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## InnerLink Teamed Up with Building a Healthier Chicago and Chicago Public Schools to Create a Force for Health this Summer

*At-risk Chicago students used their summer to make a difference in the health of their community*

**Chicago, IL, August 6, 2010** — Chicago Public Schools, in collaboration with InnerLink and Building a Healthier Chicago, wrapped up the third Student Health Force Chicago Academy, a health education and workforce development program, today. A graduation celebration was held for the 53 at-risk high school students from Chicago who used their summer vacation to further their education and make a difference in their health and the health of their community. Each graduate is now tasked to share what they learned with 100 people. They will begin at Rush University's Annual back to School Health Fair tomorrow, August 7<sup>th</sup> at Rosco Park, Chicago. "They say it's called commencement because it's the beginning. I am especially excited about tomorrow where they begin with a job serving shoulder to shoulder with professionals at Rush University Medical School," stated Dr. Robert Gillio, president and CEO of InnerLink.

Student Health Force prepares students to be a force for health; to make a difference in the world. Once the students complete their training, these community leaders will help their peers learn to better manage their health, reduce chronic disease in their community, expand their employment options, create baseline health assessments and electronic medical records, while providing community service and increasing student retention in school. The youth are emerging as trained Student Health Force interns who can pursue careers in health and provide basic information to help Chicago become the healthiest city in the country.

Dr. Robert Gillio, president and CEO of InnerLink designed Student Health Force to address the critical health and workforce challenges facing our cities. "Positive energy is flowing in the youth of Chicago as they become a force for health in their community through Student Health Force," said Gillio. "53 students graduated today after having completed a rigorous training where they learned how to make healthy decisions, apply them through a wellness plan, and share what they learned with others through a variety of advocacy activities. These students captured the imagination of their families, peers and major corporations who came to see their work today. We hope Chicago leverages the transition of these empowered health literate youth working to improve the health of the community."

Michael Diamond, executive director of Student Health Force Chicago is confident that these students are a vital part of a long term strategy to improve our health and productivity to become a more globally competitive city. "Health disparities in Chicago are unacceptable and people's health can be improved through better access to timely and accurate health information, finding local health resources to administer care, and learning ways to better manage their health," stated Diamond. "There are so many extraordinary programs and resources committed to improving health in Chicago, Student Health Force is exactly the program we need to help people find these resources and use them to better manage their own health."

**About Student Health Force®** - Student Health Force is a workforce development program powered by InnerLink that focuses on health and education to reduce health disparities, prevent chronic diseases, and provide 21st century skills for the students in a community. Based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's coordinated school health and socio-ecological models, Student Health Force supports community health consortiums through an innovative model that demonstrates value everyone involved. For more information, visit [www.studenthealthforce.com](http://www.studenthealthforce.com).

**About InnerLink** - Headquartered in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, InnerLink, Inc., is a developer of innovative web-based solutions that help communities learn and apply healthy behaviors to prevent chronic diseases. With expertise in coordinated school health, electronic health records management and health literacy, InnerLink is a proven partner working with sponsors, schools and communities to improve health outcomes. For more information, visit [www.theinnerlink.com](http://www.theinnerlink.com).

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