

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Diane Back

Phone: 312.813.0091

## **CHIDITAROD CHECKPOINTS ACCEPTING FOOD DONATIONS FOR FIRST TIME**

(Chicago, February 19, 2013)-- As the annual Chiditarod draws near, the checkpoints are preparing to accept food donations from neighbors, racers and regulars two weeks in advance of this year's race. The broadened food collection system is hoped to increase both the visibility of our partnership with the Greater Chicago Food Depository, our food collection beneficiary since 2012, as well as increase the total food amounts collected. In the past, non-perishable food has been collected from racing teams and donations accepted from food producers.

The Chiditarod is an annual race known as an Urban Iditarod. It is based on the Alaskan Iditarod dog sled race. Held on the same day in Chicago, the local version substitutes shopping carts for sleds, and people in costume for dogs in fur. Each team has 4 pullers and 1 musher. Carts and participants are decked out in theme décor, and are expected to stop for rest periods at checkpoints, all of which turn out to be taverns.

From February 19<sup>th</sup> until Race Day (March 2<sup>nd</sup>), all checkpoints will also act as food collection locations including Bottom Lounge - 1375 W Lake St, Club Foot - 1824 W Augusta Ave, Cobra Lounge - 235 N Ashland Ave, Boundary - 1932 W Division St, Five Star - 1424 W Chicago Ave, Mahoney's - 551 N Ogden Ave, Phyllis's Musical Inn - 1800 W Division St and Roots Pizza - 1924 W Chicago Ave. Food collection bins and pick-up services are being generously provided by Greater Chicago Food Depository.

"Right now, 1 in 6 people in Cook County doesn't know when or where their next meal is coming from," said Kate Maehr, executive director and CEO of the Greater Chicago Food Depository. "The more than 12,000 pounds of food and \$7,000 collected and donated by Chiditarod in 2012 helped us provide more than 31,000 meals for hungry people across our community. We are grateful for this support and we look forward to the impact Chiditarod will make on hunger this year."

"This cause resonates with everyone, since we all know what hunger feels like," said Chiditarod founder Devin Breen. "When we reflect that for some it is a constant challenge, it is impossible to do nothing. If it takes racing through Chicago streets in ridiculous costumes and with shopping carts to address this problem, we will do so."

He added that the Greater Chicago Food Depository has been "an awesome partner" by making collection and donation easy and by understanding that "charity can be madcap as well as solemn."

*For more information, visit [www.chiditarod.org](http://www.chiditarod.org).*