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25th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act will be a time to focus on the Chicago region's commitment to advancing civil rights of people with disabilities

Prominent civic leaders join dynamic initiative planned for 2015

CHICAGO—July 21, 2014—The Chicago Community Trust, our region's community foundation, is proud to be the lead funder of ADA 25 Chicago, a new initiative that will commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 2015 and leverage the milestone to ensure greater inclusion, empowerment and opportunities for people with disabilities in metropolitan Chicago.

Prominent civic leaders and disability advocates have recently signed on as honorary co-chairs of ADA 25 Chicago, including:

- Jack Catlin, member of the Trust's Executive Committee and founding partner of LCM Architects, a Chicago-based architectural and accessibility consulting firm
- Rep. Tammy Duckworth
- King Harris, member of the Trust's Executive Committee and chairman of Harris Holdings, Inc.
- Glenn Tilton, member of the Trust's Trustees Committee and retired chairman of the board of United Continental Holdings, Inc.

The co-chairs will engage the business and civic leadership community in ADA 25 Chicago.

"When President George H.W. Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities Act into law 24 years ago, he said, 'Let the shameful walls of exclusion come tumbling down.' Since then, the disability community has made great strides and removed many barriers," Catlin says. "However, there is still a long road ahead in providing equal rights and opportunities for people with disabilities."

"I am pleased that the Trust is working to renew the promise of the ADA here in Chicago and nationally by launching the ADA 25 Chicago initiative, which is dedicated to improving the rights and opportunities for people with disabilities," says Catlin, who announced the initiative on July 19 at the Disability Pride Parade in Chicago.

ADA 25 Chicago seeks to celebrate the contributions of people with disabilities while also improving the quality of life and equality of opportunity for them—an area often

considered the last frontier of civil rights. The initiative will launch legacy projects around education, employment or community living for people with disabilities.

ADA 25 Chicago also plans to secure commitments, both financial and actionable, from public and private companies to advance opportunities for people with disabilities.

In addition, ADA 25 Chicago will hold events and activities throughout the region from July 2015 to December 2015 to increase civic engagement and build awareness of the contributions of people with disabilities to our region.

A key component of ADA 25 Chicago will be a Partners Network consisting of organizations working in fields such as disability rights, business, arts and culture, and education. These partners will host events that raise awareness and/or create or expand programs that advance the equality, inclusion and empowerment of people with disabilities.

The Trust has awarded a \$1 million grant to support ADA 25 Chicago, an initiative that promotes diversity and inclusion—core values of the Trust. The community foundation believes that a community's strengths are found in its differences. As such, the Trust and the Persons with Disabilities Fund, an identity-focused fund at the Trust, have long been committed to ensuring that people with disabilities enjoy full inclusion in the civic, social and economic life of the community.

For more information about ADA 25 Chicago, please contact Emily Harris, executive director of ADA 25 Chicago, at eharris@cct.org. You can also visit www.cct.org/ada25chicago.

About The Chicago Community Trust

The Chicago Community Trust, our region's community foundation, partners with donors to leverage their philanthropy in ways that transform lives and communities. The Trust, together with its donors, granted more \$161 million in 2013 to nonprofits working to develop new audiences to sustain metropolitan Chicago's vibrant arts organizations, protect the human services safety net for those hardest hit by the recession, stem the devastating effects of foreclosures on our neighborhoods, elevate teaching to meet world-class standards, improve conditions for healthy and active lifestyles, and safeguard the region's natural resources. By connecting the generosity of donors with the needs of the community, the Trust ensures that our region thrives today and for future generations. For more information about the Trust, please visit www.cct.org.

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