

BUILDING BRIGHTER FUTURES

CHICAGO LIGHTS | 2022 ANNUAL REPORT



**Chicago
Lights**



MISSION, VISION, AND HISTORY



Our mission is to partner with youth and adults to build brighter futures through supportive relationships and life-changing programs.

We do this by providing creative youth development and adult social services that help people build the skills they need to transcend systemic barriers and lead fulfilling lives.

Chicago Lights believes every person should have access to the resources they need to overcome economic and social obstacles.

Chicago Lights grew from Fourth Presbyterian Church's longstanding commitment to social justice and compassionate service. In 1964, Fourth Presbyterian Church partnered with residents in the former Cabrini-Green neighborhood to tutor students. In 1991, that commitment gave rise to a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, which in 2004 was renamed Chicago Lights.

Today we partner with more than 2,000 individuals through mentoring, supportive services, academic enrichment, career development.

Fourth Presbyterian Church continues to be Chicago Lights' closest partner and supporter, even providing 40% of volunteers and covering most overhead costs.

In this partnership, our team of professional staff and more than 500 dedicated volunteers continue to build brighter futures for Chicago's youth and adults.





YEAR IN REVIEW



Nick VanDerSchie
President
Chicago Lights Board of Directors

Stacy Jackson
Executive Director
Chicago Lights

Throughout 2022, Chicago Lights remained a “safe constant” at a time when so much in our world was uncertain.

All the while, Chicago Lights extended its participant-focused, life-changing mission to more Chicagoans in need. We made a real difference in the lives of families and individuals facing systemic barriers to education, employment, health, and housing.

Direct human interaction is very important. So, participants, volunteers, and staff at the Social Service Center were glad to return indoors for services late in 2022. Many participants expressed gratitude for the dignity they felt and the respect of Chicago Lights staff and volunteers.

Last year, our Tutoring program came back in a hybrid format, responding to the preference of both families and volunteers. Supportive, caring adults mentored students, increasing literacy, boosting self-confidence, and driving a 100% high school graduation rate. Students in the Summer Day program also enjoyed a safe environment with books, learning tools, nutritious meals, and enrichment activities.

With so many Chicagoans facing economic insecurity and food instability, our Urban Farm staff harvested more produce than ever to ensure that our neighbors had access to fresh, healthy food. The farm is a beautiful, vibrant oasis where Chicago’s youth can learn to grow and harvest crops. At the same time, they gain life skills that will unlock their futures and impact their community.

We said goodbye in 2022 to the Dance Academy. It was not an easy decision to sunset the program, and we applaud the work of the artists, teachers, and parents who supported the thousands of Chicago-area students who participated in the program over 22 joyful, dance-filled years.

This work would be possible without our generous supporters who provide financial gifts, clothing, food, time, and expertise. Thank you for being a vital part of this community.

We invite you to read on for highlights of the Chicago Lights mission in action over 2022.





PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS





TUTORING & SUMMER DAY

RESILIENCY

The theme of Summer Day 2022 was Resiliency. Resiliency also means adaptability – building strength, hope, and character. These are essential skills our students will need to be successful throughout their life journeys.

“We wanted the students to understand and feel resilient because they have lived through the struggles of a pandemic,” says Tutoring and Summer Day Director Armedia Houston. “They have seen and experienced sickness, disease, death, major changes in everyday life, and the shutdown of their schools, their country, and the world. Yet, they are resilient; they have survived. They are still here...and that is *resiliency*.”

SUMMER DAY: COMBATING “LEARNING LOSS”

Summer Day focused on combating the COVID-19 “learning loss” with Common Core goals in language arts and math to recover, maintain, improve, and build skills.

- First-to-sixth-grade students focused on reading summarization and grade-level math skills.
- Career Prep (seventh to ninth grades) focused on cover letters and résumés, life skills, and a five-year plan.
- Field trips to the Chicago History Museum, Lincoln Park Zoo, Museum of Science Industry, and Turtle Splash Water Park were both educational and fun.
- All students enjoyed enrichment twice weekly with SEL (social-emotional learning), mindfulness and meditation in Peace Club, fitness, and hot, nutritious meals.
- Arts curriculum included daily dance, singing, acting, art, and digital music, culminating in a final presentation comprised of music, dance, skits, and visual art performance.

TUTORING

- Fifteen high school students and four Tutoring alums in college earned and completed summer internships.
- Summer internship sites included Chicago Lights Social Service Center (14th year), Chicago Lights Human Resources (1st year), Marcel Digital (15th year), Chicago Lights Summer Day (12th year), Marillac St. Vincent Family Services West (7th year), Marillac St. Vincent Family Services North (7th year), Chicago Lights Summer Day (8th year).
- New internship site partners for 2022 included Munich RE Insurance, Caregiverlist, 16th Ward Alderman Stephanie Coleman, Office of US Representative Danny K. Davis.
- Ten students participated in the Ninth Grade Readiness program, which focused on developing writing skills and strengthening executive function skills.
- Ten Tutoring high school students received scholarships to attend area private schools.
- Two new Greer Scholars joined our college cohort of twelve students. Five Greer Scholars graduated from college: Among them, one is moving to New York to work with a nonprofit; another will take the MCAT and apply to medical school; and another is working while applying to graduate school for speech pathology.



TUTORING GRADUATES:
8 high school seniors,
17 eighth graders



VIRTUAL TUTORING
2021 – 2022
school year
with **HYBRID WEDNESDAYS.**



77 STUDENTS ENROLLED IN SUMMER DAY





 Jeannine Terrell

SOCIAL SERVICE CENTER

SSC staff created the "Help Yourself Bin," which allows participants to select clothing beyond their usual allotment. "This [box] is like therapy," one participant said. "There are really nice items in the free bin," added another.

Two 2022 Open Doors Program (ODP) graduates received diplomas and celebrated with lunch.

The SSC collaborated with the Tutoring program to host two Career Development interns.

DePaul Law School students joined SSC staff for a bagged lunch and bingo with participants.

Farm staff delivered and donated 541 items for 161 SSC food pantry appointments, for a total value of \$1,039.

Students from National Louis University volunteered with the Outreach program and reported that the experience was impactful in terms of both their own learning and supporting the community.

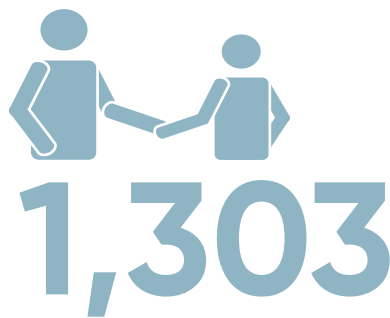
Jeannine Terrell (pictured above left), an active participant in the SSC, Meals Ministry program and Fourth Presbyterian Church, as well as a graduate of the Open Doors program, passed away in December. A memorial service was held for her at Fourth Presbyterian Church. "We find comfort in knowing that Jeannine's soul is at peace and that she found comfort and support in our community prior to her passing," says Director Theresa Thornburg.



1,151
SOCIAL SERVICE INTERACTIONS took place during Meals Ministry



1,251
CASE MANAGEMENT APPOINTMENTS served 373 individuals



1,303
INDIVIDUALS participated in SSC programming in 2022



131
INDIVIDUALS participated in housing case management



181 INDIVIDUALS participated in OUTREACH SERVICES and received 487 services



1,071
INDIVIDUALS participated in drop-in services





URBAN FARM

FOOD PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION

- The Farm grew 6,010 pounds of food, up from 4,475 pounds in 2021.
- This produce went into at least 901 produce bags through the Market Voucher Program (MVP), a local health clinic, weekly Farmstand sales, and the Social Service Center's food pantry.
- MVP engaged 73 unique individuals/families and distributed \$9,187 of free produce and \$1,947 of dry goods to the neighborhood residents.
- The Farm team distributed 40 Thanksgiving bags to Cabrini-Green residents, making 2022 the first year we were able to distribute food in November.

YOUTH PROGRAMMING

- Farm Camp offered 14 Cabrini-Green residents, aged six to 11, five weeks of practical activities and adventures to encourage curiosity about food, farming, and community.
- The Farm partnered with Project Education Plus, which brought 25 students for their weekly program.
- The high school program, Farm Corps, in partnership with After School Matters, provided a total of 40 paid positions for teens in our community.
- We delivered nearly 6,500 hours of total teen programming. Students sourced, prepared, and distributed more than 600 pounds of food for those experiencing food insecurity.



BACKPACKS
distributed

127
VOLUNTEERS



COMMUNITY
RESIDENTS
worked their own
garden plots





DANCE ACADEMY



With much consideration and careful deliberation, Chicago Lights in 2022 made the difficult decision to end the Dance Academy program.

Thanks to the work of participating artists, teachers, and parents, thousands of Chicago-area students have enjoyed in Dance Academy classes and benefited from deeper engagement in school, increased confidence, and a greater appreciation for the arts.



We give deep thanks to Directors Diana Anton, Cecily Washington, and Patty Mendez who brought their whole hearts to provide this meaningful programming to young people.



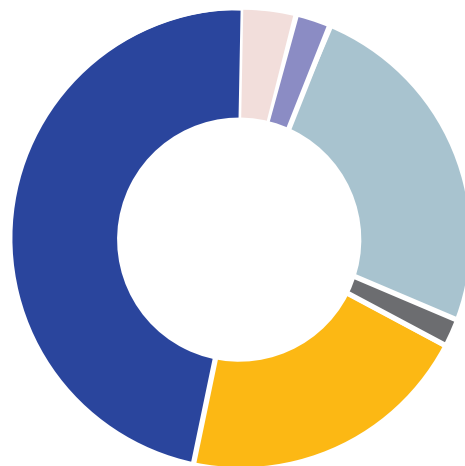


2022 FINANCIALS

REVENUE

Individual Contributions	\$1,230,443	45%
Foundations/Corporations	\$661,888	24%
Program Receipts	\$24,014	1%
Events	\$735,608	27%
Draw from Invested Funds	\$58,098	2%
Other (Ferguson Fellows Grant)	\$9,089	1%

Total: \$2,719,139



DISBURSEMENTS

Tutoring	\$628,765	23%
Management and General	\$383,891	14%
Social Service Center	\$428,827	16%
Urban Farm	\$397,104	15%
Fundraising	\$461,131	17%
Dance Academy	\$228,576	8%
Summer Day	\$190,847	7%

Total: \$2,719,139



Source: the Chicago Lights 2022 unaudited financial statement.
An audited statement is available after June 30, 2023.





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2022 FOUNDATION AND INSTITUTIONAL DONORS

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CTS TEAM APPRECIATES THE CHICAGO LIGHTS MISSION



COMPUTING TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS (CTS), a Chicago-area IT provider, became the trusted partner for Chicago Lights and Fourth Presbyterian Church in 2019. The company manages equipment, internet issues, proactive monitoring, IT support requests, and cyber security, among other things. And it turns out, our partnership began right in the nick of time.

CTS had just finished an array of updates – from beefing up the Chicago Lights’ internet connections, to moving data to the cloud – when the COVID-19 pandemic began, shutting down gatherings and offices and moving life online. Fortunately, with the support of CTS, Chicago Lights was ready with the laptops and Zoom stations required to make Tutoring a virtual endeavor and the on-call support to handle any technical problems as they arose.

“I can’t imagine the loss of productivity and the potential adverse impact on the support they provide to the community if we hadn’t been able to do that,” says CTS CEO Frank Stephens.

In business for more than 20 years, CTS works with a variety of nonprofit and faith-based organizations, as well as companies in manufacturing, distribution, and professional services. Frank says they pride themselves on offering a discounted rate for nonprofit clients, as well as helping those clients get discounted or complimentary licenses for the software and solutions they need. “We view ourselves not as an outside vendor, but as a valued partner and extension of their organization,” he explains.

And CTS has been a wonderful partner to Chicago Lights. They immediately jumped on board to not only attend the Gala of Hope but sponsor the event – “approaching us about the opportunity, not the other way around,” notes Director of Development, Katy Frey Bever, for Chicago Lights and Fourth Church. They have now been Gala sponsors three times (pausing for the coronavirus hiatus), and they’re among the first – if not the first – to get their tickets each year. “CTS always brings a full table, and their staff and guests are great supporters at the event,” Frey Bever adds.

Not only is the Gala of Hope a fun evening and a social opportunity for CTS staff to get together, Frank says it’s a great way for his team to see the real impact of the services they provide. He loves to watch the video as a team at the event and learn about the work of Chicago Lights over the past year. “Yes, it’s a computer or a server, and we’re making sure it’s efficient and online,” he says. “But because we do this, Chicago Lights can do their work and provide services to others.”

Frank says he also enjoys the opportunity to interact with the staff of Chicago Lights all together at the Gala. “It’s about relationships at the end of the day, and we try to make those strong,” he explains.

CTS cultivates relationships with each of their clients – attending several other galas and events throughout the year, as well as summer picnics, holiday parties, and corporate get-togethers – and they also strive to be a part of the communities they serve through their clients. CTS has a matching program for both employee and client contributions to nonprofit organizations, and when the company distributes employee bonuses, they also make donations, which have included clothing and supplies for the programs of Chicago Lights. “Our general manager, Heather Gehrke, came from a nonprofit,” Frank explains, which helps keep CTS’s focus on giving back.

For more information on CTS, you can find them online at www.onlineCTS.com





FARMER HAD UNIQUE APPRECIATION FOR URBAN FARM



DOUGLAS HOLLER left his family farm in Mazon, Illinois, many years ago, but his love of the land and farming remained with him a lifetime. Doug earned a master's degree in economics and went on to a successful career as a futures trader, so his knowledge went far beyond farming.

Doug and his wife, Patrena, believed strongly in giving back. The couple supported Chicago Lights by attending our annual Gala of Hope for many years. There, Doug was delighted to learn about the Urban Farm, since the farm in Mazon had been in his family for generations.

Besides financial donations to the Urban Farm, Doug put his farming knowledge to work by offering tips and advice to volunteers and students in the after-school program. Doug enjoyed the interaction with our young farmers, sharing his vast knowledge of planting, growing, and harvesting.

A longtime nurse, Patrena has also shared her expertise with Chicago Lights. She has volunteered at the Social Service Center, checking participants' blood pressure and sometimes offering advice on minor medical matters.

After an extended illness, Doug passed away last December. His love of the land lives on through the farming lessons he shared with students and volunteers. "His generosity had no boundaries," Patrena says.





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GET INVOLVED



GIVE

- Donate to a program or to the general fund
- Honor a friend or family member with a gift
- Secure a matching gift, sponsorship, or in-kind gift from your company
- Plan an estate gift for the future

VOLUNTEER

- Serve as a tutor/mentor through the Tutoring program
- Help harvest produce at the Urban Farm
- Lead a Summer Day enrichment class
- Aid guests in the Social Service Center's clothing shop or food pantry
- Join the Chicago Lights Associates Board, a group of philanthropic young professionals

ATTEND

- The Gala of Hope, our signature annual event
- Chicago Lights Associates Board social events and fundraisers throughout the year

For more information, please contact Caryn Blomquist, Associate Director of Fundraising Events, cblomquist@fourthchurch.org or 312.981.3564

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