



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
CITY OF CHICAGO



Microsoft

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

November 19, 2012

**CONTACT:**

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

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

Beth Esler

United Way of Metropolitan Chicago

312.906.2291

[Beth.Esler@uw-mc.org](mailto:Beth.Esler@uw-mc.org)

**MAYOR EMANUEL, CPS CEO BARBARA BYRD-BENNETT, MICROSOFT AND UNITED WAY ANNOUNCE THE OPENING OF 12 NEW PARENT ENGAGEMENT CENTERS IN CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

*Centers Are Being Piloted in 12 Schools As Part of the Administration's Focus on Encouraging Parental Involvement in Their Children's Education;*

*Pilot Is A Collaboration with Microsoft, United Way and Chicago Public Schools That Helps Parents Develop the Digital Skills they Need to Help Their Children Continue Learning*

Mayor Emanuel today joined Chicago Public Schools (CPS) CEO Barbara Byrd-Bennett and representatives from Microsoft and United Way of Metropolitan Chicago (UWMC) to announce the opening of 12 new Parent Engagement Centers in CPS schools across the city. The centers are being piloted as part of the administration's focus on engaging parents in their children's education and will be aimed at closing the digital divide by helping parents learn the digital and technology skills they need to support their children's learning.

"An engaged parent is critical to the success of a student and we will continue to provide opportunities, information and the encouragement for parents to get and stay involved in their children's education," said Mayor Emanuel. "This partnership provides an incredible opportunity for parents to build a relationship with their schools and learn the digital skills they need to support their children's learning at home."

121 NORTH LASALLE STREET, ROOM 507, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60602

These centers will be available for parents and their children to use before and after school, during summer school and on Saturdays during tutorials. The nine centers opening in CPS schools today include: Armstrong Elementary, Cameron Elementary, Chase Elementary, Kohn Elementary, Libby Elementary, Lloyd Elementary, Marsh Elementary, May-Horatio Elementary and Oglesby Elementary. Three more centers will open next spring at Burroughs, Davis, and Shields.

“Helping our students succeed cannot be done by teachers and principals alone – they need the support and involvement of parents,” said CPS CEO Barbara Byrd-Bennett. “We are making sure parents are welcome in our schools and breaking down barriers to collaboration. With this partnership, not only do we further open our doors to parents, we will be able to provide them with the digital skills they need to support their students’ education.”

With this partnership, each of the 12 Parent Engagement Centers will have six desktop computers fully loaded with Microsoft Windows and Office and include Microsoft’s Digital Literacy curriculum, available in more than 30 languages. In the centers, parents will receive training to help them master basic computer skills, which will help them support their children’s education.

“At United Way we believe a quality education is the foundation of lifelong learning, good health and economic success.” said Wendy DuBoe, president and chief executive officer of the United Way of Metropolitan Chicago. “Engaging parents in their child’s education creates higher expectations and a much clearer pathway for success. Our partnership with Microsoft and CPS is an important way to network resources for kids and families.”

This bridging of private sector resources to the educational needs of parents and children is a central tenet of UWMC’s LIVE UNITED 2020 strategy, which aims to help an additional 50,000 underperforming middle school kids enter high school ready to succeed by 2020. UWMC’s support for parents and children is laser-focused on two critical milestones; preparing kids to succeed in kindergarten with the right early childhood education; and preparing middle school kids for high school.

These 12 centers are located within schools that are part of the national Community Schools Initiative, which create school-based, social service hubs that offer resources, not just to students, but to their parents whose active participation plays such a critical role in a child’s educational success. In addition to the United Way, the YMCA, Children’s Home +

Aid, Metropolitan Family Services and Brighton Park Neighborhood Council partner with these schools. The United Way has funded programs that are in place at 72 middle schools (47 within CPS) across more than 40 communities of greatest need. Last year, more than 22,000 students were impacted by United Way's education investment.

"In today's digital world it's essential to not only prepare students with the skills they need to be successful in college and career, but to make sure parents and caregivers have equal access to technology in order to help their children succeed," said Chris Sakalosky, Midwest District General Manager, Microsoft Corp. "Microsoft has been and will always be committed to providing people with the training, education and tools needed to improve their digital literacy skills and grow in today's economy. We're delighted to partner with CPS and United Way to help open the parent centers."

Since 2003, Microsoft has given charitable donations totaling more than \$85 million in funding, curriculum and software to nonprofits in Chicago and Illinois. For the last five years, Microsoft has supported STEM education for girls at CPS through the annual DigiGirlz program, which provides high school girls the opportunity to learn about careers in technology, connect with Microsoft employees, and participate in hands-on workshops. Microsoft is one of five corporate partners participating in the Early College STEM School program. Microsoft is partnered with Lake View High School to develop an Early College STEM School model and curriculum, and to provide mentoring, career planning and job shadowing to students, as well as professional development for teachers. Lake View High School has been chosen as a Microsoft Partners in Learning Innovative Schools Pathfinder School, part of a global program. The goal of the Pathfinder Program is to foster a culture of innovation and system-level change at their schools, in a manner that helps teachers prepare students for the realities of life and work in the twenty-first century.

# # #

### **United Way of Metropolitan Chicago**

United Way advances the common good, creating opportunities for a better life by focusing on the three key building blocks to self-sufficiency: Education, Income and Health. LIVE UNITED 2020 is United Way of Metropolitan Chicago's community-impact plan, focused on channeling education, income and health resources into more than 40 communities of greatest need. By 2020, United Way will: help 50,000 underperforming middle school students enter high school ready to succeed, ensure 100,000 families advance their economic stability and 200,000 individuals have access to available, preventative

healthcare. Annually, LIVE UNITED 2020 will provide one million individuals with access to crisis services including emergency food, shelter and protection from violence. LIVE UNITED® is a call to action for everyone to become a part of the change. For more information about United Way visit [LIVEUNITEDchicago.org](http://LIVEUNITEDchicago.org).

**Microsoft**

Founded in 1975, Microsoft (Nasdaq “MSFT”) is the worldwide leader in software, services and solutions that help people and businesses realize their full potential.