



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
CITY OF CHICAGO

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CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

[press@cityofchicago.org](mailto:press@cityofchicago.org)

**MAYOR EMANUEL AND VICE PRESIDENT BIDEN CELEBRATE CHICAGO'S FIRST NEW  
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SHELTER IN MORE THAN A DECADE**

*Two-Story Facility Will Feature an Innovative Suite-Based Design, Social Services, and Economic Opportunities for Domestic Violence Victims*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel joined Vice President Joe Biden today to celebrate the first domestic violence shelter to open in the City of Chicago in more than a decade. The ceremony launched the construction of the new, two-story WINGS Metro facility housing, a 40-bed domestic violence shelter with retail and resale shops, offices, and social services for clients.

"In building this shelter, you are preventing so much by ending the cycle of abuse, providing an alternative to the street, bringing an end to the psychological damage being done to the children, and just maybe preventing a homicide," said Vice President Biden.

"Domestic violence victims should never have to hide in the shadows or suffer in silence," said Mayor Emanuel. "This new facility is more than a place for shelter; it's an opportunity for a chance at a new life for victims and their families. This will allow victims and their families to heal and work toward the next step in their lives. The City of Chicago will continue to work toward increasing access to resources and fostering future opportunities for families who have been affected by domestic violence."

Mayor Emanuel and Vice President Biden have each worked to support victims of domestic violence throughout their careers – including when they worked together to craft the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) in 1994. The landmark federal legislation developed a comprehensive approach to improve the criminal justice response to violence against women. The VAWA provides access to services victims and their families need.

Domestic violence shelters can be challenging environments for many families. WINGS Metro will include three innovative program components that set it apart from other facilities: domestic violence shelter suites; a street-level retail or resale shop; and permanent housing units. The suite-based facility design ensures each family will have their own bedroom and only two families will share each bathroom. This increases client privacy and reduces potential client conflicts. The shelter is expected to serve more than 100 families in its first full year of operation.

It will be built as a collaboration of three local non-profit groups including WINGS (Women In Need Growing Strong), Metropolitan Family Services, and Greater Southwest Development Corporation (GSDC). This unique collaboration will offer comprehensive services to domestic violence victims and their children.

“This innovative suite-based shelter design coupled with social services will benefit domestic violence victims for years to come, said Evelyn Diaz, Commissioner of the Department of Family and Support Services. “Adding available beds at the new shelter will foster a constructive and supportive environment for clients.”

WINGS Metro is also planning a retail or resale business on the first floor, which would be open to the public and generate income for shelter operation. This reliable income stream will help ensure the future of WINGS Metro. The second building will include at least three permanent housing units, providing affordable housing options for domestic violence victims and their children transitioning out of the shelter’s program

“Vice President Biden and Mayor Emanuel are leaders in the domestic violence advocacy community,” said Rebecca Darr, Executive Director of WINGS. “Their longstanding support for increasing access to essential housing and social services continues to touch the lives of domestic violence victims and their families, leading to a better quality of life.”

In addition to offering housing and meals in a safe, stable location, the shelter will provide comprehensive services for domestic violence victims and their children. Trained workers will be available for case management and all clients will receive safety planning; education about the Illinois Domestic Violence Act and how to obtain an order of protection; plus a service and housing plan from WINGS as well as group and individual counseling.

The partnership with Metropolitan Family Services also gives WINGS Metro clients access to comprehensive legal advocacy and legal services as well as two early childhood education sites within walking distance of the new shelter. Greater Southwest Development Corporation (GSDC) provides housing counseling, financial coaching, employment services, income support screening and computer training.

“The unique WINGS Metro shelter will not only increase the number of shelter beds dedicated to survivors of domestic violence by over 35%, but it will also unite community members through advocacy, education and outreach,” said Dawn Dalton, Executive Director of the Chicago Metropolitan Battered Women’s Network. “Vice President Biden and Mayor Emanuel continue to play an instrumental role ensuring domestic violence victims and their families have the support and resources they need.”

It is essential that every Chicagoan actively seeks to end domestic abuse of all types in the city. To report domestic abuse, call 9-1-1. For more information and support, anyone can call the domestic violence help line at 877-863-6338.

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