



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

November 10, 2022

Chicago, Illinois

**YWCA Metropolitan Chicago Celebrates  
Landmark 50th Annual Leader Luncheon**

*Milestone Event Represents a Retrospective Celebration of a Proud Legacy  
of Social Impact and Activism*

In 1972, YWCA Metropolitan Chicago held its first Leader Luncheon, instating a commitment to the recognition of women’s leadership. Fifty years later, the tradition continues and typical attendance at the annual event has grown to more than 1,200. While honoring the broad social justice, gender and racial equity work of individuals—and organizations—may not seem novel today, 50 years ago it was a trailblazing concept.

Reflecting on 50 years of progress and setbacks since 1972 reminds us of why we are called to recognize the seen and unseen work of so many leaders who have advanced our mission and have proceeded, unafraid to speak out. On our path towards justice, we stand in solidarity, to dismantle discrimination and oppression while uplifting equity, justice and liberation.

This year, the YWCA will honor four leaders who will each speak at the event:

**Outstanding Leader in Business:** Nykia Wright, President and Chief Executive Officer, Chicago Sun-Times

**Outstanding Leader in Racial Justice:** Natalie Moore, Author and Journalist, WBEZ

**Corporate Social Innovation:** Discover

**Outstanding Leader in Health Equity:** Allison Arwady, M.D., Commissioner, Chicago Department of Public Health

This year’s event will be emceed by CBS 2 Chicago Anchor and YWCA board member Audrina Bigos.

This year, we celebrate with a theme of “Because of Her” – speaking to the women and girls we serve but also a nod to our supporters and the countless women who are part of the YWCA’s legacy of impact. Since 1972, we’ve honored more than 300 women, impressive men, and several stand-out companies. Many will attend this year’s milestone



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luncheon and will be recognized as partners and fierce advocates for our shared mission. Past honorees are considered the YWCA's [Leadership Academy](#).

*"I am humbled to stand on the shoulders of so many trailblazers in the equity and social justice goals that the YWCA holds dear. This collection of honorees from the last 50 years represents the bravery and determination that we should all strive for in creating systems built on equity and respect necessary to advance our community so that everyone has the opportunity to thrive,"* said Nicole Robinson, CEO, YWCA Metropolitan Chicago.

The YWCA builds community resilience through our support of tens of thousands of women, girls, and their families. Our comprehensive services are focused around advancing safety, wellness and belonging, unleashing youth and family potential, and driving economic equity. We are building community resilience by addressing trauma, supporting and expanding our workforce. Our work is broad, our expertise is deep, and our impact is manifested in the individual success stories of women who have sustainable businesses, girls with access to quality education, and families comfortable and thriving in affordable housing.

This ticketed event will take place Thursday, November 17, 2022, from 12:00-1:30 PM CST at the Hyatt Regency Chicago Grand Ballroom (East Tower, Lower Level).

Media is invited to attend and cover this event and those involved are available for comment or interview.

### **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 individuals and families annually through comprehensive human services provided across the region. We are committed to advancing safety, wellness and belonging, unleashing youth and family potential, and driving economic equity. Among a diverse and broad portfolio of services, YWCA Metropolitan Chicago is a leading provider in the areas of sexual violence and community violence support services, early childhood and child care provider services, family support services, youth STEM programming, and economic empowerment services. A commitment to racial justice, equity, and inclusion runs through all YWCA activities. YWCA Metropolitan Chicago serves as a national incubator for innovative programming, outreach and engagement strategies, and is working at the individual and systems levels to create an inclusive marketplace where everyone thrives. The organization is an active member of many national, state, county and city-level coalitions, advocating for policies that center racial and gender equity to eliminate disparities,



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combat racism and support women and families. Learn more at [www.ywcachicago.org](http://www.ywcachicago.org) or follow @ywcachicago.

**Media Contact:**

Molly Silverman | Chief Strategic Engagement Officer, YWCA Metropolitan Chicago  
773-612-7028

[Molly.silverman@ywcachicago.org](mailto:Molly.silverman@ywcachicago.org)



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