicago’s underserved neighborhoods to create change in their lives and communities through training, service, and career opportunities in environmental fields.

The Chicago Public Art Group is a non-profit organization that brings artists and communities together to produce high-quality public art. Over its 50-year history, the Chicago Public Art Group has produced hundreds of public art projects with neighborhood groups, community development organizations, churches, schools, and social service agencies.

"Greencorps Chicago and CDOT are excited for the opportunity to leverage this donation from SHOWTIME to expand our impact on the South and West Sides while providing essential training and a career path to Chicagoans," said CDOT Commissioner Gia Biagi. "Our team is looking forward to rolling up our sleeves and turning these lots into assets in these communities."



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Greencorps trainees earn \$15-an-hour and receive on-the-job training in the field and classroom. Field training takes place while working on projects at the Chicago Park District, the Cook County Forest Preserves, City vacant lots, and other projects.

“We are thrilled to partner with the City of Chicago and SHOWTIME to create public art on newly beautified lots that celebrates the vibrant communities of Bronzeville and North Lawndale while supporting the talent of our local and affiliated artists,” said Chicago Public Art Group Executive Director Chantal Healey.

Chicago Public Art Group, artists Damon Lamar Reed, Dorian Sylvain, and Delilah Salgado, will revitalize south and west side neighborhoods with six mural installations. The art, which is scheduled for completion at the end of August will be located alongside vacant lots in Bronzeville and North Lawndale. *Chicago-Cool* is the mural that launches the series which is rooted in the duality of the city.

“We began our series by celebrating the youth of Chicago that are inspiring a new cultural wave throughout the city,” said artist Dorian Sylvain.

“We are a city that is sophisticated yet grassroots, international yet local, contemporary yet old-school, said artist Damon Lamar Reed. “We are a community of neighborhoods, yet we celebrate as one city.”

“Young organizers and activists are building bridges connecting communities building a stronger Chicago,” said artist Delilah Salgado.

Damon Lamar Reed is a graduate of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. He has created over 200 public art projects including: works for Superbowl 46 and pieces that are featured in documentaries, commercials, and books such as, Kym Pinders', *Painting the Gospel*. Damon is a true believer in the POWER of art and its ability to create change.

Dorian Sylvain has been engaged in collective artmaking, education, and elevating neighborhood and environmental aesthetics for four decades.

Delilah "Zena" Salgado is a multidisciplinary artist, curator, and co-founder of Mujeres Mutantes Artist Collective. During a recent year-long residency at the Hyde Park Art Center, Salgado created the mural, *Beautiful Journey*.

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