

# NEWS



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FROM THE OFFICE OF STATE REPRESENTATIVE JOHN FRITCHEY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
November 3, 2009

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## **Rep. Fritchey visits National Runaway Switchboard** *November is National Runaway Prevention Month*

Chicago – State Representative John Fritchey (D-Chicago) recently toured the National Runaway Switchboard (NRS), a Chicago-based direct service organization, in commemoration of the eighth annual campaign National Runaway Prevention Month in November. The goals of National Runaway Prevention Month are two-fold, focusing on both raising awareness of the issues facing runaways, as well as educating the public about solutions and the role they can play in preventing youth from running away in the first place.

“NRS has been in our community for over 3 decades and truly is, not only a state treasure, but also a national one, for the help that they provide to thousands of youth across the nation annually,” states Rep. Fritchey.

Some of the Prevention Month activities include the Green Light Project, which encourages all of us to show support of runaway and at-risk youth by shining a green light on their front porch. The green light serves as a symbol to get people talking about the runaway issue and ways to prevent youth from running.

Between 1.6 and 2.8 million youth will run from home this year. In addition, a federal study showed a 40% increase last year in homeless juveniles, and twice the number of youth living on their own than in 2003. NRS has more than 100 Chicago area volunteers who help respond to the more than 100,000 calls from across the country, each year.

“With the downturn in our economy and the significant increase of juvenile runaways, it is important that we spread awareness about youth runaways, and educate ourselves on how to recognize and prevent juvenile homelessness,” Rep. Fritchey continued. “Since the statistics on youth runaways and homelessness are so staggering, it my hope that this November campaign makes people pause and take a good look at this issue.”

The National Runaway Switchboard hotline, 1-800- RUNAWAY, has been in existence since 1974. The services of NRS provide help and hope to runaway, homeless and at-risk youth and their families. For more information about NRS and the November campaign, please visit [www.1800RUNAWAY.org](http://www.1800RUNAWAY.org).



Rep. Fritchey visits with Maureen Blaha, Executive Director of the National Runaway Switchboard.