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MEDIA ALERT – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Oak Park-River Forest Community Foundation Announces 2022 Community Grants Over \$225,000 Given to Community Organizations

Oak Park, IL (December 7, 2022) — The Oak Park-River Forest Community Foundation announced the recipients of its 2022 Community Grants, awarding \$228,000 to 21 nonprofit organizations in Oak Park, River Forest and neighboring communities. This year's grants advance the Foundation's strategic priorities of addressing education; health care and mental health; wealth and representation; and safety and housing through a race and equity lens. Grant recipients are listed below.

The Community Grants were last awarded in 2019. In 2020 and 2021, the Foundation pivoted in response to COVID-19 and awarded a series of grants from its Rapid Response and Recovery Fund, which provided funds to social impact organizations that were on the front lines providing daily, ongoing support to the community's most vulnerable members during the pandemic, including the elderly, the economically at-risk and those with health concerns.

"We're excited to have the Community Grants program back. Nonprofit organizations in our region are still experiencing tremendous demand for their services during the ongoing pandemic, and the Foundation received more grant applications than ever before," said Tony Martinez, Jr., president and CEO of the Oak Park-River Forest Community Foundation. "It is very important during these stressful times to continue supporting the organizations that uplift our community and provide essential resources to so many in need."

"The Community Grants recipients help maintain and enrich the social fabric of our communities, and we are grateful to the generous donors who have entrusted us with their philanthropic legacy, which makes these grants possible," added Denise Burns, chair of the grants & programs committee on the Foundation's board of directors. "This is a powerful measure of how we can work together to positively affect the lives of residents throughout the west Cook region."

2022 Oak Park-River Forest Community Foundation Community Grantees
EDUCATION

African-American Parents for Purposeful Leadership in Education (APPLE)

Service Area: Oak Park, River Forest

APPLE raises the voices of black parents. This funding provides support for Black families and students through advocacy, scholarship, tutoring and monitoring as part of the Racial Equity Policy in Oak Park and River Forest schools.

Chicago West Community Music Center

Service Area: Oak Park, Austin, Cicero

The CWCMC enhances families and communities through music. This funding supports the implementation of a Freedom Program which focuses on the history of African American music and its impact on the culture and history of the US.

Race Conscious Dialogues

Service Area: Oak Park, River Forest, Forest Park, Berwyn, Elmwood Park

This grant will support the work of Race Conscious Dialogues to educate and activate community members who identify as white to deepen their awareness of identity, privilege, and power; and to provide space for learning for the BIPOC community.

Silk Road Rising (Fiscal sponsor: Gillourey Institute)

Service Area: Oak Park, Austin

Silk Road Rising is a community-centered arts organization rooted in Pan-Asian, North African, and Muslim experiences. This grant will support the implementation of Silk Road Rising's myths and drama program in Oak Park and Austin elementary schools.

Welcome to Fatherhood (WTF)

Service Area: Oak Park, River Forest

Welcome to Fatherhood supports men who want to be the best Dad and co-parent they can be. This grant will provide emotional, social, and spiritual support for fathers and their families in Oak Park, River Forest and beyond.

HEALTH CARE/MENTAL HEALTH

African American Christian Foundation

Service Area: West Cook

The African American Christian Foundation specializes in innovative workforce development program models which provide career pathways, opportunities for work-based learning, and higher and alternative education options. This grant will establish a new mental health program for clients registered in AACF's housing and workforce development programs.

Proviso Partners for Health (PP4H)

Service Area: Oak Park, River Forest, Forest Park, Maywood, Melrose Park

PP4H builds capacity to address racial, health, and economic inequities through partnerships while leveraging community assets and wisdom. This grant provides support for the Radiant Vessels' Tru You initiative which addresses mental health and racial healing for black women.

Resilience

Service Area: Oak Park, Austin

Resilience, formerly Rape Victim Advocates, has been on the front lines of working with survivors of sexual violence since 1974. This grant will help address the full spectrum of sexual violence, including sexual harassment and child sexual abuse, with a focus on prevention as well as treatment.

Youth Crossroads, Inc.

Service Area: Cicero, Berwyn

Youth Crossroads supports youth, guiding them through life's challenges, and inspiring them to discover new opportunities for personal development, healthy relationships, and positive community involvement. This grant will provide free, year round counseling services for mental health in English and Spanish to youth and families in Cicero and Berwyn.

HOUSING

Chicago Funders Together to End Homelessness (Fiscal Sponsor: Michael Reese Health Trust)

Service Area: West Cook

CFTEH advances lasting solutions to end homelessness. This grant provides funding for advocacy, policy change and community organization that addresses homelessness, with a focus on Black communities who disproportionately experience homelessness in the greater Chicago region.

New Moms, Inc.

Service Area: West Cook

New Moms partners with young moms and their children who are experiencing poverty and homelessness. This funding will provide wrap around services to families as they progress towards housing stability, economic mobility, and family well-being.

WEALTH INEQUALITY

Defy Ventures, Illinois Chapter

Service Area: Austin, Galewood, Melrose Park, Maywood

Defy programs help people get back on their feet. This grant funding supports employment re-entry for formerly incarcerated people with the goal to reduce recidivism rates.

Equity and Transformation (EAT)

Service Area: Austin

EAT builds social and economic equity for Black workers engaged in the informal economy. This grant will empower Black informal workers in Austin to advocate for themselves and their communities through leadership development; political education; and solutions that address systemic harms.

Iskali

Service Area: Berwyn, Cicero, Melrose Park, Maywood

This grant supports Iskali's mentorship program for immigrant youth which aims to increase college graduation rates; provide financial literacy skills and increase integral personal growth.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

West Cook YMCA, Inc.

Service Area: River Forest, Melrose Park, Maywood

This program will increase access to extracurricular programming at the West Cook YMCA that addresses achievement gaps; increases equity; builds confidence; supports emotional and physical development.

Y.E.M.B.A., Inc.

Service Area: Oak Park

YEMBA provides youth with the education, exposure and experiences that lead to better outcomes for themselves, their families and their community. This grant will help YEMBA build positive mentoring relationships with youth in Oak Park and offer programming that supports social-emotional skill-building, financial literacy, linkage to wraparound services and prevents substance abuse.

CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

Austin Coming Together (ACT)

Service Area: Austin

ACT works with its member organizations, community leaders, and other partners to build the civic infrastructure for systemic educational improvement and economic development. This grant funds the Implementation of Austin Coming Together's major initiatives - Thrive 2025 strategy, the AFT Quality of Life Plan and the Austin Community Hub.

Cicero Independiente

Service Area: Cicero, Berwyn

Cicero Independiente is a bilingual news organization for the people of Cicero and Berwyn. This grant will produce journalism that meets Cicero residents' information needs; deepens community relationships; and equips young residents with reporting skills for civic engagement.

Friends of the Children - Chicago

Service Area: Austin

Friends of the Children connects children to paid, professional mentors. This grant provides support for a violence protection/early intervention strategy focused on children who have been impacted by gun violence, trauma and housing insecurity in Austin.

Pro Bono Network (PBN)

Service Area: West Cook County

PBN connects attorneys who want to volunteer with workable pro bono opportunities that make an impact. This grant will increase access to free legal representation for community members in Oak Park, River Forest and surrounding communities.

Revolutionary Oak Park Youth Action League (ROYAL)

Service Area: Oak Park, Forest Park, Austin, Berwyn

ROYAL provides a powerful and inspiring learning environment for BIPOC students organizing in schools and in the community. This grant will support ROYAL's climate justice campaign which ensures that Black and LatinX student voices and issues that affect them are centered.

About the Oak Park-River Forest Community Foundation

Founded in 1959, The Oak Park-River Forest Community Foundation has built lasting, impactful connections among area residents and locally-based service programs. Today as an integral presence in the community, the Foundation focuses on helping its donors identify and achieve their long-term philanthropic goals, and providing grants and leadership support to organizations working to effect positive change in Oak Park, River Forest and surrounding neighborhoods. Learn more about the Foundation's programs and services online at oprfcf.org.

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