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MAYOR LIGHTFOOT ANNOUNCES NEW BOYS & GIRLS CLUB LOCATION TO BE BUILT ON THE CITY'S WEST SIDE

The new Club is latest addition to new First Responder Training Complex

CHICAGO—Mayor Lightfoot and the Boys & Girls Clubs of Chicago today announced the first location to be built in Chicago in a generation—as part of the City's new Joint Public Safety Training Campus (JPSTC) currently under construction in the 4400 block of West Chicago Avenue. The privately funded \$8 million-dollar 18,000 square foot youth development facility will have programming designed to help five to 18-year-olds transition successfully into adulthood.

"All across the country, Boys & Girls Clubs provide important opportunities for young people to develop their talents, connect with like-minded peers and begin to chart out their path toward success," said Mayor Lightfoot. "As our city begins to reopen and restore our young people's access to meaningful, in-person, out-of-school experiences, this announcement couldn't have come at a better time. I am thrilled to welcome Chicago's newest Boys & Girls Club and am looking forward to seeing how it enriches the lives of our young people living on the West Side."

The Boys & Girls Club is the most recent community-oriented project to be added to the 34-acre JPSTC campus at 4443 W. Chicago Ave. Two Black-owned restaurants, with a shared outdoor dining area, Peach's and Culver's, will open adjacent to the JPSTC main building by the 4th quarter of 2022.

"The opportunity to offer high-quality out-of-school-time programming on the west side at this brand-new site is essential to our mission to reach more of Chicago's young people," Boys & Girls Clubs of Chicago President and CEO Mimi LeClair said. "As the center of many Chicago communities, we hope the Club will continue to build bridges by creating opportunities for first responders to engage in mentorship and develop an open dialogue with our young people."

The new Club will provide members with the emotional, educational, physical, and cultural resources that allow them to enjoy their childhood and thrive in adulthood.



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When they walk through the Club’s doors, children and teens will find caring mentors, avenues of opportunity, and the tools they need to prepare for great futures, LeClair added. With a capacity of 200, it will serve an anticipated 1,000 children and young adults every year.

“The thought of a brand-new Boys & Girls Club being developed here on the West Side fills me with excitement,” said Alderman Emma Mitts (37th Ward). “A development like this is exactly what our City needs as we come back from one of the darkest times in recent history. As Alderman, this recent development and the ongoing project reflects my neighborhood priorities, which focus on strengthening the local 37th Ward economy by fostering new opportunities for our young people to enjoy and thrive right inside their own community.”

The two to three-story Club building will occupy approximately 20,000 square feet of land that will be leased by the City for \$1 per year for 55 years, with potential for two 10-year extensions.

The lease could be introduced to City Council for approval this summer. Club construction could be completed in early 2023 through the funding and support of Boys & Girls Clubs of Chicago’s generous donors.

The JPSTC will mark a major advancement in the training of new and current police officers, firefighters, and paramedics, creating critically needed space for the teaching and practice of emergency response skills and joint training exercises in realistic scenario settings. Up to 900 first responders will use the various training components daily, 7-days a week, once the \$85 million complex opens in late 2022.

Founded in 1902, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Chicago operates over 20 club sites in the city, serving nearly 20,000 young people every year. The last Club, the James Jordan Boys & Girls Club, opened August 1, 1995.

About Boys & Girls Clubs of Chicago

Serving Chicago families since 1902, Boys & Girls Clubs of Chicago (BGCC) uses a comprehensive blend of mentoring and programming to provide youth ages 5 to 18 the tools they need to become well-rounded and successful adults. Filling the out-of-school hours, which can be the most dangerous for young people, BGCC offers academic, social, and leadership activities for students in some of Chicago’s most challenged neighborhoods. Youth are matched with professional adult mentors, giving kids a safe place to learn, grow, and succeed. Learn more at: <http://www.bgcc.org>.

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