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The Clerk of the Circuit Court's 7th Annual Expungement Summit Attracts Over Four Thousand People at Apostolic Church of God to Get a Second Chance Through Expungements, Sealings or Pardons for Non-Violent Offenses

CHICAGO - Clerk Dorothy Brown's 7th annual Expungement Summit brought over 4,000 people from throughout Cook County to find out about expungements, sealings and to meet with Prison Review Board representatives and social service providers. Clerk Brown along with representatives of the State's Attorney of Cook County; the Cook County Public Defender, and Dr. Byron Brazier, Pastor of Apostolic Church of God, along with an array of governmental legal, community and religious organizations, spoke to a filled sanctuary at Apostolic Church of God, about the day long services provided at the Summit. The doors for the Expungement Summit opened at 8:00 a.m. to a long line of people seeking assistance; with attendees continuing to stream into the Summit throughout the day, until the doors closed at 6 p.m.

Attendees of the Expungement Summit heaped thanks and praise on Clerk Dorothy Brown and the organizers for the opportunity to clear their records. "I want to thank Ms. Dorothy Brown for having this wonderful opportunity to get my record straightened out. I thought because of my age it was hopeless, but the service I received has given me new hope. I feel there is a light at the end of the tunnel." said J. Jones. Other attendees praised the organized format of the Summit. "This Summit has been expedited very well. They are doing an awesome job! said Julie Fantcauzzi, who attended with her son who was seeking to clear some misdemeanor records. " The Expungement Summit is the best thing for the community. It gives people a second chance." said Alan Smith.

"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.

This year, several Indiana elected officials showed interest in the Summit at Apostolic Church of God, including the Honorable Bernard Carter, Lake County State's Attorney, and the Honorable John Buncich, along with Pastor Steve Munsey of Family Christian Church. Their mission is to bring the full service Expungement Summit that Clerk Brown has implemented in Cook County to the residents of Lake County, Indiana.

"I am thrilled that the Expungement Summit has attracted the attention of our neighbors from Indiana. I plan on working closely with State's Attorney Carter, Sheriff Buncich, and Pastor Munsey to ensure it's success for the residents of Indiana. " said Clerk Brown.

At the summit, volunteer attorneys assisted participants with the preparation of applications for the filing of petitions that qualify for expungement and sealing. The State's Attorney, Chicago Police Department Illinois State Police, and the Illinois Appellate Defender, held information sessions on their expungement petition review process. Individuals who did not qualify for expungement attended a panel discussion conducted by the Illinois Prisoner Review Board to learn about Certificates of Good Conduct and Relief from Disabilities, as well as how to prepare letters for clemency and/or pardons from the governor.

Other agencies provided information on employment, job training, health care, housing, voter registration and other services for ex-offenders. The Illinois Department of Employment Security provided information sessions on job placement for ex-offenders.

There are filing fees associated with expungement and sealing, which may include \$120 per petition for Adult Expungement/Sealing (\$60 for the Clerk's Office and \$60 for the Illinois State Police), \$9 per certified disposition (adult cases) and \$64 per petition for Juvenile Expungement.

For additional information about how to seek an expungement, please call (312) 603-5200 or visit the Clerk's Office web site at www.cookcountyclerkofcourt.org.

This full-service, community-based Expungement Summit has been extremely successful for seven years, attracting each year 2,500 to 4,000 people who sought to improve their ability to obtain employment by having expungeable offenses removed from their criminal histories. Previous summits were held at Eisenhower High School, Austin High School, DuSable High School, Chicago Vocational Career Academy, and twice at Roberto Clemente Community Academy.

The Expungement Summit was sponsored by: the Honorable Dorothy Brown, Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County; Honorable Anita Alvarez, State's Attorney of Cook County; Honorable Abishi Cunningham, Cook County Public Defender; Dr. Bryon Brazier, Pastor, Apostolic Church of God; Baptist Ministers Conference of Chicago & Vicinity; Black Women Lawyers' Association; Cabrini Green Legal Aid; Chicago Alumnae Chapter, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.; CAPS; Chicago Police Department; Chicago Public Schools; Cook County Bar Association; Hispanic Lawyers Assoc. of Illinois; Illinois Department of Employment Security; Office of the State Appellate Defender; Illinois Attorney General; Illinois State Police; Journey to Empowerment; NAACP; Pastors United for Change; Prisoner Review Board; Safer Foundation; and Westside Ministers Coalition.

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