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FOR INFORMATION CALL

August 3, 2012

Ald. Willie C. Wade
(414) 286-3764

LEAP summer youth work program sees first graduating class

Successful inaugural session of new program yields 17 young leaders; Alderman Willie Wade points to brighter future

It's a turnabout that Milwaukee residents can be positive about: One year after a group of young people were involved in violence and chaos outside Wisconsin State Fair Park, a fresh group of Milwaukee teens today has graduated from a program that has helped them gain critical job skills and work experience while also allowing for regular communication and interaction with Milwaukee police.

Alderman Willie C. Wade, a strong supporter of the **LEAP** (Learn, Earn and Achieve with Police) program, said today's graduating group of 17 teen interns is now headed on a path to success in the work place and in the community. "There is a major benefit for these young people and for Milwaukee when we invest in them by helping them gain the skills they will need to be excellent workers and leaders," he said.

"We need to increase our base of skilled workers and LEAP so far is showing us that it is a program that can help prepare young people, giving them skills and confidence, and helping make them job ready," said Alderman Wade, noting that some of the graduates have already been offered full-time employment opportunities by participating employers.

The participating students were selected by Alderman Wade, **Alderman Ashanti Hamilton**, **Alderman Milele A. Coggs**, **County Supervisor Russell Stamper II**, **Victor Barnett** of Running Rebels, and **Sam Williams** of the Boys & Girls Club.

Teen interns were selected from the north side neighborhoods of Harambee, Lindsay Heights, and Washington Park, and south side neighborhoods of Clarke Square and Layton Boulevard West (these are LISC's five "Sustainable Communities").

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LEAP graduates/ADD ONE

In LEAP, the **Milwaukee Police Department, LISC Milwaukee**, and the City of Milwaukee's **Earn and Learn** program collaborated to strengthen communication between Milwaukee teens and police, preparing teens for future career success, all while introducing Milwaukee companies to a diverse group of Milwaukee's future workforce.

The LEAP program provides paid work with area businesses that can help build work readiness skills and valuable experience opportunities for Milwaukee teens who are enrolled in the **STOP (Students Talking it Over with Police) program**.

Students in the intern program work at area businesses to learn first-hand how to apply the skills they've learned in school and through STOP to the workplace, Alderman Wade said.

Participating employers in this inaugural year of LEAP included **Children's Hospital of Wisconsin, Educators Credit Union, Harley-Davidson, KBS Construction, LISC, Marquette University, Northwestern Mutual, The PrivateBank, Roundy's, Taylor Dynamometer, US Bank, and Wheaton Franciscan-St. Joseph**.

In the program, participating companies employ teens (ages 17-19) 20 hours per week for eight weeks (June through August), Monday through Thursday. On Fridays, interns participate in the Milwaukee Police Department **STOP** Program.

The MPD's STOP Program is designed to improve communication and build trust between police and teens. STOP was developed to educate young people on the nature of police work and explain the reasons that law-abiding citizens might find themselves interacting with police officers. Students who participate in STOP receive a photo ID, a T-shirt, and certificate of completion.