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CHA Distributed 5,000 Coats to Families, Children at 16th Annual Operation Warm

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The Chicago Housing Authority partnered with the national non-profit Operation Warm for the 16th year Saturday at the UIC Forum, handing out 5,000 new winter coats to more than 2,000 families with children living in public housing and participants of the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program.

In addition to receiving a coat, kids were able to choose from 12,000 new books to take home courtesy of the National Book Foundation and HUD's Book Rich Environments Initiative. There was also a resource fair with 30 organizations offering services and giveaways to pre-registered families.

CHA's partnership with Operation Warm has resulted in a total of 121,000 coats being distributed to 35,000 families over 16 years.

Angela Hurlock, Chairwoman of the CHA Board of Commissioners, said: "As a volunteer for many neighborhood, family and educational causes, and as a volunteer teacher, I am thrilled to see CHA participate in these philanthropic causes. But it's also a challenge, as the needs are great. That's why partnerships like this one with Operation Warm are so vital."

Silver Sponsors for the 16th annual Operation Warm were: Molina Healthcare, ComEd and T-Mobile/Assurance Wireless. Bronze Sponsors were: Aetna, AT&T, Nan McKay & Associates, CVR, BCBSIL, Old National Bank, Pepsico and RSM.

Thirty organizations participated in the Service Fair. Among the highlights:

Pepsico distributed bags of grocery products

- Chicago Department of Public Health provided free COVID-19 and flu vaccinations/boosters
- League of Women Voters registered people to vote
- The City Clerk's Office provided onsite City Key card services
- City Colleges of Chicago provided information on how CHA residents can attend for free.
- Shea Moisture distributed free personal care products.

- Sister agencies Chicago Public Schools, Chicago Public Library, After School Matters and Chicago Park District participated.
- CHA's Digital Inclusion team promoted affordable internet access along with sponsors AT&T and T-Mobile.
- CHA's WORC office promoted workforce and resident-owned business programs and initiatives.

Gwenetta Simmons has attended Operation Warm for several years. She is often among the first registrants.

"It helps that I don't have to go out in the cold in November to get his coat," said Simmons, who got her sixth-grader a new coat this year. "And he loves the books."

Photo caption (left to right): Rich Lalley, Partnership Director at Operation Warm; Chief Resident Services Officer Mary Howard; Richard J. Monocchio, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Office of Public and Indian Housing; and Angela Hurlock, Chairwoman of the CHA's Board of Commissioners.