



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

July 7, 2022

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**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT, CITY DEPARTMENTS, AND AMAZON ANNOUNCE THE 2022 SUMMER KICKBACK SERIES WITH ADDED SATURDAY NIGHT EVENTS**

*The City is investing nearly \$1 million to provide Chicago's youth safe and engaging weekly events throughout 15 communities across the south and west sides*

**CHICAGO** — Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot along with First Lady Amy Eshleman, the Community Safety Coordination Center (CSCC), the Chicago Park District, the Chicago Parks Foundation, the Chicago Public Library, the Department of Family and Support Services, the Chicago Department of Public Health, Amazon, and 15 community-based organizations across the city announced the launch of the second annual Summer Kickback Series with extended evening programming on Saturday nights.

The Summer Kickback Series was launched in 2021 in an effort to ensure youth across Chicago have access to engaging activities and necessary resources within their communities. This year, the City engaged and received additional feedback from community leaders, youth organizations, and Chicago's youth on how to keep youth safe and create more opportunities in communities experiencing high levels of violence. Mayor Lightfoot and City departments launched the first youth-led Summer Kickback Series to provide teens with fun and safe activities in their communities on Friday nights in 2021. Building upon the success of last summer's Friday Kickback Series, Mayor Lightfoot and the First Lady Amy Eshleman are now expanding programming to Saturday evenings to ensure even more weekend opportunities for youth are available.

"This year, First Lady Amy Eshleman and I will continue to deepen our focus on ensuring Chicago's families and young people have access to enriching opportunities this summer while simultaneously addressing the lack of safe, productive spaces for youth," said Mayor Lightfoot. "Through the launch of the My CHI. My Future. app, which contains thousands of opportunities, and the second year of the Summer Kickback series, our youth will have several safe and fun activities to choose from. This year's Summer Kickbacks are made possible through a whole-of-government approach and partnerships with the Chicago Park District, the Department of Family and Support Services, the Community Safety Coordination



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Center, Amazon and 15 community-based organizations that are working together to create spaces where our young residents can safely gather."

The two-part Summer Kickback Series programming includes Friday events designed by teens for teens and City-led Saturday night events. Through community-based organizations, the City hired 210 teens who plan Friday events that are designed for teens ages 13 to 24 and their families in 15 communities on the South and West sides. Each of the 15 community-based organizations have hired 14 teens for 8 weeks, with each teen being paid \$15 an hour. During the eight weeks of employment, the planning team promotes youth-focused opportunities and plans and hosts a Summer Kickback event every Friday between 5 and 9 p.m. The first event will be Friday, July 8, and will conclude on Friday, August 12. Each community will also have one "mothership" event this summer, an enhanced version of a kickback that will include a smoothie bar, e-gaming, a DJ and more activities with support from the Chicago Park District.

"We are excited to welcome the Summer Kickback Series to our parks for its encore season," said Chicago Park District General Superintendent and CEO Rosa Escareño. "The Summer Kick Back Series aligns with the work we do throughout the year to provide valuable experiences that invest in our city's teens and young adults, including a menu of teen focused programming, including clubs, teen lounges, and summer jobs. Creating opportunities that engage and support our city's teens not only impacts their development in a positive way but also helps cultivate our future leaders, strengthening our communities and our city for the next generation."

This summer, the City will also host ten supplemental *Low-Key Kickbacks: Saturday Edition*, on Saturdays from 6 to 9 p.m. The Low-Key series will bring food, entertainment, and various activities to the South and West sides, starting July 23 at Grand Crossing Park. Entertainment will include prominent Chicago DJs, steppers and breakers, sporting events, a selfie station, art activations, and free COVID-19 vaccination sites. Below is a list of the Low-Key Kickbacks.

- July 23 at Grand Crossing Park
- July 30 at Franklin Park
- August 6 at Ogden Park
- August 16 at Humboldt Park
- August 20 at West Pullman Park
- August 27 at Abbot Park
- September 3 at Garfield Park
- September 10 at Foster Park
- September 10 at Cornell Square Park



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“We know that teens across the city are excited about enjoying the summer months and it is our responsibility to provide safe spaces where they can gather and have fun,” said Chief Coordination Officer, Tamara Mahal. “The Summer Kickback series is a targeted effort to ensure that teens in communities experiencing high levels of violence have access to engaging events and activities to relax in a welcoming environment.”

Using American Recovery Plan (ARP) funding and with the support of philanthropy, the City is investing nearly \$1,000,000 in the 2022 Summer Kickback Series. Funding to hire the teens and young adults is provided by the Department of Family and Support Services and is being administered by the Chicago Parks Foundation. In addition, Amazon is providing funding for all Kickback events for a second summer in a row.

“The Kickback Series is a direct response to suggestions by our young people who wanted opportunities to plan events for themselves and their communities.” said DFSS Commissioner Brandie Knazze. “This is an investment in our city’s youth, and we are proud to provide our young people the opportunity to create the spaces and activities that most interest them.”

“We are excited to continue supporting community organizations to hire teens to plan events,” said Willa Lang, Executive Director at the Chicago Parks Foundation. “These events empower teens to use their voice to design the best possible events for their peers. We are proud to support this effort that also supplements family incomes, especially during times of COVID.”

“We are proud to return as the event's sponsor for the second year of the Chicago Summer Kick-back to support activities and events across 15 neighborhoods for teens, planned and led by teens,” said Sarah Glavin, Head of Community Engagement at Amazon. “Guided by strong community partner organizations, the teens are employed to share ideas, develop activities, and host events that bring friends and families together in safe spaces. This approach not only builds skills, but it ensures that the programs are centered in what the community and teens want to see in their own neighborhoods.”

The 15 community-based organizations who have hired teens in each community and help plan the 2022 Kickback series were funded by the City and are the following:

- Project Exploration – Austin
- CHI-RISE – Auburn Gresham
- New Eclipse Community Alliance – Back of the Yards



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- Agape – Chicago Lawn
- Community Assistance Programs – Englewood
- Breakthrough – East Garfield Park
- The BASE Chicago – West Garfield Park
- BUILD Inc. – Humboldt Park
- Gary Comer Youth Center– Greater Grand Crossing
- The Alliance 98 – Little Village
- Firehouse Community Arts Center– North Lawndale
- Girls Inc. of Chicago – Roseland
- Lost Boyz Inc. – South Shore
- Teamwork Englewood – West Englewood
- Phalanx Family Services – West Pullman

"Leading Summer Kickbacks has been one of the most meaningful ways in which Project Exploration has engaged teenagers in Austin since the start of the pandemic," said Natasha Smith-Walker, executive director of Project Exploration in Austin. "Seeing young people enjoying the company of their peers and caring adults in a fun, engaging atmosphere has been extremely rewarding and continues to be essential to keeping young people safe in the summer months. We are excited to follow the lead of the young people on our Austin Youth Leadership Council as they plan and host another year of summer fun for Austin teens."

"Our youth deserve the opportunities to learn, share, and create," said David Rojas, founder of The Alliance 98. "With support from the Mayor's Office, the Chicago Park District, the Chicago Park Foundation, and our local community partners, our TA98 team has implemented career readiness programming for young adults through the Kickback series. Through Kickback programming, youth participants have dived deeper into exploring the strengths and assets of their intersectional identities. Our young adults are exploring what it means to be their authentic self and how one can bring that into the workplace. This summer, our young adults will learn how to develop projects and job opportunities and build new positive relationships with mentors, sponsors, and advocates. And our TA98 team is proud to be a collaborating partner in this transformative work."

All weekly Kickback events will be viewable as they are planned on the My CHI. My Future. website and on the new My CHI. My Future. mobile app, which can be downloaded on iOS and Android devices.

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