

SINCE 1894

CHICAGO COMMONSSM

helping families **GO** further

UNCOMMON RESILIENCE

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

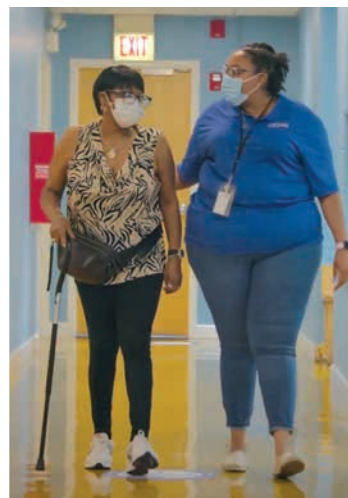


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DEAR FRIENDS & SUPPORTERS,

As many of you know, in 2020, Chicago Commons concluded our 125th anniversary year, officially marking 126 years on May 1. We certainly didn't expect at this milestone to find our four early education centers and Adult Day Service center closed for in-person programming during the spring months of 2020 due to a global pandemic.

But we've learned a lot in 126 years.

Throughout our history, Chicago Commons has faced innumerable challenges that have tested us as an organization. These include recessions, depressions, wars, political strife, and even the 1918 influenza pandemic. Just as we provided emergency food and services in 1918, here we are providing relief to the communities we serve over 100 years later.

While our centers experienced temporary interruptions of in-person programming, our services never stopped. Our early education teachers provided lessons, storytime, and even meditations to children and parents through Zoom and social media. Our Family Hub staff compiled free resources for families, sourced employment opportunities, and helped parents secure unemployment benefits. Our Adult Day Service staff placed calls to 110 seniors every other day to provide wellness checks and address their needs. And throughout the pandemic, our Home Care Aides continued to provide direct in-home services to seniors with safety modifications. The efforts of our staff this year were nothing short of heroic.

In March, Chicago Commons established our own COVID-19 Relief Fund. This fund helped us offset additional costs related to deep cleaning, facility adaptations, acquiring PPE and hand sanitizer, and to help our families pay for their basic needs such as rent, food, baby necessities, and more. We reopened our early education centers in July and our Adult Day Service center from September to the end of November, while Home Care never stopped. We are grateful to the huge community of supporters – including our donors and board as well as foundations, corporations, and public grants – who provided crucial financial support for keeping our communities as safe and secure as possible during the worst of this pandemic.

COVID-19 laid bare the health, income, racial, and other inequities of our society – inequities that Chicago Commons works to address every day. As the vaccines offer hope to eliminate the virus, we will continue to work in Chicago's most under-resourced communities to eliminate barriers and help them build the life they want and deserve.

Together, with your support, we are creating a future where all children, families, and seniors have equitable opportunities for success, generation after generation.

Thank you for your commitment to our vision.



Edgar Ramirez
President & CEO



Willard S. Evans, Jr.
Board Chair

CONTINUING ON OUR AMBITIOUS COURSE

While no plan could have predicted the COVID-19 pandemic, **Chicago Commons** is moving forward, continuing to invest in our programs, people, and future growth. In this fiscal year, we plan to invest nearly \$3 million toward initiatives that put us on a pathway to accomplishing our goals, including:

- Enhancements to our staffing to extend our multi-generational service model
- Wage parity and professional development for our staff
- Enhancements to technology, communications, and data systems
- Improvements to facilities and supplies to provide a safe environment for all



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

- 1 Remain a leader in high-quality **Early Childhood Education**, while expanding Chicago Commons' programming, increasing mixed-income classrooms, and exploring private-pay centers.
- 2 Become known as a premier multi-generation provider by expanding and enhancing the **Family Hub**.
- 3 Expand **Senior Services** to reach a broader segment of the Chicago metropolitan region's aging market through both subsidized and private-pay models.



ADAPTING WITH RESILIENCY

Chicago Commons has been a cornerstone in Chicago's most under-resourced neighborhoods for 125 years, preparing us to meet the challenges of COVID-19 with experience and resiliency.

Throughout the pandemic, Chicago Commons adapted our programs to ensure they continued for the benefit of our families. Even while our centers were temporarily closed, our work never stopped. Teachers and family and Adult Day Service workers adapted to a new normal, while Home Care Aides delivered uninterrupted in-home services.

COVID-19 RELIEF FUND

With the help of donors and supporters, Chicago Commons raised crucial emergency funds to adapt to the pandemic and provide direct financial support to the communities we serve.

\$365,000

Distributed to families through our COVID-19 Relief Fund and the Chicago Resiliency Fund

75%

Provided direct economic assistance to families

25%

Supported Chicago Commons facility and operations safety

700+

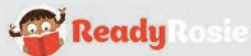
Families received support for rent, food, diapers, and other basic needs

800+

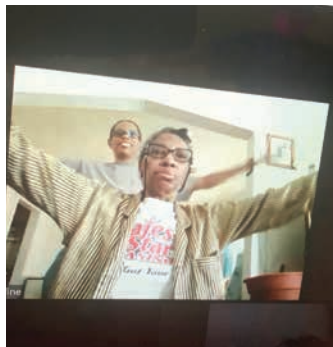
Essential workers provided with PPE and hand sanitizer



Early Education Centers adapted to remote learning by providing story time, daily activities, and even family meditation classes on social media.



Chicago Commons adopted **Ready Rosie**, an educational platform for teachers to share educational games and expert videos to support parents in teaching their children at home.



Senior Services activity aides supported seniors from afar to prevent feelings of isolation, even exercising with those who had the technological capability.



Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot addressed an audience of nearly 150 Chicago Commons supporters at our virtual Annual Meeting in June and provided words of encouragement to our staff.



Centers reopened safely in the summer, with PPE and heightened cleaning and distancing protocols.



Cradles to Crayons, Latino Policy Forum, and Robert R. McCormick Foundation provided Chicago Commons with a supply of diapers and baby wipes to distribute to the families in our care.

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 widely-held expectations across various educational domains. Through our four centers and 7 community partners, we reached 949 children in fiscal year 2020, most of them in Head Start or Early Head Start.

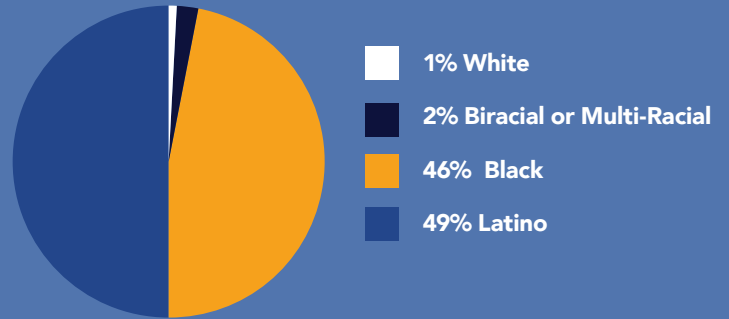


OUR CHILDREN

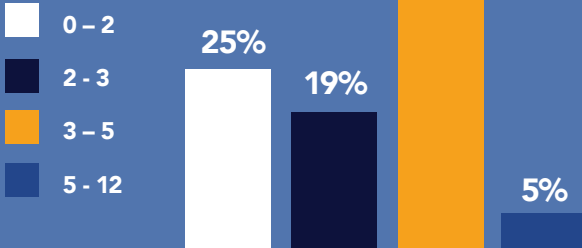
949 Number of Children Served

\$14,968 Average Income of a Family at our Centers

87% Children from Single Parent Households



AGES



46% FEMALE

54% MALE



CHILD OUTCOMES

Chicago Commons achieved CLASS ratings from the Office of Head Start that were higher than the national average in all three domains.

2019-2020 PRE-K CLASS SCORES

Emotional Support



Classroom Organization



Instructional Support



Chicago Commons National Average

The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) is an observation tool designed to assess the quality of teacher-child interactions across several dimensions such as instructional formats, teacher sensitivity, and language modeling. Scores on a scale from 1 to 7 indicate the effectiveness of supports being provided to children in the classroom.

OUR LOCATIONS

Chicago Common Centers

- Back of the Yards
- Garfield Park
- Humboldt Park
- Pilsen

Community Partner Programs

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

A GIFT THAT INVESTS IN OUR CHILDREN'S FUTURE

*Chicago Commons launches Little Scholars Fund
to help students continue their early education,
even during difficult times.*



Before he began attending Chicago Commons' Nia Family Center, Dai'jour was shy and had trouble communicating, according to his mom, Chenequa. Within a year of his enrollment, she noticed that her 4-year-old had become very talkative and learned to interact with his classmates in thoughtful and caring ways.

Then, in July, Chenequa faced a new challenge when, like many of our parents, her hours were reduced due to COVID-19. As a single parent and the sole provider for her household, Chenequa struggled to meet her expenses, including her co-pay for Dai'jour's education.

The Chicago Commons board of directors wanted to alleviate this burden, so they established the Little Scholars Fund. On average, each donation of \$1,000 to the fund eliminates a child's co-pay for an entire year. Supporters can sponsor one or more children, alleviate a financial constraint on our families, and ensure that our early education classrooms have the resources they need for maximum impact.

Donations to the Little Scholars Fund of any size are gratefully accepted. In return, donors receive a personalized thank you and updates from the kids in the classrooms. Donors of \$1,000 and more

The families of 235 children make co-pays that, while modest compared to the full tuition cost, can present a significant financial challenge.

Chicago Commons serves nearly 1,000 children annually in its Early Education program. With an average household income of about \$15,000, most of these families are fully subsidized through the federal Head Start Programs. But the families of 235 children make co-pays that, while modest compared to the full tuition cost, can present a significant financial challenge, even without the economic pressures of the pandemic.

join the Graham Taylor Society, earning special recognition and receiving briefings on our early education programs and the progress of the fund.

At only 4 years old, Dai'jour has a love of computers, is already writing his ABCs, and is excited about learning new things each day. Thanks to the Little Scholars Fund, students like Dai'jour will be able to continue their enrollment at Chicago Commons.

< LEFT Chicago Commons' curriculum utilizes a variety of materials to help children develop fine motor skills.

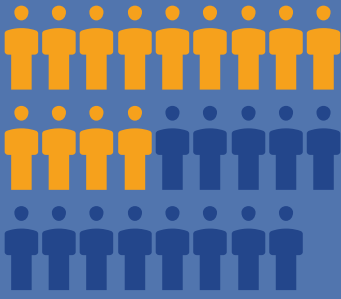
PROVIDING WRAP- AROUND SUPPORT ACROSS GENERATIONS

Through its Family Hub program, Chicago Commons addresses the multifaceted needs of families with young children. The Family Hub brings health and wellness, employment services, and financial wellness to over 300 families with children in our Early Education programs.

This two-generation approach exceeds what can be achieved through separate services for parents and children. The two-generation approach is an anti-poverty strategy that seeks to integrate intensive human capital investments across financial coaching, post-secondary education and career coaching for parents, and high-quality early education for children.



FAMILY HUB



Over 50% of parents across early education centers participated in Family Hub services

180

individuals participated in Health and Wellness programming

122

individuals served by Financial Capability programming

129

individuals served by Employment Services

70%

of parents reported eating healthier and reading nutrition labels

80%

of individuals in Financial Capability Programing reduced debt

95%

of parents at Chicago Commons completed at least one service referral

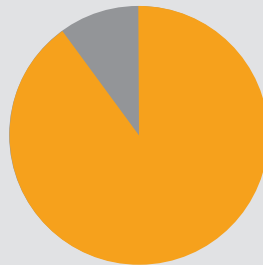
PATHWAYS FOR PARENTS



60%

of participants reported making connections within their cohort that helped them succeed.

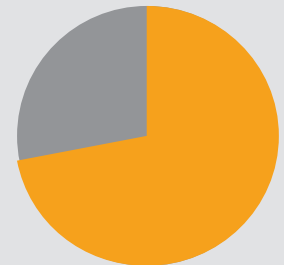
Pathways helps parents build social capital.



90%

of Pathways for Parents participants report Chicago Commons supports were critical to their success.

Pathways for Parents enables parents in college to overcome barriers to success by providing coaching and help with transportation, meals, and childcare. Through a partnership with City Colleges of Chicago, courses are fully subsidized.



72%

of Pathways for Parents participants completed their first year of the program.

Pathways for Parents provides the stepping stones for a career in early childhood education. Starting with two courses at one of our centers, Pathways gives parents with young children the opportunity to launch a career as an early childhood educator.

FROM HUB TO HOME

Family workers and the COVID-19 Relief Fund help families access crucial resources, including one family's first apartment.



The CARES Act (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act) was the largest economic stimulus in US history. Still, some US residents were ineligible for the benefits it provided, and for many who did receive benefits, the negative impacts of the pandemic were more than the aid was designed to address.

One mother and daughter enrolled at Nia Family center had been experiencing homelessness for years. They would sleep on couches at friends' and family's homes or stay in shelters, which became riskier during the pandemic. The family workers at Nia Family Center knew this mom and daughter needed additional help.

Chicago Commons compiled a list of over 150 verified resources for families, including food, housing, financial assistance, health care, and more. Employment coaches amassed a list of over 120 local businesses of all sizes accepting applications, from restaurants to Amazon and everything in between. They also worked with families to file unemployment claims.

With support from the COVID-19 Emergency Fund, the mother experiencing homelessness was able to secure a job with the US Postal Service and move with her daughter into their very first apartment. Mom is continuing to work with family workers and Family Hub's financial coach to ensure that her

“The passion you guys have to help mothers in need [is my favorite aspect of Nia]. I really did appreciate you helping us get to where we are today.” **Family Hub Mother**

To help families such as these, Chicago Commons established its COVID-19 Relief Fund, and family workers played an integral role in supporting families and connecting them with assistance.

finances stay on track to keep their apartment. In addition, Nia Family Center was able to buy her a Venra card to help her get to and from her job and pick up her daughter from Nia.

Mom said her favorite aspect of Nia is “the passion you guys have to help mothers in need,” adding, “I really did appreciate you helping us get to where we are today.”

PROMOTING INDEPENDENCE, DIGNITY, AND RESPECT

Chicago Commons' Senior Services help seniors and adults with disabilities maintain their independence and quality of life, allowing them 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.



ADULT DAY SERVICE



127

PARTICIPANTS



57,373

HOURS OF SERVICE

98%

BLACK

71%

SAVINGS*

*Versus the average annual cost of a nursing home

HOME CARE

1,195

PARTICIPANTS

525

HOME CARE AIDES

92% Live Alone

62% 75 and Older

92% Black

68% Female

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



A COMMITMENT TO CARE

A Home Care Aide's commitment to her client grows during COVID-19.



Even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Ethel Watts exuded passion for her work as a Home Care Aide on Chicago Commons' Senior Care team. For over 16 years, Ethel has been supporting seniors in their home, meeting a great need for senior care in our community. In 2020, her commitment to her work only grew.

Like many of our Home Care Aides, Ethel is driven by Chicago Commons' mission.

"I really like taking care of seniors because I consider them a part of my family," she says. "If I live to be my client's age, I will want someone to provide that care for me, too."

When asked why she believes her client has chosen to continue in-home services amid the pandemic, Ethel explains that she has worked with her client for eight years and has built a close relationship with them and their family, who trust and depend on her.

She added that she doesn't work alone, and the team at Chicago Commons has rallied to keep Home Care Aides and seniors safe during these times.

"One thing I love about Chicago Commons is how well they have responded to the coronavirus and changed how they are doing things to make sure

"I really like taking care of seniors because I consider them a part of my family. If I live to be my client's age, I will want someone to provide that care for me, too." **Ethel Watts, Home Care Aide**

During this trying time, Ethel continues to support her client, a visually impaired senior over the age of 80. She visits them five days a week for six hours to assist with cleaning, personal care, preparing meals, and checking in to make sure her client is well.

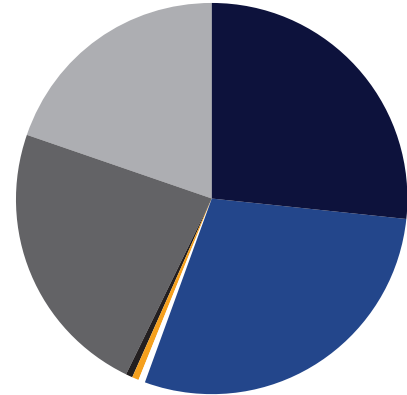
we are all okay. We are now getting alerts on our phones, they are supporting us, calling to check-in, doing PPE distributions, and making sure nobody is sick or around people who are sick," she said. "It has really brought us together."

FINANCIALS

JULY 1, 2019 – JUNE 30, 2020

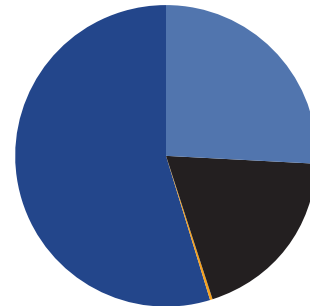
Assets

■ Cash and cash equivalents	\$4,734,043
■ Accounts Receivable, net	\$5,086,749
□ Other Assets	\$130,775
■ Contributions Receivable	\$71,610
■ Investments	\$99,338
■ Property & Equipment, net	\$4,075,799
■ Beneficial Interest in Trusts	\$3,452,162
Total	\$17,650,476



Liabilities

■ Accounts Payable	\$1,401,333
■ Accrued Expenses	\$1,047,656
■ Accrued Settlement & Retirement Obligations	\$10,000
■ Notes Payable	\$2,952,005
Total	\$5,410,991



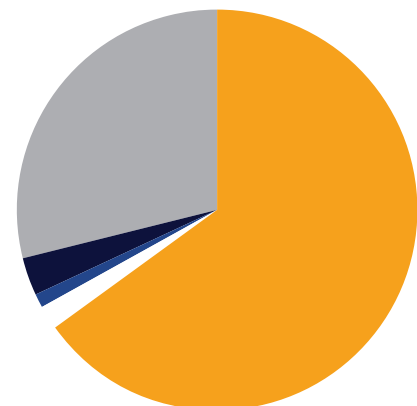
Net Assets

■ Unrestricted	\$7,958,149
□ Unrestricted Valliere Sustainability Fund	\$240,000
Total Unrestricted	\$8,198,149

With donor restrictions:

■ Time restrictions	\$135,025
■ Purpose restrictions	\$377,147
■ Perpetual in nature	\$3,529,161

Total Restricted	\$4,041,333
Total Restricted and Unrestricted	\$12,239,482
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	\$17,650,476

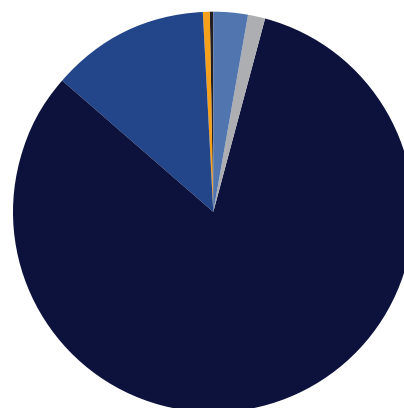


Revenue

■ Corporations, Foundations & Individuals	\$832,973
■ Special Events	\$424,597
Total Support	\$1,257,570

Fees & Grants

■ From Government Agencies	\$24,483,100
■ Fee for Service Revenue	\$3,802,303
■ Client Fees & Other Support	\$161,873
□ Investment Income, net	\$8,837
■ Other Income	\$32,004
(Decrease) Increase in Beneficial Interest in Trusts	(\$50,831)
Total Support and Revenue	\$29,694,856



Expenses

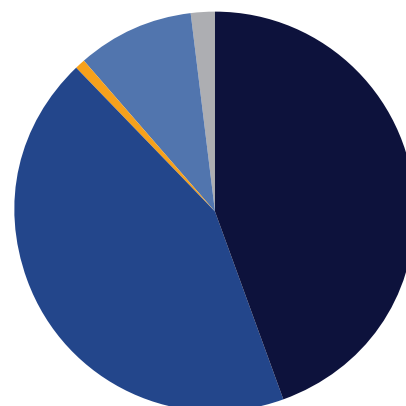
PROGRAM SERVICES

■ Child Development	\$12,945,566
■ Senior Services	\$12,634,629
■ Family Hub	\$201,582
Total Program Services	\$25,781,777

SUPPORTING SERVICES

■ Management and General	\$2,716,462
■ Fundraising	\$555,669

Total Supporting Services	\$3,272,131
Total Operating Expenses	\$29,053,908
Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets	\$640,948



DONORS AND SUPPORTERS

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

JANUARY 1, 2020 – DECEMBER 31, 2020

\$100,000 and above

Chicago Community
COVID-19 Response Fund

\$99,999-\$25,000

The Barker Welfare
Foundation
Blue Cross Blue Shield of
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Chicago Education Equity
COVID Response Fund
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Tribute gifts:

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Joan Adler *in honor of Marjorie Biederman*

Joan Adler *in honor of Lili Greenebaum*

Joan Adler *in honor of Susan Kahn*

Joan Adler *in memory of Ann Wolff*

Mary Lou and Bill Anton *in honor of Mary Settanni*

Daniel and Sarah Chavez *in honor of Priscilla Bahena*

Alfred and Terri D'Ancona *in honor of Edgar Ramirez*

Leslie and Bill Gitlin *in memory of John Benjamin*

John Guarrine *in honor of Michael Guarrine*

Kathleen Hess *in honor of Frank Seever*

Betsy Iversen *in honor of Michael Guarrine*

Johanna Luks-Jurutka *in memory of Alfred J Mazzetti, Sr.*

Daniel Miles *in honor of Amit Mehta*

Jamie Sauer *in honor of Joan Adler*

Mary Timmons *in honor of Priscilla Bahena*

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SAVE THE DATE

Bud Blossom Golf Outing

Monday, June 28, 2021

Shoreacres

1601 Shore Acres Rd., Lake Bluff, Illinois, 60044

Registration and Lunch

11:00 AM to 12:30 PM

Welcome

12:30 PM

Shotgun Start

1:00 PM

Cocktail Reception and Dinner (Pending COVID-19 restrictions)

6:00 PM

For more information please contact Emma Walsh at
walshe@chicagocommons.org or 847-714-6752.



Pour Out Your Heart for Commons:

A Virtual Beer & Wine Tasting Fundraiser

Friday, April 30, 2021

5:30 to 7:30 PM

Featuring Joe Miñoso of NBC's Chicago Fire as
Emcee and VIP reception guest.

Presented by Goose Island Beer Company

All proceeds benefit Chicago Commons'
COVID-19 Relief Fund.

www.chicagocommons.org/poyh2021

For more information, contact Cheryl Wisniewski at
cheryl@chicagocommons.org or 773-826-4256.

Sponsorship opportunities available.



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