



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Chicago, Illinois

**YWCA Metropolitan Chicago Hosts Screening
of *The Janes* with University of Chicago**

***HBO Documentary on the pre-Roe v. Wade Underground Abortion Provider
and Panel Discussion with 'The Janes' Founders Heather Booth and Marie Leaner***

When HBO producers began interviewing members of *The Janes*, they may not have imagined that by the time the documentary was airing in homes, many Americans would have lost the right to make decisions about their own reproductive health. As the 50th Anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* approaches, there may be little observance of the milestone given that the decision has been overturned.

On Thursday, January 26, YWCA Metropolitan Chicago will host a screening of the documentary *The Janes* preceded by a panel discussion with Founders Heather Booth and Marie Leaner, moderated by WBEZ's Natalie Moore. The event will begin at 6:30 PM with a Q&A, followed by the film screening at 7:00 PM. The event is taking place at Max Palevsky Cinema at Ida Noyes Hall, on the University of Chicago's campus, where the Janes' efforts originated.

The Janes tells the story of a group of unlikely outlaws. Defying the state legislature that outlawed abortion, the Catholic Church that condemned it, and the Chicago Mob that was profiting from it, the members of Jane risked their personal and professional lives to help women in need. In the pre-Roe v. Wade era — a time when a pregnant woman could not work yet abortion was a crime in most states and even circulating information about abortion was a felony in Illinois — the Janes provided low-cost and free abortions to an estimated 11,000 women.

Using code names, fronts, and safe houses to protect themselves and their work, the accused had built an underground service for women seeking safe, affordable, illegal abortions. They called themselves "Jane." Directed by Oscar-nominee Tia Lessin (HBO's *Trouble the Water*) and Emmy-nominee Emma Pildes (HBO's [*Jane Fonda in Five Acts*](#)), *The Janes* offers first-hand accounts from the women at the center of the group, many speaking on the record for the first time.



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“Reflecting on 50 years of progress and setbacks reminds us of why we are called to recognize the seen and unseen work of those who have advanced reproductive rights and have persevered, unafraid to speak out and challenge authority. We are proud to spotlight the historic efforts of “the Janes,” especially at this critical time in the movement for equity and justice,” said Nicole Robinson, CEO, YWCA Metropolitan Chicago.

YWCA Metropolitan Chicago presents this event in partnership with Chicago Foundation for Women, University of Chicago's Center for the Study of Gender and Sexuality, Center for the Study of Race, Politics, and Culture, Doc Films, and supporter Julia Stasch.

Theatre capacity is 450. Registration is required and early arrival is recommended as seats will be available on a first come, first served basis. Guests can register for this free event at <https://ywcachicago.org/janes>.

Heather Booth and Marie Leaner can be available for prescheduled interviews before and after the event.

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 leader in the areas of sexual violence support, early childhood and childcare 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.

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