

THE COMMONS

Chicago Commons - Helping families **GO** further.

Your Monthly News & Updates | July 2019

Greetings!

I hope this note finds you well and you enjoyed the holiday weekend. Summer months are an exciting time at Chicago Commons as we celebrate the successes of our children, families, and seniors.



Last month, we kicked off summer by hosting our **125th Annual Meeting and Celebration**. We acknowledged the impact you helped us achieve and reflected on the development of our new strategic plan - A Bold New Future. We commemorated this special moment with a 125th Anniversary birthday cake and with our board members, supporters, and staff.

Perhaps core to this work is that our leadership refreshed our mission and vision to reaffirm who we are and what we stand for. At Chicago Commons, we envision a future where all children, families, and seniors have equitable opportunities for success generation after generation. Our mission today is to empower individuals, families, and communities to overcome poverty and systemic barriers, embrace opportunities, and thrive across generations. It is through this lens that we developing our strategic priorities to strengthen our impact, expand our services, and increase our sustainability. I look forward to sharing an executive summary of this plan in the fall.

At our Annual Meeting, we also announced that we will hold a **125th Anniversary Dinner and Celebration** on Friday, November 15, 2019, at the Radisson Blu located at 221 N. Columbus Drive. The event, which will start at 5:30 pm with a cocktail reception, will include a program and awards ceremony and conclude with a commemorative Pour Out Your Heart for Chicago Commons After-party featuring the amazing **Chicago Players band**. We hope that you will consider joining us on this night. Please stay tuned over the coming weeks for updates and information on how you can get involved.

Lastly, in the spirit of celebration, we are also thankful to our donors, staff, and the broader Chicago Commons community who are helping us ensure this is a special year by bringing new resources to our families. **PNC** joined us once again as part of their Grow Up Great Initiative to bring the Mobile Learning Adventure to our Back of the Yards center. **Peoples Gas, PwC, and HSA Commercial Real Estate** employees also showed our children love by volunteering and participating in backpack and school supply drives for our Commons graduates. Last but not least, we are thankful for the generosity and support of the **Bud**

Blossom Golf Outing Committee and sponsors for their leadership and support. We look forward to teeing off at the rescheduled date for the outing on September 23, 2019.

Thank you for your support.

Best Wishes,



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HIGHLIGHTS

Annual Meeting and Celebration: A Bold New Future

On June 18, 2019, Chicago Commons held our Annual Meeting and Celebration at Grant Thornton LLP. We celebrated past accomplishments, 125 years of impact in Chicago, and the great things to come! Thank you to Deputy Governor of Illinois Jesse Ruiz, Chicago Commons President and CEO Edgar Ramirez, and Chicago Commons parent Catrina Swanigan for speaking. A special thank you to Vice Chair of the board, Steven Sparks, for hosting us at Grant Thornton, LLP. We appreciate all who were able to attend and share in the excitement of this 125th anniversary year!



[View the Photo Album](#)

SAVE THE DATE

125th Anniversary Dinner: Generations Of Generosity

Please join us on Friday, November 15, 2019 for our **125th Anniversary Dinner and Celebration**. Starting with a cocktail reception at 5:30 pm, this event will include dinner, a program and awards ceremony, silent auction, and more! We will conclude with a commemorative Pour Out Your Heart for Chicago Commons After-party featuring **The Chicago Players band**. We hope that you will consider joining us on this night.

[Tickets and Sponsorships](#)



GENERATIONS OF *generosity*



SAVE-THE-DATE 125TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2019

5:30 pm - 8:30 pm

Reception and Dinner

Radisson Blu Aqua Chicago

221 N. Columbus Drive

Contact: Cheryl Wisniewski

(773) 826-4256

8:30 pm - 11:00 pm

Pour Out Your Heart for Commons

After-party Featuring The Chicago Players

Selected by the Citi Foundation's

**COMMUNITY
PROGRESS
MAKERS** FUND

to Accelerate Economic Opportunity
#ProgressMakers

We at Chicago Commons are
proud Citi Foundation
Community #ProgressMakers

PNC Foundation Gifts PFC with New Technology and Brings Mobile Learning Adventure for Back of the Yards Families

As a part of their Grow Up Great Initiative, PNC brought their Mobile Learning Adventure to our Paulo Freire Family Center in Back of the Yards. The Mobile Learning Adventure is a traveling exhibit that provides an opportunity for parents and children to learn more about the importance of early childhood education while having fun! The Mobile Learning Adventure included a "When I Grow Up" photo station, where kids dressed up as different professionals and had their pictures taken and printed to take home.



PNC also donated our Paulo Freire Family Center with new iPads and a ceiling projector! We are so thankful for their support of our early education programs, and for providing our kids with the updated technology they need to learn and grow. Our kids, families, teachers, and staff will use these materials for years to come. A special thank you to Dorothy Abreu, Chicago Commons board member and VP of Community Development at PNC, who presented the gift! You can watch the video here!



Over 300 Backpacks Delivered To Chicago Commons Graduates

This year, we received a record number of 300 backpacks and 1,500 school supplies for our soon-to-be kindergartners at our four early education centers! Many thanks to the employees and leadership from **Peoples Gas** and **HSA Commercial Real Estate** for donating the backpacks and school supplies, helping ensure that our Commons graduates are prepared to start kindergarten in style, with all of the back-to-school essentials. A special thank you to Peoples Gas leaders Sharon Moy, Alison Millerick, Larry Szumski, Suany Mejia and HSA CEO Bob Smietana. Much gratitude to Chicago Commons Emerging Leaders Council and our volunteers for helping with this backpack drive. We appreciate your continued support!



PwC Day of Service

Volunteers from PwC visited us at two of our early education centers in Pilsen and Humboldt Park for their Day of Service. There, they spent time with our kids, working on various Reggio-inspired projects using unconventional, natural materials! They also toured the centers with our studio coordinators to learn more about what makes our high-quality early education centers so unique.

Thank you Megan McGrath, William Darland, and Commons Emerging Leaders Council member Alex Kapustka for being a part of this day! Our kids had a wonderful day and we are incredibly grateful for this partnership.

Interested in volunteering with us, or joining our Commons Emerging Leaders Council?

[Visit our website](#)



Father's Day Celebration at Early Ed Centers

We celebrated our dads this month for Father's Day at our four early education centers. Dads enjoyed breakfast together, along with arts and crafts projects from their kids! Check out this nice video that Guadalupano Family Center put together for our dads. Thank you, dads! We appreciate you today and every day.



Open House & Farmers Market with Plant Chicago

On Saturday, June 29, our Paulo Freire Family Center partnered with **Plant Chicago** for an **Open House & Farmers Market**. Families were invited to tour the school, purchase organic produce from local vendors, take part in a food demonstration and family workshops, and more!

Learn more about Plant Chicago!



SPOTLIGHT

Congratulations, Willie, on Your Retirement!

Chicago Commons would like to take this opportunity to thank Willie for his unwavering commitment and dedication to serving our participants. Willie E. Thrash is retiring from Chicago Commons after 11 years of working with our Adult Day Services. What drives Willie is his passion for human beings; this was evident in his role with Chicago Commons as the Adult Day Service driver. He enjoyed interacting with the participants by talking to them and simply listening to their experiences.

Willie, your compassion and sense of humor will be missed. We sincerely hope that retirement is wonderful and we wish you lots of joyous time with your family. Best wishes for a happy retirement. Thank you for everything you have done. Congratulations!

[Read The Full Post On Our Website](#)



Art Studio Coordinator Talks Reggio Approach in Reggio Emilia, Italy



Jesus Oviedo, a Chicago Commons' Studio Coordinator, recently attended a conference in Reggio Emilia, Italy where he represented Commons and the Illinois delegation of educators. Jesus shared the successes of our Reggio Emilia approach to learning, which Commons adopts at all four of our early education centers. The conference and tour were designed for seasoned thought leaders on the adaptation of the Reggio Emilia approach in the United States. In total, 200 educators from around the United States attended, several of which have been exploring the Reggio Emilia approach for decades. We are proud of Jesus' accomplishments and his work to ensure our schools provide high-quality learning environments that allow children to explore and grow socially, emotionally, and

EVENTS

Bud Blossom Golf Outing



When: Monday, September 23, 2019

Where: Shoreacres

Lunch: 10:00 AM

Shotgun Start: 12:00 PM

Due to weather, our annual Bud Blossom Golf Outing has been rescheduled to **September 23, 2019**. Questions? Please contact Cheryl Wisniewski at 773-826-4256 or cheryl@chicagocommons.org.

We would like to thank our hosts David and Annette Dezelan for making this event possible. Thanks also to our Golf Committee members, Amit Mehta, Phil Kenny, and Dan Chavez.

SOCIAL MEDIA CORNER



Chicago Commons' senior care staff welcomed Paula Basta, Director of the Illinois Department on Aging (IDOA), to our Adult Day Service center for a tour of the



Thank you to John Burns Construction CEO, Bill O'Malley and President, Scott Becker for including Chicago Commons as a beneficiary of your 4th Annual Charity Event at

facility and home care department!
Thank you Paula for taking the time to come to Chicago Commons to visit with our participants and staff.

[#ProgressMakers](#)
[#SeniorsGOFurther](#)

the Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation. Our CDO Julio Paz was delighted to join you and share our story alongside Commons Emerging Leaders Council Members and John Burns employees — Tara Swabowski and Ana Renteria.



In 1897, Chicago Commons started its summer camp program, 'Camp Commons' for boys and girls living in the city. We continue to provide unique learning environments and experiences for our children today. Our Reggio Emilia approach to early education allows kids to explore the outdoors and natural materials to foster their intellectual curiosity!
[#Commons125](#) [#FlashbackFriday](#)

DID YOU KNOW?

392

Number of individuals participating in our Family Hub program



Family Hub is our adult education program that positions our early education centers to meet the needs of the whole family. Services include: Health and Wellness, Financial Literacy, Employment Services, and Advocacy/Leadership!
[#Commons125](#) [#ProgressMakers](#)
[#FamiliesGOFurther](#)

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STAY INVOLVED



Looking for other ways to get involved? Make a donation or become a volunteer today!

Donate

Volunteer



Thank you for helping 3,000 kids, families and seniors GO further. Because of you, kids are prepared for kindergarten and lifelong learning; families have access to education, employment and financial services; and seniors and adults with disabilities maintain their quality of life and stay in their homes.