



BUILDING BETTER LIVES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Melissa Meighen
Director of Communications
Voices for Illinois Children
O: 312-516-5551
M: 973-580-7864

Mark A. Nystuen
Principal
The Kineo Group
O: 312.280.8727
M: 312.841.2214

**VOICES FOR ILLINOIS CHILDREN TO HONOR
STEANS FAMILY, JEROME STERMER WITH KIDS COUNT AWARD**

Illinois Governor Quinn to Speak at Awards Dinner

CHICAGO, September 9, 2009 – Voices for Illinois Children, one of the state's leading nonpartisan advocacy groups for children, will present its annual Kids Count Awards for 2009 to the Steans Family and Jerome Stermer, chief of staff to Illinois Governor Patrick Quinn. The awards will be presented at Voices for Illinois Children's annual Kids Awards dinner on Thursday, September 10, 2009, at the Hyatt Regency Chicago, and will include remarks from Governor Quinn.

The Kids Count Award is given each year to individuals or organizations that have made significant and long-lasting contributions to children's issues in Illinois. Previous award winners have included Barbara Bush, Irving B. Harris, Shirley W. Ryan and Jeanne Hurley Simon, as well as a number of leading businesses and nonprofit organizations.

The event is co-chaired by Mark A. Hoppe, President and Chief Executive Officer of Cole Taylor Bank, and James Reynolds, Jr., Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Loop Capital Markets LLC. Emcee for the evening is Rob Johnson, co-anchor at CBS2 News, and the South Shore Drill Team will perform.

"It's an honor to have this opportunity to thank both the Steans family and Jerry Stermer for their decades of contributions to children's issues. Their hard work and dedication has impacted the lives of countless Illinois children, ensuring they are healthy and well educated and their families and communities are strong. We're also very pleased that Gov. Quinn will join us in honoring the work and the leadership of our dear

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nd and longtime Voices' president, Jerry Stermer, and in helping us give a warm welcome to Voices' new president, Kathy Ryg," said Craig Culbertson, chairman, Voices for Illinois Children.

"For over 20 years, Voices for Illinois Children has been a champion for our children. The group's innovative work has improved the well-being of children across Illinois," said Governor Pat Quinn. "I salute this year's Kids Count Awards Dinner honorees, Jerome Stermer and the Steans family. Like Voices, their steadfast support for our children never wavers. They are living examples that each one of us has the power to make a difference in children's lives."

2009 Kids Count Awards

Steans Family Foundation

Through their family foundation, Lois and Harrison Steans and their three daughters, Jennifer, Heather, and Robin, invest their time, money, and expertise in North Lawndale, a neighborhood undergoing revitalization on Chicago's west side. They work in partnership with community residents and organizations to support the holistic development of children birth to 5, improve public school education, and engage parents and families to become more active and effective in guiding children's positive development.

The Steans family's philanthropic approach is notable for its concentrated, long-term commitment to one neighborhood and for the family members' personal and active partnership with community residents. Harrison I. Steans, formerly chairman of NBD Illinois, Inc., and its predecessor institutions, is a visionary force for the foundation and community. In addition to their work in North Lawndale, second-generation family members are making major contributions to civic life in Illinois. Heather Steans brings her experience as an advocate for good public policy to the role of state senator for the 7th district. Robin is executive director of Advance Illinois, an independent statewide education policy and advocacy organization dedicated to ensuring that Illinois provides a world-class education to every student. As president of Financial Investments Corporation, Jennifer ensures that the foundation will have the resources to continue its philanthropic work for another generation.

Jerome Stermer

Jerome Stermer, chief of staff to Governor Pat Quinn, was President of Voices for Illinois Children from its inception in 1987, until his appointment in February 2009.

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markable for his modesty, commitment, collaborative spirit, and deep understanding of effective advocacy, Stermer built Voices for Illinois Children into a leading child advocacy group that promotes public investment in children's education, health care, and early development. Stermer also has an extensive background in state government, including positions as assistant to the director at the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services and executive director of the Legislative Advisory Committee on Public Aid. While at Voices, Stermer served in key leadership roles with a variety of government and private groups. He was a member of the executive committee of the Illinois Early Learning Council, a commissioner of the 21st Century Commission of the City of Chicago, and a member of the boards of both the Illinois Children's Health-care Foundation and Voices for America's Children. He also served on the board of the United Way of Illinois and the Governor's Task Force on Human Services Reform. He has been an adjunct professor at Northwestern University's School of Education and Social Policy for several years. He and his wife, Nancy, have two adult children, Rachel and Daniel, and live in Evanston.

About Voices for Illinois Children

For over 20 years, Voices for Illinois Children has been working across issue areas to improve the lives of children of all ages. We envision Illinois as a place where all children have the opportunity to grow up healthy, happy, safe, loved and well educated.

Learn more at www.voices4kids.org

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