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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT ANNOUNCES 'HOLDING HEALING SPACES FOR YOUTH'  
VIRTUAL CONFERENCE**

*The City sponsors its first ever pre-summer training for Youth Developers*

**CHICAGO** – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot today announced ‘Holding Healing Spaces for Youth’—a virtual, multi-day conference for youth developers focused on mental health and racial healing. This first of its kind, trauma-informed training is geared towards adults who plan to work with youth in and out of school settings this summer. The conference is being presented by [‘My CHI. My Future.’](#) and will take place on June 8<sup>th</sup> and June 9<sup>th</sup>.

“This past year has been difficult for all of us, but it has taken an especially hard toll on our young people who have been adjusting to the many challenges that the pandemic has presented,” said Mayor Lightfoot. “It’s up to us to provide our young people, especially those who are Black, brown or under-resourced, with what they need to heal and protect their mental wellbeing. That’s why I want to ensure that the trusted adults who are working with young people this summer have the tools and capacity to not only care for our city’s youth, but also care for themselves.”

The ‘Holding Healing Spaces for Youth’ conference aims to ensure providers are adequately prepared to welcome youth back to in-person and hybrid programs as Chicago safely reopens this summer. This event reinforces Mayor Lightfoot’s dedication and direct investment in Chicago’s young people, which has remained one of her top priorities throughout her administration.

The conference will include various sessions led by City and community partners that give providers a holistic understanding of what trauma is and how to approach the healing process. Those sessions include:

- **Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot, First Lady Amy Eshleman.** *Welcome Message*
- **Dr. Allison Arwady, Chief Equity Officer Candace Moore and the City of Chicago Youth Commission.** *Elevating Youth Voice: The Connection Between Their Mental Health and Racial Healing*



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- **Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation (THRT).** *Keynote on Racial Healing*
- **Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital.** *Coming out of Quarantine: Youth Mental Health and Resilience*
- **YWCA of Metropolitan Chicago.** *Trauma-informed care in Early Childhood*
- **Habilitative Systems Inc.** *Implementing a trauma-Informed Centers of Care Network*
- **Apna Ghar/Hamdard Center.** *Culturally responsive and trauma-informed services for adult survivors and youth*
- **Alternatives Inc.** *Return to Normal: Reimagining the Now*
- **Midwest Asian Health Association.** *Mental Health 101*
- **Urban Initiatives** *Social Emotional Learning in Sport and Play*

“Adults working on the front lines with youth who are coming out of quarantine have an incredibly important role during the transition “back to normal” after the collective trauma of the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Rebecca Ford, PhD, Co-Director of the FAIR Clinic at Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago. “Specialty mental healthcare systems cannot meet the demand singlehandedly for supporting the mental health of young people. This training is a call to arms to include youth development providers in meeting the social/emotional needs of youth utilizing universal trauma-informed practices to promote resilience.”

“We truly believe healing is possible. Our work is centered in love & liberation,” said Steven Rosado, Co-Director at Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation (TRHT) Youth Institute. “Doing our job well means curating the right conditions, supporting the best paths to wellness, and digging deep enough to understand the root of what is causing the harm. We must always remember that our work is transgenerational and intergenerational. The impact that we make today can have a continued impact across generations.”

This virtual conference is the latest project of Mayor Lightfoot and First Lady Eshleman’s signature youth initiative, “My CHI. My Future.” – a multi-year, youth-focused initiative designed to connect youth across Chicago to meaningful out-of-school experiences. The My CHI. My Future. family of more than 200 organizations, has been designing the initiative, with a focus on organizing and connecting the opportunity ecosystem in Chicago and galvanizing caring adults, all over the city, to ensure that every young person has a plan for out of school engagement.

For more information and to register for the virtual conference, interested parties are encouraged to visit [Chicago.gov/healingspaces](https://chicago.gov/healingspaces) by **Monday June 7<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 P.M.**



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Additionally, for those unable to attend the live trainings, they will be recorded and available to access at [MyCHIMyFuture.org/partners](https://MyCHIMyFuture.org/partners) following the even

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