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Contact: Karen E. Pride, Asst. Press Secretary
(312) 742-9948; kpride@thecha.org

**Chicago Housing Authority Creates Thanksgiving Memories
For Thousands with Annual Tradition**
*Jewel Food Stores, Volunteers Distribute
Turkeys, Gift Cards to Families*

CHICAGO (November 22, 2006) – The holiday season is always one of fun, family and sharing. In accordance with the spirit of giving, the Chicago Housing Authority continued its 22-year tradition Tuesday of providing turkey baskets and trimmings to CHA families.

With an assembly line of dozens of dedicated volunteers, the Annual Thanksgiving basket creation and distribution effort was organized and managed, as always, by Francine Washington, Local Advisory Council president for Stateway Gardens. In addition to 1,000 turkey baskets, the CHA also distributed 500 gift cards, valued at \$25 each, to Housing Choice Voucher families to help with holiday expenses.

“During the season of giving, the Chicago Housing Authority looks forward to this event almost as much as the families benefiting from it,” said CHA CEO Sharon Gist Gilliam who also volunteered at the distribution event. “I am honored to take part in this annual tradition and hope these turkey baskets and gift cards bring a new Thanksgiving tradition to more and more families.”

The Thanksgiving baskets distributed to residents all included one large turkey, stuffing, sweet potatoes, macaroni and cheese, rolls, peas, cranberry sauce, juice and pots and pans needed to cook a family feast.

“During this season of giving, we all have a responsibility to help those who are less fortunate,” said Lauri Sanders, Jewel-Osco director of public affairs. “Jewel-Osco is grateful for the opportunity to make a positive difference by putting food on the tables of those families in our area who need it most.”

The food and gift cards were donated by Jewel-Osco Food Stores, the National Conference for Community and Justice, Windows of Opportunity, the non-profit partner of the CHA that works to support families’ self-sufficiency, CHA Commissioner Dr. Mildred Harris and God’s First Ministries and from the attendees of a fundraiser and farewell tribute to former CHA CEO Terry Peterson. The baskets were distributed at the Central Advisory Council’s Headquarters on Chicago’s South Side.

“NCCJ is again pleased to partner with CHA and Windows in providing food baskets for Chicago’s public housing families and seniors,” said Barbara Abrajano, executive director of NCCJ of Chicago and Greater Illinois. “This is a special time of the season to come together, share and give thanks. NCCJ is grateful to the many faith communities involved with us to make this happen each year.”

The Chicago Housing Authority is a sister agency under the administration of the Mayor of the City of Chicago. Ninety-eight percent of its funding is from the U. S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development.

The CHA is currently in the eighth year of its 15-year Plan for Transformation, a multi-billion dollar project designed to rebuild or rehab a total of 25,000 apartments for public housing families and seniors. It is the largest reconstruction effort of public housing in U.S. history. The CHA is providing housing for every resident who was lease-compliant as of 10/1/99 and better access to services like job training, day care and drug treatment, which can lead to meaningful economic opportunities. The Plan is changing the dynamic of and reshaping some of Chicago's most desolate neighborhoods. It is also assisting public housing residents to improve their lives and those of their children by creating pathways to self-sufficiency.

For more information on services and programs available to residents please visit www.thecha.org.

Caption: Denise Wright, left, a resident of the Chicago Housing Authority's Stateway Gardens, gets a Thanksgiving basket from CHA CEO Sharon Gist Gilliam, right, and Derek Hill, CHA press secretary, on Nov. 21 at the CHA Central Advisory Council offices, 243 E. 32nd St. Wright was one on 1,000 CHA residents and 500 Housing Choice Voucher holders who received a turkey and food basket or \$25 gift card for the holiday. The 22nd annual event was sponsored by Windows of Opportunity, the CHA's non-profit partner; Jewel – Osco; the National Conference for Community and Justice of Greater Illinois; and CHA Commissioner Dr. Mildred Harris and God's First Ministries. The event was organized by Francine Washington, Local Advisory Council president for Stateway Gardens. Washington has organized hundreds of volunteers to help deliver the baskets since 1984.



Courtesy Wick Swanton/MK Communications



Caption: Chicago Housing Authority Commissioner Sandra Young, left, and Stateway Gardens Local Advisory Council president Francine Washington, check out one of the 1,000 turkeys being added to Thanksgiving food baskets for CHA residents.

Courtesy Karen Pride/CHA