



For Immediate Release

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Americorps Celebrates 20 Years in Chicago, Improving Student Health and Wellness with Strong Partners like Chicago Public Schools and Erie Family Health Center

CHICAGO – March 12, 2015 – March 9-13 is National [AmeriCorps](#) Week and a time to celebrate the service AmeriCorps members provide in order to meet critical needs across the United States. This year, [Chicago Health Corps \(CHC\)](#) AmeriCorps program, a local branch of the National Health Corps and operated locally by the [Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago](#) (PHIMC), celebrates 20 years serving Chicagoland. Through partnerships with strong host sites, CHC fosters healthy communities by connecting those who need it most with health and wellness education, benefits, and services, while developing tomorrow's compassionate health leaders.

A good example of what CHC does on a daily basis is what happened yesterday at the Johnson School of Excellence, an Academy for Urban School Leadership (AUSL) school, that serves the North Lawndale community. In a creative collaboration with Chicago Public Schools (CPS), Johnson is also the site of a full-service [Erie Family Health Center](#) that serves the students, their families, school staff, and anyone who comes into the clinic. CHC member, Mayra Miranda, whose assignment is as a health educator at Erie, taught a class of 6-year olds how to brush their teeth. "The kids and even some of their parents may not know that a healthy mouth is related to overall good health, but we do. That's why it's so important to teach students how to properly brush. The giant mouth and toothbrush are a fun way to provide clear instructions. After serving as a CHC member at Erie, I am more committed than ever to a career empowering communities with the knowledge and resources they need to lead healthy lives."

[Johnson School of Excellence](#) Principal, Alice Henry, adds: "A healthy student is a better learner, and we at Johnson are fortunate to have strong partners in the Erie Family Health Center and the CHC, who provide our families access to critical healthcare services. Our neighboring health center offers families information and resources to keep their students healthy, and flexible access so that the family does not have to travel far for the care they need."

According to [Lee Francis](#), President and CEO of Erie Family Health Center, "Chicago Health Corps gives organizations like Erie the capacity to reach more community members in need of health services and education."

PHIMC Executive Director, [Karen A. Reitan](#), adds, "Building the next generation of public health professionals continues to be a priority for PHIMC, and we are excited to celebrate 20 years of CHC tackling real world health challenges."

PHIMC's partnership with host sites like Erie and CPS help build school capacity to support student health and wellness. During the last service year, CHC members provided health services to over 24,000 people in Chicago communities, over half of those services in CPS.

About Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago

Since 1994 the Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago (PHIMC) has responded to critical health challenges by improving public health capacity and enhancing health care systems. Through program implementation, organizational development, and fiscal management, PHIMC leads efforts to strengthen the public health infrastructure in Illinois. PHIMC partners with public health departments and other government agencies, community-based organizations and advocacy groups, academic and grant-making institutions, and health care providers and associations.

About Erie Family Health Center

Founded on Erie Street in Chicago in 1957, Erie Family Health Center is a community oriented provider of high-quality, compassionate health care services. Serving more than 62,000 medical patients and 9,500 dental patients at 13 centers throughout the city and surrounding suburbs, Erie delivers comprehensive primary medical, dental and behavioral health care that responds to the needs of each community. Erie's highly skilled providers, innovative partnerships and forward-thinking approach make it a national leader for the provision of community-based health care.



Mayra Miranda (left) and Woudnesh Yilma (right), Chicago Health Corps members, serving at Erie Family-Health Center's site at the Johnson School of Excellence, show students at how to properly brush their teeth.



Woudnesh Yilma (left) and Mayra Miranda (right), Chicago Health Corps members, serving at Erie Family-Health Center's site at the Johnson School of Excellence, prepare to show students at how to properly brush their teeth.