



**For Immediate Release**  
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**MADIGAN, WHITE, CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS, LAW  
ENFORCEMENT AND COMMUNITY GROUPS LAUNCH  
CAMPAIGN AGAINST TEEN VIOLENCE AND AGAINST YOUTH  
DRUG, ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO USE**

Chicago – Working with Secretary of State Jesse White, the Chicago Public Schools, law enforcement organizations and community groups, Attorney General Lisa Madigan launched the “Not Me” program, an initiative to curb teen violence and prevent youth drug, alcohol and tobacco use. Today, Madigan, White, State Sen. Don Harmon (D-39th), State Rep. Deborah Graham (D-78th), Chicago Public Schools (CPS) Board President Rufus Williams, and Chicago Police First Deputy Superintendent James Jackson participated in a ceremony at Douglass Academy High School in Chicago’s Austin neighborhood on the West Side in which more than 60 students marked the completion of the CPS Freshman Connection program and joined the new “Not Me” campaign.

The “Not Me” campaign is designed to raise awareness among teens of the dangers of drug, alcohol and tobacco use and violence and encourage them to make positive choices to avoid these dangers and focus on their education. Through the “Not Me” campaign, teens take a pledge in which they promise to focus on their education and not to participate in violence, drinking, smoking or drugs.

The 60 students at Douglass Academy are among more than 3,000 CPS students who today are completing participation in the Freshman Connection program, designed to help students transition into high school. All 3,000 of these students also signed the “Not Me” pledge as part of their commitment to focus on their high school education and steer clear of the dangers of drugs, alcohol, tobacco and violence.

“Far too often, our young people are experiencing devastating violence and seeing the terrible impacts of drug and alcohol abuse,” said Attorney General Madigan. “This program is an effort to encourage and empower teens to choose education over violence, drugs, alcohol and smoking. The students here at Douglass Academy and in high schools across the city are taking a very positive step toward a better future by investing their energy in school and committing to stay away from violence, drugs, drinking and smoking.”

The “Not Me” campaign is a collaborative effort with the Chicago Public Schools, Secretary of State Jesse White and several community groups – all of which will, over the coming weeks, work with young people to take the “Not Me” pledge and raise awareness of the dangers of violence and drug, alcohol and tobacco use. For example, the “Not Me” pledge and t-shirts will be distributed to the Illinois State Alliance of YMCA’s for integration into their pre-teen and teen programming and to youth programs throughout the state.

“I have seen through the Jesse White Tumbling Team how as a society we can have a positive impact on our young people. I want to commend the people who are participating in “Not Me”, and to encourage as many of our youth as possible to get involved in this program,” said Secretary White.

CPS Board President Rufus Williams said, “The transition from 8th to 9th grade is probably the most important time in a student’s education. We started Freshman Connection to help our students get a head-start on the critical transition to high school, and the ‘Not Me’ program really helps drive home the importance of making the right decisions away from school. I’d like to commend the students who participated in Freshman Connection for their commitment to their education, and I’d like to thank the Attorney General for her support of our students through the ‘Not Me’ campaign.”

“The commitment these young adults are making at a critical point in their lives will lead them to create positive relationships and safe communities,” said Chicago Police Department’s First Deputy Superintendent James Jackson. “Youth are saying they are going to be part of the solution, and we support their pledge to refuse activities that contribute to violence.”

Douglass Academy is located in the legislative districts of State Sen. Harmon and State Rep. Graham.

“It is inspiring to see the commitment of these students to ending violence through individual action,” said Sen. Harmon. “We who are elected to represent them must match that commitment.”

“It’s time to end the reality that these kids have to face every day that they could be seriously hurt or even killed in their neighborhoods, their schools, their homes,” said Rep. Graham. “I am proud to stand with them and, ‘say not here, not us, no more violence.’”

The Illinois Children’s Healthcare Foundation, Illinois Council Against Handgun Violence, Illinois Violence Prevention Authority and Northern Trust sponsored the campaign.

“We are pleased to provide resources that directly support the efforts of our young people to make positive choices,” said Kelly Dibble, senior vice president and director of public affairs for Northern Trust.