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Fifth Graders Create Living Map in Celebration of the Burnham Plan Centennial

76 Big Shoulders Fund schools to create 30'x35' map of Chicago

CHICAGO – April 23, 2009 – In honor of the Burnham Plan Centennial, 152 fifth grade students from 76 of Chicago's Catholic schools, which are part of the Big Shoulders Fund network, assembled a 30'x35' artistic mixed media map of Chicago as a culmination of a yearlong project.

Each school was assigned a distinct Chicago neighborhood at the start of the school year, along with a set of pen pal schools located within that neighborhood to help research and visit the community. The goal of the yearlong project was to engage students across cultural, ethnic and geographic divides of the city to mark the Centennial of Daniel Burnham's *Plan of Chicago*, while encouraging them to think creatively and productively about the history and future for all the city neighborhoods.

Each school's fifth grade class generated a final project—including a report and a mixed-media map of one of Chicago's 77 defined historic neighborhoods. The individual pieces, generously created and printed to scale by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), fit together to form the paper tapestry.

"We're thrilled to see these young people demonstrating such passion for the communities and region where they live," said Randy Blankenhorn, executive director of the CMAP. "Our GO TO 2040 comprehensive regional planning campaign is about securing a bright future for them by addressing today's challenges before they become tomorrow's problems."

Each neighborhood map was constructed by the students assigned to investigate and learn about that community throughout the year. The paper tapestry of the city was then illustrated by more than 1,600 fifth graders from across the city representing every community.

"It is transformational to see our students not only reflecting on the city and their own community," said Joshua Hale, executive director of the Big Shoulders Fund, "but also moving beyond their own boundaries to meet other students from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds to get to know them including their similarities and differences. And today students had the chance to take that knowledge to learn how to shape their own futures, as well as their communities, our city, and beyond. We are so grateful to the Burnham Plan Centennial and CMAP for helping us to make our idea and vision a reality."

The Burnham Plan Centennial provided curricular support and encouragement to allow every fifth grader in the inner-city Catholic schools to learn about the *Plan of Chicago*, understand the purpose of local and regional planning, visit communities across the city, and assert their own hopes and dreams for the future of Chicago.

Emily Harris, executive director of the Burnham Plan Centennial, noted, "the heart of the Burnham Centennial is to inspire people to think about what our region's future *should* be, and who has more of a vested interested in that issue than today's children? We're proud to see a project as ambitious and inspiring as this come to fruition. Our hope is that our region's leaders take note of what these young people are saying, and harness the drive and ambition to make some of these visions come true, just as civic leaders did with Daniel Burnham and Edward Bennett's original plan 100 years ago."

The assembled mixed media map will be displayed at the Loyola University Museum of Art at a future exhibition to be determined.

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The Big Shoulders Fund

Founded 23 years ago, the Big Shoulders Fund is a private, non-profit that has raised over \$172 million to support the Catholic schools in the neediest areas of inner-city Chicago. 100% of the funds raised by the Big Shoulders Fund are used to support children through scholarships, special education programs, instructional equipment, school facility improvements, faculty support, and operating grants. To learn more, visit www.bigshouldersfund.org.

The Burnham Plan Centennial

The Burnham Plan Centennial and its more than 250 partner organizations are offering hundreds of ways for the people of Chicago's three-state metropolitan region to dream big and plan boldly. This 100th anniversary of the *Plan of Chicago* is once again stirring a diverse community to action on a grand scale – building the best possible quality of life for all. See what you can do at www.BurnhamPlan100.org. And aim high!

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP)

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) was created to integrate planning for land use and transportation in the seven counties of northeastern Illinois: Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, and Will. By state and federal law, CMAP is responsible for producing the region's official, integrated plan for land use and transportation. The GO TO 2040 planning campaign will develop and implement strategies to address projected growth in population and employment and their serious implications for transportation, housing, economic development, open space, the environment, and natural resources. See www.cmap.illinois.gov or www.goto2040.com for more information.

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