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Picture Date: Thursday, May 23, 2002 4 P.M.

LOCATION: City Hall First Floor Lobby

Milwaukee, WI — May is the kick-off for City's anti-graffiti campaign. The Department of Neighborhood Services (DNS) kicked off the 2002 anti-graffiti program by showcasing some specialty art. The artists were children from Milwaukee Boys and Girls Clubs as well as Milwaukee Public Schools. Their art poster subject was stopping graffiti in Milwaukee. The latest efforts of the war on graffiti were also updated.

The children created the theme of "Don't put Marks where they don't belong." The theme was reflected in the art showing a zebra with spots and a cheetah with stripes.

Officials such as Mayor John O. Norquist and Alderwoman Suzanne Breier thanked some of the children for their contributions. This youth diversion activity is one of many that DNS is coordinating to fight graffiti this year. Each of the youths received a ribbon and certificate for their participation. Students also spoke out against graffiti.

DNS is also coordinating neighbors who voluntarily have "adopted a block" to keep it graffiti-free. Individuals and community groups are sent out to monitor their neighborhoods and lend a hand to remove the graffiti after it occurs. Keep Greater Milwaukee Beautiful (KGMB) is also joining the effort. The DNS anti-graffiti message and materials are included in KGMB's education program that goes to area schools. Officials are asking for the public's support of the anti-graffiti effort reminding citizens to be vigilant about graffiti. People should quickly remove graffiti and call police if they witness the vandals in the act of committing the crime. It is okay to call 911 if people see graffiti vandals in the act.

The mayor noted that the negative aspect of graffiti kills jobs, destabilizes neighborhoods and attracts other criminal behavior like gangs. Officials from the DNS will be on hand to offer information about free materials, free technical advice on cleanup products and sign-up information on future clean-up events. The Department of Neighborhood Services is coordinating this year's effort and is working with a number of area neighborhood groups to host special Graffiti Wipeout days. Dates and times are posted on the DNS web site for citizens to get more information.

If you have a WIPE OUT or a Painting Party and would like to put it on this list, call the Hotline at 286-8715 or send an email to DNS's web site listed below. Graffiti complaints can now be taken over the internet. The department will post it and provide groups organizational help in setting up an event. Additional helpful information on how to remove graffiti, selection of solvents and cleaners, along with tips & tricks from the

professionals is posted on the web site. Users can go directly to the Anti-Graffiti information right from the front page at:

<http://www.ci.mil.wi.us/citygov/dns/home.htm>

The event also reminded area retailers about their responsibility to prevent graffiti. Since 1995 it has been illegal to sell wide-tipped markers or spray paint to minors in Milwaukee. These items must be in a secured area. If not they must be either physically or electronically monitored by a clerk. A sign must be posted in these areas notifying customers of this ordinance. If you see a store violating this ordinance, report it to the Hotline. Violators can be fined up to \$500.

The City has committed thousands of dollars annually to get rid of graffiti and the blight it creates. The police department continues to make arrests for graffiti. Businesses are banding together to form "Paint Banks" and keeping their retail areas clean and attractive. Neighborhood groups are hosting their own painting parties all in hopes to end graffiti in Milwaukee.
