

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **YWCA Metropolitan Chicago Expands Service Area and Impact through Merger with YWCA Lake County**

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS (February 1, 2021)

YWCA Metropolitan Chicago and YWCA Lake County have merged operations under the YWCA Metropolitan Chicago banner, paving the way for more comprehensive direct services across the region.

Both organizations are part of a national network of YWCAs, long sharing a mission of eliminating racism and empowering women.

YWCA Lake County's vital work will continue, including child care resource and referral, youth development, economic empowerment, and health and wellness services. The merger will bring new programming to Lake County, including child care provider support and additional workforce development, mental health, and diversity, equity and inclusion services.

YWCA Metropolitan Chicago CEO Dorri McWhorter said the merger benefits communities across Lake County.

"By coming together, we are stronger and can more effectively meet the growing challenges faced by families and individuals across our region," McWhorter said.

Board President Joycelyn Winnecke said the merger aligns with YWCA Metropolitan Chicago's evolution from traditional social services agency to social enterprise.

"This helps ensure that more people receive the direct services they need every day even as we work to find solutions to the complex problems we face today," Winnecke said.

The YWCA Gurnee office will remain open while the organization explores additional Lake County locations. For YWCA Metropolitan Chicago, the Gurnee site marks its 11<sup>th</sup> location. YWCA Metropolitan Chicago long served the city of Chicago as well as suburban Cook, DuPage, Kane and Will counties, with other suburban sites in Chicago Heights and Addison.



YWCA Metropolitan Chicago



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Gussie Yonashiro-Daniels, former YWCA Lake County Executive Director, will remain with the YWCA through the merger process.

*“By leveraging the strong infrastructure and innovative spirit of the YWCA Metropolitan Chicago team we can build on our longstanding service to the residents of Lake County and create even more impact,”* Daniels said.

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 work across the enterprise and the nonprofit sector to create efficiencies, improve access to services and deepen impact through expansion of programs. Some of the programmatic expansion has come through acquisition and strategic integration of other direct service and policy organizations including Project HELP, Voices for Illinois Children, StreetWise, and now YWCA Lake County.

Since embarking on this transformation, YWCA Metropolitan Chicago’s operating budget has grown from a \$10.5 million in 2013 to an expected \$35 million in 2021.

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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 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](http://www.ywcachicago.org) and follow @ywcachicago on Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube.