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OFFICE OF THE CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY

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**Clerk Dorothy Brown's 10th Annual Expungement Summit Attracts More than 2,000 to Living Word Christian Center on Sat. June 7<sup>th</sup>**

*Community Event Offers Attendees Second Chance and Employment Opportunities*

CHICAGO - On June 7, Hon. Dorothy Brown, Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County, and Dr. Bill Winston welcomed more than 2,000 individuals to the Clerk's Office's 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Adult and Juvenile Expungement Summit at Living Word Christian Center in Forest Park, Illinois.

Mr. Kevin Braxton, a member of the Morgan Park community, was the first person in line at 3:00 a.m. to seek to get his records expunged and benefit from this important community event.

Forest Park Mayor Anthony Calderone joined Clerk Brown and Dr. Winston in greeting the summit participants, informing the guests of the wealth of information and services offered.

"To hear how lives have been changed by people attending the Expungement Summit, reinforces my belief that we have an obligation to provide an opportunity for individuals to expunge their court records so they can have a second chance to be law-abiding, productive members of society," said Clerk Brown.

"I thought this event was extremely successful. This was a game changer for many people's lives; it gives them a chance to serve in the area of their gifting that perhaps they would not have without this expungement opportunity," said Dr. Winston, Pastor of Living Word Christian Center.

Summit participants were assisted by 163 volunteer attorneys in the preparation of petitions for expungement and sealing through the courts. Representatives from the Cook County Public Defender and Cabrini Green Legal Aid also assisted attendees with legal concerns. The Chicago Police Department and Illinois State Police hosted informational sessions on their expungement petition review processes. Additional presentations were made by representatives of the State Appellate Defender and the Illinois Attorney General.

Twelve Circuit Court judges were available to grant filing fee waivers to individuals who were found to be unable to afford the costs of expungement or sealing through the courts.

Individuals who did not qualify for expungement were able to consult with members of the Illinois Prisoner Review Board and attorneys to learn about other remedies, such as: Certificates

of Good Conduct and Relief from Disabilities, as well as how to prepare applications for executive clemency from the Illinois Governor.

Participants were also able to attend an on-site Ex-Offender Job Information Seminar receive information on how to develop the skills necessary to compete in today's job market. Attendees participated in several workshops presented by the Living Word Christian Center's Joseph Business School specifically on setting achievable goals, job hunting, resume writing, education enhancement, small business development, and computer training, among other topics. The City of Chicago Department of Family and Support Services conducted job-readiness training, and the Illinois Department of Employment Security introduced guidelines on overcoming barriers to employment for ex-offenders. Additionally, a representative from Veteran's Affairs discussed psychological counseling, housing and health services that are available for veterans.

Additionally, 43 exhibitors provided information on employment, job training, health care, housing, voter registration and other services for ex-offenders.

"I want to thank Ms. Dorothy Brown for having this opportunity to get my record straightened out," said Phillip Graybar, an attendee of the Expungement Summit. "The Summit was very effective, entirely. The services helped me tremendously and have put me in the right direction."

Clerk Brown hosted Ms. Sally Barrientes, Assistant State Public Defender of Milwaukee, WI; Ms. Christine A. Donahue, Attorney Legal Action of Wisconsin; Mr. Dan Litvok, Graduate Student at Michigan State University; Mr. Robert Mochel, Assistant State Public Defender of Milwaukee, WI; Ms. Lillian Perry, Director of Education, Senior Citizen, Culture Liaison for State Representative Linda Chapa LaVia, 83rd District, Aurora, IL; and Honorable Junitha Wells, Aurora Township Board Trustee to observe the Expungement Summit program. Their mission is to replicate the full-service Expungement Summit in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and Kane County in Aurora, Illinois.

Over the last ten years, Clerk Brown's annual Expungement Summits have attracted between 2,500 to 3,000 individuals seeking to improve their ability to obtain employment to provide for themselves and their families by having expungeable offenses removed from their criminal histories.

This event was sponsored by: Living Word Christian Center, Safer Foundation, Sam's Club, Hodgkins, IL, Starbucks of Forest Park and River Forest, IL, Verizon, Entenmann's of Morton Grove and Oak Lawn, IL, Walgreens of Oak Park and Deerfield, IL, Wal-Mart of Forest Park Plaza Mall, Ultra Foods of Forest Park Plaza Mall and Dunkin Donuts of Oak Park, IL.

#### PHOTO #1

Clerk Dorothy Brown greets Kevin Braxton of Morgan Park, the first expungement summit attendee, who lined up to have his record expunged at 3:00 a.m.

#### PHOTO #2

Clerk Brown (center) poses with Dr. Bill Winston (left) and Honorable Anthony Calderone, Mayor of Forest Park (right).

#### PHOTO #3

Honorable Dorothy Brown welcomes attendees and offers direction to those seeking to have expungeable offenses removed from their criminal histories.





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