



For Immediate Release: November 17, 2009

Media Contacts: Mary May
(312) 744-0576
mmay@cityofchicago.org

Cindy Gatziolis
(312) 744-0573
cgatziolis@cityofchicago.org

CHICAGO'S OWN BONNIE HUNT TO LIGHT THE CITY'S CHRISTMAS TREE

*Presented by Underwriters Laboratories which
Helps Keep Chicago Safe and Bright During the Holidays*

Bonnie Hunt, host of the popular “The Bonnie Hunt Show”, will join Mayor Richard M. Daley and Underwriters Laboratories CEO Keith Williams in lighting this year’s tree on **Daley Plaza**. This year the ceremony will be held on **Wednesday, November 25** beginning at **4:00 p.m.**

Presented by The City of Chicago and Underwriters Laboratories (UL) the **96th Annual Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony** is a highly-anticipated event drawing people of all ages to the heart of Chicago’s downtown “Loop.” Holiday Music will begin at **4:00 p.m.** with the **CPS All-City Elementary Youth Chorus** and the holiday season officially commences at **4:30 p.m.**, when the switch is flipped and the lights shine bright in Daley Plaza.

Homegrown Chicagoan Bonnie Hunt is a versatile and accomplished writer, director, producer and an Emmy®, Golden Globe and SAG Award-nominated actress, earning critical acclaim in film, television and theater. Now in its second season, “The Bonnie Hunt Show” was the winner of the Gracie Award for “Outstanding Talk Show” by the Foundation of Women in Radio and Television after only one season. Hunt has also appeared in many films such as “Rain Man”, “The Green Mile”, “Jerry McGuire”, “Cheaper by the Dozen” and “Return to Me”, which she wrote and directed. To promote holiday safety, Bonnie is teaming up with Underwriters Laboratories to help share tips on how to keep the holidays safe and bright. For a list of safety tips visit www.safetyathome.com.

The Christmas tree this year is very special and will bring back an old tradition to the city. From 1956 until 2008 the City of Chicago Christmas Tree was one large tree created from many smaller trees. This year, for the first time since 1955, the City of Chicago is using one single tree to light up Daley Plaza. The 2009 Christmas tree is a 55 foot Blue Spruce donated to the City of Chicago by the Weivoda Family of Palos Heights, Illinois. Thank you Carol, Harlan, Ian and Kelsey!

Mayor Daley is pleased to welcome back presenting sponsor Underwriters Laboratories (UL) the trusted source for product compliance and safety this holiday season. By seeing a UL Mark on any product purchased, families can trust that those products have met UL’s Safety Standards. “UL is proud to, once again, be the presenting sponsor and official safety partner of the City of Chicago’s annual Christmas tree lighting,” said Underwriters Laboratories CEO Keith Williams. “As a company deeply rooted in the Chicago landscape for more the 115 years, UL is pleased to provide the new star and lights for the tree to help make the Holidays safe and bright.”

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Jolly Old St. Nick will again grace the plaza with his holiday cheer in his Midwest satellite workshop on Daley Plaza! Visits with Santa Claus start on **Wednesday, November 25 at 6:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m.** and with special hours on Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Eve from 11:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Regular hours will begin on Friday, November 27 and continue every Friday, Saturday and Sunday through December 20 from 11:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. (Please note Santa takes a break each day from 3 p.m. - 4 p.m.). Santa will be available for photos so don't forget your personal cameras.

Give a gift to the less fortunate this Holiday Season! On Wednesday, November 28 from 11:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m., The Greater Chicago Food Depository will have containers on the corners of Daley Plaza for non-perishable food collection. Canned or packaged food will be accepted. The Greater Chicago Food Depository, Chicago's food bank, is a nonprofit food distribution and training center providing food for hungry people while striving to end hunger in our community. The Food Depository's programs and services for children, older adults and the unemployed and underemployed address the root causes of hunger. For more information, log onto www.chicagosfoodbank.org or call 773-247-FOOD.

The 96th Annual Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony is presented by the City of Chicago and Underwriters Laboratories. Admission is free. For more information visit www.explorechicago.org/specialevents or call (312) 744-3315.

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