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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT ANNOUNCES TWO WINS FOR CHICAGO'S RESTAURANT INDUSTRY: DOORDASH'S \$500K SUPPORT FOR WINTERIZATION AND THE WINNERS OF THE WINTER DINING CHALLENGE WITH BMO HARRIS BANK AND ILLINOIS RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION**

*DoorDash will provide financial support to help cover costs of winterizing outdoor dining; and Heated "Japanese-style" Tables, outdoor Block Party and Cozy Cabins came out as the top winners of this first-ever winter design competition*

**CHICAGO** – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot today announced two significant developments in support of Chicago's restaurant community. First, in collaboration with the Illinois Restaurant Association (IRA), DoorDash will be providing \$500,000 in financial support to Chicago restaurants to help cover the costs of winterizing their outdoor dining areas. Second, in partnership with BMO Harris Bank and the IRA, the Mayor also announced today the winners of the Winter Design Challenge – a first-of-its-kind competition for community members to reimagine the winter outdoor dining experience in Chicago. After receiving over 600 submissions, a team of judges that included architects, designers, chefs, restaurateurs and servers selected three ideas that not only capture the spirit of Chicago but can provide feasible and safe options for Chicagoans to enjoy dining out as temperatures drop.

The winners of the Winter Design Challenge are:

- [ASD | SKY, Cozy Cabins](#): Small modular, adjoining 'cabins' that fit within the footprint of a standard parking space.
- [Neil Reindel, Block Party](#): A flexible approach to outdoor dining that is adaptable and easy to implement for many different sites and street configurations.
- [Ellie Henderson, Heated Tables](#): Modify the Japanese Kotatsu, an economical way to keep warm and cozy in cold months.

"As we approach the winter months and adapt our COVID-19 response accordingly, we owe it to our restaurants to make sure they have what they need to continue keeping their doors open and serving their communities," said Mayor Lightfoot. "Thanks to IRA and the outstanding creativity of our Winter Dining Challenge winners, we will be able to not only make this a reality, but do so in a way that is



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safe and showcases our City's innovative spirit. I extend a huge congratulations to each of our Winter Dining Challenge winners. Thanks also to DoorDash for investing in Chicago and its restaurants to assist them in continuing to serve Chicagoans this winter.”

Over the course of two weeks, 643 submissions were received on global design firm IDEO’s open innovation platform. After two preliminary rounds of reviews by IDEO and City departments, a final 26 submissions were chosen for the last round of the competition. The City and the IRA then fielded a set of judges with a range of perspectives from the restaurant industry and neighborhood associations. The 26 finalists were then evaluated based on a ration that assigned points for feasibility, innovation, cost efficiency, safety adherence and functionality of the idea.

“We are excited to have had the chance to reimagine our public spaces and provide Chicagoans an opportunity to experience the city in a fun and unique way. Chicago has always been a resilient city when faced with difficult times, said Neil Reindel. “With Block Party we wanted to provide a warm place for People to reconnect as we move forward through the winter and into 2021.”

“We are honored that our concept was chosen for the Chicago Winter Dining Challenge. Our Cozy Cabins idea focused on creating a warm, welcoming experience to encourage Chicago residents to safely dine in rather than take out,” said Amy Young of ASD | SKY. “We wanted to create an outdoor destination centered around new experiences, neighborhood connections, and a sense of community—elements lost while dining at home. We hope this idea helps support small businesses and safely bring people together during this difficult year.”

The winners of the Winter Design Challenge will each receive a \$5,000 cash prize. Additionally, the IRA will be selecting local construction firms that will start the process of bringing these ideas to life. The process will include design development and technical refinement. Once complete, the firms will be able to construct prototypes that can be tested at Chicago neighborhood restaurants in the coming weeks. The IRA will choose those pilot restaurants, and the construction will be paid for with funds that BMO Harris has previously contributed for this purpose.

“We expected that the Winter Design Challenge would attract many great ideas, but the number of unique, innovative suggestions was staggering,” said David Casper, Chair and CEO, BMO Harris Bank. “Supporting our superb restaurants here in Chicago is critical, and I know my BMO colleagues and I are looking forward to dining out throughout the winter.”



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The winning designs and other outdoor options can be flexibly adapted for use by restaurants and bars throughout the City in sidewalk cafes, outdoor patios or through the new Expanded Outdoor Dining (EOD) Program that was created specifically to foster outdoor dining during the COVID-19 pandemic. To date, over 400 bars and restaurants have participated in the EOD program to operate in their parking lot, on the sidewalk or in closed streets, and they will have the opportunity to extend these permits to allow for continued operations during the fall and winter months.

“I want to thank the City of Chicago, IDEO and the Illinois Restaurant Association for choosing my winter dining idea,” said Ellie Henderson. “My hope is that my proposal for using heated tables will help restaurants adapt, providing a novel open-air dining experience for their patrons that is safe and comfortably warm through colder months in 2020 and beyond.”

The City has created clear [guidelines for outdoor operations](#) as the weather gets cooler. The implementation of the winning designs and other outdoor options must follow these guidelines, which provide clear directions for safe and responsible outdoor service. Restaurants and bars will not need to apply for a new sidewalk café or EOD permit to operate in the winter months, though they do need to ensure that their submitted site plans reflect heating and structure elements. To make it easier for bars and restaurants to continue operating safely and successfully, the City is allowing temporary tents on the public right of way for the first time and temporarily extending the length of tent permits that are typically issued for 60 days to now last 180 days.

To help restaurants and bars operate outside, the City will be holding webinars next week on safe outdoor operations. To register and learn more, visit [www.chicago.gov/businesseducation](http://www.chicago.gov/businesseducation).

In addition to the City’s commitment to supporting restaurants and bars, DoorDash, today announced a new \$2 million grant program to help restaurants in select cities prepare for winter and continue to serve customers during colder weather. DoorDash, together with the Illinois Restaurant Association and Mayor Lightfoot, is proud to announce \$500,000 in grants for Chicago-area local restaurants as part of DoorDash’s Main Street Strong initiative to help restaurants recover and succeed amidst COVID-19 related challenges.

“Our city’s restaurants are finally starting to move forward, and we have to help them maintain that momentum,” said David London, Head of U.S. East & Federal Government Relations at DoorDash. “DoorDash is deeply committed to supporting our restaurant partners and the communities we serve. This initiative will provide



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critical financial support to keep restaurants going through the cold weather, and we're appreciative of the City and IRA's shared support."

As winter weather looms on the horizon, Chicago area restaurants will be able to apply to receive a \$5,000 grant to defray winterization expenses such as the cost of heating equipment, additional safety materials to improve indoor dining, upgrades for air filtration systems, bulk orders of blankets for patrons, and more. Applications open on October 16, and recipients will be notified by the end of December. To qualify, restaurants must be located in Chicago with three or fewer locations operating currently, 50 employees or fewer in 2019, and \$3M or less in 2019 annual revenue per store. Restaurants can find full details and the application on the Hello Alice website beginning October 16th [here](#).

Read more about DoorDash's efforts to help restaurants adapt to winter temperatures on the DoorDash blog.

While three winners were chosen for the Winter Dining Challenge, there were many other ideas that would also create options for outdoor dining during the winter. The top 60 ideas have been compiled and is available by [clicking here](#). To learn more about the Winter Dining Challenge and see all of the submissions, [click here](#).

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