

# Y EARSOF MPACT

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#### **DEAR FRIENDS & SUPPORTERS**

As we reflect on the past year, we are filled with gratitude for the unwavering commitment and generosity of our community. First and foremost, we extend our deepest thanks to outgoing Board Chair Steven Sparks for his 13 years of dedicated leadership and service to Chicago Commons. His guidance has been instrumental in advancing our mission and impact. As we look to the future, we are delighted to welcome our new Board Chair, Ronald Kaminski, and Vice Chair, Mary Timmons. We are confident that their leadership will help propel Chicago Commons into a new era of growth and impact.

This past year, we celebrated an extraordinary milestone—130 years of impact. Since our founding in 1894, Chicago Commons has been a pillar of support for families across Chicago, continuously evolving to meet the needs of our community. Throughout our history, we have been guided by visionary leaders who have shaped our organization and left a lasting legacy. From Graham Taylor, whose pioneering work in social reform laid the foundation for our mission, to Bertha Hofer Hegner, who led the way as our first Kindergarten Director, to Lea Taylor, whose leadership as President from 1922 to 1954 strengthened our commitment to community-centered humanitarianism, to Ethel Percy Andrus, a dedicated teacher at Chicago Commons who went on to found AARP. Each of these extraordinary trailblazers believed in the power of community and provided the building blocks to get us where we are today. We would not be the organization we are today without them.

As we honor our past, we also look ahead to an exciting future. This year brings new opportunities to expand our programs, deepen our impact, and reach even more families. From our upcoming Chicago Commons Early Childhood Center, currently in development at the newly redeveloped LeClaire Courts on Chicago's southwest side, to our new partnership with the Center for Better Aging in Englewood, we are excited to continue strengthening our key services to support our community through every stage of life. In addition to the above, we are also excited to continue to grow our Family Hub by expanding our support services, workforce development programs, and educational resources to empower more families on their path to economic mobility and stability.

Throughout this report, you will find inspiring stories that illustrate the true impact of our work stories of individuals who are the heart of Chicago Commons and have grown with us—including children who, with the tools provided by Chicago Commons, have pursued their dreams, adults who have built a family business with the support of the Pathways to Parents program, and seniors who have found encouragement through improving their quality of life. These stories are a testament to the power of collective action and the difference we can make when we come together with a shared purpose.

As we embark on the next chapter of our journey, we remain steadfast in our mission to empower individuals, strengthen families, and build thriving communities. Thank you for being part of this incredible journey.

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**Edgar Ramirez** President & CEO

**Ronald Kaminski** Board Chair

### MISSION, VISION, & STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

#### **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.

#### NEW STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

As we conclude our previous strategic plan one that strengthened Chicago Commons' leadership in Early Childhood Education, expanded the Family Hub's multi-generational support, and broadened Senior Services to reach more aging adults—we celebrate the resilience and progress achieved, even in the face of the pandemic.

During this time, Chicago Commons became the second-largest provider of Head Start programming in Chicago, ensuring more children and families have access to high-quality early learning. The Family Hub expanded its workforce development program with a \$2.2 million investment from JPMorgan Chase, creating new pathways to economic mobility for parents and caregivers. Additionally, our Senior Services have experienced a surge in participation since the pandemic, reinforcing the vital role our programs play in fostering connection and well-being for older adults.

Building on this strong foundation, our new strategic plan sets a bold course for the future. These new strategic goals will shape our path forward, ensuring that we continue to meet the evolving needs of our communities. Our new strategic plan is guided by four key areas essential to well-being:

- Physical health
- Psychological and emotional well-being
- Financial stability
- Social well-being

Well-being is at the heart of this plan because we believe it is foundational to achieving our mission of thriving across generations. Chicago Commons is dedicated to creating and fostering well-being so that our parents, children, families, seniors, staff, and communities can thrive together. By explicitly prioritizing well-being, this plan enables us to be more intentional in pursuing strategies that enhance and sustain it for all members of our community. To advance these priorities, we are expanding access to:

- High-quality early childhood education and senior programs.
- Workforce development and financial literacy support for parents and caregivers.
- Leadership and career advancement opportunities for staff.
- Health and wellness programs across all generations.
- Safe, thriving communities with access to transportation, affordable housing, and healthy food.

#### **STRATEGIC GOALS**

#### **Shared Purpose**

Accelerate learning and internal alignment to promote well-being.

- Enhance data-driven decision-making to inform programs, policies, and influence.
- Align policies and practices to advance well-being.

#### **Collaborative Impact**

Partner to influence and change the community context impacting well-being.

• Unleash the power and voice of parents,

caregivers, and seniors engaged with Chicago Commons to advocate alongside Chicago Commons staff and leaders to change community contexts impacting well-being.

#### **Connected Communities**

Align and integrate Chicago Commons' supports and connections to promote wellbeing for all populations.

- Co-locate well-being supports and environments for children, parents, caregivers, and staff within all Chicago Commons' sites.
- Strengthen referrals and connections to internal and external services for children, parents, caregivers, and staff.

#### **Strategic Growth**

Ensure financial health and sustainable expansion.

- Expand our goals and performance indicators to include achieving larger impact in addition to program and organizational excellence and growth.
- Embed the use of a strategy screen to guide decisions across all levels of Chicago Commons to ensure strategic alignment.

Through these goals, Chicago Commons remains dedicated to creating lasting change—ensuring that individuals and families have the resources, support, and opportunities they need to thrive at every stage of life.



## CELEBRATING 130 YEARS OF IMPACT

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This past year marked a major milestone for Chicago Commons: 130 years of empowering individuals, families, and communities to thrive across generations. That is 130 years of making significant strides to serve the community. From starting as a settlement house to offering early childhood education to adding family and senior programs, we are honored to have become Chicago's second-largest Head Start and Early Head Start provider and one of the state's largest nonprofit senior services providers over the past few years.

In celebration of this significant milestone, we hosted a 130th Anniversary Gala to honor our past and build for our future. Symbolizing our commitment to the communities we serve, Chicago Commons unveiled a fresh new brand identity. The new look represents the heart of who we are, emphasizing our multigenerational approach and impact. Additionally, the bold "g" serves as a nod to our past and previous tagline, "Go Further," and a tie to our future and new tagline, "Thriving Across Generations." The brand reveal received an overwhelmingly positive response at the gala.

In addition to celebrating the amazing work accomplished over the past 130 years, our President & CEO, Edgar Ramirez, was honored for his contributions, having received the Community Champion Award at the 2024 Negocios Now Who's Who Gala.

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# EARLY CC EDUCATION



#### **IGNITING LEARNING**

In 2021, Chicago Commons became Chicago's second-largest early childhood education provider with four directly-operated centers and serving as a collaborative partner with other community-based organizations. Through these partnerships, Chicago Commons is able to expand its services and provide high-quality Early Head Start and Head Start services across 18 Chicago communities.

At our four Chicago Commons-operated centers, we guide learning through the Reggio Emilia approach where children are empowered through self-directed experiential learning. We create an environment that emphasizes respect, responsibility, and parent engagement to nurture children's intrinsic abilities. Chicago Commons consistently sees that children moving onto kindergarten from our early childhood education centers have a stronger foundation for peer engagement and future growth.

Through our collaborative community partnerships, Chicago Commons provides training and technical assistance, shares content area expertise, and supports the implementation of best practices to ensure the delivery of quality programming for the children we serve, in addition to the families and staff. Chicago Commons is also responsible for the effective monitoring and oversight of all program operations in adherence to the Head Start performance standards across these programs.

Chicago Commons has the capacity to support up to 1,750 children across 22 sites. By fostering strong educational foundations, Chicago Commons empowers children and families to achieve their dreams—one story, one success, and one future at a time.



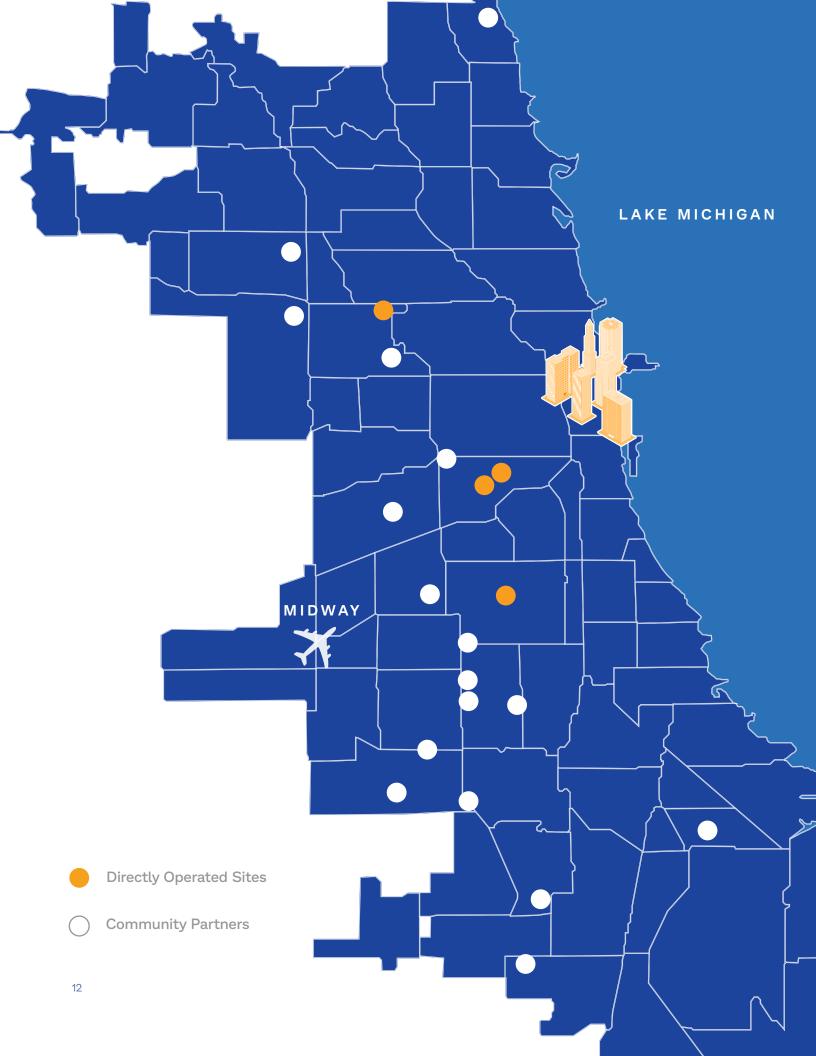
#### SHOOTING FOR THE STARS

Harold Quiroz was among the first children to enroll at the Paulo Freire Family Center in Back of the Yards in the early 2000s. From a young age, Harold had an innate curiosity about how things worked. His fascination with science was encouraged by Chicago Commons' Reggio Emilia-inspired approach, which emphasizes exploration and discovery. His mother, Miriam, credits this early learning experience with setting Harold on a path to success and equipping her with the tools to support his education.

Today, Harold has completed his undergraduate degree at Illinois State University and is now a PhD candidate in Physics and Astronomy at the University of Missouri. His passion for the stars has only grown, and his potential has been recognized by his professors—one of whom, a former NASA employee, has taken Harold under his wing as a teaching assistant. With his guidance, Harold is on track to pursue a career in astrophysics, aspiring to, one day, contribute to space exploration.

As the matriarch of a low-income, singleparent family, Miriam also pursued her own dream while Harold was in school, earning her Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education. Now an early childhood educator herself, she remains committed to inspiring young minds. Her three other children, all Chicago Commons graduates, are also achieving their own dreams through higher education and military service.





#### **Early Education Program Data**



1,750

Head Start & Early Head Start Slots



Children Enrolled



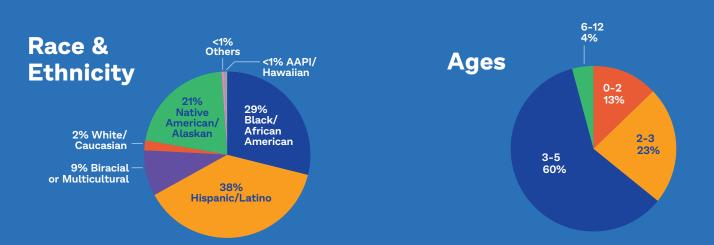
Children from Single-Parent Households 0

**\$15,000** Average Annual Family Income ₹<del>}</del>}

678

Children Living Under 100% of the Federal Poverty Level

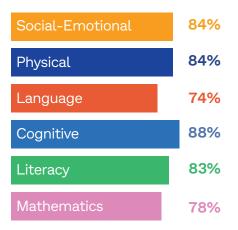
DATA INCLUDES DIRECTLY OPERATED SITES AND COMMUNITY PARTNER AGENCIES



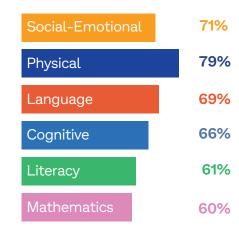
#### **Outcomes of Development** and Learning for Children

The data below represents Fiscal Year 2024-25 Fall outcomes for children in Chicago Commons' directly operated sites and external partner agencies' sites. Based on the analysis of Smart Teach GOLD Assessment tool, the report is designed to monitor the progress of children from birth to third grade in key domains of development and learning. The bar graphs represent the percentages of children whose skills, knowledge, and abilities were meeting or exceeding expectations for developmental benchmarks.

#### Ages Birth to 3 years old



#### Ages 3 to 5 years old



#### **Fun Facts**

#### 1,350

families supported by Family Workers

84%

average monthly child attendance

#### **99%**

of children served eligible for subsidized childcare.

87%

75% received dental exams

#### 80+

family engagement activities including parent policy meetings, bi-annual resource fairs, open houses, and mental health workshops.\*





#### THRIVING FAMILIES, THRIVING CHILDREN

Chicago Commons takes a holistic, multigenerational approach to serving its communities in an effort to enhance economic mobility and promote overall family well-being. This approach is called the Family Hub. Through the Family Hub, we connect families to comprehensive support services and career pathways, fostering family stability and empowering families to break the cycle of poverty and thrive across generations.

The Family Hub aims to empower parents by helping them:

- Set, pursue, and achieve goals
- Enhance financial literacy and management
- Improve physical and mental health
- Acquire employment and job-readiness skills
- Pursue further education
- Enhance digital literacy
- Advocate for themselves, their family, and their communities.

For families with young children, research indicates that integrating services across generations has a more positive impact on children's long-term wellbeing than serving parents and children separately. Therefore, we intentionally integrate our Family Hub with our Early Childhood Education programs and Senior Services.



"Commons envelops the whole family – it's not just education for the child, but also for the family."

- Lorraine Bahena, Family Hub Participant

#### LORRAINE'S STORY

At Chicago Commons, we believe in empowering families by providing the support they need to grow and thrive. This is beautifully illustrated by Lorraine Bahena and her daughter, Amaris. Lorraine's journey with Chicago Commons began when Amaris was two years old. Struggling with the high cost of childcare, Lorraine found herself overwhelmed by the financial strain of paying for care while working in the early childhood education field. A counselor through public aid introduced her to the Guadalupano Family Center in Pilsen, and Lorraine was surprised to find she could enroll Amaris in the program without the burden of steep costs. Chicago Commons provided Lorraine with the support she needed, offering a full-day program that worked with her income and allowed Amaris to receive the care and educational stimulation she needed. The impact on Amaris was remarkable, as she thrived in the program, learning essential skills like problemsolving and following her passions.

As Amaris grew, Lorraine remained connected to Chicago Commons, joining the Parent Policy Council. Through this role, she not only advocated for her child's well-being but also gained valuable leadership skills. She learned how much influence parents have in shaping the future of the center and was able to advocate for improvements.

Even after Amaris aged out of Chicago Commons' education programs, their connection with Chicago Commons remained. Amaris followed her passions and became skilled in ceramics and jewelry making. Eventually, this turned into a small business where she sold her work to friends and family members.

Lorraine remained connected to Commons through various family members and friends that she referred to the programs. When the opportunity to participate in the Family Hub's small business series arose, Loraine and Amaris took the leap to take their small business to the next level. At first, they had no business name or plan, but with the help of the Family Hub's entrepreneurship program, they registered Quetzal Trinkets & Gems, developed a business plan, and began selling at the Chicago Commons Market and other local markets. What began as Amaris' passion for ceramics and jewelry quickly blossomed into a thriving business with her mother.

Through their story, Lorraine and Amaris exemplify the power of family support and community resources. Chicago Commons not only provided the tools they needed to thrive as business owners, but also played a key role in laying the foundation for Amaris' success in life. Commons is more than just an educational program; it's a community that cares about families and provides them with the tools to succeed.

#### FAMILY HUB PROGRAM DATA

#### **688**

parents referred for services

#### 73

parents participated in parent support groups

#### 41

parents placed in full time jobs

#### 55

parents attended small business development workshops in collaboration with YWCA

#### 37

parent entrepreneurs participated in the Chicago Commons Market

#### 290

parents completed 2-3 goals focused on mental health, financial, employment, and education areas

#### 95%

reported decreased symptoms of depression, PTSD, and anxiety after receiving counseling

#### 136

parents attended cooking classes to learn healthy eating habits

#### 114

parents working towards education goals including GED, ESL, vocational, and postsecondary education



# SENIOR SERVICES

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#### LIFE-INVIGORATING CARE

In 2024, Chicago Commons continued its commitment to enhancing the quality of life for seniors and adults with disabilities, solidifying its position as one of Chicago's largest nonprofit providers of senior services. Through our comprehensive Home Care services and the Adult Day Service (ADS) Center in Bronzeville, we provided support to over 1,000 individuals across Illinois this year.

Our Home Care program offers personalized assistance, enabling seniors to maintain their independence within their own homes. Services include personal care, light housekeeping, medication reminders, meal planning and preparation, and specialized care for conditions such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease. Available seven days a week, 24 hours a day, these services are tailored to meet the unique needs of each participant.

At the ADS Center, we provide a community-based environment where up to 80 individuals engage daily in preventive care, health monitoring, physical exercise, nutritious meals, and social activities. Our dedicated team, including a Licensed Practical Nurse, ensures that each participant receives attentive and compassionate care.

Reflecting on this year, Chicago Commons remains steadfast in its mission to empower seniors and adults with disabilities, fostering independence and enriching lives through compassionate, comprehensive care.

#### FOSTERING MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS

Beyond activities, Chicago Commons fosters meaningful relationships among participants. The friendships Janice has built give her something to look forward to each day. "Chicago Commons is very caring of those with memory- and age-related health conditions," she says. The ADS van ensures she can attend without transportation concerns, further enhancing her ability to participate fully.

Another important aspect of Chicago Commons' Adult Day Services is the relationship between participants and their caretakers. For the past two years, Janice has had Letitia Thurmond as a caretaker. Letitia has worked at Chicago Commons for six years, and with a background in corrections as a chemical dependency counselor and an associate's degree in psychology, Letitia sees her work as a calling. "These participants have paved the way for me and my children," she shares. She values their stories and finds joy in bringing laughter and care to those she serves.

Chicago Commons continues to be a beacon of hope, providing compassionate care that enhances quality of life while ensuring seniors receive the respect, dignity, and support they deserve.

"I was a caregiver, but now someone is taking care of me."

- Janice Eves Adult Day Services Participant since 2023





#### SENIOR SERVICES PROGRAM DATA



**34,921** Service Hours

Participants

93

71%

Savings to

Taxpayers\*

90% Live Alone

48%

75+ Years Old

10 Veteran

Participants

551 Home Care Aides

**91%** African American

**54%** 

Women

78% African American

**59** Field Trips & Outings

92% Live Alone

**70%** Women



**915** Participants

**35%** 75+ Years Old

\*versus the average annual cost of a nursing home

# FINANCIALS

Statement of Activities Year ended June 30, 2024 (with comparative totals for 2023)

	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	2024 Total	2023 Total
PUBLIC SUPPORT & REVENUE				
Direct Public Support:				
Contributions	\$ 905,598	\$ 1,490,459	\$ 2,396,057	\$ 1,746,815
Special events, net of expenses (2024–\$442,893; 2023–\$291,619)	\$ 22,591	-	\$ 22,591	\$ 218,578
Net assets released from restrictions	\$ 1,286,186	\$ (1,286,186)	-	-
	\$ 2,214,375	\$ 204,273	\$ 2,418,648	\$ 1,965,393
Fees and grants from governmental agencies	\$ 45,047,469	-	\$ 45,047,469	\$ 44,165,596
Fee for service revenue	\$ 5,563,000	-	\$ 5,563,000	\$ 5,065,749
Client fees and other support	\$ 649,053	-	\$ 649,053	\$ 285,590
Investment income, net	\$ 52,955	-	\$ 52,955	\$ 28,255
Increase in beneficial interests in trusts	-	\$ 334,585	\$ 334,585	\$ 254,921
Other income	\$ 36,373	-	\$ 36,373	\$ 36,973
	\$ 53,563,225	\$ 538,858	\$ 54,102,083	\$ 51,802,477
EXPENSES				
Program Services				
Child Development	\$ 32,536,256	-	\$ 32,536,256	\$ 32,455,952
Senior Services	\$ 13,561,430	-	\$ 13,561,430	\$ 12,683,327
Family Hub Services	\$ 1,236,007	-	\$ 1,236,007	\$ 966,345
	\$ 47,333,693	-	\$ 47,333,693	\$ 46,105,624
SUPPORTING SERVICES				
Management and General	\$ 4,794,822	-	\$ 4,794,822	\$ 4,626,154
Fundraising	\$ 605,314	-	\$ 605,314	\$ 579,731
	\$ 5,400,136	-	\$ 5,400,136	\$ 5,205,885
	\$ 52,733,829	-	\$ 52,733,829	\$ 51,311,509
Increase in net assets	\$ 829,396	\$ 538,858	\$ 1,368,254	\$ 490,968
NET ASSETS				
Beginning of Year	\$ 8,663,194	\$ 5,014,453	\$ 13,677,647	\$ 13,186,679
End of Year	\$ 9,492,590	\$ 5,553,311	\$ 15,045,901	\$ 13,677,647

## DONORS & SUPPORTERS

#### January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024

We are thankful for every person, family, corporation, foundation, and funder who supports Chicago Commons!

#### \$100,000 AND ABOVE

Abbie E. Tyrell Fund The Chicago Community Trust Department of Family and Support Services - City of Chicago Eli B. Williams and Harriet B. Williams Memorial Fund Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) JPMorgan Chase Foundation Paul M. Angell Family Foundation Robert R. McCormick Foundation United Way of Metropolitan Chicago

#### \$99,999 - \$25,000

Anonymous Brian C. Littleton Trust The Field Foundation of Illinois, Inc. in collaboration with the Illinois Department of Human Services titled Healing Illinois The Emeline Carman Thurston Memorial Fund, Gift of her Son, Frank W. Thurston John Burns Construction Company The Kaminski Family Impact Fund The Northern Trust Company Peoples Gas Polk Bros. Foundation Purple Group U.S. Bank

#### \$24,999 - \$10,000

Anonymous Mary Lou and Bill Anton Cabrera Capital Markets Daniel and Sarah Chavez CIBC US ComEd Willard S. Evans, Jr. Franciscan Sisters of Chicago Virxhini Gjonzeneli Henrietta Lange Burk Fund, Bank of America, N.A., Trustee Jackson National Life Insurance Company Macy's, Inc. PNC Bank Powering Chicago (IBEW 134/ NECA) Russell and Josephine Kott Memorial Charitable Trust

#### \$9,999 - \$5,000

Andrew and Alice Fischer Charitable Trust Scott Becker Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois Bright Promises Foundation Burns & McDonnell Comcast Cozen O'Connor Foundation Credit Builders Alliance The Clyde Smith McGregor and LeAnn Pedersen Pope Charitable Fund at The Chicago Community Trust Emaroy June Benevolent Fund of JPMorgan Chase Great Computer Solutions, Inc. Greenberg Traurig, LLP H.I.G. Whitehorse Edward Harney Harry S. Black and Allon Fuller Fund, Bank of America, N.A., Trustee HBK Engineering, LLC HSA Commercial Real Estate ICL. LLC Nadia Ivanova Rashod Johnson LGIM America Marguette Bank Meade Electric Company James and Suzanne Neaylon Pepper Construction Group Point B RW Collins Co. Sirius Computer Solutions Tampico Beverages, Inc. Dozier Thomas Mary E. Timmons Titan Electric The Venable Foundation Waste Management, Inc. Wintrust Financial Corporation Wipfli CPAs and Consultants

#### \$9,999 - \$5,000

Admiral Heating & Ventilating, Inc. Assurance Agency John Beran Bob Broseman Brown Electric Service, Inc. Alex Chang Cintas Corporation Craig Close Dr. Erica Collins Kenneth Collins Hettie Collins Josh Connolly Corwith Fund Alfred and Terri D'Ancona Cristina De La Rosa Annette G. Dezelan Nvla Diab Episcopal Bishop of Chicago Erie Family Health Centers Financial Renaissance Flood Brothers Disposal Company Armando Gonzalez Paris Hardamon Nancy Caroline Harney Christian Heller James Hill. III Torrence and Kimberly Hinton Leonel Hurtado The James and Carolyn Brett Charitable Fund Ann Beran Jones and David Bebb Jones Elizabeth and Frederick Joosten Revahd Kazmi LaSalle Network William J. Lawlor James and Henrietta Liddell Brian Marquez McGraw Foundation Katheryn and Charles Meagher The Melville Foundation Miner, Barnhill & Galland, P.C. Morgan Services Inc. Christina L. Navarro Office Revolution Jacqueline Parks Louis Paster George & Elizabeth Persekian Provisio Partners Jaime Rehm **Rise Strategy Group** Aurora Rodriguez RSM US LLP Susan B. Rubnitz Ryan Companies Michael Salvati and Charlotte Rubinstein

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#### \$499 - \$100

Lane Alexander Rosendo Almanza Uche Amako Katia Amirkhanian Kelly Anderson Kristin S Anderson Raafat Arman Randi Armstrong Sandra Arredondo Roberto Arrovo Janina Austin Juan Carlos Avila Hector Ayala James Bachmann Teresa Backes Kim Baker Eric Banh Alejandra Barbosa John Barry Tyler Bartley Charmyne Beverly Kanav Bhatheja **Robin Bingham** Miguel Blancarte Jr. Italo Bove John Broseman Milagro Brown Alec Brumlev Elaina Bunch Daniel Busch Gisela Campos Geordan Capes Jonathan Casiano Joseph Cerda John Blake Cerda Apinya Chang

Imani Change Nauie Change Camille Chatman Stephen and Jane Coley Alani Colon Jasmine Copeland Krissy Corrigan **Denise** Cortes Kimberly C. Cothran Terry Cromwell **Regina** Cross Madeline Cruz Marsha Cruzan Jason Daza Evans Debeza Mercedes Debeza Maurice DeBonnett Eleazar Delgado Ron DeNard Kevin DeNichols Kelda Draper Alex Dury Dan Duster Katie Edeus Anna Edwards Carolyn Eloby Eddy Encinales Tressa Epps Matt Estenssoro Fellicia Foster Sarah Frick Daniel Fulwiler Mario Galindo Monica Garcia Annie Garcia Jennifer Geldermann Rachel S. Goldstein Ruth Gomez Kara Goodbrand Scott Gottlieb Elizabeth Guerrero Paulina Guzman Robert A. Habermann Elizabeth Half Vanessa Hall Therese Hanev Rhyan Hayes Andrew Heidel Maureen Hellwig Marilyn Helmholz Grace Hennellv Jeremi Hermano Linda Hernandez Yalila Herrera Ava Hirose Claudine Hollack

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#### \$99 AND BELOW

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## EVANS-BLOSSOM GOLF OUTING

Monday, June 30, 2025

Shoreacres 1601 Shore Acres Road Lake Bluff, IL 60044





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