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**MAYOR EMANUEL, CHICAGO PARK DISTRICT INVITE YOUTH BASEBALL, SOFTBALL TEAMS
TO REGISTER STARTING TOMORROW FOR FIRST ANNUAL CITYWIDE TOURNAMENT**

Donations from Chicago Cubs, Chicago White Sox allowed for creation of citywide tournament

As part of an effort to provide Chicago children with more opportunities to participate in organized baseball and softball, Mayor Rahm Emanuel and the Chicago Park District today announced that registration for the first annual citywide youth baseball and softball tournament opens tomorrow, Wednesday, July 22 at 8 am. This tournament is made possible through donations made by the Chicago Cubs and the Chicago White Sox.

“Organized athletics like youth baseball and softball teach kids the skills that will serve them well both on the field and in the classroom,” said Mayor Emanuel. “I’m pleased that Chicago’s major league baseball teams have come together to help us create the first citywide baseball and softball tournament, which complements the capital investments we’ve been making in parks to enrich the quality of life of all Chicagoans.”

This year’s tournament will host 32 youth baseball teams and eight youth softball teams and will be held at UIC on August 21, 22 and 23. First round match-ups will provide opportunities for leagues from throughout the city to compete, with a post-game meal provided to strengthen relationships between kids and communities. Saturday night’s games will conclude with a movie in the park at dusk. Championship games will be held August 29 and 30.

As announced last year by the Mayor and the Chicago Park District, the Chicago Cubs and Chicago White Sox provided \$250,000 each – a total of a half of a million dollars – to allow for an expansion of baseball and softball programming. This five year commitment by the Cubs and White Sox, in partnership with the Chicago Parks Foundation, has allowed for the establishment of this annual-city-wide baseball and softball tournament.

“The Chicago White Sox and Chicago Cubs have stepped up for youth in Chicago by making this tournament possible,” said Michael P. Kelly, Chicago Park District Superintendent and CEO. “These

programming investments and capital improvements are opening doors for youth baseball and softball participation across the city.”

Currently, more than 50,000 youth in Chicago participate in baseball and softball annually at more than 80 Chicago Park District parks. In addition to the citywide baseball and softball tournament, the \$500,000 investment by the Cubs and White Sox will allow the Park District to support community based youth baseball and softball in Chicago parks through clinics, camps and trainings for coaches.

“The Chicago Cubs are proud to join Mayor Emanuel, the Chicago Park District and the White Sox to create the first ever citywide youth baseball and softball tournament,” said Cubs Chairman Tom Ricketts. “Through our continued efforts to support Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities (RBI), little leagues and the thousands of Chicago children who play baseball and softball, we showcase the strong support for our sport and the joys of playing baseball all summer long. We look forward to seeing talent from all Chicago neighborhoods and communities come together in a great tournament.”

"The game of baseball has been woven into the fabric of Chicago's history and community, creating memories for fans of all ages on and off the field," said White Sox Chairman Jerry Reinsdorf. "The White Sox are passionate about increasing opportunities to play baseball among Chicago's youth through programs like our Amateur City Elite (ACE) program and Chicagoland Little League Initiative. It's why we are proud to join the City of Chicago and the Chicago Cubs to support a long-term youth baseball program and keep a shared love for the game alive in our city for many more generations to come."

Registration is limited to one team per league and must be received by Friday, July 31 at 5 pm. Players must be 11 or 12 years old. To register, visit <http://www.chicagoparksfoundation.org/playball/>.

Mayor Emanuel previously announced \$17 million in capital improvements to support youth baseball and softball, featuring artificial turf fields at Southwest Elementary School, Clark Park, Amundsen Park, Kelly Park, Columbus Park, Palmer Park, Tuley Park and Jackie Robinson Park.

For more information, visit www.chicagoparkdistrict.com or call 312.742.PLAY, 312.747.2001 (TTY).

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The Chicago Park District is the 2014 Gold Medal Award winner, recognized for excellence in park and recreation management across the nation. For more information about the Chicago Park District's more than 8,300 acres of parkland, 585 parks, 26 miles of lakefront, 12 museums, two world-class conservatories, 16 historic lagoons, nearly 50 nature areas, thousands of special events, sports and entertaining programs, please visit www.chicagoparkdistrict.com or contact the Chicago Park District at 312/742.PLAY or 312/747.2001 (TTY). Want to share your talent? Volunteer in the parks by calling, 312/742.PLAY.