



Dear Shelley,

The racism that we are seeing offends our mission and it is through feelings of anguish and deep respect that we state clearly: **BLACK LIVES MATTER.**

The Black and Brown children that we serve deserve to grow up in a world where they have equal access to education. Our children deserve to feel unafraid to play outside. Our children deserve to have everything they need to thrive.

The Black and Brown children we serve need to hear from all of us right now: You are loved. You deserve a high-quality education. You deserve to have your basic needs met. You are important. Racism is not OK. Violence is not OK.

Restoring and demonstrating dignity for children in communities of color requires us to activate these attitudes and respond with actions that fight against poverty and racism. I have been reflecting personally and thinking about the changes that I can make in my home, in our workplace, and in our society.

Our CEO shared these [resources](#) and I'm committed to talking to my kids about racism. I've valued the honest conversations happening amongst our colleagues and our shared commitment to improving diversity & inclusion in our office. In our work, we value our partners and learn from them daily about how racism affects the well-being of children.

I encourage you to extend solidarity to our dynamic partners who serve communities of color. We are honored to have many – here are just a few: [South Side YMCA](#), who develops youth programming that protects children from violence; [i Grow Chicago](#), which identifies the root causes of violence and trauma; [ChildServ](#), who protects, heals, and educates children and families so they can build better lives.

These partnerships strengthen community work that fights against racism, violence, and poverty. The respect and admiration we share for one another brings me hope and strength, but we understand that there is still so much more work to be done. Today I am listening and learning from our supporters in Black leadership at [Chicago Community Trust](#), [Jack & Jill of America](#) — regular volunteers of ours, and [Chicago Public Schools](#) who published a Say Their Names: a resource toolkit to help foster productive conversations about race and civil disobedience.

Please join us in restoring and demonstrating dignity today. There is no time to wait.

Sincerely,

Shoshana Buchholz-Miller  
*Executive Director*



Image courtesy of our partners at i Grow Chicago.

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## What We're Grateful For

## Toni Preckwinkle and Chicago Housing Authority Visit The Giving Factory

Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle and Chicago Housing Authority join us for last week's distribution and help us reach a new total: **35,000 kids served since the launch of our emergency essentials fund.**



ABC7CHICAGO.COM

Cook County Board Pres. Preckwinkle visits Cradles to Crayons' main warehouse



## Virtual Panel: Barriers to Basic Needs

"If we still face challenges, we don't have enough collaboration," said Candace C. Moore, City of Chicago's Chief Equity Officer. She motivated us and leadership from the Greater Chicago Food Depository inspired us at our first **Virtual Panel: Barriers to Basic Needs**. Thank you to all who attended.

## Sunshine Stories Like This

"Recently, it has come during this pandemic, some parents have expressed embarrassment as they are not financially able to fulfill their children's requests. I have personally witnessed a parent break down and express gratitude for receiving items as she was laid off from her job. Receiving toys and clothes for her daughter from Cradles to Crayons lifted a burden from her and it made a difference for this family during their most vulnerable time." **Mary Crane Center**



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What We're Hopeful For

## Talk About Black Lives Matter

Structural discrimination and ongoing racism put communities of color at greater risk for violence, poor health outcomes, and disparities in education. We take a stand for what's right. And we bring others along with us. Our kids are not too young to talk about race. We can have age-appropriate conversations about everyone's role in ending racism and violence in our country. **CEO Lynn Margherio's full open letter addressing #BLM [here](#).**



## Sponsor Ready for Learning

Our *Ready for Learning* initiative will promote equitable education systems and empower children to feel safe, valued, and ready to learn during uncertain times and ensure that 50,000 kids have everything they need to feel ready to learn this fall. We will be providing 50,000 kids with the necessities they need to learn – no matter what learning looks like in the fall – including notebooks, crayons, paper, scissors, glue – all the essentials. Want to help provide a classroom with learning essentials – either on your own, through your company, or faith group? **Sponsor our initiative [here](#).**

## Accepting Product Donations Again Soon

In the coming weeks, we will publish our COVID-19 Donation Guidelines. Please be on the lookout for an email and social media posts with more information about when we will accept donations, and our new donation guidelines to ensure we continue to serve kids in a way that keeps our staff and community members safe.



## A Note We Were Passed From A Partner



We currently have a family enrolled in our early childhood education program composed of Dad and his two children (Male-4, Female-5), both of whom have developmental delays.

Not to mention, Dad is currently separating from his Wife and has taken on the role of the primary guardian. After a

few weeks in the program, the Teachers and Family Support Specialist realized the children would have the same jackets every day to go outside, which were not sufficient for the winter weather.

Knowing that we had some coat donations leftover from Cradles to Crayons, staff found three jackets for each child to try on. Staff conducted a mini fashion show where the children tried on all the coats and chose which picture of them with the coat on they liked the best.

After both children chose their coats, CCCS's staff washed them and left them in the children's cubby. When Dad arrived for pick up, he was shocked and not used to receiving this kind of support from social service agencies. The jackets turned into a sense of pride for these kids – it made them feel good and it showed. They showed off the jackets to their Teachers, peers, and even aunty!

The jackets were a need Dad just didn't feel comfortable sharing at that time due to being a single parent and didn't want to seem inadequate.

Just as the children began to open up, Dad started to become a staunch advocate for his children and their education. Cradles to Crayons was the "icebreaker" to foster rapport with this family and reframe their assumptions on what asking for help means or looks like. Thank you.

### **Chicago Child Care Society (CCCS)**

*Chicago Child Care Society (CCCS) provides innovative, community-based education and social service programs that address the current and emerging needs of children and their families. Chicago Child Care Society has been serving children and their families for nearly 170 years, making us the oldest social service agency in Illinois. CCCS first opened its doors as the Chicago Orphan's Asylum in 1849 when children were left homeless after their parents lost their lives to the cholera epidemic. Since then, CCCS has embraced Chicago children through the Great Chicago Fire, the Civil War and both world wars.*



Staff member Kevin Mork falls asleep on his Big Wheel outside circa summer 1979.

Today as our Senior Director of Development, he helps us build relationships with community members who believe in our mission and help fund our cause. He wants to thank you for joining us as we work hard to support those who are the most vulnerable at this time.

Fund the Cause

*Cradles to Crayons provides children from birth through age 12, living in homeless or low-income situations, with the essential items they need to thrive – at home, at school and at play. We supply these items free of charge by engaging and connecting communities.*

