

Campaign Platform

READ MORE ABOUT MY SEVEN IDEAS TO TRANSFORM COOK COUNTY



A FRESH START FOR COOK COUNTY

It's all about...SAVINGS. SERVICE. JOBS.

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IF ELECTED, I PLEDGE TO MAKE ALL UNITS OF COOK COUNTY GOVERNMENT LEANER AND MORE EFFICIENT AND LOWER YOUR PROPERTY TAX BILL!

1. ELIMINATE TODD STROGER'S REMAINING HALF-CENT SALES TAX INCREASE AND FIGHT TO ELIMINATE T.I.F. (TAX INCREMENT FINANCING) DISTRICTS –

ELIMINATING WASTE, CORRUPTION AND THE T.I.F. PROGRAM WILL REDUCE YOUR PROPERTY TAX BILL BY AT LEAST 10%!

2. EXTEND HEALTH CARE SERVICES TO THE LEAST SERVED IN COOK COUNTY VIA STORE-FRONT CENTERS STAFFED BY NURSE-PRACTITIONERS.

3. CONVENE A "STATE OF THE COUNTY'S HEALTH" SUMMIT WITH COMMUNITY LEADERS, HEALTH CARE EXPERTS AND CITIZENS. PUBLISH AN ANNUAL HEALTH CARE ATLAS DOCUMENTING THE HEALTH OF THE COUNTY WITH TRENDS, NEEDS AND SOLUTIONS.

4. DE-INSTITUTIONALIZE NON-VIOLENT OFFENDERS AND SEEK COMMUNITY-BASED TREATMENT ALTERNATIVES THAT ARE LESS EXPENSIVE AND MORE EFFECTIVE IN REDUCING CRIME.

5. ESTABLISH A COUNTY-WIDE URBAN AGRICULTURE PROGRAM TO TURN VACANT LAND INTO FOOD PRODUCTION – CREATING NEW JOBS AND NEW SOURCES OF AFFORDABLE FRESH PRODUCE.

6. ESTABLISH A COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BANKING PROGRAM TO INVEST COUNTY FUNDS IN FIRST-TIME HOME OWNERSHIP AND SMALL BUSINESS INVESTMENT.

7. LAUNCH A COUNTY-WIDE SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE REVIEWING THE STATUS OF OUR WATER, LAND AND AIR – TO MAKE COOK COUNTY THE GREENEST, CLEANEST AND MOST CARBON-NEUTRAL COUNTY IN AMERICA!

8. CONVENE A COUNTY-WIDE SUMMIT OF MAYORS AND TOWN MANAGERS FOR REGIONAL PLANNING ON TRANSPORTATION, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, GREEN TECHNOLOGY AND LAND USE. ESTABLISH TRAINING PROGRAM AT COMMUNITY COLLEGES FOR GREEN JOBS SUCH AS SOLAR PANEL INSTALLATION. INVESTIGATE HOW MEDICAL CENTERS CAN PARTNER WITH COMMUNITY GROUPS TO TRAIN THE NEXT GENERATION OF MEDICAL TECHNICIANS.

9. ESTABLISH A COOK COUNTY ARTS COUNCIL TO SERVE AS A VOICE AND CHAMPION FOR THE ARTS IN COOK COUNTY AND TO SEED CREATIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECTS BECAUSE THE ARTS *SAVE LIVES* AND BUILD VITAL COMMUNITIES. **READ MORE...**

TO MAKE THESE PROMISED SAVINGS AND TO FUND NEW INITIATIVES, I WILL ELIMINATE PATRONAGE, WASTE AND DUPLICATE DEPARTMENTS *AND* BRING IN NEW REVENUES – TOTALING \$700 MILLION IN SAVINGS AND NEW REVENUES ANNUALLY!

I WILL PLACE ALL LEGISLATIVE, FINANCE, EMPLOYEE, CONTRACTOR AND VENDOR INFORMATION ONLINE FOR CITIZENS TO REVIEW AND COMMENT UPON. IT'S **YOUR** MONEY. IT'S **YOUR** INFORMATION.

BOTTOM LINE: I WILL TRANSFORM COOK COUNTY FROM AN UNDER-PERFORMING SERVANT FOR THE COOK COUNTY DEMOCRATIC MACHINE INTO A WORLD CLASS, SERVICE DRIVEN ORGANIZATION FIERCELY DEDICATED TO CUSTOMER SERVICE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE.

“I do not take campaign contributions from any organization that does business with Cook County. That way you know I will only serve your interests once in office. My opponents will make no such pledge. The Democratic candidate has already raised over \$1 million from special interests. If you want to see a real change in Cook County politics, then you will have to make an investment in my campaign. Please donate \$50, \$100 or even \$500 today. I firmly believe my reforms will increase the effectiveness of Cook County government *and* reduce your property taxes by at least that much.”

DONATE ONLINE AT <http://www.pleasecontribute.com/8251>

OR – MAIL A CHECK MADE OUT TO “FRIENDS OF TOM TRESSER” TO

333 W. NORTH AVENUE #154, CHICAGO IL 60610.

Tom will work to restore trust in Cook County government, eliminate corruption from Cook County government and deliver world-class service from Cook County government.



Tom was a lead organizer for the No Games Chicago Chicago.

Tom is an educator, organizer and consultant to nonprofit organizations. He has founded or led ten nonprofit enterprises in the arts, community development and civic engagement. He has worked for good government causes for over 30 years. He formed 42nd Ward Citizens for a Better Future in 1994 and was part of the regional coalition that defeated Mayor Daley’s attempts to bring land-based gambling to Cook County. He was a co-founder of **Protect Our Parks**, which successfully blocked the privatization of Lincoln Park, and was a leader of **No Games Chicago**, which successfully opposed the 2016 Olympic bid that would have bankrupted our local government, destroyed public parks and displaced working class families from their neighborhoods. Tom has the experience in collaborative problem solving and the courage to confront the Democratic Machine to create a...

A FRESH START FOR COOK COUNTY!

Why I'm Running

WHY I'M RUNNING FOR OFFICE

I saw the Democratic Machine up close and personal in my first campaign work in Chicago. It was for Roosevelt University Professor Hank Rubin running against Bernie Stone in 1991 and for Dick Simpson against Rostenkowski in 1992 and 1994. I organized "**Arts for Rubin**" and "**Arts for Simpson**" Committees.

As I worked my assigned precincts for those campaigns on election day, I would see two to four guys at every polling place passing literature, escorting voters into the polling station and tabulating votes at the election judge table. I approached a tall fellow who was passing palm cards for the Rosty ticket. "Oh – are you a volunteer for the Congressman?" I asked. "Nah," he said, "I work for the Forest Preserve."

Welcome to Chicago – where independent candidates and good government reformers get skunked by the patronage army of Da Machine. In the old days it was patronage workers. Nowadays Da machine tends to use direct mail and broadcast media to back its candidates.

I have spent years fighting the crooked schemes of the Daley Administration – often taking the unpopular side of a policy issue. I formed 42nd Ward Citizens for Chicago's Future in 1994 to be part of the state-wide coalition fighting the expansion of gambling into Cook County. I organized in the Gold Coast and wrote op-eds and stood on Miracle Mile gathering petitions. A few years later I was doing **cultural organizing work in Douglas Park for the Park District** as a part-timer and when a job opened up doing that work I was told there was no way I was going to be hired because (in the words of my boss's boss) – "You are a known Daley-basher."

It's a label I wear with pride.

In the mid-1990's I was one of the founding volunteer organizers of **United Action for Power and Justice** – the local affiliate of the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) founded in Chicago over 60 years by Saul Alinsky. I helped bring the Jewish community solidly into UPAJ and had the privilege of speaking in front of 10,000 people at our founding convention at the UIC Center in 1997.

I spent the years before and after that organizing in the cultural community – doing countless speeches, training sessions and op-eds on the need for artists and creative professionals to enter public life, to lead and to run for local office. I founded **Greater Chicago Citizens for the Arts** in 1991 and **The Creative America Project** in 2004.

In 1993 the **Independent Voters of Illinois-Independent Precinct Organization** (IVI-IPO) recognized me for this work, awarding me the Edwin Astrin Special Service Award for my arts and politics work.

Over the years I have advocated and organized consistently around two big issues – **fighting privatization** and fighting **Tax Increment Finance districts** (TIFs). You might say the over-arching passion is to protect **the Commons**.

In 2008 I was a co-founder of **Protect Our Parks** which fought the Latin School Lincoln Park Land Grab (private soccer field deal with the Chicago Park District) and then organizing an effort to **educate the public around Tax Increment Financing**. My current platform calls for the elimination of the TIF Program entirely from Cook County.

This work was a prelude to what became the hardest social change and civic engagement work of my life and that was opposing the bid for the 2016 Olympics.

Everyone in Chicago knows what a supposedly hopeless fight that was. I joined with a tireless group of concerned citizens called **No Games Chicago** and together we took on Da Mayor, Da County Board President, Da Governor (Blago and then Quinn), Da President and even Oprah!

I went to Lausanne, Switzerland in June to deliver the No Games Chicago message directly to the International Olympic Committee and went to Copenhagen Denmark in October to deliver more materials in advance of the 2016 vote. I and the other No Games organizers did this work because we felt the 2016 bid was a lie and a scam and would've enriched the Democratic Machine beyond measure – and we believe that the Olympic kick-back cash would've been in the tens of millions of dollars – after all. Millionaire Eddie Burke would've been placed on the 2016 Operating Committee's board and would've served as the gateway for ALL Chicago's Olympic cash and contracts. As

difficult as it is now to run independent candidates in the Chicago region, it would've become impossible as the Machine's allies would've been flush with an almost limitless political action funding base. In short – the coming of the 2016 games would've spelled the end of independent politics for a generation. Fighting the bid was – we felt – required work for any progressive and independent citizen's group. Unfortunately only a handful dared join us.

After our year-long fight to stop the 2016 Olympics from bankrupting the region, despoiling public parks and displacing thousands from their neighborhoods, I was in the City Council chamber on September 9, 2009 to witness the 49-0 vote for the Olympic Blank Check – Alderman Preckwinkle being present and voting AYE.

The true story of the 2016 bid and what No Games Chicago did and why has not been told to this day. Despite the fact that the Vancouver games stuck the taxpayers there with a **\$1.5 BILLION bill** and the **London games are now \$10 BILLION over budget** – and despite the fact that all the BS that the organizers told the citizens there BEFORE the games – which was the SAME BS told to us here – all proved to be lies and worse – despite all this – I believe Chicago's civic organizations has NOT LEARNED THE LESSONS available to us from the failed Olympic bid. The next big TIF-powered scam is already in the wings and it has been approved by the Mayor's lap-dog City Council – Alderman Preckwinkle included – and that is the **Central Area Plan**. This is another TIF -fueled \$15 billion concrete and contract laden plan to build stuff in the central Loop area which will do nothing to push prosperity out in the communities.

Fighting the bid was a special fight and it was lonely and dangerous. I've talked to dozens of community leaders who privately told me they opposed the bid but were afraid to do anything about it. I hope some day we can convene a forum to review what happened in Chicago when our region's future was at stake and so few people spoke out.

Now – all along the journey I have described I have seen the rampant corruption and arrogance in Illinois politics that resulted in the conviction of a former Governor and which will likely lead to the conviction of his successor – as well as the jailing of literally dozens of Chicago Aldermen, judges, county officials and crooked Democratic-connected contractors.

This cumulative experience caused me to seek the office of President of the Cook County Board in order to bring independent, progressive and innovative government to the citizens of Cook County. The county has been a bastard step-child to the Democratic Machine for decades (if not generations) and people have lost sight that it can be an instrument of excellence, reform, justice and economic development – regardless of who runs the city of Chicago. I've abandoned the Democratic Party as hopelessly corrupt and run by a cadre of political families who treat local government as a private family business – family names like Daley, Madigan, Berrios, Burke, and Stroger – to name a few – dominate Illinois politics and I don't believe reform is possible inside the Democratic Party.

I will be a true independent. I will be the guy "**who nobody sent.**"

Green Party candidates do not take money from PACs or big business. I will not accept cash from any organization that does business with the county. **Alderman Preckwinkle has already taken over \$200,000 from unions** that represent thousands of county employees. I consider this a major conflict of interest. Alderman Preckwinkle's former campaign manager went to work for Joe Berrios (in his capacity as head of the Cook County Democratic Party). **She supports his for Cook County Assessor** over Independent Forrest Claypool and Green Party candidate **Bob Grota**. I believe the Alderman is simply the new face of the Democratic Machine and will be incapable of making the hard choices necessary to get this county under control and delivering excellent service.

Bottom line – my career in public life has been about promoting the common good via innovative and ground breaking tactics. I have built coalitions and programs that attracted major resources and grassroots support. I do deep research on policy matters and take consistent, principled stands regardless of political popularity and FIGHT EFFECTIVELY for those principles. If INDEPENDENCE means anything then I have embodied the spirit and practice of independent politics. My opponent has voiced support for casino gambling, voted for dozens and dozens of TIFs and backed the Olympics despite initial reservations – by what measure can that record be judged independent? And most recently **she has backed down from her pledge to swiftly repeal the remaining half-cent Stroger sales tax hike**. She is repeating the Machine's script when she asserts that no tax cuts can be made at this time because there is no waste or corruption in the county budget that would be cut first.

SO – After a life time of organizing in the progressive community I have joined the Green Party and am seeking to build a real, INDEPENDENT alternative to the entrenched two parties in Illinois and Cook County.

Tom Tresser

Cost of Corruption

Tom Tresser Remarks to the Rotary Club of Chicago – August 17, 2010

[Download as a PDF = Remarks to the Rotary Club of Chicago Cost Corruption](#)

THE HIDDEN (AND NOT SO HIDDEN) COSTS OF CORRUPTION IN COOK COUNTY

Good afternoon. My name is Tom Tresser, I'm the Green Party candidate for Cook County Board President. The topic for this afternoon is "The Hidden (and not so hidden) Cost of Corruption in Cook County."

I was in court the other day at a political corruption trial, the prosecuting attorney attacked a witness. "Isn't it true," he shouted, "that you accepted five thousand dollars to compromise this case?" The witness stared out the window, as though he hadn't hear the question. The prosecutor repeated, "Isn't it true that you accepted five thousand dollars to compromise this case?" The witness still did not respond. Finally, the judge leaned over and said, "Sir, please answer the question." "Oh," the startled witness said, "I thought he was talking to you."

When our most recent governor who was arrested for corruption, it was like Christmas came early for the late night comedy writers. Here's one comment from Letterman:

"But did you hear about this guy? Blagojevich is charged with corruption and apparently he was stealing a lot of money, getting a lot of bribes and kickbacks and hiding them in his hair."

We got a million of them.

What's NOT so funny is the costs behind the scandal headlines – headlines like these from just a day ago:

"KEY ZONING OFFICIAL QUILTS AMID PROBE"- but the unqualified guy he put in place is still there earning \$69,000/year.

"CHICAGO A MODEL TO AVOID" (referring to the parking meter deal) and

"THE AMERICAN DREAM – ON TAX PAYER'S DIME" – Cook County employees getting federal subsidies to purchase homes improperly.

This pile of clippings in front of me – about a foot high – are all about corruption and waste in local government – just from the last three years. I have another stack of academic studies, civic group reports and Inspector General investigations that is about 1 foot high.

So I guess the first cost of corruption I can report is Tom Tresser's copying bill.

To my mind there are two kinds of corruption – one which is frequently cited and the second which is rarely mentioned.

The first and most commonly understood cost is the financial cost to the taxpayer for paying for poor or nonexistent services. This cost is expressed in dollars and can be calculated by adding up the many scandals and doing a little extrapolating.

The second and harder to quantify cost is the cost in human lives – an opportunity cost for the missed solutions, incompetent leadership and missed remedies to complicated problems.

Let's look at the easy subject first.

There are a few big buckets into which we can sort the financial costs of corruption:

1. Hiring people who are not qualified for their jobs.

EXAMPLE: **The Shakman Decree** has been hovering over us for 40 years and allegedly monitors hiring practices for the city of Chicago, the Office of the President of Cook County, the County Sheriff and the Forrest Preserve District. We've spent millions on the Shakman administration process and millions awarded to people who were found to have

been improperly passed over. But did you know that once a bad hire has been determined by this process, the bad hire STAYS in place. We loose three ways – we pay for the admin, we pay off the aggrieved party AND we have to pay the improper hire. Great.

2. Hiring people who do not actually work at their jobs – who are elsewhere – including prison.

EXAMPLE: **The City Inspector General issued a 2008 report** on the City's Bureau of Sanitation based on investigating just ten of the fifty wards and found massive fraud where crews were being paid while not being on the job – calculating an annual loss to the city of \$21 million.

3. Awarding contracts to the highest or unqualified bidder and getting poor or NO service. This includes fraudulent contracts to so-called minority businesses which turn out to be owned by old white men like me.

EXAMPLE: **The Hired Truck Scandal** where the city paid \$40 million of year for nothing. 45 people were convicted, including 20 city workers – County Commissioner John Daley's brother-in-law went to jail. John also sold insurance to three of the biggest Hired Truck firms. 25% of all the Hired Truck money went to companies from Daley's 11th Ward and Hired Truck companies contributed a total of \$108,575 to the Mayor.

4. Sweetheart deals where the terms of the negotiations are secret and the specter of bad-faith bargaining hovers over the deal because the awardees are related to the government officials or have made campaign contributions to them.

EXAMPLE: **The Mayor sold our parking meters for a song** – we've spent most of the cash we got from the deal – parking rates have skyrocketed – and Bloomberg News reports that while the taxpayers got a little over \$1 billion from the deal, Morgan Stanley and their partners – which includes the oil rich sheikdom of Abu Dhabi – will reap \$11.6 billion. Mayor Daley's nephew, William Daley Jr, was a Morgan Stanley executive when this deal went down.

5. Secretive taxing programs that divert property taxes from units of government into hard to track slush funds that end up subsidizing private sector projects with no oversight, evaluation or accountability.

EXAMPLE: In 2008 **the Tax Increment Finance Program** siphoned \$875 million in property taxes away from the units of government that rely on property taxes for their operation. There are 420 TIF districts across the county -161 of these districts are in the city and they sucked \$496 million out of the city's budget in an essentially off-the-books secret budget controlled by the Mayor. Some worthy projects receive TIF funds but far too many go to commercial developers with no debate, oversight, accountability or evaluation.

Grossinger Auto received \$8.5 million to move about 10 blocks into the hottest retail area in the city – right across from the new Apple Store and virtually in the shadow of a glass high rise where one bedroom units go for over \$200,000. Willis Insurance, which made over \$950 million in the first quarter of 2009 **got \$3.8 million when they moved into the Sears Tower. The Chicago Mercantile Exchange got \$15 million for rehab costs** – this when they enjoyed 2009 revenues of \$2.6 billion! **The City had \$1.2 billion in their combined TIF district funds at the end of 2009.**

6. Large legal judgments resulting from recurring and systematic improper official misconduct and attending legal fees from defending these corrupt officials.

EXAMPLE: The most shameful and shocking incidence of official misconduct recently in the news would have to be the case of **Commander John Burge**. Although **official investigations accused him of multiple instances of torturing suspects and although many of his victims have been exonerated**, the statute of limitations ran out on his crimes and he was found guilty of perjury and obstruction of justice. **The city has spent \$10 million to defend him and another \$21 million in settlement awards to his victims.** This is not over by a long shot as there are more civil law suits and dozens of new trials on the horizon as prisoners come forward saying they suffered at his hands.

7. And let's not forget old fashioned theft – just making off with cash or property.

EXAMPLE: There's old **John "Quarters" Boyle** who was convicted after stealing \$4 million from the Illinois Toll Highway Authority and then given a cushy city job and was a prominent player in the Hired Truck scandal! He was charged and convicted and is now serving a seven year prison sentence. I suppose when he gets out the City will hire him again – maybe to collect the cash from the new parking meters?

Are you getting numb yet? Don't. Here's a jolt that should keep you awake...

The **Better Government Association**, which has been around since the days of Al Capone, estimate that fully TEN PERCENT of all government spending in Illinois is lost to fraud, corruption and waste. I think that is VERY conservative. Let's break that down for someone living in Chicago:

- Chicago's 2011 budget = \$6.3 billion = \$630 million corruption tax.
- Cook County's 2010 budget = \$3 billion = \$300 million corruption tax.
- State of Illinois 2010 budget = \$24.8 billion = \$2.5 billion corruption tax.

ONE YEAR Grand total for Chicago taxpayers for the Illinois Corruption Tax = OVER \$3.4 BILLION.

And, as I said – I believe that is a conservative estimate. We haven't even addressed the sweetheart bond deals, the corrupt pension funds, the hopeless complex system of property evaluation and property tax collection in this county or the choke hold that the unions have over city, county and state representatives funneling millions to them in campaign contributions.

So that's the story on the ledger side of the equation.

What about the soft side – the human side of the cost of corruption?

Corruption is the enemy of excellence.

Corruption is the enemy of innovation.

Corruption is the enemy of service.
And corruption is the enemy of justice.

When corruption rules, these qualities go out the window.

I did Master's Degree research on the **de-institutionalization of the Massachusetts juvenile justice system** in 1974. Massachusetts closed its kid jails to all but a handful of the most violent offenders and placed their charges in community and foster-care settings. It's MUCH cheaper, far more effective and offers young people who get in trouble or who have addictions a way to a normal life rather than a career in crime – which what a jolt in the jailhouse brings. After decades of study and model programs ONLY NOW is Illinois stumbling to this test method of service and justice. Why? Because our government is corrupt and incompetent. The human cost alone from the missed opportunity here is staggering.

Research shows that the **lifetime wage differential between some WITH a high school degree and someone WITHOUT one is \$400,000!** Think of the tens of thousands of kids who have slipped through a failed public education system and a corroded juvenile justice system because they are run by hacks, thugs and cronies. Now multiply that number by \$400,000 and you get a small sense of what the REAL cost of corruption and cronyism is for Cook County and Illinois.

This results is a special corruption tax placed on your businesses as YOU have to train workers who should be coming to you ready to solve complex problems. The cost of an ill prepared workforce is devastating to Illinois business, YOU are paying the price for these missed opportunities. The University of Chicago and the Institute for Justice recently did **a study that showed Chicago is positively hostile to entrepreneurs and small business**, in general. Another byproduct of corruption is the loss of brainpower and new business as the flee to less expensive, cleaner, saner and more user-friendly jurisdictions. As we know that most new jobs are created by small business, it's no wonder that this region does very poorly in this metric, What could the \$3.8 million that was lavished on Willis Insurance done had it been broken up into small loans or grants for promising home-grown start-ups?

But my friends, the true cost of corruption in Cook County goes beyond even the hard and soft costs I've detailed so far.

Worse then ALL this is the pervasive sense of cynicism, resignation and apathy that falls on our citizens like some miasma and which has poisoned the body politic. Our democracy is dying, ladies and gentlemen – right in front of our eyes. That is the ultimate price we pay by ignoring the annual corruption tax and all the misdeeds they represent.

But we have an opportunity this November to cancel the corruption tax. The way to do that is to move aggressively

and decisively to take back our government from these corrupt politicians who treat government like a private family business – dispensing cash, contracts and jobs to friends, family and supporters.

When you vote for Governor and County Board President this November – ask yourself if that candidate is in the pocket of Big Business or Big Labor – look at who gives the candidate cash and who will expect (and who will GET) favors in return.

If you want a change in local government – it will have to start with you.

You know, the common definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again but expecting a different result.

You all LOOK eminently sane to me – PROVE it in November by NOT doing the same old thing over again – make a real change – by voting for **Rich Whitney**, the **Green Party** candidate for Governor and Tom Tresser, the Green Party candidate for Cook County Board President.

Thank you!

Seven Ideas

SEVEN PROGRAMS TO TRANSFORM COOK COUNTY

With seven days to go to the election, I thought I'd share the ideas I have for transforming Cook County. The media has not afforded me a real opportunity to get these ideas to the public and my campaign has lacked the resources to buy ads or large direct mail campaigns.

Each day I'll update you with the details for one specific program for transforming Cook County from "Crook County" into the cleanest, leanest, greenest and healthiest county in America. I welcome your comments and suggestions using the web form below.

IDEA #1 – URBAN AGRICULTURE TO TRANSFORM VACANT LOTS



There are thousands of vacant lots in the city of Chicago and across the county. The county owns land around its various facilities and it also manages the Forest Preserve.

There is a major problem across the county with people having access to fresh food that is affordable and convenient to get to. We also have an epidemic of obesity, high blood pressure and other incidents of poor health.

So I propose the county launch a major initiative to transform vacant lots into plots that produce fresh vegetables, fruit and even honey via beekeeping!

We would start with a sizable plot adjacent to Stroger Hospital and make it a model or demonstration project – complete with solar panels for electricity, a farm stand for sales and a classroom for teaching and lectures.

We would work with the established urban agriculture experts to set up and run this project. We would ask local universities to adopt this project and help design and supply volunteers to document the project. We would make sure that all work around the actual growing and harvesting of food was paid at a living wage with benefits. We would work with youth service programs and ex-offender programs to see how we can get people to work on these plots.

I would direct the county to purchase produce from this program to supply the hospital, jail and county office buildings. As the program expands, we would seek customers from local schools, universities and corporate cafeterias.

At first we would use the county's own land to start this project. I would encourage the other municipalities across the county to start similar programs. I would establish an Office of Innovation (to be explained in an upcoming newsletter) to coordinate these programs and seek support funding from the federal government and private foundations.

But if this program takes off like I think it would, I can see establishing incentives to encourage owners of land across the county to convert their vacant plots into mini-farms. Perhaps owners could be forgiven some of their property taxes in return for producing food and entering into a county-wide system of local growers.

Every aspect of this program will be documented and put on line and we will have regular reports to the community as to the progress, expenses, revenues and other benefits the program produces. We will evaluate this program at the end of the first year to see if it has lived up to expectations. Like all new and innovative ideas, this program will be the result of collaboration, learning and some trial-and-error.

But there are many local and national examples that we will be able to learn from as we plan and launch this program.

By growing and buying locally we turn ugly and blighted vacant land into spots of beauty and bounty. We put people to work. We reduce carbon emissions and purchase of oil as we don't have to transport food from far away places.

This program connects to many parts of county life. We can put people to work. We can transform vacant land into productive land. We can work with design schools, community development agencies and business schools to develop classes and training programs in the retail and food service industries that will build upon our agriculture project.



Web sites on urban agriculture:

<http://growingpower.org> – Growing Power, a nationally known nonprofit

<http://www.ruaf.org> – Resources for urban agriculture

<http://auachicago.wordpress.com> – Chicago Advocates for Urban Agriculture

IDEA #2 – STORE FRONT CLINICS



Currently Cook County ranks 81 out of Illinois' 102 counties in terms of health care delivery. This is according to the **County Health Rankings published by The University of Wisconsin's Population Health Institute.**

This survey looks at measures such as premature death, low birth-weight, adult obesity, uninsured adults, preventable hospital stays, violent crime rate, air pollution and access to health foods. We come out close to the bottom.

27% of all adults in Illinois are obese. 35% of blacks and 25% of whites are obese.

The people of Cook County are not healthy.

The access to health care and the poor outcomes associated with lack of health care hits our communities differently. If you live in a poor community or a community of color, you are likely to be unhealthier than if you live in a community of wealth or a white community.

Dr. Steven Whitman, the Director of the Mt. Sinai Urban Health Institute, **has written**, “The battle against racial disparities in health is: (a) touted widely, (b) long overdue; and (c) losing ground and predisposed to continue doing so by social forces that are propelling society in the wrong direction.”

I propose to take Cook County in the RIGHT direction in eliminating these health care disparities.

We will do this by working with the County Health System to establish a series of store front mini-clinics staffed by nurse-practitioners. Sometimes called “advanced practice nurses,” these health care professionals can provide a wide range of basic health care services, including:

- Taking medical histories and performing physical exams
- Diagnose and treat acute and chronic problems
- Provide routine health care, wellness and disease prevention
- Order and interpret lab tests, X-rays and other diagnostic tests
- Prescribe medications and treatments
- **and much more.**

Advanced practice nurses can do almost everything doctors can do – especially in the role of preventative and primary care. And the savings are considerable.

Remember, when people don't have access to preventative and primary care and they get sick or injured they head to the emergency room and that costs a bundle.

Let's put these clinics in the communities with the greatest need and whose residents are not being adequately served by our public health programs. A study in the journal “**Nursing Economics**” (March/April 2008) looked at this model and concluded “Nurse-managed clinics can serve as an **important safety net** in the health care delivery system by offering needed health services to the poor and under-insured populations.”

This sort of health care is already happening across the country – just take a look at the **MinuteClinics** and similar programs popping up at your local chain drug store.

We are going to need new thinking to transform health care delivery in Cook County. **We need to bring our health care metrics up from 81 to #1!** This will save lives, improve the quality of life for our neighbors AND save money over the long term.

Web sites on nurse-managed clinics:

- Article on cost and quality of nurse-managed clinics from “Nursing Economics” – <https://www.nursingeconomics.net/ce/2010/article26075083.pdf>
- Illinois Society for Advanced Practice Nursing – <http://www.isapn.org>
- American Academy of Nurse Practitioners – <http://www.aanp.org>

IDEA #3 – CREATIVITY & INNOVATION



I've spent decades in the arts and culture communities in Chicago. I was a co-founder of a small classical theater company in 1981 and grew it from nothing to a budget of \$150,000 in three years. Later I was the managing director of Chicago's largest non-Equity theater. I have made a study of how the arts and creativity transforms lives, builds communities and creates economic value.

Creativity is a powerful and often under-valued natural resource for a community and a region. We all have it and creativity powers not just vast portions of our economy but it nourishes the soul and brings us all together.

The arts, culture and creative industries are big business in Illinois and Cook County.

Close to two million people in Illinois make their living in the creative industries. That's about 32% of the full time workforce. About the same percentage is true for the Chicago metropolitan area.

Being creative, innovative and being a problem solver are qualities NOT just for artists or scientists – but are skills EVERYONE needs to succeed in an economy driven by ideas, hyper-competition and new discoveries. Skills learned through creative activities – such as problem-solving, collaboration and empathy are MUST HAVES for the modern work place where much of the work is done in high-performance teams. Our schools need to re-tool their programs to encourage, nourish and celebrate creativity in our children. Our workers need to be smart, creative and highly literate.

In order to succeed in the modern economy, Illinois – and Cook County – must lift creativity to a MUST HAVE priority.

I've seen many examples – some of which I organized myself for **Pegasus Players**, **Peoples Housing** and the **Chicago Park District** – where the arts bring people together, create safe places for collaboration and celebration, spark effective training programs, bring streets back to life and light up lives.

I will bring this spirit of creativity and innovation to Cook County.

- I will call for the establishment of a Cook County Arts Council to give the arts a voice and champion county-wide.
- I will work with the arts and cultural leaders of the county to create a cultural plan to lift up the arts and bring cultural programming to areas of the county that currently lack cultural resources.
- I will work with business leaders and the mayors of the municipalities of the county to encourage them to add the arts and culture to their civic planning and improvement agendas.
- I will advocate for literacy programs, increased support to local libraries and expanded English As Second Language teaching programs.
- I will appoint artists and cultural workers to commissions, boards and other offices in order to receive the benefits of creative thinking and unique perspectives.
- I will work with the deans of local business schools and major cultural institutions to establish training programs that prepare workers for success in the creative industries.
- I will establish an Office of Innovation inside the President's Office to look at how the county can bring new services to the people of Cook County and how to pay for them.

Cook County has not been known for being a hot bed of innovation and a home for the arts and creative industries. This will change if I become the next President of the Cook County Board. Cook County will practice innovation in order to deliver excellent and needed services. But it will also seek, nourish, celebrate and accelerate the creativity within its borders in order to build communities and save lives.

Web sites on the arts and innovation:

- Arts Alliance Illinois – <http://www.artsalliance.org>

- National Council on Competitiveness – <http://www.compete.org/about-us/initiatives>

- “Beyond Productivity: Information, Technology, Innovation & Creativity” – The National Academies Press – http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=10671

IDEA #4 – GREENING COOK COUNTY



Let's make Cook County the showcase for green government and environmental stewardship.

Let's reduce the carbon footprint of the government to as close to zero as possible.

Let's create a comprehensive recycling program for the entire county. **We can look to the City of Seattle** to see how a large-scale program was introduced and what amazing impact it has had. We need to go further. Let's put gardens on our county building rooftops. Let's install solar arrays and re-use rain water for those gardens. Let's re-fit our fleet to run on bio-fuels.

Let's plan together across the county, with all the villages and municipalities, to look at our shared environment and issue a regional assessment of our water, land and air quality.

Let's implement the recommendations of the Chicago Agency for Metropolitan Planning's (CMAP) "**Go To 2040**" **Report** which calls for improved mass transit, expanded green space, innovative urban agriculture programs to transform vacant land into food production and investing in our research and innovation capacities.

I see a number of major opportunities for the county.

First, I'd like to implement an urban agriculture initiative. That was described in the Idea #1 email on Wednesday..

Second, let's get serious about installing as many solar arrays for our homes and businesses as possible. Let Cook County take the lead here by working with local suppliers to set up model installations on highly visible county buildings. Let's work with local community colleges to start a training program that will turn out qualified technicians who can perform energy audits, install the solar panels and perform other jobs related to the green economy.

I would propose a pilot project to give home and business owners a reduction of their property taxes in return for installing and maintaining approved solar panel setups. **New Jersey has an excellent system** that could show us one way to do this.

We need to improve our mass transit system significantly. The folks at CMAP estimate the cost of congestion in the metro region is \$7.3 billion every year. They estimate the annual average cost of car commuting is \$12,500 while the annual average cost of transit commuting is \$1,000. I will call on our regional and local transit agencies to merge and plan for service expansion. We will need to think strategically and creatively about funding service improvements and the CMAP plan offers a number of sound options.

I pledge to bring a spirit of sustainability, stewardship and innovation to Cook County. We need to think green and be green as a matter of taking care of our planet and building the next economy.

Let's make Cook County the greenest, cleanest, leanest and healthiest county in America!



IDEA #5 – JUVENILE JUSTICE





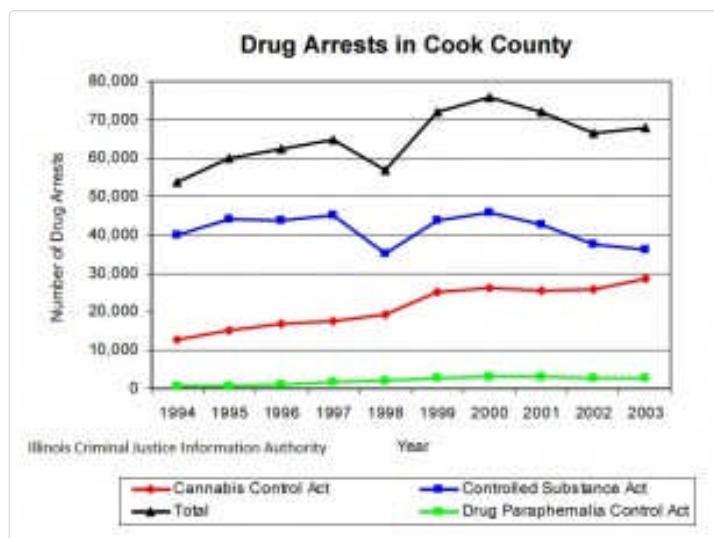
We arrest and jail far too many kids in Illinois and Cook County. About 16,000 17-year-olds enter the adult system in Illinois every year. In 2007 some 4,473 kids cycled through the Cook County Juvenile Detention Center.

71% of all arrests of juveniles are for non-violent crimes. Youth of color are about one-third of the youth population but make up 90% of the young people who are put into the adult system.

Something is wrong with this picture.

It costs the Illinois taxpayers about \$85,000 annually to keep a kid in jail.

Look at this graph:



According to the civic planning organization **Metropolis 2020**, imprisoning people convicted of non-violent drug offenses costs Illinois taxpayers an estimated \$240 million a year.

If I am elected Cook County Board President I will move to change this picture.

First, I will advocate for the decriminalization of marijuana and for the release from detention any juvenile being held for non-violent drug-related offenses.

Most importantly, I will move to implement a comprehensive program of diversion programs to keep kids who get into trouble **OUT OF PRISON**. We need to have excellent drug rehab programs to get kids with substance abuse problems clean and sober. We need after school programs to keep kids out of trouble.

We need a range of community-based solutions to use for kids if they do enter the justice system. These community-based solutions include mentoring, counseling, group homes and foster care. These community-anchored programs cost, on average, \$10,000 per kid annually. This is a huge savings over incarceration and is far more likely to result in that youth becoming a tax payer and not a tax consumer.

I would advocate for Cook County's juvenile justice system adopting what has been labeled **the "Missouri Model"** for caring for young people who get in trouble.

Here's what **one nationally known child welfare expert said** about this model:

"The state of Missouri has created a juvenile justice system that has proved so successful over the last 30 years it's known as the "Missouri Miracle." A number of practices combine to make Missouri's system unique: It's primarily made up of small facilities, generally designed for between ten and 30 youths, located at sites throughout the state that keep young people close to their own homes. These facilities don't look like jails with traditional cells; there are only eight isolation rooms in the entire state, which are seldom used and only for emergency situations. They feature

a highly trained and educated staff working in teams with small groups of youths. Youths are treated with respect and dignity, and instead of more traditional correctional approaches, the system uses a rehabilitative and therapeutic model that works towards teaching the young people to make positive, lasting changes in their behavior. The result has been some of the best outcomes in the nation: fewer than 8 percent of the youths in the Missouri system return again after their release, and fewer than 8 percent go on to adult prison. One-third of the youths return to their communities with a high school diploma or GED, and another 50 percent successfully return to school.”

The modern juvenile justice system was created here in Cook County in 1899, led by social activist Jane Addams. What was once a model for the world has deteriorated into a scandal-ridden and over-crowded embarrassment. The county was sued by the Illinois ACLU over the horrible conditions in the juvenile jail and, as a result, the operation of the system was handed over to an administrator who reports to a federal judge.

We need to reclaim the reform and champion of justice banner that was carried by Jane Addams and her allies from so long ago.

If I am the next President of the Cook County Board we will see that spirit return to our juvenile justice system.

Web resources on juvenile justice:

- Chicago Public Radio's series on juvenile justice in Illinois – <http://insideandout.chicagopublicradio.org>
- Juvenile Justice Initiative – <http://www.jjustice.org>
- Campaign for Youth Justice – <http://www.campaignforyouthjustice.org>

IDEA #6 – REFORM, SERVICE, SAVINGS



Everyone claims to be a reformer in this race. Everyone claims to be a tough independent willing to take on the Machine. I'd like to remind you that I'm the one candidate running anywhere in Illinois who has so successfully challenged the Democratic Machine for so long and on so many vital issues.

In the mid-1990's I was part of a state-wide coalition that stopped the expansion of casino gambling into Cook County. This was pushed by Mayor Daley and had the support of every politician in the city.

More recently I was the co-leader of **No Games Chicago**, an all-volunteer group of concerned citizens that fought the bid for the 2106 Olympics when no one else would.

I estimate that because we did not get the Summer Olympics every tax payer in Cook County will save about \$1,000 in higher property taxes that would've resulted from the massive cost overruns that come with the modern Olympics. How bad can it get? Ask the poor tax payers in Vancouver where the much smaller Winter games stuck them with a \$1.5 BILLION debt. Or ask the shell shocked tax payers of London where the 2012 games are now \$12 BILLION over budget.

That being said, if elected, I pledge to bring a fresh start for Cook County featuring massive reform, increased excellence in all services and a savings for each and every tax payer.

I am dedicated to service. I follow a **model of leadership called Servant-Leadership** which basically says one seeks to lead in order to serve. It may sound odd to want to serve as a way of leading but anyone who knows a great teacher or doctor or nonprofit leader or religious steward will know what this spirit is all about.

I will bring this model of service to the entire Cook County work force. We will be dedicated to delivering excellent service to the people of Cook County.

Along with the call to service, and the revamping of our hiring, training and compensation plans to reflect this dedication, will come some very serious accounting.

I intend to cut the workforce by at least ten percent. I will institute a forensic audit on all aspects of the county's finances as well as every contract. We simply can not take anything for granted. The corruption and incompetence has been so widespread for so long, we simply don't trust much of anything the county has published recently.

We will conduct a desk audit of all employees. We'll start with the people who report to the President's Office. I will certainly bring in a team for the most pressing managerial positions but I don't want a mass exodus. We will review all positions to see if (1) the job is needed and aligns with some strategic plan for the county, (2) the person is qualified for the job, and (3) the person is actually present and working.

We will then review all middle-management positions with the same criteria. Finally, we will review all line personnel. We will review all the Shakman Decree settlements and look at the employees whose hiring or promotion triggered a settlement. I will want to know why those bad hires or bad promotes are still on the county payroll.

My message to Cook County employees is this. If you have received your job properly and if you are qualified for your job and if you are actually performing your job, then you have nothing to worry about from a Tresser administration. But if this is NOT the case and we find you – then we will fire you and prosecute you for theft.

I will also fight to eliminate Tax Increment Financing (TIFs) from the county. This is not something the Board President can make happen on their own. I would embark on a grassroots education campaign to every city, town and village in the county. I will ask the people of Cook County to demand to their local elected officials to sunset existing TIFs and not to start any new ones.

In 2008 some 420 TIF districts hijacked some \$875 million of our property taxes county wide AWAY from the local units of government that rely on them for their operations. This included \$495 million from the City of Chicago. If you live in a neighborhood that is in a TIF district then YOUR property tax bill is lying to you unless it shows the amount of money being diverted from your schools, your parks, your police, your libraries, etc.

I regard TIFs as a massive fraud on the taxpayer and the source of the biggest slush funds the Democratic Machine operates. **Learn more about TIFs and TIF abuse at this web site I have set up.** You can also sign an **online petition calling for the abolition of TIFs in Cook County.**

In addition, there are about \$50 million in easily achieved savings from eliminating duplication of county departments. There is another \$200 million in new revenues to be garnered by implementing modern billing systems in the hospital system.

These reforms will conservatively **CUT YOUR PROPERTY TAXES BY TEN PERCENT.**

My decades of experience in the nonprofit sector has made me a frugal administrator – able to innovate and implement new programs effectively and efficiently. I have extensive experience in creating non-traditional collaborations between unlikely allies to solve problems and get things done. This background makes me an ideal candidate for the position of President of Cook County.

If the people of Cook County place their trust in me, I will not disappoint them. I promise to launch a fresh start for Cook County – one that will be remembered for a new day of reform, excellence and service.

IDEA #7 – CONNECT THE DOTS



I've laid out a plan for bringing excellence, reform, innovation and savings to the tax payers of Cook County.

In the past six emails and prior communications I've told you that I have the courage to take on the Democratic

Machine, the passion to serve and in the intellect to innovate.

I believe my non-traditional background in community development, nonprofit leadership, grassroots organizing and cultural programming gives me a set of skills that will allow me to bring people together to solve tough problems AND save money at the same time.

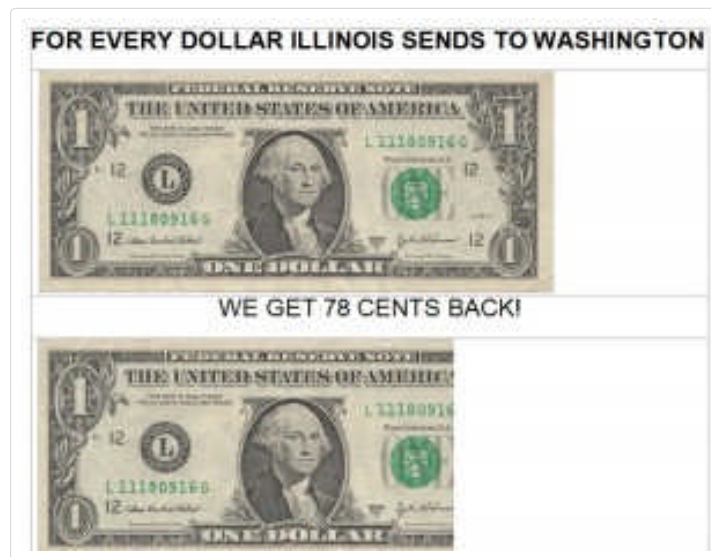
I will transform “Cook County” into the greenest, cleanest, leanest and healthiest county in America.

But there is one more way that I see to transform Cook County.

I'd like to make Cook County a national leader in advocating for changing the way our federal government spends our money.

Here's a little known deficit that is at the heart of many of our state's government-related problems.

For every dollar we send to Washington in form of taxes, Illinois gets .78 back.



In 2005 Illinois sent \$99,776,000,000 to Washington and we got \$80.778,000 back. That was a net loss of \$18,998,000,000! That's almost \$19 BILLION lost in one year!

The reason is simple. We don't have extensive military bases and defense-related manufacturing in Illinois.

USA Today reports:

“Rapidly rising pay and benefits in the armed forces have lifted many military towns into the ranks of the nation's most affluent communities, a USA TODAY analysis finds. The hometown of the Marines' Camp Lejeune — Jacksonville, N.C. — soared to the nation's 32nd-highest income per person in 2009 among the 366 U.S. metropolitan areas, according to Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) data. In 2000, it had ranked 287th. The Jacksonville metropolitan area, with a population of 173,064, had the top income per person of any North Carolina community in 2009. In 2000, it ranked 13th of 14 metro areas in the state. The USA TODAY analysis finds that 16 of the 20 metro areas rising the fastest in the per-capita income rankings since 2000 had military bases or one nearby.”

Globally, the top defense contractors took in \$635 billion in 2009. Of that, the U.S. Defense industries had revenues of \$385 billion. Not bad in a time of global recession.

All across America states are in the red. Counties and cities are awash in deficits. In some cities school days are cut back and street lights are being turned off.

Mayors across the country are turning to privatization deals to sell off priceless public assets for a song to private investors to raise short term cash. Hello, every time you pay a parking meter in Chicago you are rewarding the private partnership put together by Morgan-Stanley – which includes the oil rich kingdom of Abu Dhabi.

This partnership will make \$11.6 billion off of us during the life of the 75-year deal. That's TEN TIMES what

they paid for the right to fleece us. Pretty good return on a no-risk investment, I'd say!

If this isn't enough to give you palpitations, consider this. Morgan-Stanley received \$10 billion in federal bail out funds. We paid a private company to buy our own parking meters for a song. They risked nothing.

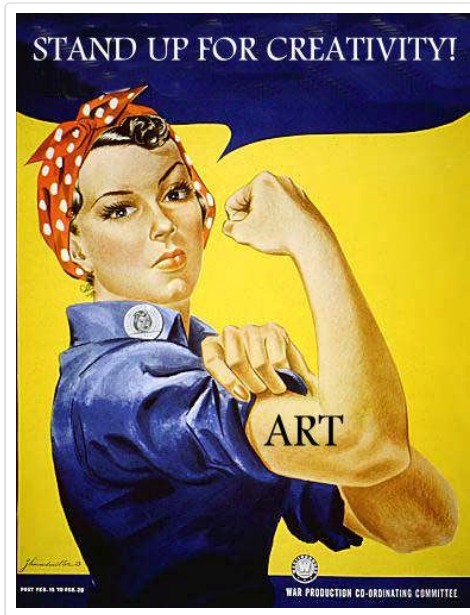
So we have to connect the dots and understand that the plight of Cook County – of all America's counties – is tied directly to this federal mis-allocation of our own money.

If I am elected Cook County Board President I intend to vividly and dramatically connect the dots and I'll go to the chief executives of America's other nine biggest counties and make the case that together we must pressure our Congressmen, or Senators and our President to change this funding formula disaster. The federal government's inane spending priorities are KILLING America's cities and counties.

We need a County Board President to take care of business here at home. But it is my strong argument that one of the best ways to do this is to raise hell with our allies from counties across the country. We need to change the way Washington spends our money.

If we here in Illinois could correct that structural deficit by even ten percent – that would mean almost \$2 billion of extra revenue to the state. If we correct it by twenty percent, that's an additional \$4 billion annually. These dots **definitely** need connecting.

Arts & Culture



TOM TRESSER – ARTS & INNOVATION PLATFORM

I am the only candidate running for office anywhere in Illinois (and perhaps the nation) who has decades of experience in the arts community. I was an actor, theater producer, arts activist and have produced and delivered leadership training sessions for cultural workers in seven states.

I've been fighting for the arts and culture in civic life since 1990. In 1990 I instigated the creation of the Advocacy Committee for the League of Chicago Theatres and served as a field organizer for their campaign to save the National Endowment for the Arts. After getting a small research grant from the MacArthur Foundation in 1991, I visited six cities to see what programming and funding innovations the arts communities in those cities had come up with. With that information I attempted to organize a center for cultural policy at the Institute for Metropolitan Affairs at Roosevelt University. I taught "Arts & Cultural Policy" at Roosevelt for several years. I founded and led Greater Chicago Citizens for the Arts in 1991 and worked on behalf of candidates from Alderman to U.S. Senate who vigorously supported the arts and freedom of expression (for more information, see <http://tresser.com/artspolitics/index.html>).

I was the Director of Cultural Development at Peoples Housing for three years ending in 1995. I pioneered programs there that blended economic development, culture and micro-enterprise. My work was funded by a number of local and national foundations and was recognized by the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC). I've consulted with groups on culture and economic development, including the provincial government of Saskatchewan.

I organized the Creative America Project in 2004 and made the case that artists and cultural workers should lead in civic life and run for local office. I've done leadership development workshops for artists and cultural workers in seven states and I've written a book stating the case for creative professionals to lead – "America Needs You! Why You Should Become a Creativity Champion." I've personally registered thousands of young people to vote and have curated and produced arts and politics events, exhibits and op-ed pieces. Sadly, my call to America's creative community has gone pretty much unheeded.

I have created a number of classes that mix the arts, creativity and civic engagement for Roosevelt, Loyola, DePaul and the Illinois Institute of Technology. These classes include "The Politics of Creativity," "Acting Up – Using Theater & Technology for Social Change," "How To Be A Cultural Activist," "The Artist As Activist," "Introduction to Nonprofits as Engines of Social Change," and "Who's Lying To You Now? Critical Thinking & Media Literacy" (for more details, see <http://tomsclasses.wordpress.com>).

I have been a very active defender of the public commons. In 2008 I co-founded Protect Our Parks, which stopped

the privatization of Lincoln Park. In 2009 I was a co-leader of No Games Chicago which helped defeat the 2016 Olympic bid. We did so because the games would've bankrupted the region, destroyed priceless public parks, displaced poor families from their neighborhoods and would've generated millions of dollars in Olympic contract kick-backs for the Democratic Machine. We were right to oppose the bid. The much smaller winter games in Vancouver has left that city with a \$1.5 billion debt and the 2012 London games are \$10 billion over budget (see <http://www.nogameschicago.com>).

Now as the Green Party candidate for Cook County Board, I call on my colleagues in the creative community to support my campaign. My platform calls for reform and innovation and reducing property taxes by ten percent.

Here are the policy initiatives I will pursue that relate directly to creativity, the arts and culture in Cook County:

- I will create a Cook County Arts Council to give voice and support to the arts county wide. I know that there are areas of the county that do have adequate cultural resources. I want to map the need and help grow arts organizations and presenting opportunities where the need is greatest.
- I will create an Office of Innovation and call on creative professionals to help me re-imagine and re-invent Cook County government – including health care, the juvenile justice and probation system, land use, mass transit and regional planning.
- I will encourage local communities to use arts-based strategies for economic development and move away from subsidizing Big Box retailers as the only solution offered to re-vitalize disinvested communities.
- I will apply the Percent-For-Art ordinance to all new county building projects.
- I will appoint artists and cultural leaders to my administration in order for them to bring their creative skills and experience into public service.

The arts saves lives and build communities. The arts and cultural industries will have a strong ally in county government if I am elected!