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CHICAGO FOUNDATION FOR WOMEN

HEALTH, POWER, & POSSIBILITY

41st ANNUAL LUNCHEON

Tuesday, October 20, 2026

Aon Grand Ballroom at Navy Pier

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LUNCHEON PROGRAM

Health in Motion

Performance by Black Girls Dance®
Remarks from Erin Barnett, Founder and Executive Director, Black Girls Dance®

Health is the Lifeline

Co-Chairs' Welcome
Jessica Sohl and Joseph Niciforo, 41st Annual Luncheon Co-Chairs

Lunch, Networking, and Table Conversation

Everyday People. Extraordinary Power.

Remarks
Georgina Heard-Labonne, Board Chair, Chicago Foundation for Women

41st Annual Luncheon Video
Featuring Chicago Women's Health Center and Women for Economic Justice
Produced by Motion Source

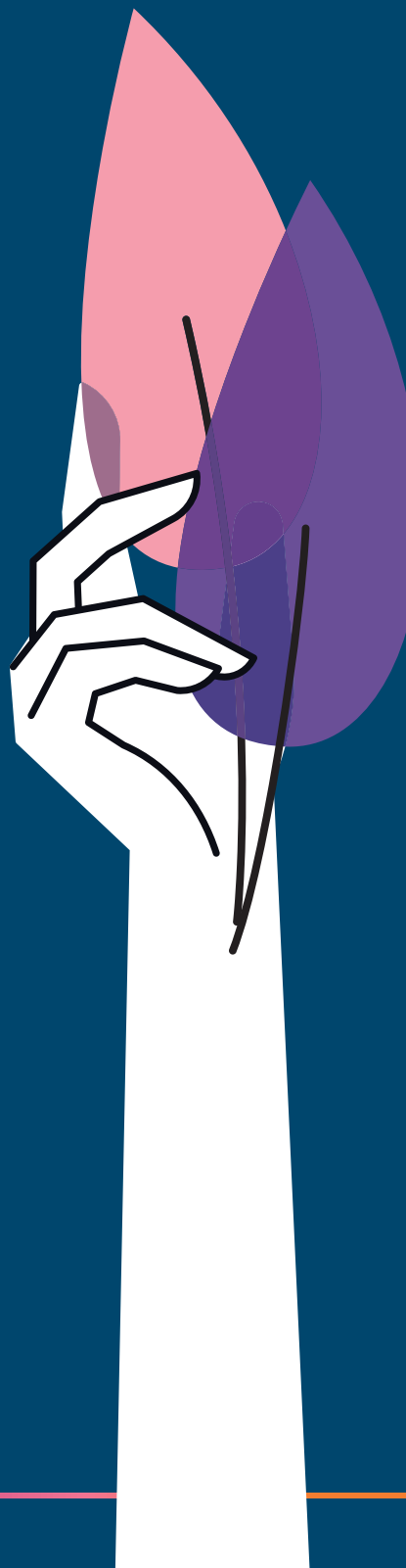
Grantee Reflection
Scout Bratt, Executive Director, Chicago Women's Health Center

Possibility Across a Lifetime

Call to Action
Keenya Lambert, President and CEO, Chicago Foundation for Women

Featured Conversation: Health, Dignity, and the Power of Choice
The Lacks Family members, Jeri Lacks Whye and Veronica Robinson, and Dr. Jessica Shepherd
Moderated by Melody Spann Cooper, Chairwoman and CEO, Midway Broadcasting Corporation

Closing Remarks
Tanya G. Davis, Board Chair-Elect, Chicago Foundation for Women



DEAR CFW COMMUNITY,

As we gather for **Chicago Foundation for Women's 41st Annual Luncheon, "Health, Power, & Possibility,"** I am grateful to everyone who makes our mission possible: our founders, supporters, attendees, donors, sponsors, grantee partners, board, staff, Giving Council and Circle members, and volunteers.

More than four decades ago, CFW's founding mothers imagined a different kind of philanthropy, one led by women and rooted in the belief that resources should move toward urgent needs, bold ideas, and lasting change. Their vision built the foundation we stand on today and continues to guide us as we step into our next strategic chapter as **A Force for Equity. A Funder for Change.**

For me, this next chapter is about who we are and how we show up. Our strategic plan calls us to mobilize more resources, invite more people to take action, and deepen our investment in grassroots leaders and local organizations driving community-led solutions. This year's Luncheon theme reflects that commitment.

Health is more than healthcare. It is safety, autonomy, dignity, economic security, reproductive freedom, and the ability to make meaningful choices about our lives. When people have the resources they need to live fully, power grows. That power lives in caregivers, organizers, advocates, neighbors, teachers, researchers, and community leaders working every day to care for one another and create systemic change.

We know this is lifelong and generational work. CFW is focused on supporting women, girls, and gender-expansive people at every stage of their lives, from childhood and youth through adulthood, caregiving, aging, and later-life transitions. Our role is to listen, trust, connect, amplify, and move resources toward the leaders and organizations building care, safety, and autonomy across Chicago.

Thank you for being here, for **investing in CFW**, and for building health, power, and possibility for our communities.



With gratitude
and partnership,

Keenya Lambert

KEENYA LAMBERT
President and CEO
Chicago Foundation for Women

LUNCHEON CO-CHAIRS

Jessica Sohl and Joseph Niciforo are honored to serve as Co-Chairs of Chicago Foundation for Women's 41st Annual Luncheon, united by a shared belief that advancing women's equity is everyone's responsibility.



Jessica Sohl



Joseph Niciforo

Jessica has been deeply involved with CFW for nine years, including serving as Chair of the Board of Directors. Professionally, she served as President of HC Technologies, overseeing the firm's global operations and strategy. A lawyer by training, she previously served as counsel at Jump Trading and as Assistant General Counsel for the State of Illinois Office of the Comptroller. She has held leadership roles on the New York Federal Reserve's Foreign Exchange Committee and the CFTC's Global Markets Advisory Committee.

Joseph is the former Chairman and CEO of HC Technologies and a founding member and Investment Committee Chair of HC Private Investments, with a career spanning nearly four decades in global financial markets—including 17 years at Tudor Investment Corporation, where he became a partner, and 15 years on the boards of the Chicago Board of Trade and CME Group. He also serves on the Misericordia Advisory Board and the Feerick Center for Social Justice Advisory Council at Fordham Law School.

OPENING TALENT



Black Girls Dance® is a Chicago-based nonprofit organization founded by Erin Barnett that creates a place where girls of color feel seen, celebrated, and free to shine. Through high-quality dance training, performance opportunities, and scholarships, BGD welcomes more than 200 young dancers each season into a community built on confidence, friendship, and belonging. Guided by the belief that dance is the vehicle and empowerment is the destination, Black Girls Dance® helps its dancers grow skills that carry well beyond the studio, into school, relationships, and every dream they pursue. BGD is a proud grantee of CFW and the South Side Giving Circle.

LUNCHEON VIDEO

Imagine healthcare that meets you where you are, with sliding-scale costs within reach. What would become possible with a space to discover your gifts, build your skills, earn income, and create a business of your own?

Through the stories of CFW grantee partners **Chicago Women's Health Center** and **Women for Economic Justice**, this year's Luncheon video, ***Lifelines of Care: Pathways to Power***, shows what can happen when care is human, accessible, and rooted in community. It also reveals how resources, support, and room to build can help women, girls, and gender-expansive individuals shape their own futures.

Thank you to Motion Source, our production partner for the 41st Annual Luncheon video.

Motion Source is a Chicago-based video production company specializing in corporate video and nonprofit storytelling. We partner with organizations to create on-brand video content that connects with audiences, supports mission-driven goals, and inspires action.

GRANTEE PARTNERS

WEJ
Self-Sufficiency & Freedom

Women for Economic Justice is a collective of women of color working to transform the culture and systems that perpetuate gender-based violence and economic and racial discrimination. Throughout our work, we promote the principles of solidarity and mutual aid, building our shared power to create meaningful change.

CHICAGO WOMEN'S HEALTH CENTER

Chicago Women's Health Center (CWHC)'s mission is to facilitate the empowerment of women, trans people, and young people by providing access to health care and health education in a respectful environment where people pay what they can afford. The organization was founded in 1975 to create an alternative to the traditional model of health care and to make comprehensive, affirming health services a reality for underserved populations.

Fifty-one years later, CWHC continues to adapt to meet the changing needs of its communities and the challenges of the health care landscape.

FEATURED CONVERSATION

HEALTH, DIGNITY, AND THE POWER OF CHOICE

SPEAKERS



The Lacks Family has become a powerful voice for health equity, bioethics, and justice while honoring the extraordinary legacy of Henrietta Lacks. Henrietta's cells, taken without her knowledge in 1951, became one of the most important tools in modern medicine and transformed scientific research worldwide.

Through public speaking and advocacy, her descendants share the family's story and explore the intersections of race, consent, medical ethics, and scientific advancement while continuing to champion dignity, accountability, and equitable treatment in healthcare and research.

Jeri Lacks Whye is Henrietta Lacks's granddaughter and the daughter of Henrietta's middle child, David "Sonny" Lacks. She works at the Judiciary System of Baltimore in the Domestic Violence Unit. Jeri has visited dozens of campuses and communities around the country, sharing her perspective on the legacy of Henrietta Lacks and the HeLa cells. She continues to keep her grandmother's legacy alive while using her family's story as a platform to address national issues including preventative healthcare, health disparities, literacy, and community trust. Jeri is one of three family members on the National Institutes of Health panel that oversees HeLa genome research applications. She was also among the family members who consulted on the HBO film adaptation of *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, produced by Oprah Winfrey and Alan Ball. Jeri continues to curate The Lacks Family Collection with artifacts from her grandmother's life and legacy.

Veronica Robinson is Henrietta Lacks' great-granddaughter. Veronica is a patient rights advocate who speaks on Henrietta Lacks' legacy, their family's experience in biomedical research, impact on participation, and ethics in this modern era of precision medicine. Veronica travels the country sharing the Lacks Family's efforts to control their medical history and rebuild trust with the medical community, subjects she was honored to speak about in a 2018 TEDx Talk. Working with the National Institutes of Health, Veronica serves as both an All of Us Ambassador, advocating for access to precision medicine, and a Lacks Family Representative on the HeLa Genome Data Access Working Group. As a mentor for Baltimore City Public Schools, Veronica is committed to empowering the next generation. Inspired by Henrietta's story, Veronica is currently studying at Baltimore City Community College to become a registered nurse to help make certain all people can access equitable and high-quality healthcare.

FEATURED CONVERSATION

HEALTH, DIGNITY, AND THE POWER OF CHOICE

SPEAKER



Dr. Jessica Shepherd, MD, MBA, FACOG, is a board-certified OB/GYN, Chief Medical Officer of Hers, and author of *Generation M*, the chart-topping book redefining women's health.

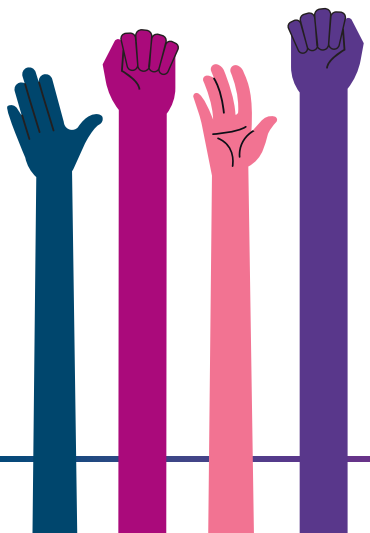
A leading voice in women's wellness and longevity, she is a regular on *Good Morning America* and frequently featured on *The Today Show*, *CNN*, *LIVE with Kelly and Mark*, *Vogue*, *Cosmopolitan*, and more. With a no-nonsense approach and deep medical expertise, she is helping women cut through the noise, take control of their health, and feel their best at every stage of life.

MODERATOR



Melody Spann Cooper is an innovative entrepreneur and communications leader with over 30 years of experience in media management, marketing, and community engagement. Since becoming Chairwoman and CEO in 1999, Melody Spann Cooper has expanded Midway Broadcasting's media assets, which include the legendary WVON, Chicago's oldest Black-oriented radio station. Known for its social and political impact, WVON is considered one of the nation's most storied media institutions. In 2013, Spann Cooper spearheaded the development of WRLL Radio, *La Voz De La Comunidad Latina*, which delivers content to Chicago's thriving Latino community. In 2020, she led the company's acquisition of VONtv, WVON's digital streaming platform, which reaches over 100 million households.

In addition to her role at Midway Broadcasting, Spann Cooper serves on numerous boards, including Co-Chair of Inclusion for the Obama Foundation, past President and Board Member of the Illinois Broadcasters Association, Board Member of Gift of Hope Tissue Donor Network, Commissioner of the Illinois Liquor Control Commission, and Trustee at the Griffin Museum of Science & Industry and at her alma mater, Loyola University Chicago. She is also the author of *The Girlfriend's Guide to Closing the Deal*, a semi-biographical book for female entrepreneurs.



STAY CONNECTED WITH CFW

POSSIBILITY BEGINS IN COMMUNITY.

We hope today's Luncheon leaves you feeling inspired and invited to stay close to CFW's work. Stay in the loop to read powerful grantee partner stories, learn about upcoming events, and join a community committed to advancing gender equity across the Chicago region.

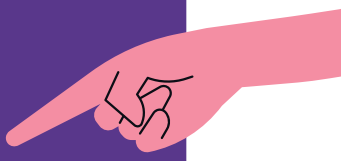
GET UPDATES AND ACTION IN YOUR INBOX

Subscribe to GoWomen, CFW's monthly email newsletter, for community stories, upcoming events, important announcements, and opportunities to get involved.

Subscribe to GoWomen

EXPLORE CFW STORIES

Learn about CFW's historic milestones and read grantee partner spotlights that highlight bold leadership, collective care, and community-driven solutions across Chicago.



Visit Our New Stories Page

GATHER WITH US AGAIN

Today's Luncheon is just one way to be part of the CFW community. Explore upcoming CFW Giving Council and Circle gatherings, community conversations, and other opportunities to learn, connect, and take action with CFW.

Explore Upcoming Events

STAY CLOSE TO THE WORK

Follow CFW on social media for the latest updates, stories, opportunities, and ways to stay engaged with our work.

- @ChicagoFoundationforWomen
- @chifdn4women
- @ChicagoFoundationforWomen
- @chicagofdn4women

COLLECTIVE GIVING. COMMUNITY POWER.

Support CFW's Giving Councils & Circles

Since 2004, CFW's Giving Councils and Circles (GCCs) have granted nearly $2.4 million to 200 community-based organizations, funding community solutions and meeting local needs through collective philanthropy.

Explore membership for the 2026–2027 cycle to:

- Connect with a purpose-driven community
- Lead with impact and shared values
- Invest in grassroots organizations supporting women, girls, and gender-expansive people

GET CONNECTED

Register for upcoming events: cfw.org/events

JOIN A GROUP

Become a member: cfw.org/giving-councils

DONATE TODAY

Support the GCCs: cfw.org/donate

lbtq giving council
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south side giving circle
chicago foundation for women

west side giving circle
chicago foundation for women

western suburbs giving circle
chicago foundation for women

Thank you to the entire staff of Chicago Foundation for Women!

The 41st Annual Luncheon would not be possible without your unwavering dedication and service to this work.

Thank you for the care you bring to our community every day and for all you do to support CFW's mission.

Keenya Lambert

President and CEO
Chicago Foundation for Women



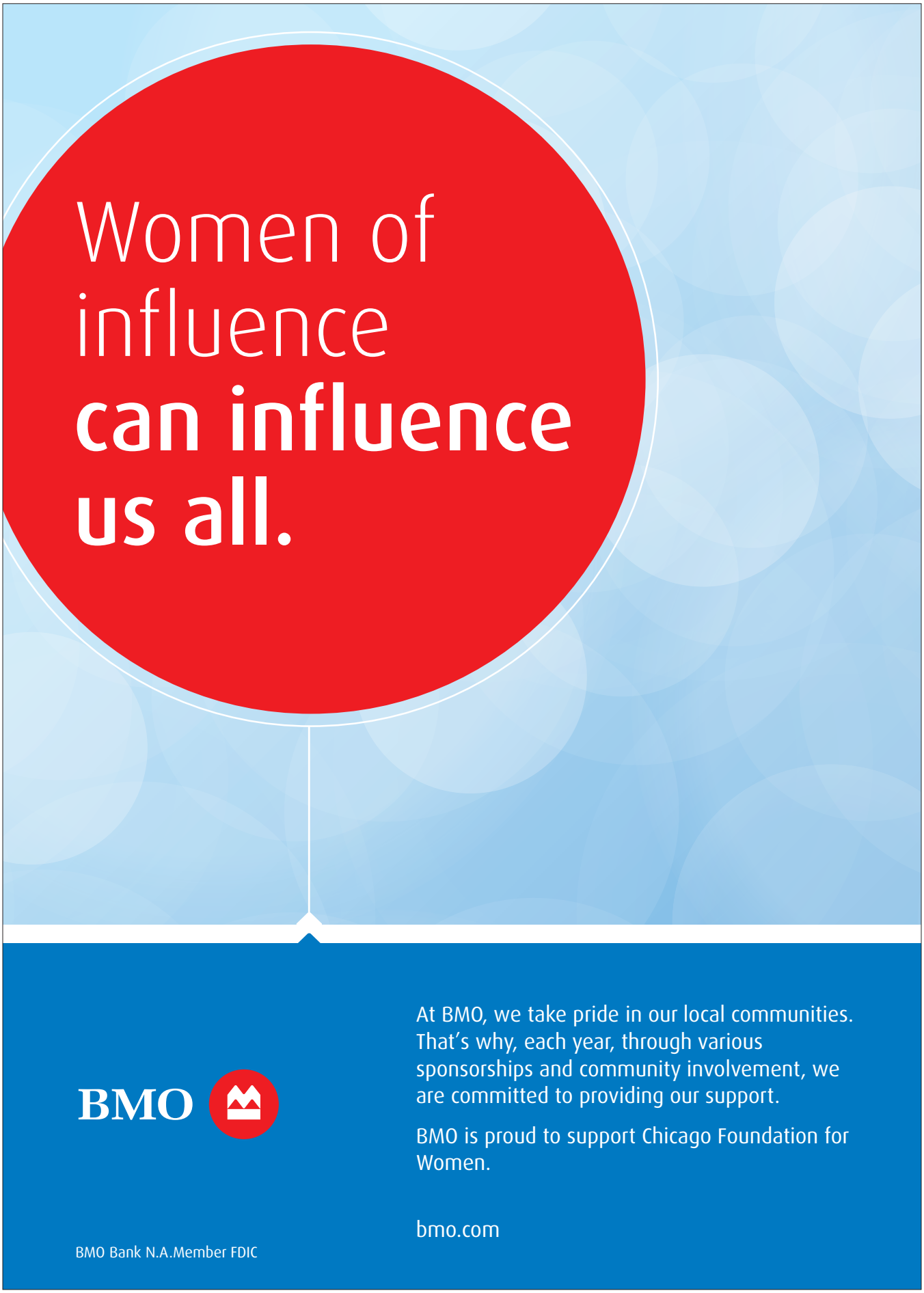


Thank You, Founding Mothers

In the 1980s, four leaders in the Chicago philanthropic community — Marjorie Benton, Sunny Fischer, Iris J. Krieg, and Lucia Woods Lindley — came together around a bold, urgent idea: women and girls deserved greater investment, opportunity, and power to shape their futures.

From $50,000 distributed in our first grants to over $55 million invested in grassroots organizations today, Chicago Foundation for Women's 41-year legacy would not be possible without our co-founders' vision, leadership, and continued support.

Staff and Board of Directors
Chicago Foundation for Women


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influence
can influence
us all.
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At BMO, we take pride in our local communities. That's why, each year, through various sponsorships and community involvement, we are committed to providing our support.
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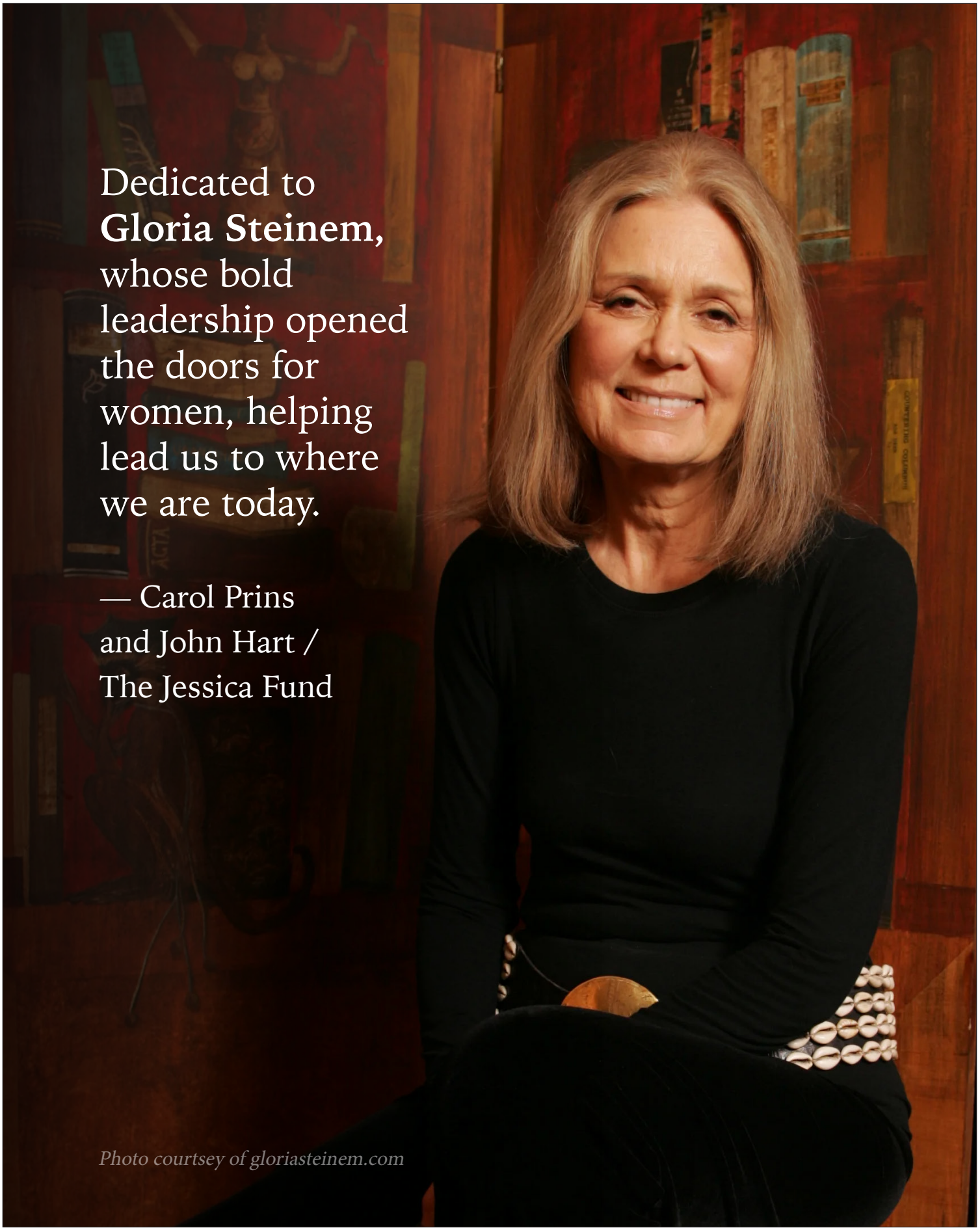
Communities and countries and ultimately the world are only as strong as the health of their women.

— MICHELLE OBAMA

Health equity requires safety, autonomy, and community power. Today we honor the work of CFW and its grantees that are building solutions in these areas, while also raising support to effectuate the ultimate change we want to see — gender equity for all.

With admiration for the work ahead,

Jessica Sohl & Joe Niciforo



Dedicated to **Gloria Steinem,** whose bold leadership opened the doors for women, helping lead us to where we are today.

— Carol Prins and John Hart / The Jessica Fund

Photo courtsey of gloriasteinem.com

Immense gratitude to **Iris, Sunny, and Marjorie**, three of Chicago Foundation for Women's inspiring and intrepid founding mothers! Your vision ignited a movement that we celebrate today.



Thank you for your leadership in philanthropy, which continues to have **a lasting impact on women, girls, and gender-expansive people** throughout the Chicago region.

— Marcie Love

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For more than a hundred years we've lent our support to organizations and events throughout our community. Giving back is a tradition we're proud to continue for years to come. ComEd is proud to support the **Chicago Foundation for Women's** 41st Annual Luncheon, and its mission to build stronger communities.

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PROJECT 50

Congratulations, Chicago Foundation for Women

Celebrating the 41st Annual Luncheon | Health, Power, & Possibility

Forty years of investing in community and advancing equity. Thank you for funding the grassroots leaders building safer, healthier, more just communities across Chicago and beyond.

We are proud to stand with you.

The road to protecting reproductive freedom starts here.

PROJECT 50 project50pac.org

We are proud to partner with Chicago Foundation for Women

We are grateful for CFW's work to build leadership, strengthen organizational capacity, and invest in women, girls, and gender-expansive individuals across Chicago

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Congratulations to CFW on 41 years!

"The future depends entirely on what each of us does every day; a movement is only people moving."
– Gloria Steinem

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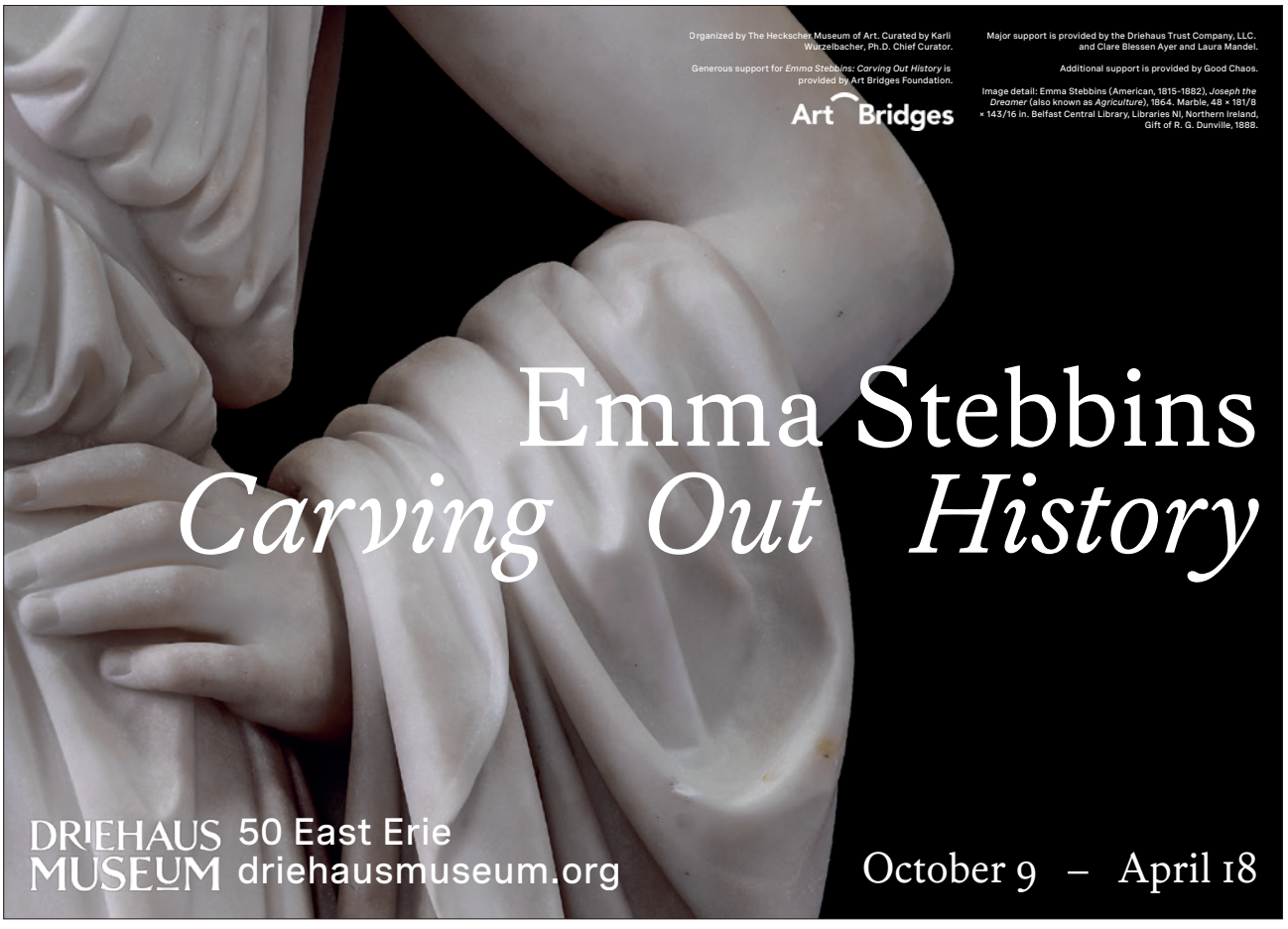
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Congratulations to the Chicago Foundation for Women on its 41st Annual Luncheon.
We celebrate your unwavering commitment to improving the lives of women and girls and strengthening communities across the Chicago region.
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Proud to serve on the Board of Directors for Chicago Foundation for Women, as we celebrate 41 years of impact!
For more than four decades, CFW has been a powerful force for advancing equity and opportunity for women and girls throughout the Chicago area, investing in communities, amplifying voices, and creating meaningful, lasting change.
Here's to 41 years of impact and to the work still ahead!
Norman B. Jones
CHICAGO FOUNDATION FOR WOMEN
HEALTH, POWER, & POSSIBILITY
41st ANNUAL LUNCHEON

Congratulations to Chicago Foundation for Women on 41 years of investing in women, girls, and gender-expansive people! Irving Harris Foundation is grateful for your leadership, partnership and bold vision for the future.

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BOLHOUS FOUNDATION

FOR WOMEN & GIRLS

BREAK BARRIERS. BUILD BRILLIANCE.

We honor the members of the **Alumnae Council** for their continued commitment to gender equity. Their leadership inspires us to push forward in our fight for the empowerment of women, girls, and gender-expansive individuals.

In loving memory of **Juju Lien**, fearless leader of gender and racial equity and former Alumnae Council Co-Chair.

— Ellen Benjamin and Queta Rodríguez Bauer, Co-Chairs
Chicago Foundation for Women Alumnae Council

Congratulations to Chicago Foundation for Women for their continued service in the pursuit of gender equity.

We celebrate over 40 years of CFW's leadership and look forward to many more!



"It is more rewarding to watch money change the world than watch it accumulate."

— Gloria Steinem

Thank you, Chicago Foundation for Women, for all you do to change the world.

— Bette Cerf Hill and Sunny Fischer

HERE'S TO ALL THE YEARS OF COLLABORATION AND MANY MORE TO COME.

LAKSHMI FOUNDATION

We salute and honor the Founding Mothers — **Iris J. Krieg, Lucia Woods Lindley, Marjorie Benton, and Sunny Fischer** — of Chicago Foundation for Women, visionaries and pioneers who paved the way and continue to provide wisdom and leadership to the philanthropic community.

— Karen Pritzker and the staff of Seedlings Foundation

Seedlings Foundation

IRIS KRIEG & ASSOCIATES



Best wishes for a great year of collective giving
from the **North Chicagoland Giving Circle**.
— Kemery Bloom

north chicagoland giving circle
chicago foundation for women

"Let nothing dim the light that shines from within."
— Maya Angelou

To Chicago Foundation for Women.
Your light continues to inspire and illuminate the way for others.

— Tanya G. Davis and
The William & Mary Davis Foundation



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Put your dollars where the change is.

Every Chicago Foundation for Women Giving Circle and Council is powered by people like you, pooling resources to fund grassroots leaders on the front lines of gender equity.

Interested? Contact Akira Barclay, abarclay@cfw.org.

When we move together we are unstoppable.

Emily Lonigro, Creative Director & Business Coach
emilylonigro.com

cwip CHICAGO WOMEN in PHILANTHROPY

CWIP is proud to celebrate Chicago Foundation for Women and its 41st Annual Luncheon. CFW's commitment to advancing women, girls and gender-expansive people reflects the shared values of Chicago Women in Philanthropy (CWIP), where philanthropic, corporate-giving, and non-profit professionals connect, learn, grow, and create meaningful change in our communities.

Chicago Women in Philanthropy (CWIP) is an inclusive community of women and non-binary individuals committed to advancing women and girls. Since 1981, we have educated and empowered professional women to grow, advocate for themselves and their communities, and help create a more equitable, inclusive, and connected social sector.

Learn More About CWIP & JOIN US!

Huntington

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As Chair of the Board of Directors of Chicago Foundation for Women, I'm immensely proud of the impact our work has on the health and livelihood of women, girls, and gender-expansive individuals.

We honor and celebrate the work of our incredible grantees to create **equitable, accessible, and affordable healthcare for all**, across every stage of life.

— **Georgina Heard-Labonne**
Chair, Board of Directors
Chicago Foundation for Women



Joseph & Bessie
Feinberg Foundation

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Leah Taylor

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Sunny Fischer

Iris J. Krieg

Lucia Woods Lindley*

**deceased*

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Valerie Sherman

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CHICAGO FOUNDATION FOR WOMEN

HEALTH, POWER, & POSSIBILITY

41st ANNUAL LUNCHEON

Chicago Foundation for Women (CFW) invests in bold ideas, grassroots leadership, and local organizations dismantling barriers for women, girls, and gender-expansive people so that equity is possible and permanent. Since 1985, CFW has invested over $55 million through more than 5,500 grants to organizations across the Chicago region, focusing on economic security and mobility, reproductive justice, freedom from violence, and access to health and wellness.

CFW invests in community-led organizations that have the expertise and trust to lead change but often lack access to the essential capital needed to scale their impact. By investing in women, girls, and gender-expansive individuals, CFW helps catalyze stronger, more equitable communities for all. For more information, visit **cfw.org**.

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