

A future of opportunity.



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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dear Friends & Supporters,

For more than 125 years, Chicago Commons has been a trusted neighbor and partner, helping Chicago families build the life they want—the life they deserve. We've evolved alongside our communities as needs have changed and new challenges arose, including the unprecedented challenges posed by COVID-19. We are and will continue to be a cornerstone in the neighborhoods we serve, which are among the most under-resourced in Chicago.

As we entered our 125th anniversary year, we embarked on a process to develop a threeyear strategic plan that would honor our roots while positioning us to continue to evolve and expand to meet the needs of our communities.

For example, we're working to expand our services to Chicago's senior population, as longer life expectancies contribute to a growing demand for senior care services. By 2040, the number of Chicagoland residents ages 65–84 is projected to double. Meanwhile, only 25% of Chicago children are prepared to enter kindergarten*, but we know through Teaching Strategies Gold that between 85% and 99% of our children meet or exceed widely-held expectations for kindergarten readiness. Therefore, we're working to increase our capacity so that more Chicago children can benefit from our proven approach.

*Illinois State Board of Education study 2019

Chicago needs Chicago Commons more than ever, and we are answering that need with the support of our board members, donors, community partners, and staff members.

In addition to serving as a time for reflection and planning, our milestone anniversary was also a time for celebration.

We are grateful to the State of Illinois, the City of Chicago, the 27th Ward Alderman Walter Burnett, Jr., PNC Grow Up Great, the Chicago Bears, Bears Care, the NFL Foundation, the Horne family, and countless volunteers for joining forces to install a bigger outdoor play and learning space at our Nia Family Center in Humboldt Park. The green space increased to almost half an acre and is now home to a new double slide, a log crawl tunnel, climbing structures, balance beams, and a fossil dig structure that encourage learners to crawl, walk, climb, and maintain balance and coordination.

In November, we were moved by the outpouring of support at our gala, Generations of Generosity: 125 Years of Chicago Commons. We thank our honorary co-chairs, Governor J.B. Pritzker and Mayor Lori Lightfoot, and the more than 500 supporters who helped us honor the impact of our forbearers and raise critical funds for educational programs and support services for children, families, adults with disabilities, and seniors. We also thank and applaud the Governor and Mayor for continuing to prioritize the most vulnerable through a strong social services sector. We look forward to working with state and local leadership to find a pathway that allows for service provision while also supporting the rebuilding of our economy in light of COVID-19.

Chicago Commons has always worked in and for the communities with the most intractable barriers to reaching their full potential. Through our strategic planning, we updated our mission and vision statements to reflect an increased focus on empowering families, addressing multigenerational challenges, and overcoming systemic barriers to economic opportunity—issues made only more important by the pandemic.

Today, Chicago needs Chicago Commons more than ever, and we are answering that need with the support of our board members, donors, community partners, and staff members. Together, we envision a future where all children, families, and seniors have equitable opportunities for success, generation after generation.

Thank you for helping us make this vision a reality.

Edger Raming Willed &

Willes Shraf

Edgar Ramirez President & CEO

Willard S. Evans, Jr. **Board Chair**



STRATEGIC VISION

A bold new future.

In early 2019, Chicago Commons embarked on a new three-year strategic planning process, engaging stakeholders, staff, funders, and families in thoughts and conversations about the strategic pillars that will help guide our leadership through Fiscal Years 2020 to 2023.

The Chicago Commons board and leadership team reflected on the organization's history, strengths, and areas for improvement, while developing an understanding of emerging trends and stakeholders' viewpoints. During this process, we took a fresh look at our vision and mission and updated them to reflect a focus on empowerment and generational impact in the communities that we serve.





MISSION STATEMENT

To empower individuals, families, and communities to overcome poverty and systemic barriers, embrace opportunities, and thrive across generations.

VISION STATEMENT

We envision a future where all children, families, and seniors have equitable opportunities for success, generation after generation.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



Remain a leader in high-quality Early Childhood Education,

while expanding Chicago Commons' programming, increasing mixed-income classrooms, and exploring private-pay centers.



Become known as a premier multi-generation provider by expanding and enhancing the **Family Hub**.



Expand **Senior Services** to reach a broader segment of the Chicago metropolitan region's aging market through both subsidized and privatepay models.

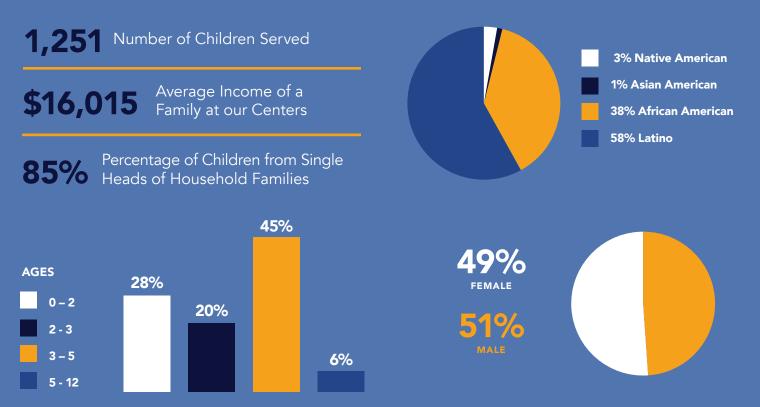
Activating children's inherent potential.

At Chicago Commons, we believe in and nurture children's intrinsic abilities. Using the **Reggio Emilia** approach, we empower children to author their own learning processes through self-directed, experiential learning in an environment that emphasizes respect, responsibility, and parent engagement.

In a city where only one out of four children is sufficiently ready to enter kindergarten, students in our centers routinely meet or exceed widelyheld expectations across various educational domains. Through our four centers and 10 community partners, we reached 1,251 children in fiscal year 2019, most of them in Head Start or Early Head Start.



Our Children



Our Locations

Chicago Common Centers

- Back of the Ya<mark>rds</mark>
- Garfield Park
- Humboldt Park
- Pilsen

Community Partner Programs

- Austin
- Calumet Heights
- Chatham
- Little Village
- Rogers Park
- South Deering
- Washington Park

Child Outcomes

Teaching Strategies GOLD is a widely used, research-based, statistically valid tool that shows the percentage of children whose skills, knowledge, and behaviors are above a benchmark value. The scores tell us where to focus to improve outcomes both at the student and classroom levels, informing teachers' instruction as well as teacher training.

2019 SCORES – COMMONS CENTERS

	Ages 0–3	Ages 3–5
Social Emotional	83%	90%
Physical	84%	94%
Language	72 %	88%
Cognitive Development	82 %	93%
Literacy	76 %	89%
Math	76 %	83%

Chicago Commons' early education programs are recognized by **ExceleRate Illinois** as **GOLD Circle of Quality** programs for meeting the highest quality standards in learning environment and teaching quality, administrative standards, and training and education. We are also accredited by the **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)**.

Finding their voice.

With the help of an early childhood program, a family rewrites their narrative.

ARDS OLD TOWN UNIVERSITY VILLAG

Catrina Swanigan recalls being immediately captivated when she first entered Chicago Commons' Nia Family Center in West Humboldt Park. "Nia is a sanctuary for learning and discovery," she says. "It is a place where children are encouraged to express themselves creatively."

Catrina enrolled her oldest daughter in Nia's afterschool program and quickly put her three younger girls in Head Start. She was most impressed with the program's educational approach.

"Commons' Reggio-enhanced curriculum allows children to ask questions, find solutions to problems, and interact confidently with teachers and adults," she says. "Children have a voice."

But Catrina's youngest daughter, Judah, appeared to have difficulty finding her voice. When she was 10 months old, a Chicago Commons family worker referred her to early intervention and speech therapy.

Catrina still remembers the day 2-year-old Judah spoke her first words—which came out in a full sentence. Catrina walked into the home one night and Judah announced, "Daddy is upstairs."

"Not only did Chicago Commons help my children learn how to speak up for themselves, but they taught me how to advocate for my children and myself as well." CATRINA SWANIGAN As is part of the Reggio approach, Judah's family got involved in her education. Her father taught her a new word each day in the car. By age 5, she was interviewed in the Chicago Sun-Times, which noted that her vocabulary included the word "contemplated."

"Not only did Chicago Commons help my children learn how to speak up for themselves, but they taught me how to advocate for my children and myself as well," Catrina says. "I had awesome family workers who assisted me with looking for funds to return to school, securing services for my daughter, and ensuring that I was approved for child care."

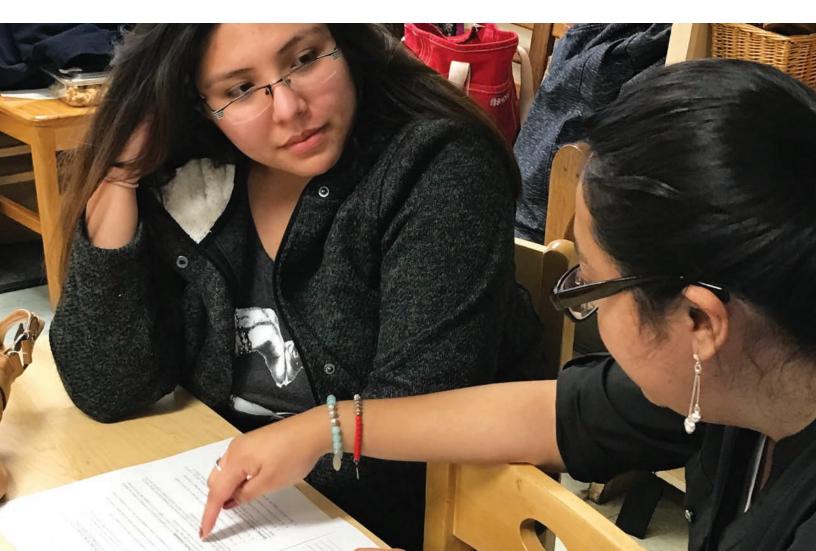
Today, Catrina's daughters are thriving, and she herself works at Chicago Commons.

"I have seen firsthand just how impactful Chicago Commons can be in helping to rewrite the narrative for entire families, because that is precisely what happened to mine," she says.

Providing wrap-around support across generations.

Chicago Commons' Family Hub provides families at our early education centers with a full range of wrap-around support to increase children's kindergarten readiness, parents' economic opportunity, and the socialemotional connections that spark lifelong success for the family.

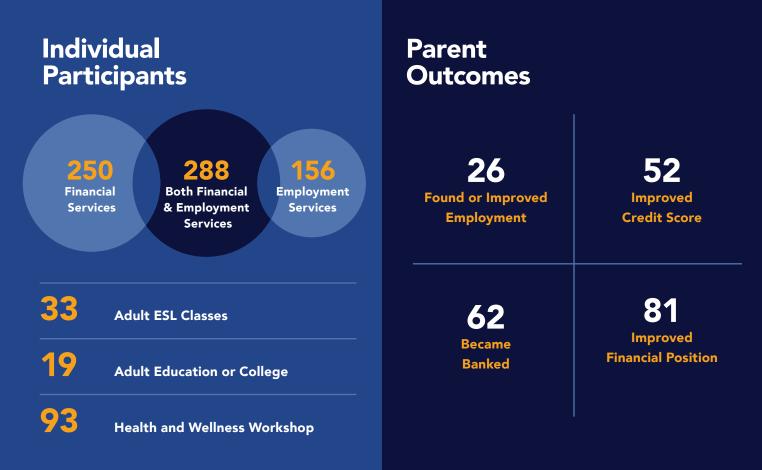
Using a two-generation approach, **2Gen**, our Family Hub exceeds what can be achieved through separate child and parent services. By combining these services, parents are able to build the tools to realize their ambitions, knowing their children are well cared for. Within the Hub, families can access ESL and digital literacy education, financial coaching and workshops, health workshops, and employment services all from one program.



Family Hub Participation

OVER 2/3 OF PARENTS across early education centers participated in Family Hub services.

Chicago Commons Family Hub is supported by Citi, the Robert R. McCormick Foundation, and PwC.



A pathway to college and a career.

Through Pathways for Parents, a mother achieves her dream while helping her family.



Aleli Vargas long dreamed of attending college, but soon after graduating from high school with honors, she found herself with three small children to care for and limited funds. Feeling unable to pursue her goal, she struggled with depression and low self-esteem.

Aleli and her partner enrolled their children in Chicago Commons' Guadalupano Family Center, where she also began volunteering. She instantly knew that her children would receive excellent care and quality early education; she also felt a world of possibilities open up as she now had an unexpected opportunity to pursue her college education.

Aleli enrolled in Commons' pilot cohort of the **Pathways for Parents** program, which provides college classes at no cost for parents who wish to become early childhood education teachers. The program also provides transportation, dinner, and child care to help the parents make room in their lives for their studies.

"Early on, I didn't think of myself as a teacher, but being at Commons and volunteering in the classrooms, I found I liked it!" Aleli says. "Working with my daughters on their homework, I realized that I had the tools and knowledge to help them. Why not help other kids too?" In the pilot cohort, 10 of the 16 participants completed the first two courses, earning six college credits, and half elected to continue taking five additional courses that will grant them the Advanced Certificate in Child Development: Preschool Education.

Currently, Aleli is continuing to take classes while working and raising her family. It's not an easy road. But she looks forward to graduating with her bachelor's degree and working somewhere like Chicago Commons. She credits Chicago Commons with guiding her and giving her the tools to succeed.

Aleli is also proud that she is an academic role model to her children, telling them, "*Nada es imposible*" (nothing is impossible).

When her daughter Victoria asked her, "Mom, can I go to college?" Aleli answered, "If you work hard, you can go." To which Victoria replied, "If you can do it, I can too!"

PROVEN PATHWAY

Researchers published a 2019 article in the *American Journal of Psychology* highlighting Pathways for Parents along with two other Chicago-based programs that are seeking to increase early childhood education workforce skill and diversity. The article concludes that the cohort model works. Programs that are tailored to support a unique population on the pathway for increased educational attainment are particularly effective in building the early childhood education teacher pipeline.

Promoting independence, dignity, and respect.

Chicago Commons' Senior Services help seniors and adults with disabilities maintain their independence and quality of life, allowing them the ability to stay in their homes and preventing or delaying the need for institutional care.

As one of the largest non-profit providers of senior care in Chicago, our Senior Services consist of **Adult Day Service** and **Home Care** programs. Home care aides provide assistance, friendship, and specialized care for loved ones who may be isolated, while the day services program provides therapeutic care in a community-based group setting along with recreational and social activities.



Client Locations

Chicago Commons' Adult Day Service and Home Care programs serve nearly 1,500 seniors combined throughout the greater Chicago area.



Communities where Adult Day Service clients reside



Communities served by the Home Care program





At their service.

In a community-based setting, the Adult Day Service team provides individualized care.



Every Monday through Friday, an average of 60 Chicago seniors are transported to Chicago Commons' Bronzeville center, where dedicated staff provide lifeenhancing care, camaraderie, and joy.

"It's our goal to make sure that each and every senior, we're putting some bright side to their day, so they're not sitting home alone," explains DeLizza Russell, director of Chicago Commons' Adult Day Service (ADS).

In this professional care setting, seniors and adults with disabilities receive individualized therapeutic and health services, nutritious meals, physical exercise, and more.

"We treat each and every participant as if they're the only one," says DeLizza. "We call it the 'white glove service' of adult day service."

Sarah Foster has attended ADS for over five years, and her participation has had a positive impact for her and her family. "I've seen great improvements in her demeanor and she is more outgoing," says Rochelle Foster, her daughter. "Her attendance within the program has prolonged her ability to continue to have a more independent lifestyle."

"We treat each and every participant as if they're the only one. We call it the 'white glove service' of adult day service." DELIZZA RUSSELL, DIRECTOR OF ADULT DAY SERVICE Participants also engage in social activities and group outings such as bowling, plays, movies, and White Sox games—activities that can be hard for their families to provide.

Robin Napier's husband attends ADS and has Alzheimer's disease. The couple used to enjoy going to the movies together, but as his illness advanced, Robin hasn't been able to take him on outings by herself.

"That is why I so much appreciate the trips that he has gone on with Chicago Commons. They have enabled him to become more active and take part in activities that he has not been able to do in recent years," she says. "I know how much he enjoys the outings to the movies, as well the other outings provided."

It's not only the participants who enjoy the activities. "As much as I give to them, they're helping me throughout the day just relieve some stress," says DeLizza. "Hearing their stories, painting their nails—I absolutely love it."

Fiscal Year 2019

lssets		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$2,715,615	
Accounts Receivable, net	\$6,131,663	
Other Assets	\$96,480	
Contributions Receivable	\$151,689	
Investments	91,169	
Property & Equipment, net	\$3,793,923	
Beneficial Interest in Trusts	\$3,502,993	
otal	\$16,483,532	

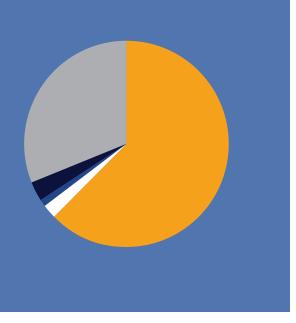
Liabilities

Accounts Payable	\$1,092,775
Accrued Expenses	\$867,164
Accrued Settlement & Retirement Obligatio	ns \$20,000
Notes Payable	\$2,905,059
Total	\$4,884,998



Net Assets

 Unrestricted Unrestricted Valliere Sustainability Fund 	\$7,267,425 \$240,000
Total Unrestricted	\$7,507,425
With Donor Restrictions:	
Time Restrictions	\$142,310
Purpose Restrictions	\$368,807
Perpetual in Nature	\$3,579,992
Total Restricted and Unrestricted	\$11,598,534
	\$16,483,532

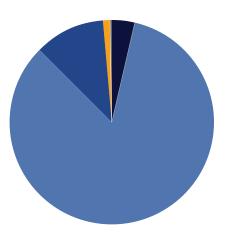


Revenue (Operating)

Corporations, Foundations & Individuals	\$1,056,511
Special Events	\$8,620
Total Support	\$1,065,131
Fees & Government Grants	
From Government Agencies	\$23 033 237

From Government Agencies	\$23,033,237
Fee for Service Revenue	\$3,128,992
Client Fees & Other Support	\$239,222
Investment Income (loss)	\$7,576
Other Income	\$59,458

Total Support, Fees & Government Grants



Expenses (Operating)	
Program Services	
E Child Development	\$12,782,752
Senior Services	\$11,566,753
Family Hub	\$273,088
Total Program Services	\$24,622,593
Management and General Expenses	\$2,534,923
Fundraising	\$446,328
Total Support Services	\$2,981,251
Total Program and Support Services	\$27,603,844
Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets*	\$(70,228)

\$27,533,616

*For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2019, Chicago Commons incurred an operating deficit of (\$70,228), representing 0.25% of total expenses. The operating deficit was caused by the rescheduling of our annual golf fundraiser, originally slated in June 2019, due to inclement weather; the event was subsequently rescheduled to September 2019. We deferred the release of the funds raised for the event (\$119,000) until the event was held in September.

A win for experiential learning.

With a new playground and other volunteer activities, PNC and the Bears get into the game with Chicago Commons' kids.

PNC and the **Chicago Bears** teamed up last fall to install a bigger outdoor play and learning space for infants and preschoolers at Chicago Commons Nia Family Center in Humboldt Park. More than 30 volunteers, including Bears Chairman George H. McCaskey and 2019 rookie players, helped build a mini football turf field, install new play equipment, plant shrubs, help with beautification and add other nature-based elements to boost experiential learning.

"On behalf of our families in the community, we are deeply appreciative of the investment from PNC, Chicago Bears and our other partners," said Edgar Ramirez, Chicago Commons chief executive officer. "The outdoor learning area will help spark curiosity, encourage imaginative play and self-awareness for our young children through our Reggio Emiliainspired educational philosophy."

Since 2015, PNC has supported Chicago Commons as part of PNC Grow Up Great[®], a \$500 million, multi-year, bilingual program to help prepare children from birth to age 5 for success in school and life. Employees are provided up to 40 hours of paid time off per year to volunteer and can earn grants for partner organizations.

Restoration of the play area was made possible by grants provided by the State of Illinois, City of Chicago, PNC Foundation, Chicago Bears, Bears Care, F.B. Hubachek, Jr. Trust, Peter Dodge Horne, and Frances Thorne Horne.



We are thankful for every person, family, corporation, foundation, and public sector funder that supports Chicago Commons.

JANUARY 1, 2019 – DECEMBER 31, 2019

\$100,000 & ABOVE

Citi Foundation PNC Bank

\$99,999 - \$25,000

The Barker Welfare Foundation

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Caerus Foundation, Inc.

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Northern Trust Charitable Trust

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Peoples Gas and North Shore Gas Community Fund

Polk Bros. Foundation

PwC Charitable Foundation, Inc.

Red Nose Day Fund/ Comic Relief Inc. at the Chicago Community Foundation

Robert R. McCormick Foundation

United Way of Metroplitan Chicago

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GENERATIONS OF GENEROSITY: 125 YEARS OF CHICAGO COMMONS

Thank you to all of our supporters and friends who helped us mark our 125th anniversary while raising critical funds for Chicago children, families, adults with disabilities, and seniors.







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Bud Blossom Golf Outing

September 21, 2020

Registration and BBQ Lunch 10–11:30 AM

Shotgun Start Noon

Cocktail Hour 5:00 PM

Dinner 6:00 PM

Shoreacres 1601 Shore Acres Rd. Lake Bluff, Illinois





SAVE THE DATE

Pour Out Your Heart April 30, 2021 6:00 PM

Galleria Marchetti 825 W Erie St. Chicago, Illinois

FOR INFORMATION, TICKETS, AND SPONSORSHIP DETAILS CONTACT: Cheryl Wisniewski at 773-826-4256 or go to www.chicagocommons.org/events



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