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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

January 19, 2021

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**THE CHICAGO COOK WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIP CELEBRATES VIRTUAL  
GRAND OPENING OF CHATHAM EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE CENTER**

*Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership Lead Development of New Jewel on South Side*

CHICAGO—The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership (“The Partnership”) today hosted elected officials, community leaders, local philanthropists and the family of a much loved and respected South Side resident to mark the grand opening of the Chatham Education and Workforce Center (the Center). Congressman Bobby L. Rush (D, IL-1), Mayor Lori Lightfoot, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle, Alderman Roderick Sawyer (6th Ward), Alderman Michelle Harris (8<sup>th</sup> Ward), Cook County Commissioner Stanley Moore (4<sup>th</sup> District, family of the late Dr. Betty Howard, and philanthropist and investor Jessica Sarowitz of 4S Bay Partners LLC, came together to mark the culmination of nearly seven years of collaboration that brought this Center to life.

When Dr. Howard, the beloved head of the special education department at Gwendolyn Brooks College Preparatory Academy, was killed by random gunfire in May 2014, Congressman Rush led an effort to revitalize local communities gripped by violence. The Center is one of many initiatives to evolve from that work.

“I am pleased to be a part of this historic grand opening of the Chatham Education and Workforce Center, a mission established nearly eight years ago to honor the memory of Dr. Howard,” said Congressman Bobby L. Rush (D-IL). “The hard work and determination of the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership will lead to providing additional employment opportunities and economic growth for residents in Chatham and the surrounding communities for years to come.”



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Today's event marks the Center's grand opening, just blocks from the site where Dr. Howard lost her life. The 11,000 square foot Center conceptualized by The Partnership, which operates the public workforce system in the City of Chicago and Cook County, truly lives up to its name as a place for education and occupational advancement. The first floor is home to office, classroom/group meeting spaces and a state-of-the-art manufacturing classroom/Maker Lab where instruction will be provided by the Jane Addams Resource Corporation (JARC) and Richard J. Daley College, one of the City Colleges of Chicago. Courses offered in the Lab will include blueprint reading, introduction to electrical circuitry, Computer Aided Design (CAD) and metrology (the science of measurement)—an important aspect of advanced manufacturing.

The second floor boasts a career center offering an array of services for job seekers and businesses, including resume preparation and training to job screening and placement. The second floor also houses a computer lab/resource room and a large, sun-soaked multi-purpose room with capacity for more than 100 people for hiring events or community gatherings. The room can be subdivided into two or three classrooms as well.

In addition, the Greater Chatham Initiative (GCI), born of that initial meeting, will call the Center home. Launched in June 2016, GCI performs the role of a local anchor institution—by coordinating, planning and fundraising for key synergistic initiatives, GCI drives and links comprehensive neighborhood and economic growth.

All services provided at the Center are provided free of charge and the Center will offer weekend hours to facilitate community use.

“We are elated and humbled to have our beloved Betty's legacy continued through such an impactful addition to the community. We look forward to not only witnessing the growth and change this Center will bring to our community, but also being active participants ensuring her lifetime of work and dedication lives on,” said Dr. Howard's niece, Kristal Long.

“For nearly seven years, The Partnership has remained committed to making this Center a reality,” said The Partnership CEO Karin M. Norington-Reaves. “Ensuring the space has a warm feeling, using bright colors and open spaces to foster community use, paired with the state-of-the-art tools required to provide training and career development were critical considerations. It was impossible to know when we all began this journey what the world would look like today, and just how much residents would need the education and job training this Center provides.”



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The Center is an example of successful public private collaboration. The building that houses the Center at 640 East 79<sup>th</sup> Street was initially purchased by IFF, a mission-driven lender, real estate consultant, and developer that helps communities thrive by creating opportunities for low-income communities and people with disabilities. IFF leveraged funds from JPMorgan Chase's \$40 million three-year investment in Chicago's South and West Sides. 4S Bay Partners LLC (4S Bay) purchased the building outright from IFF, contributing more than \$3 million to date towards the purchase, build out, and furnishings for the Center.

"We salute the many unsung heroes who worked for so long to bring this Center to their community," said Jessica Sarowitz of 4SBay Partners. "This Center will be a hub connecting their hard work to better lives. We are grateful that we have had the opportunity to help our neighbors and we look forward to joining them in making this a world that offers opportunity and fullness of life to everyone."

"I am grateful for the good work of the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership and our community partners who made the vision for this center a reality," said Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle. "The Chatham Education and Workforce Center is a product of our commitment to workforce and economic development and community investment. I look forward to seeing how the Center will positively impact the neighborhood and our local economy."

While the 4SBay investment was critical to the Center's existence, other private sector contributions enabled the provision of essential services. Blue Cross Blue Shield donated \$50,000 for the multipurpose room's state-of-the-art audio-visual equipment; Com Ed donated \$45,000 and all of the computer equipment in the Resource Room/Computer Lab; and Verizon and Fifth-Third Bank each contributed \$10,000 in support of virtual programming made necessary due to the pandemic.

"The Chatham Center is our city's latest asset as we work to address the systemic inequities that COVID-19 has exacerbated, such as poverty and joblessness," said Chicago Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot. "Not only will it provide Chatham residents with the employment resources they need to get back on their feet, but it will also support our citywide goal of revitalizing the economies of our historically underserved South Side communities. I want to thank the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership, their partners, and every stakeholder involved with this incredible project, which will help to ensure that our city's long-term success is both inclusive and equitable."

The Center will be home to a variety of The Partnership's sector-driven initiatives including skilled trades (Construction Works Powered by the Illinois Tollway), digital literacy training, manufacturing training, Chicago Housing Authority



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(CHA)resident training and reentry programs. Each of these programs offers occupational training resulting in industry-recognized credentials, access to career coaching, and employment opportunities. The Partnership has collaborated with more than 2,000 employers and placed more than 70,000 people in employment since its inception. The Partnership plans to work with local high schools to facilitate student exposure to and exploration of the region's high demand careers in sectors including manufacturing, information technology, the skilled trades and more.

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### **About the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership**

The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership (The Partnership) is a non-profit umbrella organization operating the public workforce system for the City of Chicago and Cook County. The Partnership combines federal and philanthropic resources to provide comprehensive workforce development services to employers and job seekers. As the largest public workforce development system in the nation, The Partnership has helped place more than 70,000 individuals in employment; collaborated with more than 2,000 employers; and administered more than \$400 million in federal and philanthropic funds. The Partnership's network consists of 90+ community-based organizations, American Job Centers, satellite sites and sector-driven centers, serving more than 140,000 people annually. Learn more at [www.chicookworks.org](http://www.chicookworks.org).

### **About 4S Bay Partners, LLC**

4S Bay Partners is a family office that strives to eliminate prejudice and the inequalities of our society. We partner with community to create economic opportunities and amplify storytelling of, for and about marginalized communities. We achieve our mission by deploying creative private capital investments.