

July 24, 2006

# C/C.U.R.E.

CHICAGO/CALUMET UNDERGROUND RAILROAD EFFORT  
25 E. Washington St., Suite 1650, Chicago IL 60602  
Diane Banta, Facilitator 312.863.6287

## *Raising Spirits!*<sup>™</sup>

### A HISTORY OF C/CURE

### The Chicago/Calumet Underground Railroad Effort AND PROGRAM SUMMARY

### First Annual True North Remembrance Celebration

*To explore the Underground Railroad is to explore our birth as a nation and our staggering journey toward a more perfect union; to witness bonds of slavery transformed to bonds of partnership and collaboration; to face the paradoxes in ourselves and our history; and to challenge the perceived limits of our compassion, courage, and capacity to share. We are strengthened and humbled when we honor the price paid for freedoms to which we still aspire. In honoring our ancestors we honor ourselves; and so may our efforts be worthy of our mission, and may the hallowed ground we celebrate result in raising spirits – now and for generations to come.*

### The Honor Of Your Presence Is Requested

**SUNDAY, AUGUST 20, 2006 AT 2PM**

**In The Chicago Riverdale Community of Altgeld Gardens  
Outdoors On the 900 Block of 134th Street**

*Look for your special invitation with map and directions in the mail next week.*

C/CURE has planned a program to please the ancestors and their progeny, filled with culture which evokes the spirit of victory from a time when slavery reigned in America; and filled with pride in the Underground Railroad Site & Archeological Dig at the former Jon Ton Farm site just blocks away:

**Drumming  
Dancing  
Drama  
Song**

C/CURE will honor governmental, philanthropic, corporate, and educational leaders with its:

### First Annual “True North” Awards

C/CURE youth in period costume will help enlighten you with:

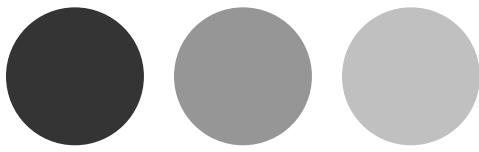
**Great abolitionist speeches  
Slave narrations from love letters & diaries  
Their oral history video of a celebrated Altgeld elder  
The C/CURE story and the “Search For DuSable” on DVD  
Guided tours through a 70-foot Underground Railroad diorama  
An exhibition by the African Scientific Research Institute (ASRI) of UIC**

C/CURE will also feature genealogy/history books for sale; photographic portrait booths, and the launch of its Community Theater Initiative and line of Underground Railroad Quilts.

**Glennette Tilly Turner, author of The Underground Railroad In Illinois will be featured.**

C/CURE presents this program in conjunction with Altgeld Oldtimers Family Reunion Weekend, at which thousands of current residents and former residents from around the world converge onto the campus for a weekend that includes a parade, a gala, and a field of family cookouts. Its annual outreach and membership drive will kickoff with a parade on Saturday, August 19th between 9am and 12pm, and continue with a program series, designed in alternative 1-hour segments from 2-3pm, 3-4pm, and 4-5pm.

**Introduction of Dignitaries is featured on Sunday, August 20, 2006 at 2pm when libations will be served.**



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## **C/CURE has been bringing life to the Underground Railroad (UGRR) in Chicago since 2001.**

Launched by a diverse group including historians, community leaders, business and development interests, and government representatives, its original focus was to raise public awareness and pride in the role the region played in aiding African American fugitives from slavery in their journey to freedom. C/CURE's intent was to preserve the property of Dutch immigrant and abolitionist Jon Ton, whose farm occupied fifty acres on the Little Calumet River near Altgeld Gardens in the Chicago/Riverdale community, utilizing research and exhibiting interpretive components in a Visitor's Center. This site is recognized by UGRR researchers as a documented safe house on the UGRR. C/CURE believed that by creating an engaging destination there, it could tie into the important regional web of recreational lakes and trails and provide an engaging, multi-faceted, multi-ethnic learning and cultural experience. It believed vibrant family, community, and regional pride would result.

Over the years C/CURE's programming reflected its passion for and commitment to highlighting this crucial time in our country's history, such as in:

- Partnering with the African Scientific Research Institute (ASRI) and the Field Museum to study the feasibility of an archeological dig on the Ton farm;
- Collaborating with Openlands Project and others to preserve public open space along the entire Little Calumet Riverfront through planning and acquisition.
- Presenting programs at schools and other group locations in Illinois and Indiana.
- Hosting Quarterly Research Roundtables, which featured presentations, networking opportunities, researcher empowerment, and UGRR storytelling:
  - Organizational Introduction: September 19, 2002
  - Strategic Partners & Planning: March 13, 2003
  - Researching An Illegal Activity: January 30, 2004
  - In Search of DuSable: July 30, 2004
  - Making The Canada Connection: November 19, 2004
  - The Injustice of Slavery: February 4, 2005
  - Openlands Project: May 20, 2005

During all this time, many development plans and trail studies were published for the area by a variety of organizations. In November 2005 C/CURE hosted a Ton Farm Design Charrette which resulted in its mission expanding to catalyze development of a thriving neighborhood with a comprehensive, sustainable economic development plan – one featuring tourism, mixed housing and commercial development, community involvement, and healthy lifestyle. The charrette was successful in advancing an economic agenda with strong community benefits, but had limited participation from community members.

Understanding the critical need to achieve community involvement, in April 2006 C/CURE embraced a more inclusive approach in its visioning process and incorporated a community theater initiative into its strategic plan. This free program for area youth aims to incorporate the oral histories of individuals, families, and friends into a process of writing, producing, and performing in their own annual multi-media community musical. C/CURE believes that by making history alive in the present, by engaging young people to engage with their elders, by providing a connection to their rich local past, and by demonstrating a positive impact to community wealth, neighbors will begin to open their hearts to greater possibilities.

**Launching this community engagement program this fall, continuing its focus on excavating and preserving the Ton Farm site, and researching and recommending best practice models for the highest and best use of this important land are C/CURE's priorities for the coming year.**