

**August 25, 2008**  
For Immediate Release

**Contact Information**  
Kristen Berlacher  
Day: 312-606-2030  
Evening: 610-812-7873  
Kristen@witsontheweb.org

As students' express greatest fears are getting shot  
**The Need for More Mentoring Programs in CPS is Ever Apparent**

**WHAT** : Now more than ever, the importance of a caring and consistent adult in a child's life is so crucial and as Chicagoans, we can all play a part. This fall, Working In The Schools, WITS, will embark on its 17<sup>th</sup> year of providing one-on-one tutoring and mentoring programs for elementary students in CPS.

While the focus is on literacy and developing a love of reading, the program ultimately serves to introduce students to healthy role models and expose them to real life situations outside their comfort zones.

For example, our after-school program transports students to nearby downtown offices where they receive one-on-one tutoring, once a week, in a workplace environment. Our corporate partners, including Deloitte, UBS, Smith Barney, Credit Suisse, Northern Trust, CBOE and many more, allow their employees to volunteer during the work day because they understand the value of introducing CPS students to new environments outside their neighborhoods and schools.

"This program is more than just the responsibility to improve a child's education. It's about being a positive role model for a child in all aspects of life - family, friends, academics, health. Knowing that they may apply these positive influences in their own lives is the most rewarding feeling of all," explains Kimberly Connors, a Workplace Mentoring volunteer from Smith Barney.

**WHY**: In recent weeks, the Sun-Times series of "Schooled in Fear" has really resonated with our organization and staff. As the leading literacy nonprofit here in Chicago, not only do we strive to promote literacy and the love of reading among elementary students in Chicago Public Schools, but (as your stories have continued to remind us) we also provide something even more valuable than reading – and that is the opportunity to dream and learn about a life free of gangs and violence.

**WHERE**: In 27 Chicago Public Schools and 28 Corporate offices across Chicago.

**WHEN**: Programs begin in early October and continue through the end of May.

**HOW**: WITS provides training and transportation for students and mentors as well as a hands on program management, making volunteering easy and convenient.

**WHO**: Working In The Schools, is a local 501(c)3 organization that promotes literacy and the love of reading among Chicago's youth through one-on-one tutoring programs. With the help of over 1,200 volunteers, WITS serves more than 1,500 CPS students each school year.

###