

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Representative Lauren Underwood Visits The Learning Experience in Oswego to Celebrate \$575,000 in Federal Funding for YWCA Metropolitan Chicago

OSWEGO, ILLINOIS – Last week, Representative Lauren Underwood (IL-14) visited The Learning Experience at to celebrate \$575,000 in federal funding she secured for YWCA Metropolitan Chicago. The YWCA will use the funding to create and administer a childcare network in Illinois' 14th District. During her visit, Underwood read to children and spoke with staff about the benefits of this funding announcement.





“YWCA Metropolitan Chicago so appreciates Representative Underwood for supporting our Chicago Community Project to fund a Childcare Network in Illinois’ 14th District. This investment will strengthen communities, families, and children by enabling high-quality early care and education businesses to thrive,” said Shelley Bromberek-Lambert, Chief Resilience Officer, YWCA Metropolitan Chicago.

“I am so proud to deliver over \$20 million to fund 15 projects across our community, including \$575,000 to administer a childcare network in the 14th District,” said Underwood. *“Our community is strongest when our children and families have the resources they need to thrive. This is an essential investment that will strengthen childcare businesses in our community, expand our childcare system’s capacity, and guarantee children receive excellent care.”*

The shortage of affordable childcare is major concern in northern Illinois. The high cost of childcare and workforce challenges, exacerbated by the pandemic, make maintaining a sustainable childcare business a challenge. By providing education and resources to childcare





centers and family childcare providers, the YWCA will be able to support network participants and help improve the quality of care for children in the community.

This funding was submitted by Underwood through the Community Project Funding initiative, through which Members can help direct federal funding to projects that address the most pressing needs throughout northern Illinois. In 2022, Underwood selected 14 other projects that will directly benefit the 14th district. Learn more about the additional projects at Underwood.house.gov.

The services the YWCA plans to provide include one-on-one advising to develop sustainable business plans, improve care quality, identify and apply for funding opportunities, and improve marketing and enrollment. We will also use the funding to provide wage supplements for educators, so businesses can attract and retain early childhood educators.

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 touches tens of thousands of women and families annually through comprehensive human services provided across the region. YWCA Metropolitan Chicago is a leader in the areas of sexual violence support, early childhood and child care provider services, family support, youth STEM programming and economic empowerment. A commitment to racial justice, equity and inclusion is foundational to all YWCA programs and services. Located in the third-largest American city, YWCA Metropolitan Chicago serves as a national incubator for innovative programming, outreach and engagement strategies. YWCA Metropolitan Chicago works at both the individual and systems levels to create the truly inclusive marketplace necessary for a diverse and balanced economy. The organization is an active member of many national, state, county and city-level coalitions, advocating for policies that combat racism and positively affect women and families. Learn more at www.ywcachicago.org and follow @ywcachicago on Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube.

Media Contact:

Molly Silverman | Chief Strategic Engagement Officer, YWCA Metropolitan Chicago
773-612-7028
molly.silverman@ywcachicago.org



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