

CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS
NEWS RELEASE
CHICAGO OFFICE OF TOURISM

CHICAGO CULTURAL CENTER • 78 EAST WASHINGTON STREET • CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60602

TEL: (312) 744-2400 • FAX: (312) 744-2359 • TTY: (312) 744-2947

Contact: Kristin Unger
312.742.1080
kristin.unger@cityofchicago.org

**CHICAGO WELCOMES VISITORS FROM ALL 50 STATES AND 75 COUNTRIES TO
THE CITY WITH CHICAGO GREETER
Visitors Using the Service Doubles in Last Year**

The Chicago Office of Tourism's free visitor service, **Chicago Greeter**, highlights more than 40 special interest areas and over 25 neighborhoods for visitors to explore. Since April 2002, **Chicago Greeter** has been a resource for visitors as well as locals entertaining visiting family and friends. Chicago Greeter currently has 180 volunteers, representing dozens of languages. There have been over 7,000 Greeter visits to date, servicing visitors from more than 75 different countries.

Chicago Greeter is designed to match a friendly, enthusiastic, and city knowledgeable local with a visitor for a two to four hour informal, insider orientation to Chicago's sights. Visitors meet with a greeter who takes them around the city and demonstrates its walk-ability and the user-friendliness of its public transportation system. Visitors are matched with greeters through an online registration system based on interests, availability and language.

"**Chicago Greeter** is a great opportunity for visitors to see and learn about the city," said Dorothy Coyle, Director of the Chicago Office of Tourism. "Visitors are introduced to the city with our local volunteer greeters who can give them an unforgettable Chicago experience from a local's perspective. **Chicago Greeter** is a great service for Chicagoans to utilize when they host out-of-town family and friends."

Launched in September 2003, *InstaGreeter* is Chicago Greeter's "on-the-spot" greeter service, offering visitors the opportunity to see downtown Chicago in an hour with a greeter leading free downtown walking visits. Visitors interested in *InstaGreeter* meet at the *InstaGreeter* booth in the Visitor Information Center at the Chicago Cultural Center, 77 E. Randolph Street, on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The visits are limited to families or groups of six or less and conducted on a first come, first served basis. Since August 2003, more than 2,000 *InstaGreeter* visits have been conducted.

Millennium Park Greeter Service, launched in summer 2005, provides visitors with a specialized tour of the park's development, architecture and environment. Tours are offered daily from mid-May to mid-October at 11:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. Groups depart from the Welcome Center in Millennium Park, 201 E. Randolph, and no reservation is needed.

Travel parties of six or less interested in taking a **Chicago Greeter** visit must register seven to ten business days in advance online at www.chicagogreeter.com. Visitors with questions about their upcoming Greeter visit should call 312.744.8000, Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. **Chicago Greeter** and *InstaGreeter* visits originate at the Chicago Cultural Center Visitor Information Center, 77 E. Randolph Street.

American Airlines and United Airlines are proud partners of the **Chicago Greeter** service.

Visitors and Chicagoans planning to entertain out-of-town guests can receive Chicago brochures, reserve hotel accommodations and receive trip-planning assistance by calling toll-free 1.877.CHICAGO (1.877.244.2246), or visiting www.cityofchicago.org/tourism. Brochures and information on Chicago's exciting events and activities are also available at the Visitor Information Centers. The centers are located at Chicago Water Works, 163 East Pearson Street at Michigan Avenue and the Chicago Cultural Center, 77 East Randolph Street. The TTY toll-free number for the hearing impaired is 1.866.710.0294.

The Chicago Office of Tourism, a division of the Department of Cultural Affairs, is the official City agency dedicated to promoting Chicago to domestic and international visitors and to providing innovative visitor programs and services.

###