

Advanced Parent Leadership: Working With the Media

Sample Press Release

(On Organizational Letterhead)

For immediate release
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Parents and Students Demand Recess as They Celebrate “National Recess Week”

What: National Recess Week Press Conference and Action

When: Friday, September 22, 2006 at 11:30 am

Where: Von Humboldt Elementary School, 2620 West Hirsch

On Friday, September 22, 2006, Chicago parents and students from across the city will gather at Von Humboldt Elementary School (2620 West Hirsch) in honor of “National Recess Week,” as declared by the Cartoon Network to call upon the Chicago Public Schools to reinstate recess. “Our kids need recess in order to be better students. They need time to exercise, socialize and blow off some steam. Then they can return to class more focused and ready to learn,” said Nelly Torres, mother of three students at Von Humboldt school and POWER-PAC IL co-chair.

For the last year POWER-PAC IL, *Parents Organized to Win, Educate and Renew – Policy Action Council*, has been urging Chicago Public School officials to bring back recess in the district’s elementary schools, as currently 82% of the Chicago public elementary schools don’t have recess. Parents at Von Humboldt school have collected over 300 signatures of parents, students and teachers that support recess bringing back recess at their school. Within the last year, a handful of Chicago schools have reinstated recess, including Nicholson Elementary in Englewood and Mitchell Elementary in West Town. However, parents believe that recess should be reinstated in all Chicago elementary schools.

“We are thrilled that National Recess Week is raising up this issue at the national level. Many people who live in Chicago are shocked when they learn that the majority of Chicago elementary schools don’t have recess. If we as adults get breaks during our workdays, how is it that our children don’t? It’s time to let our kids be kids!” said Lynn Morton, parent in the Austin community and co-chair of POWER-PAC IL.

As part of their *Recess for All!* Campaign, POWER-PAC IL has collected over 50 endorsements from organizations and politicians throughout Chicago, such as: Aldermen Rey Colon, Emma Mitts, and Theodore Thomas; State Representatives Mary Flowers and Cynthia Soto; along with the Sinai Children’s Hospital, the Healthy Schools Campaign, and Illinois Action for Children.

POWER-PAC IL, which is staff supported and funded by Community Organizing and Family Issues (COFI), is a group of low-income African-American and Latino parents, mainly mothers and grandmothers, which are working to build a strong voice for low-income and working families in Chicago. POWER-PAC IL and their partners, the Austin Wide Parent Network, Southwest Women Working Together, and West Town Leadership United have pushed forward their *Recess for All!* Campaign.

VISUALS: Children jumping rope, playing four square and playing on playground equipment. Parents and children holding placards, calling for the return of recess.

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