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The Chicago Community Trust Announces 2006 Fellowship for Community Leaders

Sabbatical Strengthens Chicago's Not-For-Profit Leadership and Cultivates New Ideas to Benefit the Community

CHICAGO, Nov. 15, 2005-The Chicago Community Trust has named Patricia Abrams and Jose "Pepe" Vargas to the 2006 Fellowship for Community Leaders program. The two were chosen for their community leadership skills and accomplishments as well as their plans to develop and implement new ideas to help strengthen Chicago.

"The Fellowship for Community Leaders program identifies and nurtures outstanding not-for-profit and public sector leaders and helps them to better serve the Chicago metropolitan area," said Terry Mazany, president and chief executive officer of The Chicago Community Trust. "The goal is for Fellows to return to their chosen fields with greater leadership capacity and skills."

The program allows individuals to take time from their day-to-day work to pursue a self-directed course of learning, travel, observation and reflection. Fellows receive a stipend from the Trust that covers both their salary and benefits during the eight- to fifteen-month fellowship and the expenses incurred during the fellowship time. Past Fellows include: Tom Behrens of The Night Ministry, Helen Doria of the Chicago Park District, Connie Evans of the Women's Self-Employment Project, Raphael Ravelo of the Erie Neighborhood House and Laura Washington, currently a professor at DePaul University and columnist with the *Chicago Sun-Times*.

Patricia Abrams is executive director for The Renaissance Collaborative, a housing and supportive services agency in Chicago's historic Bronzeville neighborhood on the south side. During her fellowship, she will explore the dramatic increase of grandparents raising grandchildren, as well as the support systems available to and the challenges these families face. In addition to researching current policies and programs, Pat will visit various agencies, legislative bodies and advocacy groups around the country. Her goal is to use this information to develop services for the needs of such families, in Bronzeville and elsewhere in Chicago.

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Pepe Vargas is founder and executive director of the International Latino Cultural Center of Chicago, which promotes Latino cultures through events like the acclaimed Chicago Latino Film Festival and other artistic offerings. While he has led this organization since its inception in 1986, his training has been mostly on-the-job. Pepe will use his fellowship to more formally build his leadership skills through coursework, consulting with colleagues and observing best practices around the world with the goal of growing the Center to serve as the cultural hub of the region's large and diverse Latino community.

About the Trust

The Chicago Community Trust and affiliates form the region's community foundation, helping local residents manage their charitable giving. Celebrating its 90th anniversary this year, the Trust is a union of numerous gifts, bequests and other contributions totaling more than \$1.3 billion. Income from these assets provides more than \$83 million annually in grants to agencies that improve the lives of the residents of our region through arts funding, community development, education improvement, health and wellness, and to assure that basic human needs are met for all members of our community. Learn more about the Trust at www.cct.org.

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