

For Immediate Release

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31 News Projects to Cover West & South Sides

Local Reporting in Low-Income Communities Gets Boost from \$110,000 Fund

April 4, 2011 (Chicago) The Chicago Community Trust announced 31 Local Reporting Awards through its Community News Matters program totaling \$110,000 for reporting on a variety of important issues affecting Chicago's low-income areas, from the plight of black men in a recession to the impact of federal health care reform on West and South Side residents.

"High-quality journalism and analysis is vital to public discourse," says Ngoan Le, vice president of program at the Trust, the region's community foundation. "We hope this burst of reporting will ensure that the needs and perspectives of the city's poorest communities are heard and understood at this critical time."

The Community Media Workshop and *The Chicago Reporter* are helping the Trust administer the Local Reporting Awards, part of the Trust's [Community News Matters](#) program, which seeks to increase the flow of truthful, accurate and insightful local news and information and help the region's cutting edge innovators develop new models for providing news and information. It is funded by [The Chicago Community Trust](#), [the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation](#), [the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation](#), [the McCormick Foundation](#), [the Richard H. Driehaus Foundation](#), and the [Woods Fund of Chicago](#).

"We're excited about the breadth of issues, voices, expertise and communities represented in this group of reporting projects," says Alden Loury, publisher of *The Chicago Reporter*. Award winners include individuals, nonprofit organizations and for-profit companies with expertise in either journalism or Chicago's community issues. The 31 winners were chosen from among 108 proposals for a total of \$620,000.

Le noted that at a time of significant budgetary pressures and a shift in leadership in city, county and state government, the Local Reporting Awards should produce in 2011 a burst of impactful relevant coverage of, by, and for Chicago's low-income neighborhoods on the south and west sides that sheds light on current and future decision-making.

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While stimulating new reporting and new voices in the nation's third largest media market, the initiative will also capitalize on the shifting media landscape by developing new ways and channels to spread high-quality, civically relevant information and build interest and engagement among citizens.

"We expect to expand the audience for these community stories by helping their creators publish through many traditional channels and online platforms," reports Thom Clark, president of the Community Media Workshop.

The awards are a direct response to the findings of a 2010 Community News Matters research report that discovered people in the Chicago area do not feel they know enough about the region's challenges and that residents of low-income South Side and West Side neighborhoods are especially concerned that traditional news organizations do not cover relevant issues in their communities.

www.communitynewsmatters.org

About The Chicago Community Trust

For 95 years, The Chicago Community Trust, our region's community foundation, has connected the generosity of donors with community needs by making grants to organizations working to improve metropolitan Chicago. In 2010, the Trust, together with its donors, granted more than \$100 million to nonprofit organizations: developing new audiences to sustain Chicago's vibrant arts organizations, protecting the human success safety net for those hardest hit by the recession, stemming the devastating effects of foreclosures on our communities, elevating teaching to meet world class standards; and improving conditions for healthy and active lifestyles. To learn more, visit www.cct.org.

About the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation promotes excellence in journalism worldwide and invests in the vitality of the U.S. communities where the Knight brothers owned newspapers. Knight Foundation focuses on projects with the potential to create transformational change. For more information, visit www.knightfoundation.org.

About the Community Media Workshop

Since 1989, Community Media Workshop has worked to diversify the voices in news and public debates by providing communications coaching for grassroots, arts and other nonprofit organizations and by sourcing grassroots and community news for journalists. Connecting the community with media, the Workshop promotes news that matters. The Workshop will help maximize the distribution of award winners' work. www.communitymediaworkshop.org

About The Chicago Reporter

The Chicago Reporter's investigations engage leaders and concerned citizens in critical issues – all with a unique focus on race and poverty. The bimonthly print and online newsmagazine serves as an important watchdog of government and other institutions. Now in its 39th year, its pioneering use of sophisticated data analysis, multimedia features and compelling personal accounts influences agendas. *The Reporter* will help award winners maximize the editorial quality of the work. www.chicagoreporter.com/

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