MISSION

Chicago Lights provides hope and opportunity to our city’s children, youth, and adults who face the challenges of poverty. Through supportive relationships and diverse programs, we empower people to thrive academically, secure economic stability, lead healthy lives, and build community.
Dear Friends of Chicago Lights,

Whether you notice it or not, each and every one of us has an opportunity to alleviate someone else’s struggles and to serve as a catalyst for positive change in someone else’s life. I know it’s easy to be cynical in a world where there is more darkness than light in our news stories and where the problems of the world seem nearly insurmountable. But then I remember Chicago Lights and the work we’re doing right here to make change and affect lives.

“We are putting feet to our faith,” as I’ve heard it said, and changing the lives of more than 4,000 children, youth, and adults who are struggling in our community. It’s visible and it’s powerful.

- **The Urban Farm** continues to empower youth and community residents in the Near North neighborhood—formerly Cabrini-Green—to have increased economic opportunities and access to healthy, affordable food.
- **The Tutoring program** encourages students from under-resourced neighborhoods to stay in school through high school graduation, to excel academically and socially, and to pursue higher education.
- **The Summer Day program** prevents summer learning loss and provides a safe environment.
- **Chicago Lights Academic Success in Schools** (CLASS) fosters whole learning, self-confidence, self-expression, and increased cognitive and social and emotional development through performing and fine arts education in under-resourced and underperforming elementary Chicago Public Schools.
- **The Elam Davies Social Service Center** meets basic human needs while working to support persons on their journey toward greater stability and self-sufficiency.
- **The Free Write Jail Arts and Literacy program** reduces recidivism with students at the Cook County Juvenile Detention Center through literacy, written expression, and exposure to performing, visual, and literary arts.

Chicago Lights programs transform not only the lives of program participants, but also the volunteers who find reward in their good work. Learn more about Chicago Lights at www.chicagolights.org. Your life may also be transformed.

Rick Sabol
President, Chicago Lights Board of Directors
May 2014–May 2015
In honor of the fiftieth anniversary of the Tutoring program, a celebration in September brought together past and current student-tutor pairs, family members, volunteers, community members, and supporters of the program. Throughout the fall, we shared stories and reflected on the life-changing bonds formed through Tutoring, which received recognition in the Wall Street Journal on October 9 and on an NBC Nightly News segment on November 5. Internships were provided to thirty students and 100 percent of seniors in the Tutoring program graduated from high school, applied to college, and were accepted into the schools of their choice.

Yoga was added to the enrichment classes offered through Summer Day, where ninety-seven first- through eighth-grade students received instruction in reading, writing, math, science, music, dance, drama, and art. The first issue of ChiLights Magazine: Summer Day Edition 2014 included a piece of writing by Summer Day students, who worked through the writing process, from brainstorming ideas to creating final copy. By the end of the program, 100 percent of students maintained or improved their reading and math skills.

The Chicago Lights Academic Success in Schools (CLASS) touring and performance dance ensembles flourished, as they participated in two meditative Taizé worship services at Fourth Presbyterian Church. The second annual Summer Dance Intensive offered instruction in ballet, modern/contemporary, jazz, African, and Spanish dance. CLASS engaged 1,179 students across four Chicago Public Schools through enrichment in dance, drama, music, and fine arts, all while boosting technique, confidence, and self-esteem.

The Urban Farm piloted a successful workforce development program for thirty youth who had a safe place to go and remained engaged while learning valuable urban agriculture techniques, along with transferable work and leadership skills. The Farm continues to be a thriving source for fresh produce within the community as it saw a 358 percent increase in revenue from produce sales this year.

The Elam Davies Social Service Center implemented a structured short-term case management program, assisting guests with short- and long-term goals, such as obtaining identification, accessing health services, and attaining gainful employment and stable housing. Since the program’s launch, 191 EDSSC guests filled out a case management interest form. The Good Neighbors Street Outreach team, which takes the EDSSC services outside the walls of Fourth Presbyterian Church, continued to thrive, encountering more than 200 individuals experiencing street homelessness.

The Associates Board logged 1,200 hours of volunteer service with Chicago Lights among its forty-one members and raised $50,888!
Beginning in the fall of 2014, the Chicago Lights Tutoring program kicked off its fiftieth year providing emotional and educational support to students from under-resourced neighborhoods. For nearly half of that time, Jon Findley has been an avid supporter of the program, having been a tutor for twenty-four years and serving as the Co-Chair of the Fiftieth Anniversary Committee.

Jon’s interest in volunteering and encouraging youth stems from his parents. “My parents are responsible for my drive to volunteer. To this day, they serve others on a daily basis,” he says. A native of Michigan, he moved to Chicago in 1988 and immediately searched for opportunities to give back. “As soon as I moved to Chicago, I wanted to find a way to get engaged with the community. Through my parents and from other experiences growing up and in school, I knew a great way to do that was through volunteering. Someone pointed out a newspaper column about the Tutoring program at Fourth Presbyterian Church, and it just clicked. I come from a family of teachers, so tutoring was a natural choice.”

Since then Jon has been a regular tutor for ten students and a substitute tutor for many more. “I tutor to be part of the solution to problems around us and because I want to give my students every chance they can have to succeed,” he says. His ongoing commitment is accompanied by support from his employer, BMO Harris Bank, which has made financial contributions to Chicago Lights for the past four years and sponsored the annual Chicago Lights events Carnaval and Spotlight. “My management at BMO Harris Bank has encouraged and supported my involvement as a Chicago Lights board member and provided counsel on filling that role. I feel like there’s a real partnership.”

With the 2014–2015 school year being a milestone in Tutoring’s history, Jon recognized the significance of the program’s fiftieth anniversary and joined the committee to help recognize everyone who has furthered the mission of the Tutoring program since its inception in 1964.

“Like any big anniversary, 2014–2015 is a special year to recognize the history and sustainability of a program that started in a small, earnest way so many years ago,” Jon says. “We’re recognizing the efforts of so many people over the years and celebrating our successes. This is a great time to raise awareness of the program and to encourage us to look forward to the next fifty years.”

For the last two years, Jon Findley (right) has been tutoring Bryan (left), a sophomore at Chicago Hope Academy.
After Craig Caudle ran the 2013 Bank of America Chicago Marathon as a member of the Ronald McDonald House Charity Team, he decided to bring the idea to Chicago Lights. "Running the 2013 Chicago Marathon as a member of the Ronald McDonald House Charity Team was a wonderful experience, and I saw it was a very effective fundraising tool for the charity," he says. "I then thought it would be great to organize a team of runners to raise thousands for Chicago Lights."

The dream became a reality in 2014 after Craig, who at the time was a tutor with the Chicago Lights Tutoring program and a Deacon at Fourth Presbyterian Church, suggested that Chicago Lights recruit runners to train together for the October marathon while also raising funds in support of the organization.

The first-ever Chicago Lights Charity Marathon Team of fifteen runners raised more than $35,000—far exceeding expectations. The effort was spearheaded by Craig, who, as the top fundraiser, was moved by the outpouring of support for the team and Chicago Lights. "For me the significance of running with the 2014 Chicago Lights Charity Marathon Team was witnessing the support from the community of Fourth Presbyterian Church along with friends of our runners and their willingness to donate on our behalf to Chicago Lights," he says.

The team was truly diverse—from seasoned runners to beginners and comprised of Chicago Lights and Fourth Church staff, members of Fourth Church, a Chicago Lights Board member, tutors, Associates Board members, and new friends of Chicago Lights. “The whole process of training and running the race as part of a team with a purpose was an inspiration,” Craig says. “I’m just happy to have had the opportunity to participate, and I hope that the 2014 team was the first of many marathon teams to come.”

The Christopher Family Foundation was drawn to the Chicago Lights Tutoring program because of the way it makes "a true difference in children’s lives by providing them with the tools necessary to be positive and productive . . . and to build a strong foundation for their future lives," says Alanna Andruszkiewicz, Executive Director of the Christopher Family Foundation.

For the last two years, the foundation has awarded grants to the Tutoring program, including participation in Tutoring’s Fiftieth Anniversary Matching Challenge. The Foundation continues to invest in Tutoring because the program aligns with the foundation’s mission of supporting initiatives “that educate, that encourage health and family well-being, and that inspire creativity.”

Today the foundation carries on the Christopher’s legacy by supporting programs like Chicago Lights Tutoring that foster an environment of education and social support. "The Christopher Family Foundation believes that together our partnership will allow Chicago Lights to reach more children around the city and continue to improve the lives of Chicago children,” the Foundation’s philanthropic efforts are truly a family affair, with the board including multiple generations of the Christopher family. Established in 1997 by Jay W. and Doris K. Christopher, the foundation is an outgrowth of the Pampered Chef, a direct sales company that markets kitchen products and that Jay and Doris founded in their home in 1980.

Alanna Andruszkiewicz is Executive Director of the Christopher Family Foundation, which was one of the top supporters of Chicago Lights Tutoring’s Fiftieth Anniversary Matching Challenge.
I have been homeless on and off for twenty years. I came to the EDSSC during this time and started working with a staff member when I requested help with housing. They put me into the Central Referral System. About six months later I got matched with Heartland Alliance’s Stable Futures Program. It makes me feel like I matter again. I’m part of society again. I’m a taxpayer! I can vote now. I can do everything that a functioning member of society can. It feels so good to go home every night. It feels good to be in my neighborhood on the weekends, to walk around. I can stay in my own space at night and be able to concentrate and write. It feels good to have neighbors and to be able to look for a job and actually have an address to give.

— Umar, guest of the Elam Davies Social Service Center

Jesse Brown VA Medical Center
Jesuit Volunteer Corps Midwest
Joffrey Ballet
John Marshall Law School
Josephinum Academy
JP Morgan Chase Bank
Jumpstart
Kendall College
Kindness Club of Chicago
Kovitz Shifrin Nesbit
Lakeview Pantry
I’m glad to have the opportunity to participate in the Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) program at the Urban Farm. Thank you for an amazing summer of deliciousness, very professionally provided. The produce tasted fantastic, it was clean and nicely packed in its sack every week, and it was always where it was supposed to be, with my name on it so that I knew I wasn’t sneaking someone else’s kale. I loved visiting the farm—I wish I could have done it every week. Thanks for your expertise, passion, and professionalism!

— Gretchen Wahl, CSA Salad Share member
FINANCIALS

CONTRIBUTIONS

- Individual Contributions: $778,054 (39%)
- Foundations/Corporations: $620,612 (31%)
- Fourth Presbyterian Church Support: $125,000 (6%)
- Program Receipts: $446,314 (23%)
  (Reduced by Mission Benefit cost/transfers of $195,044)
- Draw from Invested Funds: $27,109 (1%)
- Accumulated Surplus: - (0%)

Total: $1,997,089

DISBURSEMENTS

- CLASS: $148,166 (8%)
- Elam Davies Social Service Center: $286,810 (15%)
- Free Write Jail Arts and Literacy: $250,901 (13%)
- Summer Day: $118,330 (6%)
- Tutoring: $510,191 (27%)
- Urban Farm: $218,034 (12%)
- Administration: $169,789 (9%)
- Fundraising: $174,375 (10%)
  (Reduced by Mission Benefit cost/transfers of $195,044)

Total: $1,876,597

Net Surplus / (Deficit): $120,492

Source: the Chicago Lights 2014 unaudited financial statement.
An audited statement is available after June 30, 2015.
Thank you!

Chicago Lights is grateful for each and every supporter who made a donation in 2014. With their generosity, our programs continue to provide hope and opportunity to children and adults facing the challenges of poverty.

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I live nearby in Cabrini-Green. I always knew about the Urban Farm. As soon as I turned fourteen I wanted to work there because I needed the money and it was also fun. We’re learning practical skills that can be used at any future job.
— Joshua T., ninth grader in the Urban Farm’s Job Training program
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Jon Findley

“Thank you, Ms. Cescily Washington and Chicago Lights! My daughter, A’londra, received a bunch of high school letters welcoming her to their schools for ninth grade, and we were overexcited to open the biggest and heaviest one from Chicago Academy for the Arts! A’londra did it! She’s receiving entry as a dance major and was awarded a dance scholarship award. Thank you for pushing her to work very hard in dance through the CLASS program.
— Felicia Sewell, parent of A’londra, a student in the CLASS program

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“I believe that Free Write is very important. The space allows us as young men to apply our creative skills. It also provides motivation through positive thoughts, which give young men leadership skills. I hope we can continue going to Free Write!”

— A., student in the Free Write Jail Arts and Literacy program
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It’s because of my own experience that I know without a doubt the power of education and community Chicago Lights instills. I can only hope it will continue to restore hope to the current and future generations of children like me.
— LaFaye Garth, alum of the Tutoring program

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I am very grateful for the CLASS program and the instructors’ help. They gave me advice on my dance and music voice audition. I really enjoyed Ms. Cescily Washington’s Summer Dance Intensive my cousin and I attended. It was a wonderful challenge, and we agreed to try and go again this year. It is amazing to have so much support, and I know that I am learning physically and mentally.

— Karmi R., eighth grader in the CLASS program

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