

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

YWCA Metropolitan Chicago, A Local Leader In Addressing Gender And Racial Inequalities, To Acquire StreetWise

Collaboration will benefit the homeless and those at risk of homelessness throughout Chicago by expanding access to resources, services, and employment opportunities

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS (March 5, 2020) Over the past seven years, YWCA Metropolitan Chicago has transformed from a traditional social service organization to a 21st century social enterprise committed to building an inclusive marketplace where everyone can thrive. Since embarking on this transformation, YWCA Metropolitan Chicago's operating budget has grown from \$10.5 million in 2013 to \$24 million in 2019. Part of the organization's growth can be attributed to strategic integration with other local non-profits where a merger increases collective impact, inspires innovation and effectively leverages the robust infrastructure of the YWCA. This month, StreetWise will become part of YWCA Metropolitan Chicago, allowing the two organizations to serve more women and men with expanded and diverse resources. StreetWise, known on Chicago's street corners for its magazine and innovative approach to micro-entrepreneurship, has built a strong reputation over its 28-year history as a critical resource for individuals who are or are at-risk of homelessness.

StreetWise will slide into the existing Economic Empowerment Services of YWCA Metropolitan Chicago, retaining its moniker. You'll still hear magazine vendors calling out "StreetWise, StreetWise" and greeting pedestrians throughout the day. "I'm excited that this merger will strengthen and expand the resources available to our vendors and participants transitioning into jobs. StreetWise will continue to offer low-barrier, entry-



level earning opportunities, and be better positioned for innovation and growth” said Julie Youngquist, StreetWise’s CEO, who will continue as the organization’s leader. StreetWise is scheduled to move into its long-planned South Loop location later this month. Youngquist says “The new location provides the space we need to expand programming and services that meet the community’s needs. Our magazine vendors are excited about the improved accessibility and upcoming opportunities.”

YWCA Metropolitan Chicago CEO Dorri McWhorter believes mutually-beneficial, value-driven, cross-sector collaboration is the key to creating an inclusive, more equitable marketplace. “We’re reimagining social impact,” says McWhorter. “If by coming together we can serve more Chicagoans, and serve them more deeply, then the integration is in everyone’s best interests! We are excited about the possibilities with StreetWise part of the YWCA’s comprehensive service portfolio.”

This announcement follows last week’s news that YWCA Metropolitan Chicago acquired Voices for Illinois Children, the leading state-wide children’s advocacy organization. For more information on that acquisition, visit <https://ywcachicago.org/about/news/press-releases/>.

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About YWCA Metropolitan Chicago

Founded in 1876, YWCA Metropolitan Chicago is a social enterprise committed to eliminating racism, empowering women, and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all. As a leading association among a national network of more than 200 YWCAs, YWCA Metropolitan Chicago impacts tens of thousands of women and families annually through comprehensive human services provided across the region. YWCA Metropolitan Chicago is a leading service provider in the areas of sexual violence support services, early childhood and child care provider services, family support services, youth STEM programming, and economic empowerment services. Located in the third-largest American city, YWCA Metropolitan Chicago serves as a national incubator for innovative programming, outreach and engagement strategies. Contributing to a diverse and balanced economy, YWCA Metropolitan Chicago is working at the individual and systems levels to create an inclusive marketplace where everyone thrives. Learn more at www.ywcachicago.org or follow @ywcachicago.



YWCA Metropolitan Chicago



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About StreetWise

StreetWise started in 1992 to help Chicagoans facing homelessness get their lives back on track by providing an opportunity to work and earn an income by selling a newspaper. This newspaper - turned magazine, *StreetWise*, has been sold by thousands of individual vendors over the past decades. Today, StreetWise helps those who are homeless and at-risk of homelessness by providing immediate self-employment, training and preparation to transition into job opportunities, and access to social services, including emergency and employment clothing, referrals for housing and legal aid, financial and computer literacy workshops, free meals, and healthcare support. To learn more about how StreetWise empowers those facing homelessness with a hand-up, visit www.streetwise.org or follow @StreetWise_CHI.



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