Sunday Edition







WEST SIDE TIMES

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Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation Invests in Children's Mental Health



to invest at least \$2 million of its COVID response funding in communities most impacted by the dual pandemics of COVID-19 and structural racism. With the CSWI – Chicago initiative, ILCHF increased that commitment to just over \$4.1 million. The 14 zip codes were selected based upon the impact of COVID as well as mapping data indicating the multiple environmental risk factors, including air pollution and asthma, historic redlining policies, poverty and economic insecurity which put the Black and Latinx communities on Chicago's South and West Sides at greater risk for negative outcomes related to COVID-19. Chicago grantees include: •Alivio Medical Center –

ILCHF's 2020 commitment

60623 •Association House of Chicago – 60641 and 60651

•Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago – 60609

•Children's Home & Aid Society of Illinois – 60639 •Community Counseling Centers of Chicago (C4) – 60644

For more information, go to www.ilchf.org.

The Covid-19 pandemic has fully exposed and exacerbated the children's mental health crisis in Illinois and nationally. The Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation (ILCHF) has responded with the COVID-19 School

Wellness Initiative (CSWI) – a statewide effort to address the mental health needs of children, their caregivers and teachers in communities hardest hit by COVID-19. As part of this school wellness initiative, ILCHF recently awarded 29 two-year grants of up to \$300,000 each, representing a total investment of more than \$8 million. The funded projects will provide an array of interventions customized by each school community to respond to

their unique needs and may include preventative universal supports for the entire school, small group or targeted early interventions and intensive one-on-one services for more severe problems. Through the CSWI project, ILCHF invited applications from mental health providers working in partnership with schools serving 14 zip codes in Chicago and 14 counties outside of Cook across the State. The focus on Chicago arose out of

Holiday Sounds



Compiled by Ashmar Mandou

Enjoy the last days of Christmas in Chicago with a few fun-filled events happening around the city from Merry, Merry Chicago at the Symphony Center to hearing holiday sounds with a Latin twist, get your tickets today and get into the spirit.

Chicago Symphony Orchestra's Merry, **Merry Chicago!** Through December 23rd Symphony Center h t t p s : // c s o . o r g / performances/21-22/csospecials/merry-merrychicago/

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra decks the halls of Symphony Center with the return of its popular Christmas concert, teaming up with Broadway star Jessica Vosk for an evening of holiday standards and festive arrangements of classical compositions. In addition to Christmas carols like "Jingle Bells" and "Oh Come, All ye Faithful," this year's program features selections from *Sound of Music* and *Babes in Toyland*.

Mariachi Herencia de México

Dec. 17 Old Town School of Folk Music Dec. 18 Old Town School

llamar ahora

of Folk Music Dec. 19 Thalia Hall https://linktr.ee/ mariachihermex Chicago-based Mariachi Herencia de México presents its A Very Merry Christmas Concert at the Old Town School of Folk Music and Thalia Hall, playing four shows over the course of three days. Expect to hear plenty of familiar holiday songs with a Latin twist, including renditions of "It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year," "Winter Wonderland," "Los Peces en el Rio" and "Christmas Don't Be Late." The Nutcracker Civic Opera House

Through December 26th https://joffrey.org/seasonand-tickets/nutcracker/ Having retired cofounder Robert Joffrey's production of The Nutcracker after nearly 30 years, the Joffrey Ballet debuted a brandnew version in 2016, set in Chicago against the backdrop of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition. This year's production will be staged in the Civic Opera House (where the Lyric Opera also resides), featuring music performed by the Lyric Opera Orchestra and the stunning choreography of Christopher Wheeldon.





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ISBE Awards \$1.1m in Grants to Recruit More Girls, Low-Income Students into STEAM

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has awarded eight Illinois school districts a total of \$1.1 million to increase access to science, technology, engineering, art, and math (STEAM) programming for girls and low-income students. ISBE made the announcement during

Computer Science

Education Week, as part of its efforts to widen the pipeline into high-paying, in-demand STEAM careers. Funded by a special scratch-off ticket from the Illinois Lottery, the grants support the integration of hands-on STEAM programming into the school curriculum and professional learning for educators to strengthen

their STEAM teaching practices. The grants also support career-connected experiences that build students' knowledge of the skills required to excel in STEAM careers. Public Act 101-0561 created the program. National research shows that students who attend the highest-poverty schools are least likely to have access to STEAM resources, experiences, and classes. ISBE's STEAM grant helps to close that gap by targeting resources to underfunded school districts. Seven of the districts awarded funds are Tier 1 and one is Tier 2. ISBE awarded the eight districts a total of \$1,106,054.48. A few of the schools include: Berwyn North School District 98 (Tier 1) – \$153,982.99

Berwyn North School District 98 plans to expand existing STEAM programming, open two new STEAM labs, host STEAM summer camps, and provide professional development for staff through the Northern Illinois University STEAM Center.

Chicago Public Schools District 299 (Tier 1) – \$244,653.89

Chicago Public Schools District 299 plans to expand its Early College STEAM School, recruit more girls into STEAM programs via lunch-and-learn events and career panels, and host a Women's History Month STEAM Conference. Elmwood Park CUSD 401



(Tier 1) – \$153,627.90 Elmwood Park CUSD 401 plans to offer after-school STEAM programming for all elementary students, including hands-on opportunities with 3D printing, graphic design, laser woodworking, video vlogging, and podcasting. Sixty girls will have the opportunity to attend a STEAM summer camp called GADgET (Girls Adventuring in Design, Engineering, and Technology).

¡Felíz Navidad!

QUE TU TEMPORADA DE FIESTAS SEA BRILLANTE

Desde las miles de luces por toda la ciudad hasta las decoraciones al frente de tu casa, ComEd está aquí para ayudar a iluminar el espíritu festivo en todo Chicago. Porque cuando los vecindarios brillan más, las comunidades son más unidas.

Descubre las exhibiciones de luces navideñas en el área de Chicago en ComEd.com/HolidayLights

Felices Fiestas de parte de ComEd.





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Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago



CPS To Distribute Take-Home COVID Test Kits Ahead of Winter Break



Chicago Public Schools (CPS) this week will distribute approximately 150,000 take-home COVID test kits to more than 300 schools. To ensure the test is processed properly and that families receive test results in a timely manner, families are strongly encouraged to test students on Tuesday, Dec. 28 and drop the sample at their nearest FedEx Drop Box on the same day. Parents can find information about drop box locations and pickup hours at color. com/fedex-dropbox. Instructions for conducting the test will be provided to each student that receives a test kit. With the goal of advancing equitable testing strategies focused on the most impacted communities, CPS used the city's COVID-19 Community Vulnerability Index (CCVI) to guide

distribution of test kits. All schools in neighborhoods designated high risk by the CCVI and most elementary schools in neighborhoods designated as medium risk will receive tests for each student. Families whose students do not receive a test from CPS are also strongly encouraged to test their students over winter break. Visit cps. edu/youthcovidtesting for testing opportunities in the community.



Berwyn Shops: A homegrown project breaks ground



Berwyn Shops: A Homegrown Project had an official groundbreaking ceremony at 6931 Roosevelt Road, Berwyn, IL 60402. As a retail incubator for the City of Berwyn, Berwyn Shops is designed to support entrepreneurs, artisans, and makers who are committed to taking their businesses to the next level, from a pop-up or online store to a 12'x12' cottage-style shop. The twelve vendors will have the opportunity to test out the local market

before committing to a full-blown storefront operation. The inaugural season is set to launch June of 2022. To kick off the celebration, Mayor Robert J. Lovero welcomed attendees and stated, "What we've done over the last few years is trying to bring big businesses into town, but now it's time for us to go back to where Berwyn started with the mom-andpop shops. This incubator system is going to be terrific!

"Berwyn is built on smallbusinesses. It is part of their history, and something we must support in every way possible," added Cook County Commissioner Frank J. Aguilar (16th District). "Berwyn Shops will be one more step towards helping small businesses throughout Berwyn and our district be able to not only survive, but thrive. I want to thank Mayor Lovero, the Berwyn **Development Corporation** and their partners for all their hard work."



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Chicago Study: individual housing reduced coronavirus rates in people experiencing homelessness



Persons experiencing homelessness (PEH) who were at high risk of severe COVID-19 were 2.5 times less likely to contract SARS-CoV-2 if they were provided with individual hotel rooms and medical and social support compared to citywide rates in homeless shelters, according to new research from the University of Chicago Medicine, Lawndale Christian Health Center, and the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH). Additionally, PEH who participated in this housing intervention also saw improvements in certain health measures such as blood pressure, and more than half of them moved on to longer-term housing after the intervention. The results were published on

December 13 in JAMA Network Open. Initially, the team did not set out to conduct a research study; instead, their focus was simply to minimize the impact of COVID-19 on an extremely vulnerable population.

The city of Chicago offered an entire hotel — almost 200 rooms — for the intervention, and the first guests arrived on April 2, 2020. The healthcare team conducted screenings in shelters to identify highrisk individuals meeting at least one of the following criteria: at least 60 years old, at least 55 years old with any underlying health condition, or under 55 years old with any health condition known to substantially increase COVID-19 risk (e.g., HIV/ AIDS). Those who met

the criteria were offered the option to move from the shelter to an individual hotel room with extensive supportive services, where they were able to stay as long as needed, up to the full five-month length of the intervention. After the intervention ended in September 2020, the outcomes were clear: providing people experiencing homelessness with individual hotel rooms and wraparound care led to a dramatic reduction in COVID-19 rates and improvements in other health measures, including lower blood pressure and improvements in glycemic control. Also, over half of the individuals who spent time in the hotel went on to more permanent housing.





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Beware of Storm-Related Repair Scams



Following fatal storms in southern and central Illinois Friday night, Attorney General Kwame Raoul today warned residents to be on alert for scammers looking to exploit homeowners and business owners who may be in need of repairs from storm-related damage. After severe storms and tornadoes resulted in several fatalities in Edwardsville, Illinois,

JB Pritzker issued a state disaster proclamation for 28 counties and activated the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) to provide assistance in affected areas. Raoul cautioned residents that

and damaged communities

throughout the state, Gov.

scammers often move quickly into communities to take advantage of people with damage to their homes or businesses. Raoul offered the following tips to help families and businesses avoid dishonest contractors:

•Be wary of contractors who go door to door to offer repair services or "free" inspections. Ask for recommendations from people you know and trust and, whenever possible, use established local contractors.

Visit the Better Business Bureau's St. Louis, Central Illinois, Quad Cities or Chicago websites to see if a business is a member and whether any complaints have been lodged against it.
Get all of the terms of a contract in writing, and obtain a copy of the signed contract.

•Never make full payment until all the work has been completed to your satisfaction.

Never pay in cash.Be aware that you have the

right to cancel a contract within three business days if you signed it based on the contractor's visit to your home.

•Ask to see required state and local permits and licenses. Insurance adjusters and roofers must be licensed by state agencies. It should raise a red flag if the roofer or adjuster does not have a required license, or if the name on the license does not match the name on the business card or truck. Please visit the IDFPR's website to search for roofing licenses. Visit the DOI's website, or call 866-445-5364 to verify that a public adjuster is licensed and in good standing.

Raoul encouraged local residents and business owners to call local law enforcement agencies and his office's Consumer Fraud Hotline (1-800-386-5438 in Chicago, 1-800-243-0618 in Springfield and 1-800-243-0607 in Carbondale) to report any suspicious activity.



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Peters' expansion to Reimagine Public Safety Act becomes law



More communities are a step closer to addressing the problem of firearm violence related crimes after State Senator Robert Peters' (D-Chicago) measure to bring gun violence prevention training and services to more areas was signed into law. "The recent rise in gun violence will not be addressed until

we change the policies that disproportionately have a negative impact on Black and Brown communities," Peters said. "Soon, we will be able to work handin-hand with affected communities, intervening with at risk youth, supporting survivors and working from the bottomup rather than the topdown. People in Illinois deserve public safety for all, not theater." The new law will expand upon the Reimagine Public Safety Act to increase the number of communities that can receive grant money for gun violence prevention, based on population size. The law will also allow for five more communities to



haunting, trauma, and historical fiction

This January celebrate *Read a New Book month*!

Sign up for a free community book group and event series on Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, Octavia Butler's *Kindred*, and Alejo Carpentier's *The Kingdom of This World*.

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For more information on reading groups, events, and to request free books:



be eligible statewide and would allow organizations to apply directly for training and technical assistance from contractors. Peters supported the Reimagine Public Safety Act to address gun violence in Illinois by working with the communities most affected. The act was originally signed into law in June 2021 and created the Office of Firearm Violence Prevention to issue grants and provide

support to violence prevention organizations in communities affected by gun violence. The measure signed today expands upon the act. House Bill 2791 was signed and takes immediate effect.





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Three Out of Four Immigrant Families Unaware Policy Overturned, Survey States



A poll released Wednesday by the Protecting Immigrant Families (PIF) coalition finds that a large share of immigrant families are unaware the Biden Administration has reversed a Trump Administration policy that put immigration applications at risk if lawfully-present immigrants used safety net programs for which they qualified. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) reversed the 2019 "public charge" regulations in March, but experts cite the policy's persistent chilling effect as a contributing factor to the pandemic's disproportionate impact on immigrant families of color, including vaccination disparities. The new research validates these concerns, showing that 78 percent of immigrant families were unaware the policy had changed. "The reversal of the Trump Administration public charge regulations was a critical first step toward ending the pandemic," said Eddie Carmona, PIF director. "But this poll confirms that the Biden Administration, and all of us, have much more work to do." The poll surveyed 1,000 individuals nationwide, most Latino or Asian American / Pacific Islander. Respondents have at least one family member who is not a U.S. citizen. The survey found that:

• Only 22 percent of immigrant families had

heard "a lot" about DHS' action to reverse the Trump Administration public charge policy

• But 50 percent said that knowledge made them more likely to use safety net programs when necessary

• About half (46 percent) of respondents whose families needed help during the pandemic declined to apply because of immigration concerns. The poll was completed

for the PIF coalition by BSP Research, which has also overseen large public opinion surveys measuring the impact of COVID-19 on Latino communities. The research was funded by Share Our Strength's No Kid Hungry campaign. The survey was in the field from September 1-22, 2021. BSP screened in only

people who are immigrants or have at least one close family member who is an immigrant, and the poll





CCC, Mid-America Carpenters to Provide More Apprenticeship Opportunities



City Colleges of Chicago (CCC) is proud to announce the signing of an Articulation of Prior Learning Transfer Agreement with the Mid-America Carpenters Regional Ĉouncil Apprentice and Training Fund. This newest agreement between CCC and the Carpenters Union will allow journeymen carpenters to apply their education and training experiences towards a degree at Kennedy-King

College, and, for the first time, allow students who successfully complete their basic certificate in carpentry at Kennedy-King to receive advanced placement in the Fund's pre-apprenticeship program. The agreement outlines a clear pathway for participants to earn a degree in Construction Management at CCC, awarding college credit to those with approved prior experience. Another agreement benefit gives those with appropriate

MHOA Distributes 1,500 Turkeys to Local Families, Veterans to Kick Off Holiday Season



This holiday season the McDonald's Hispanic Owner-Operators Association (MHOA) the Black joined McDonald's Operators Association (BMOA) to present once again the annual program Food for the Body & Spirit. The Northern Illinois Food Bank and Bimbo Bakeries USA also joined this community effort throughout Chicagoland and Northwest Indiana. "The Food for the Body & Spirit program's main objective is to help those communities most affected by unemployment and poverty," said Carmen Solano De Carrier, president of MHOA, "and that is why we are committed to distribute the 1,500 turkeys at McDonald's

restaurants to individuals and families most in need with this program." Those attending received turkeys and trimmings that will make this holiday season a little brighter than last year's. Considering all the planned events along with the other partners, the total distribution in was expanded this year to 15 locations and 5,500 turkeys and boxes of trimmings. A special aspect of these events was to honor veterans in acknowledgement of their service to this country. Any veteran attending any Food for the Body & Spirit event that presented valid proof of their status, was able to use a VIP line ahead of the general public to receive their Thanksgiving package. In addition, all the veterans received a special gift.

prior credits from CCC's Carpentry program the advantage of placing out of equivalent classes in the pre-apprenticeship program. In addition, the apprenticeship will offer classes designed to meet the needs of CCC carpentry completers to satisfy preapprentice requirements and will be available on nights and weekends. This flexibility offers students a broad range of educational opportunities. The CCC Construction Management degree requires 65 credit hours. CCC can award up to 30 credit hours toward an Associate of Applied Sciences in Construction Management to participants who successfully complete

LAWNDALE NEWS

the coursework. All students must have a high school degree or G.E.D, be a minimum of 17 years old, and live in Chicago. For more information, visit ccc. edu or call 773-COLLEGE.

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