Celebrating 60 Years

tutoring CHICAGO







2024-2025 ANNUAL REPORT

VISION

Our vision is a brighter future for all of Chicago's children.

MISSION

Tutoring Chicago delivers the power of education through one-to-one tutoring.

We believe that through one-to-one relationships with supportive tutors, students facing economic barriers can access brighter futures. Our mission, programs and delivery are centered in these values.

We believe that all children regardless of economics, race, cultural background, gender identity or neighborhood are valuable, capable of greatness and have the right to the following:



DIVERSE REPRESENTATION



EXPOSURE TO KNOWLEDGE



SECURE SENSE OF BELONGING



ACCESSIBLE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

OUR COMMITMENTS



Tutoring Chicago is committed to being a safe, inclusive and equitable learning space for all. This is our responsibility as an organization and as citizens to create an environment not clouded by racism and other systemic inequities.

The safety and health of our students, volunteers and neighbors is paramount to healing and growing as a community. We are committed to sharing resources, ideas and support towards our long-standing vision of brighter futures for all of Chicago's children.

These commitments include greater representation of diversity among our volunteers, staff and boards; authentic community engagement that positively impacts neighborhood residents; and improved efforts to continue educating ourselves.

> "What my child enjoys about her tutor is her patience, with learning my child's weakness and strength and adjusting her way of teaching to best help my child. My child also enjoy how her tutor encourages her to keep going even when she is ready to give up" - Tutoring Chicago Parent

LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear Friends,

As I reflect on the 2024-25 program year, I am filled with gratitude—for our students, our families, our dedicated volunteers, and each of you who make our mission possible. What began as a simple belief—that every young person deserves access to high-quality, one-to-one academic support—has, over 60 years, grown into a city-wide program committed to advancing educational equity for Chicago students.

This year, our free tutoring program reached 1,347 underserved students, more than ever before. We expanded our volunteer training, strengthened partnerships with community organizations and developed new online resources to ensure that every tutoring session is not only accessible but high-quality and impactful. These improvements are reflected in the growth, resilience and academic progress our students demonstrate each day.

The unwavering commitment of our families and volunteers allowed us to expand tutoring through 12th grade. To bolster our middle and high school students' success, beyond strengthening core subjects, we are committed to ensuring students receive support and guidance as they prepare for academic testing and pursue their schools of choice. Our burgeoning Alumni Program will help extend the trusted relationships built in High School Tutoring and earlier into key transition years when students need them most.

Our volunteers remain at the heart of this work. Their generosity and commitment help students to strengthen foundational skills, explore new interests and develop a love of learning. Behind every hour of tutoring (and our program provided more than 38,000 hours last year) is a young person who feels more confident walking into class, a parent who feels a bit more hopeful and a volunteer who knows their time is making a lasting difference. These individual moments of connection and learning add up to real change.

Thank you for your partnership as we work to create opportunities for students who have historically been left behind. As we celebrate 60 years of impact, we remain committed to empowering young people through education, building deeper relationships in the communities we serve and ultimately, opening brighter futures for all Chicago students.

With gratitude,

Sandy Marek
Executive Director & Tutor

OUR PROGRAMS

Elementary School Tutoring Program

The Elementary School Tutoring (EST) program supports 1st through 5th grade students in areas like social-emotional learning, math, and literacy. Tutors build trusting relationships while helping with homework and student skills, like reflection and self-advocacy. The EST curriculum focuses on grade-level math and reading skills, including phonics and comprehension. Social-emotional learning along with current events and relationship-building activities are incorporated through structured lessons to provide holistic support to the whole student.

Literacy Intensive Tutoring Program

The Literacy Intensive Tutoring (LIT) program supports 1st through 5th grade students by focusing on building essential literacy skills. The program is divided into two groups: LIT Decoding and Fluency for 1st-3rd graders and LIT Comprehension for 4th-5th graders. LIT Decoding and Fluency helps younger students improve phonics, fluency, high-frequency word recognition, and reading comprehension through targeted activities. Older students in the LIT Comprehension group focus on reading comprehension, vocabulary, and writing, with an emphasis on expressing thoughts and ideas clearly.

Middle School Tutoring Program

The Middle School Tutoring (MST) program serves 6th through 8th grade students, focusing on academic coursework, social-emotional learning, executive functioning, and high school readiness. Tutors support students with homework, helping them stay organized, track assignments, and prepare for tests and projects. The program emphasizes mathematics and reading comprehension, with lessons aligned to Common Core State Standards. Students also receive guidance in developing social-emotional skills and test-taking techniques to improve academic performance and prepare for high school.

High School Tutoring Program

The High School Tutoring (HST) program provides 9th through 12th grade students with tutoring and mentoring, focusing on academic coursework, social-emotional learning, and post-secondary readiness. Tutors help students with homework across subjects and study strategies for classes and standardized tests while also supporting personal growth with relationship-building activities.







PROGRAM UPDATES & LOOKING AHEAD

During the 2024-25 program year, Tutoring Chicago continued to strengthen instructional quality and deepen relationships with students across grade levels. As we reviewed internal assessment data and program outcomes, two themes emerged clearly.

First, **literacy** remains foundational to student success across all subjects and age groups. While early elementary students showed strong growth through Literacy Intensive Tutoring, assessment trends indicated that reading comprehension continues to significantly influence academic performance for middle and high school students, with many requiring more targeted literacy support.



Second, as our high school cohort grows and students move into our **alumni** community, the need for support beyond graduation becomes increasingly clear. Students and families are seeking guidance during key transitions, including college persistence, financial aid navigation, and early adulthood decision making.

Expanding Literacy Across All Programs in 2025-26

In response to what we observed in 2024–25, Tutoring Chicago will place a greater emphasis on literacy across all program agendas in the 2025–26 program year.

Building on existing instructional tools such as grade level scope and sequence resources and expanded access to Hi Lo texts, literacy will be treated as a cross cutting skill embedded throughout tutoring sessions, rather than a stand alone focus limited to early grades. Tutors will be supported in reinforcing reading comprehension and fluency alongside subject specific instruction. By strengthening literacy across middle school and high school programs, Tutoring Chicago aims to support students' confidence, independence, and ability to engage meaningfully with increasingly complex academic content.

Extending Support Beyond Graduation Through Alumni Programming

Insights from the 2024-25 program year also underscored the importance of continued support after students complete high school tutoring. In response, Tutoring Chicago is laying the groundwork for a new Alumni Program.

This program will extend mentorship beyond graduation, with a focus on college persistence, financial aid literacy, career exploration, and navigating early adulthood. Alumni programming reflects a natural evolution of our High School Tutoring model, allowing us to stay connected to students during critical transition periods.

By pairing strong academic and executive functioning support during high school with continued mentorship after graduation, Tutoring Chicago is deepening its long term commitment to student success and ensuring that support does not end at high school graduation.







Celebrating 60 Years

tutoring CHICAGO

2024-25 IMPACT REPORT

2024-25 Extension Opportunities

In addition to offering our program at 4 in-person locations and online, Tutoring Chicago shared additional opportunities for our students to grow and thrive:

Summer Internship Program:

We were pleased to offer a second year of the paid Summer Internship Program to five Tutoring Chicago high school students (ages 16+). Interns support tutor recruitment and cultivation, as well as assist with administrative tasks. This program brings students hands-on work experience, the opportunity to network with nonprofit professionals, mentorship from Tutoring Chicago staff, and a variety of professional development opportunities.

Digital Marketing Training:

For the second year in a row, Tutoring Chicago high school students had the opportunity to explore the world of digital marketing through our partnership with Marcel Digital. Students participated in a multi-week training covering search engine optimization, paid media advertising, website development, and Google Analytics services.

Chicago Fire Group Outings:

Hard work has to be balanced with fun! Through the generosity of our friends at the Chicago Fire FC, Tutoring Chicago families and volunteers received free tickets to select 2024 Chicago Fire games at Soldier Field. We appreciate the opportunity to share this cultural, recreational experience for our volunteers and families.

2025-26 IMPACT FOCUS

- Maintain strong math performance across all grades
- Target grade-level reading development, particularly for middle school and high school students
- Continue to invest in students achieving selective enrollment and school of choice admissions



48 HOURS OF FREE TUTORING OFFERED TO EACH STUDENT DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR



Long-term, one-to-one tutoring. Free of charge.

1,347

students enrolled in one of our programs this year
Each student is paired with their **own tutor** for the school year.



Tutoring Chicago serves students across **380** Chicagoland schools.

100% face financial barriers
*As defined by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.

38,042

HOURS OF TUTORING BETWEEN STUDENT/TUTOR PAIRS THIS YEAR

TUTORING CHICAGO STUDENTS AVERAGED **93% SCHOOL ATTENDANCE,** A HIGHER ATTENDANCE RATE THAN THEIR CPS PEERS, ENSURING **BETTER ENGAGEMENT IN EDUCATION AND REDUCING THE IMPACT OF CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM**





2024-25 HIGHLIGHTS

80% OF 9TH GRADE STUDENTS WERE PROFICIENT IN GRADE-LEVEL MATH BY END OF YEAR, DOUBLING THEIR LIKELIHOOD OF GRADUATING SUCCESSFULLY BASED ON RECENT RESEARCH

80% OF 3RD GRADE STUDENTS WERE PROFICIENT IN GRADE-LEVEL READING SKILLS, SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVING THEIR LIKELIHOOD OF COMPLETING HIGH SCHOOL

23% OF OUR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ATTENDED A SELECTIVE ENROLLMENT HIGH SCHOOL, WELL OUTPACING THE AVERAGE FOR CPS STUDENTS FACING ECONOMIC BARRIERS

99% OF PARENTS WOULD RECOMMEND TUTORING CHICAGO TO ANOTHER PARENT

93% OF TEACHERS REPORTED THAT THEIR STUDENTS ARE DOING BETTER IN SCHOOL AS A RESULT OF ATTENDING TUTORING CHICAGO PROGRAMMING

92% OF STUDENTS REPORTED A STRONG AND POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH THEIR TUTOR

100% OF TUTORS WOULD RECOMMEND TUTORING CHICAGO

92% OF PARENTS REPORTED THAT THEIR STUDENT IS DOING BETTER IN SCHOOL AS A RESULT OF TUTORING

85% OF STUDENTS REPORTED TUTORING HELPED THEM IMPROVE THEIR MATH GRADE

MST Program Outcomes

75% of MST students increased their reading grade or maintained an 85% or higher

64% of MST students grew in grade level math proficiency

EST Program Outcomes

82% of EST students improved in grade level math proficiency

86% of EST students improved in grade level phonics proficiency

LIT Program Outcomes

90% of LIT students grew grade level phonics proficiency

78% of LIT students grew in grade level reading comprehension proficiency

HST Program Outcomes

86% of HST studentsincreased their math grade or maintained an 85% or higher

2024 HOLIDAY GIFT DISTRIBUTION

Our annual Holiday Gift Distribution is truly the most wonderful time of the year at Tutoring Chicago, as students write a wish list with the help of their tutors comprised of "something they want, something they need, and something to read."

Tutoring Chicago carried on the heartwarming tradition and distributed gifts to students in our 2024 program with the help of corporate partners and their employees, as well as caring individuals and families. In the span of 72 hours, our talented volunteer "elves" received, organized and distributed more than 1,000 student gifts at locations across the city.

A heartfelt thank you to our generous gift sponsors, whose contributions made the holiday season that much brighter for Tutoring Chicago students and families. Additionally, we extend our deepest gratitude to the many dedicated volunteers who contributed their time and effort to ensure the smooth distribution of student gifts.







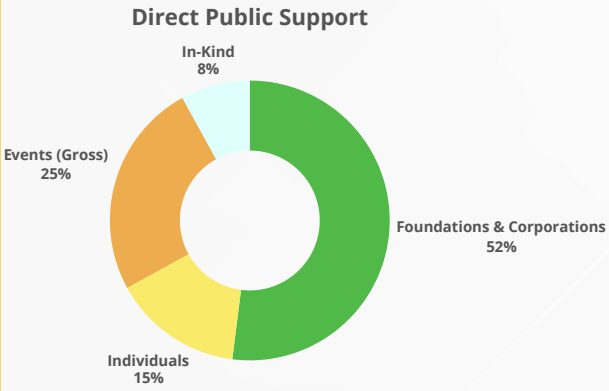
FINANCIAL SUMMARY

tutoring CHICAGO

ASSETS/LIABILITIES

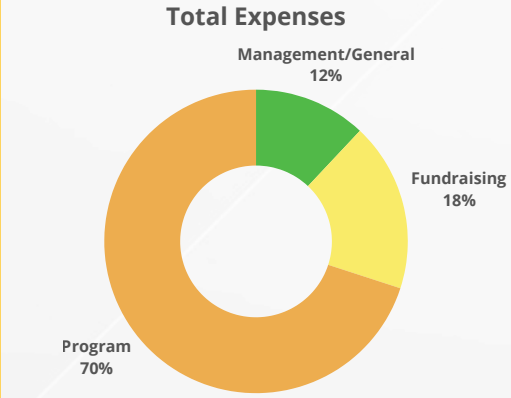
Cash/cash equivalents/investments	$843,528
Grants and contributions receivable	$ 26,850
Prepaid expenses/other assets	$ 45,290
Other receivables	—
Property and equipment, net of accumulated depreciation	$ 38,596
TOTAL ASSETS	**$954,264**
TOTAL LIABILITIES	**$83,385**

NET ASSETS	
WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS	**$838,807**
WITH DONOR RESTRICTIONS	**$32,072**
TOTAL NET ASSETS	**$870,879**



REVENUE

Foundations and Corporations*	$617,577
Individuals	$175,145
Events (gross)	$309,375
In-Kind	$96,482
Total Direct Public Support	**$1,198,579**
Investment income	$32,010
Loss on Disposal of Property & Equipment	–
Total Other Revenues & Gains (Losses)	$32,010
Total Earned	**$1,230,589**



EXPENSES

Management/general	$195,273
Fundraising	$287,951
Program	$1,117,761
TOTAL EXPENSES	**$1,600,985**
Direct fundraising expenses	$112,851
TOTAL EXPENSES W/FUNDRAISING EVENT EXPENSES	**$1,713,836**

*Tutoring Chicago received a significant grant to be paid out to the organization over a two-year period and applied towards fiscal years ending July 31, 2024 – 2025. Under generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP), the revenue from this grant was recorded when the commitment was made by the funder in fiscal year ending July 31, 2024. Thus, the expenses related to this grant will be incurred over the two years after the commitment was received and revenue was recognized. This mismatch of revenue and expenses is common among nonprofit organizations. The impact on the financial statements for Tutoring Chicago was a significant increase in net assets (net income) for the year in which the commitment was received and will result in decreases in net assets (net losses) for the years following as the grant funds are spent by the organization.

PAIR HIGHLIGHT



Scott and Naty

Scott and Naty have tutored together for three years, since Naty was a sophomore in high school struggling to find confidence. This year, Naty is a senior in high school applying for college. As they prepare for their last semester tutoring together, Scott shared his reflections on how Naty has grown as a student and person, and what lies ahead!

Over the last year, I've seen Naty move from building confidence to building real independence. Honestly, the biggest sign of success is that she needs me less. She shows up ready to work, puts on her headphones, and just locks in. Watching her take ownership of her learning has been one of the most rewarding parts of tutoring her.

Our relationship has grown from something pretty formal into one that feels very natural and friendly. She'll text me updates, and we're able to balance focused work with moments of play and fun during sessions. I've also built a strong relationship with her mom, which matters a lot. That family connection creates trust and consistency, and it makes the support around Naty feel much bigger than just our 90 minutes together.

This fall was all about college applications, and Naty worked so hard. She's already been admitted to multiple schools, including UIC and DePaul, which is incredibly exciting!!! We talk about college a lot – what she's excited about, what she's nervous about, and what she hopes comes next. I couldn't be more proud of her.

Naty is really excited about going to college and figuring things out as she goes. She wants to become a nurse, and what's been amazing to see is how much more she believes in herself now. Tutoring Chicago played a big role in that. Her Spelling Bee speech was the first time she ever spoke in front of a group on her own, and she's told me that experience changed how she sees herself. Earlier on, she never would have believed she could do something like that. She feels her writing has also improved a lot, which has helped her feel more confident sharing her ideas and telling her story.

Of course Naty and I will stay in touch after 12th grade, not even a question!

-Scott Wolf, Naty's tutor





60 YEARS OF BRIGHTER FUTURES



The Tharpe Family: A Full Circle Journey

Cierria's connection to Tutoring Chicago began in first grade, when she was a young student. With her mom working hard and juggling responsibilities, Cierria found support and consistency through the Montgomery Ward Cabrini-Green Tutoring Program. It wasn't just about homework help—it was access to resources like printers for school projects, and a trusted adult outside of her family who showed up for her week after week.

She started in the Cabrini Green Tutoring Program (now Tutoring Chicago) and had two incredible mentors—women who believed in her, pushed her to succeed, and helped her build confidence. "My tutors made me fall in love with writing," Cierria says. One of her most cherished memories was a trip to Navy Pier with her tutor, a one-on-one experience that made her feel valued and prioritized. Through tutoring, she discovered a love for writing, especially poetry, which became a powerful outlet for self-expression. That passion has now been passed down to her 11-year-old daughter, who also loves to write.

Tutoring Chicago didn't just help Cierria academically—it taught her life skills like interviewing, interpersonal communication, and how to navigate new experiences and perspectives. Years later, she enrolled her daughters Amira, Cayden, and Avery in the same program. Her oldest was struggling with math, and tutoring helped her thrive. Now, she writes short stories weekly with her tutor and recently aced a spelling test—just one example of the growth Cierria has seen in all her daughters. "She's shy like me," Cierria says, "so to see her comfortable enough with someone to let them in to help her, it really warms my heart. I see a different side of her."

For Cierria, Tutoring Chicago has been a blessing. It built her confidence and continues to shape her daughters into strong, capable learners. Looking ahead, she hopes the program continues for another 60 years, giving future students the same foundation, encouragement, and opportunities that transformed her life—and now, her family's.



From our small beginnings as the Cabrini-Green Tutoring Program to serving thousands of students each year at Tutoring Chicago, our core vision of brighter futures for all children remains at the heart of our work.

Tutoring Chicago's 2025 Celebrity Spelling Bee

Presented By Inspire11 tutoring CHICAGO at The Second City



Tutoring Chicago's 6th Annual Celebrity Spelling Bee at The Second City raised a record-breaking $160,000 for our free, one-to-one tutoring program for students facing financial barriers. From the vibrant energy of our Second City host TJ Shanoff to the incredible roster of celebrity spellers including WGN's Micah Materre, Chris Witaske from the FX hit show The Bear, Miss Illinois USA Grace Rodi, Alderman Timmy Knudsen (Ward 43) and NYT-bestselling author Kate Kennedy–who took home the trophy along with her Team Marcel Digital teammate Kyle Brigham–the evening was a great success!

Thank you to our 2025 sponsors!

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PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

UNION LEAGUE BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS





Tutoring Chicago recognizes the importance of strategic partnerships to strengthen impact and serve more students across Chicago. We are grateful for the opportunity to forge an exciting partnership with **Union League Boys & Girls Club**, which helped to establish our new Pilsen tutoring location for the 2025-26 school year. This site, which aims to reach students where they are already engaging with services, will increase access to one-to-one tutoring and mentoring support for 120 students in the surrounding communities, with potential for future growth to additional club locations.

We thank the Union League Boys & Girls Club for their longstanding commitment to Chicago's youth, and for helping our program to reach more students across the city.

Inspire11
An Insight company

Inspire11 continues to serve as a high-impact partner of our tutoring program, demonstrating sustained commitment to educational equity. In 2024–25, the company donated refurbished laptops, increasing student access to technology and digital resources during tutoring and at home.

As Presenting Sponsor of the 2025 Celebrity Spelling Bee—the first year at Second City—Inspire11 helped achieve record-breaking proceeds in support of our free one-to-one tutoring program. Their commitment extended beyond funding, with team members contributing their time and talent to help create Tutoring Chicago's 60th Anniversary promotional video, showcasing powerful stories from students and volunteers across the decades. We value Inspire11's ongoing partnership and look forward to continued collaboration and impact.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT
MARCO CESARIO



For more than 15 years, Tutoring Chicago volunteer Marco Cesario dedicated his time to students in need of support. As a new dad juggling work and home commitments, last May marked his final session with D'Angelo, his "best student yet." Reflecting on his many years as a dedicated volunteer tutor with our organization, he shared this special message:

Dear friends, fellow volunteers, and the Tutoring Chicago family,

As I reflect on the past 15 years of volunteering with Tutoring Chicago, I find myself overwhelmed with a deep sense of gratitude and humility. What began as a small commitment, just one evening a week, became one of the most defining chapters of my life. Fifteen years ago, I walked into my first tutoring session thinking I was there to share knowledge and to help with their homework. But it didn't take long to realize that I was there to learn as well.

What these students gave me, year after year, were lessons in resilience, hope, and the power of showing up. Every child I worked with brought their own light, their own story, their own challenges and dreams. Some nights were tough, distracted minds, tired eyes, long days. But even on the hardest days, there was always something that made me return the next week. A small breakthrough, a moment of laughter, a glimmer of understanding in their eyes. It reminded me that consistency, patience, and presence can truly change lives.

In many ways, Tutoring Chicago has raised me. It has taught me how to listen, not just to answers, but to silences and fears. It has taught me how to be patient even when progress felt slow. It has taught me to believe in people before they believe in themselves. These are not just skills for tutoring. These are life lessons. Now, as I step into this new chapter of my own life as a new father, I'm struck by how deeply this experience has prepared me. The tenderness, the responsibility, the quiet strength it takes to guide a child to show up consistently with love and intention.

These are things I've practiced every week for the last 15 years. And though fatherhood is its own journey, I know the heart I've grown through Tutoring Chicago will serve me well. Being part of this organization has shaped the way I see the world. It's helped me understand the power of opportunity, the importance of equity, and the incredible capacity of young people when someone simply believes in them. I've had the privilege of watching children transform over time, not just academically, but in their confidence, in their voice, in their belief that they matter.

So, to the staff, volunteers, board members, and donors, thank you for your support of Tutoring Chicago. To the students, I want to say thank you. Thank you for trusting me and the tutors you're currently working with or have worked with in the past. This work is quiet, steady, and often goes unseen, but it is sacred. Thank you for allowing me to be a part of something that truly matters. I will carry its impact with me for the rest of my life.



With all my heart,

Marco

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"This year, my student has done well...he's improved academically and he's become confident and comfortable in himself, which is just as important." - Clif Clarke, Tutoring Chicago Board Vice Chair and Tutor

MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR



Dear Friends,

This year, as Tutoring Chicago celebrates 60 years of service, we reached a meaningful milestone: we supported more students than ever before through our free one-to-one program. This record isn't just a number — it's a reflection of the growing need in our city and the remarkable strength of the community that continues to step forward to meet it.

As Chair of the Board of Directors, and as someone who has had the privilege of serving as a tutor myself, I am especially grateful for the hundreds of volunteers who show up week after week. Their patience, dedication, and care are the heart of this organization. They remind us that real change is built one relationship at a time.

I am deeply proud of the progress we've made. Even as we reach more students and use our resources more efficiently, our focus remains the same: ensuring every student receives the personal, high-quality support that defines Tutoring Chicago. I'm energized by the possibilities ahead — serving students through 12th grade and bringing our program to even more neighborhoods across Chicago. Your partnership is what allows us to dream big on behalf of our students.

Together with the 1,300 students and families whose lives are touched by your generosity, thank you. Thank you for believing in them, in our city, and in the power of education to change lives. Your support makes this work possible, and we're grateful to have you with us.

Kim Ruhana,
Chair of the Tutoring Chicago Board of Directors

THANK YOU TO OUR TUTORING ASSOCIATE BOARD (TAB)

The TAB is a board comprised of dedicated veteran volunteers. We are grateful for their ongoing support of our mission.

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Celebrating 60 Years

tutoring CHICAGO



In Person Tutoring Locations:

St. Vincent de Paul Center
2145 N. Halsted Street
Chicago, IL 60614

Hope Ignites
823 Gaffield Pl.
Evanston, IL 60201

Mozart (Amadeus) Park
2036 N Avers Ave.
Chicago, IL 60647

Shine Bright (Discover) Community Center
8650 S Cottage Grove Ave.
Chicago, IL 60619

Union League Boys & Girls Club
2157 W 19th St.
Chicago, IL 60608

Tutoring Chicago is recognized by Guidestar with a 2025 Platinum Seal of Transparency, a Charity Navigator 4-Star Charity with a Give with Confidence seal.

Thank You to Our Champion Partners!

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