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For Immediate Release

As Obama invites next generation to 'take their own crack at changing the world,' Chicago youth answer yes we can

350 teen problem-solvers from 60 schools gather to present solutions to Chicago's toughest issues at Mikva's Action Civics Showcase

CHICAGO, IL, May 9, 2017 – Encouraged by Obama's call to young people, "to take up the baton," Chicago youth will gather to showcase their year-long activism effort to better their schools and neighborhoods at the Mikva Challenge 15th Annual Action Civics Showcase on May 23, 2017 at the Chicago Cultural Center. Mikva Challenge will host the Showcase in partnership with the Chicago Public Schools Office of Civic Engagement and Service Learning. Youth will meet political and community leaders at the Showcase and will be awarded badges for civic action, research and community building.

To stand-up against current immigration policies, youth leaders at Benito Juarez Academy are engaging lawmakers on the local, state, and national level. To increase teen employment in the summer, youth from Excel Academy in Marquette Park organized a job fair with over 25 businesses offering employment opportunities. To increase youth engagement in local politics, youth from Sullivan High School drafted a project proposal to be put on the ballot for the 49th Ward PB process, and they also launched a GOTV campaign to get their peers to vote.

"I'm working Mikva for the recycling project and each day we collect food that so many students throw away. This food could be given to those that actually need it. Saving food also helps students see that they are wasting most of not, not eating it, and that throwing it away is just wrong," said Khadijah Zaki from Mather High School, who is working on a food recycling and waste elimination project this year with her peers.

The Action Civics Showcase is a culminating event of our Democracy in Action program that had 2,500 youth participants from over 60 schools throughout the Chicagoland area this year. Here's a complete list of all our projects and schools that will be presenting at the Showcase on May 23rd.

When: Tuesday, May 23, 2017 from 4pm-6pm

Where: Cultural Center, 78 E Washington, Chicago, IL 60602

Visuals: Over 350 young people will have their project on display at the event. You'll also see teachers, politicians and community leaders at the event

Action Civics Showcase 2017 – Project Highlights

School	Project Title	Description
Benito Juarez Community Academy	Lobbying to stop anti-immigrant policies	Angered and frustrated by immigration policies coming out of the White House and the negative impact it was having on the school community, youth leaders decided to take action. The group is planning a year long lobbying campaign to influence lawmakers in Springfield and D.C. to change immigration policies through lobbying and launching a story-telling project on youth impacted by these policies.
Julian High School	Peace Week	In response to a tragedy that took a student's life in 2012, youth leaders have organized themselves to lead a Peace Day and now a Peace Week every year in their school. As part of their final project, the group will be hosting a Peace Summit to empower teens to discuss societal issues and create peace within themselves, within their schools and within their communities.
Chicago Excel Academy, Southwest	Connecting Youth to Jobs	Worried and frustrated with the high rate of youth unemployment in the Marquette Park neighborhood, youth and teachers collaborated to bring over 25 businesses and other agencies to a school-wide employment fair.
Fenger High School	More opportunities for Black Men	Recognizing the dearth of role models and access to good leadership opportunities for black men in their neighborhood, youth leaders worked on creating pathways to fill that gap. They met with Chicago Bears player Charles Tillman to talk about challenges they face, and are also regularly meeting with community leaders to bring more jobs to black men in their school.
Marquette Elementary	Fill a Tote for Hope	In order to address the issue of homelessness in their community, youth at Marquette researched the number of displaced families and individuals living in Chicago Law and then designed a campaign called Filled A Tote for Hope! They packaged a 100 tote bags filled with hygiene products, clothes etc to distribute to the homeless on April Fools Day.