



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

AFTER SCHOOL matters

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AFTER SCHOOL MATTERS® AND MAYOR EMANUEL ANNOUNCE NEIGHBORHOOD PROGRAMMING SITE TO OPEN IN BELMONT CRAGIN

Donated 36,000-square-foot building to deepen organization's community presence, potentially lead to replication in neighborhoods throughout Chicago Open in Belmont Cragin

As part of a creative, new strategy to plant its roots in more of Chicago's neighborhoods, After School Matters joined Mayor Rahm Emanuel today to announce the donation of a 36,000-square-foot building in Chicago's Belmont Cragin neighborhood, which will allow the organization to create a new dedicated after-school and summer programming facility for high school students.

The new site has been made possible by a donation through the Lutz Family Foundation. It will be the first After School Matters-owned programming site located in one of Chicago's neighborhoods. Plans are currently underway for After School Matters to launch its signature programming in the building as soon as this fall, with the ultimate goal of replicating the successful teen-focused model in more neighborhoods throughout Chicago.

"The After School Matters model has proven itself time and again because it recognizes that the greatest investment we can make is in our children," said Mayor Emanuel. "I want to thank After School Matters for bringing its successful programming to the Belmont Cragin neighborhood and for strengthening many more with citywide programming to serve thousands of teens each year. Whether it's academic enrichment or summer jobs programming, these programs keep our children safe during out of school time, while providing opportunities to pave the way for a bright future."

After School Matters currently delivers more than 1,000 after-school and summer programs each year in schools, parks, libraries and community organizations across 62 of Chicago's 77 community areas, including downtown at the Gallery 37 Center for the Arts. Last year, nearly 40,000 teens applied for available programs.

“We are enormously grateful to the Lutz Family Foundation,” said Mary Ellen Caron, After School Matters chief executive officer. “For the first time in our organization’s history, we have the opportunity to own a space and build a world-class neighborhood facility dedicated to teenagers. Young people deserve to explore, learn and grow in environments that are tailored and accessible to them. That is what this new After School Matters center will be – a place for teenagers from Belmont Cragin and beyond to discover their potential and work with professional mentors in a safe, enriching, productive and empowering environment.”

The organization currently reaches approximately 170 teens in Belmont Cragin each year through programming at nearby high schools, parks and a number of community organizations. In addition to current program offerings, the new center will ultimately expand the organization’s capacity by providing opportunities for more than 1,000 teenagers annually.

“Thanks to this tremendous gift, After School Matters will be able to make a significant investment in young people right in the heart of Belmont Cragin – one of Chicago’s fastest-growing, yet under-resourced communities,” continued Dr. Caron. “But what is truly transformative is that this gift allows us to build a scalable model for teen-focused programming in other city neighborhoods, particularly on the West and South sides, that would benefit from an investment in additional resources.”

After School Matters provides life-changing after-school and summer program opportunities for Chicago public high school students from across the city. Since 1991 when 260 teens participated in arts programming on Block 37 in the Loop, the organization has grown to serve 15,000 teens each year through programs ranging from the arts to communications, science, sports and technology.

“We have tremendous breadth in that we are reaching 15,000 unique teens each year,” said Adrienne Scherenzel-Curry, After School Matters chief program officer. “But there are so many more teens who want and deserve an opportunity. This new building will allow us to create an effective model and ultimately shrink the opportunity gap for underserved youth throughout Chicago.”

After School Matters is reaching out to community members, organizations, businesses and residents to share plans for the project as they are developed and to solicit feedback. A presentation to the community will be held later this month.

“Belmont Cragin is thrilled to call After School Matters our neighbor, and to welcome an expanded community presence from the organization,” said 30th Ward Alderman Ariel Reboyras. “Our community is stronger when we support each other. By opening more doors for our young people, we are building a brighter future together. I look forward to partnering with After School Matters to build that future right here in Belmont Cragin.”

Since Mayor Emanuel took office, the City of Chicago has nearly doubled its annual investment in After School Matters—increasing the city’s contribution each year to provide Chicago’s teens with access to quality enrichment and jobs experience that will help them to reach their full potential.

After School Matters will continue its partnerships with Chicago Public Schools, the Chicago Park District and the Chicago Public Library, as well as community organizations in Belmont Cragin and around Chicago, to further leverage resources and provide program opportunities for teens. After School Matters’ program model has been replicated internationally, and its teens regularly produce higher Freshmen On-Track, attendance and high school graduation rates than their peers. It is one of the nation’s largest providers of out-of-school-time programs for teenagers.

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ABOUT AFTER SCHOOL MATTERS

After School Matters provides Chicago high school teens with high quality, out-of-school time opportunities to explore and develop their talents while gaining critical skills for work, college and beyond. Over the past 25 years, more than 200,000 teens have participated in our hands-on, project-based after-school and summer programs in the arts, communications, science, sports and technology. Programs take place at locations throughout the city including Chicago public high schools, Chicago Park District and Chicago Public Library locations, community-based organizations and downtown at the Gallery 37 Center for the Arts. www.afterschoolmatters.org.

ABOUT THE LUTZ FAMILY FOUNDATION

To educate a child, one must ensure the conditions are right for learning. As such, the Lutz Family Foundation works to provide children with safe, supportive environments where they can learn and thrive, from early childhood, through college and into adulthood. Past donations have gone to help young people in Chicago and beyond live better lives and prepare for successful futures.