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ywca

metropolitan chicago

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YWCA METROPOLITAN CHICAGO ANNOUNCES ACQUISITION OF VOICES FOR ILLINOIS CHILDREN, THE LEADING STATE-WIDE CHILDREN ADVOCACY ORGANIZATION

Acquisition Expands the YWCA's Policy Efforts To Benefit Thousands of Children Across Illinois

CHICAGO/March 2, 2020—YWCA Metropolitan Chicago, a local leader in early childhood and child care support services, today announced that it acquired Voices for Illinois Children, the leading state-wide children advocacy organization that focuses nonpartisan advocacy on behalf of children. Voices for Illinois Children is a multi-issue advocacy organization that is committed to policy research and analysis, policy advocacy, strategic communications, and community engagement, all in support of policies and programs that enhance the wellbeing of children, families and communities in Illinois. Over the past 32 years, Voices for Illinois Children has successfully advocated for a range of impactful policies including quality preschool, a fairer local tax system and health insurance for low-income families.

“Our acquisition of Voices for Illinois Children is a testament to the success of our transformation to a social enterprise,” said Shelley Bromberek-Lambert, YWCA Metropolitan Chicago’s Chief Reimagination Officer, who oversees early childhood and family support services. “We are thrilled to have the opportunity to increase our impact by leveraging our collective direct service and policy expertise for the benefit of children across the state.”

Through this acquisition, Tasha Green Cruzat will continue to lead the program under its new name Voices for Illinois Children, Powered by YWCA Metropolitan Chicago, with plans to expand its early childhood initiatives. Green Cruzat brings more than 25 years of experience in the public and private sector of education, business and government, including previously serving as Chief of Staff to Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle.

“After growing Voices for Illinois Children to successfully advocate on a range of impactful policies including quality preschools, a fairer local tax system, health insurance for low-income families and increased transparency of policy impacts on minority communities, I am thrilled to join forces with YWCA Metropolitan Chicago,” said Green Cruzat. “Our shared belief in the social enterprise model means we will be even more focused and agile in our efforts to improve the lives of children across the state.”

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 a marketplace where everyone can thrive. Key to the organization’s transformation has been



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its work across the enterprise and the nonprofit sector to create efficiencies, improve access to services and deepen impact through expansion of programs, including more direct engagement in the public policy arena.

Since embarking on this transformation, YWCA Metropolitan Chicago's operating budget has grown from a \$10.5 million in 2013 to \$24 million today. Much of that growth has been within the Early Childhood division, including a \$4 million Early Head Start contract from the State of Illinois.

In addition to Green Cruzat, Voices for Illinois Children's KIDS COUNT Project Manager Dr. Bill Byrnes will be joining the YWCA team. Bill received his Ph.D. from Loyola University where his dissertation explored the effects of mass incarceration on the middle class. He also worked as a research fellow at Loyola's Center for Urban Research.

Mitch Lifson will remain on the Voices team as Vice President of Policy, focusing primarily on early childhood programs but also supporting the YWCA's broader public policy efforts. Mitch's previous experience includes working as a policy and legislative advisor for the Illinois Department of Revenue and serving as Deputy Director of the Policy and Budget Staff for the Illinois Senate Democratic Caucus.

The acquisition was effective February 19, 2020.

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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 with the third-highest percentage of women in the U.S., YWCA Metropolitan Chicago serves as a national incubator for innovative programming, outreach and engagement strategies. Contributing to our diverse and balanced economy, YWCA Metropolitan Chicago is working at the individual and systems levels to create an inclusive marketplace where everyone thrives. The organization is also an active member of many national, state, county and city-level coalitions, representing the interests of and advocating for policies that positively affect women and families. Learn more at www.ywcachicago.org or follow @ywcachicago.