

City of Aurora 2023 Quality of Life (QoL) Applicant: Summary

- Applicant:** Aurora Fire Station Preservation Corp – DBA: Aurora Regional Fire Museum

Agency Background: Housed in Aurora’s old Central Fire Station, the Aurora Regional Fire Museum actively serves the Aurora community to teach and preserve the history of the Aurora Fire Department and our region as well as through fire safety programs. The Museum serves the community as a unique historical, educational, landmark and is a destination for local, regional, and international visitors. The Aurora Regional Fire Museum is open to the public Wednesday – Saturday from 10am-4pm and during the summer months, we are open on Tuesdays. We are actively involved in all events happening in Downtown Aurora and open our doors for First Fridays and other community events. We have two floors of exhibits, provide educational programming and outreach in the museum, virtually, and in the community.

2023 QoL Project Proposal: *Aurora Regional Fire Museum*
Funds will be used to support the areas of museum operations, exhibition development, and education program development. We explore fire history, teach and promote fire safety and prevention. We serve Aurora and the Fox Valley Region.
- Applicant:** African American Men of Unity (AAMOU)

Agency Background: African American Men of Unity (AAMOU) is a 501(c) (3), organization founded in 1999 with the commitment to empowering underserved individuals and families with education, training and resources to fulfill their divine purpose, improve their quality of life and promote self efficacy in impoverished communities. AAMOU serves at risk youth of all ethnicities, regardless of challenges, socio-economic background or academic deficiencies disabilities. We are here to support families struggling with the managing the day to day stresses and help youth avoid the pitfalls of life, enrich their cultural aptitude and preparedness to reach their full potential. AAMOU believes that education, training and certification are essential keys to unlock the doors of opportunities, prerequisites for youth to see the value in themselves and achieve optimal self sufficiency. Programs and services include but not limited to Rites of Passage, Leadership Development, Job and Career Readiness, Mentoring, sports activities and Life-skills. We also offer cultural enrichment through our Kwanzaa and Juneteenth celebration attended by officials, family, elders and youth. In addition we have a Back to School Fair for economic disadvantaged individuals and families in need of backpacks filled with school supplies.

2023 QoL Project Proposal 1: *Rites of Passage Mentoring Program*
Rite of Passage (ROP) a evidence based mentoring program that will provide youth with trauma informed positive youth development, guidance, structure and examples of leadership, manhood and appropriate behaviors expected at each developmental stage.

2023 QoL Project Proposal 2: *Jobs for Youth Internship*
Jobs for Youth Internship will provide job readiness training, job shadowing and other related employability skills i.e. work ethics and dependability to unemployed individuals age 14-30 and prepare them to fill expected growth in high demand jobs.
- Applicant:** Agape Connection, Inc.

Agency Background: Agape Connection, Inc., formed in 1991, is a not-for-profit 501(c)3 organization and currently has five subcontractors. Since its establishment, Agape Connection has been committed to improving the quality of life for residents in Aurora, Illinois, and surrounding western suburbs by developing and implementing cultural and educational programming for underprivileged youth and children in grades 1-8. Agape's vision is to bring awareness of and respond to social, economic, and

educational needs of disenfranchised residents with attention to persons of African descent. Agape's initiatives make significant and lasting contributions in the community. Students have participated in training, educational and social activities, and opportunities. Participants who are engaged in activities in the Wax Museum are enrolled in the Sankofa Saturday School of History, Culture and Creativity, which also includes a cross-cultural music program. The Agape Connection rents facilities from St. John AME Church in Aurora. The Sankofa program meets twice monthly on Saturday from 9 a.m.- noon from October-May and 8 weeks during the summer.

2023 QoL Project Proposal: *Sankofa Saturday School of History, Culture and Creativity*

Sankofa is designed for underrepresented/low-income participants, grades 1-8, to gain knowledge of African-American icons, and prepare and present findings by participating in a Wax Museum. Sankofa also provides cross-cultural music appreciation.

4. **Applicant:** Alive Center NFP

Agency Background: The Alive Center is Aurora's only teen center. Alive's mission is to create Teen-Led, Teen-Driven (TLTD) centers focused on proactive empowerment of the youth of today to become the impassioned, resilient leaders of tomorrow. Our mission statement was written by our teens and continues to be the voice and heart which drives our centers. At Alive, we empower teens by providing a safe space to lead and create while discovering who they are in the process. The Alive Center is a 501c3 that has been in existence since 2014 and was founded in Naperville by Executive Director Kandice Henning. Our first Aurora satellite opened in October of 2018. Alive provides unsupervised youth - often from families with low and moderate incomes as well as many with autism, ADD, ADHD, and mood disorders - with free tutoring, mentoring, opportunities to socialize, and other structured and unstructured activities. During the critical hours after school and over summer vacation, Alive provides unique workshops, programs, community events, and clubs on a variety of topics, including fine arts, STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), leadership, career development, healthy living, life skills, drug prevention and awareness, anti-bullying and cyber safety/social media safety, coping with stress, diversity and inclusion, community service, media, girl empowerment, and more. to our Aurora location.

2023 QoL Project Proposal 1: *Agency Expansion*

2023 QoL Project Proposal 2: *Alive Aurora Teen Initiated Drop-in Program*

Alive's free Teen Initiated Drop-in program is held 3 days per week from 3:00 - 6PM in downtown Aurora. The program will provide Aurora teens in grades 5-12 with a safe after school alternative where they can learn, meet new friends, and gain skills.

5. **Applicant:** APS Training Academy

Agency Background: APS Training Academy provides free supplemental science, technology, engineering, art, and math (STEAM) education for members of the Aurora community that identify as racial minorities and report income lower than the Area Median Income (AMI). This audience was selected as both racial minority status and low-income individuals are underrepresented in STEAM-related occupations.

2023 QoL Project Proposal: *Child and Youth STEAM Robotics Programs*

The requested funds will be used to expand upon the foundational robotics curriculum and further develop skills. Aurora residents that have attended courses and have expressed interest in continuing their education will be the focus audience.

6. **Applicant:** Association for Individual Development

Agency Background: Celebrating 61 years of providing customized, consumer-focused programs and services in an equitable, inclusive manner, the Association for Individual Development (AID) works with

individuals with developmental, intellectual, physical and/or mental health challenges, those who have suffered a trauma, those experiencing immediate and/or chronic crises and those at risk to overcome personal, behavioral, societal and environmental barriers to achieve recovery, independence, self-reliance and to live the lives they choose. AID currently operates community centers in Elgin, Aurora, Batavia, Sugar Grove and Yorkville, mental health outpatient clinics throughout the Fox Valley, supports 1000 individuals living in their own apartments, and more than 220 individuals in 3 dozen group homes scattered throughout the greater Fox Valley. AID collaborates with Federally Qualified Healthcare Centers (FQHCs), managed care companies, Frequent Users (FUSE) programs, Continua of Cares and local hospital systems to decrease homelessness, increase employment and improve the mental and physical health of residents.

2023 QoL Project Proposal: *Victim and Outreach Services*

The 24-hour program serves victims of crime, trauma or quality of life issues such as housing instability, primarily in Kane County. This program is a collaboration with municipalities, police, fire and local human services providers.

7. **Applicant:** Aurora Area Interfaith Food Pantry

Agency Background: The Aurora Food Pantry provides life-saving groceries and nutrition to more than 900 families every single week. Neighbors from a five-county region are welcome at the pantry, but the vast majority of those served reside in Aurora.

2023 QoL Project Proposal: *Holiday Food Distribution*

Holiday Meal Distribution will provide meal boxes to families in November and December, 2023. Boxes including turkeys will be given in Nov., and hams will be distributed in food boxes in December. Both will be held at the pantry's address in Aurora.

8. **Applicant:** Aurora Historical Society

Agency Background: Founded in 1906, the Aurora Historical Society is the primary caretaker of Aurora's heritage, with the Mission Statement: "The Aurora Historical Society gives the past a future by collecting, preserving, interpreting and presenting the rich, diverse history of Aurora and the surrounding area." The Society fulfills its mission by actively collecting artifacts and documents from all eras of Aurora's history, including the present, and by documenting the community and its activities as they happen (tomorrow's history), and permanently preserving these all materials for future generations. The Society helps serve and educate the public through the operation of its two museum sites and a research archives, and by producing several educational exhibits, events, programs, and publications throughout the year. At the downtown Pierce Art & History Center, a City-owned facility shared with the Aurora Public Art Commission, since 1996, the Historical Society has presented dozens of quality exhibits and programs. Since 1936, the Historical Society has operated the 1857 William Tanner House Museum at the corner of Oak & Cedar, and offers the museum to the public free of charge. Also at the Tanner site is our Local History Research Archives, containing documents and photographs covering all topics of Aurora history.

2023 QoL Project Proposal: *Giving the Past a Future*

"Giving the Past a Future" describes our entire museum operations and programming over the year--exhibits, programs, and activities at our two museum sites--the David L. Pierce Art & History Center and the Tanner House, serving all of Aurora.

9. **Applicant:** Boys Baseball of Aurora

Agency Background: Boys Baseball of Aurora, Illinois was formed in 1952 with a goal to provide our youth with an organized summer baseball league. We are dedicated to providing the children in Aurora, as well as the surrounding communities, with a baseball program that stresses the early development of

fundamentals, the importance of teamwork, the life lessons of good sportsmanship, and above all else, having fun playing age-level competitive baseball. Governed by a sixteen member Board of Directors, BBA is a Not-for-Profit corporation chartered annually by the State of Illinois. Sponsored by the City of Aurora, the Fox Valley Park District, and dozens of local businesses and organizations, BBA operates five leagues for kids ages 5-14. Boys Baseball of Aurora initiated the Aurora Starz tournament team program in 2003. Participation in the Starz allows boys with the talent and desire to play more baseball during the Summer, that opportunity. Selected each year in late summer through a tryout process, team members enjoy a rigorous Fall and Winter schedule to further develop their baseball skills through additional practices, training, and clinics. Beginning in the Spring, the Starz teams travel to tournaments throughout Northern Illinois competing against the areas best talent. During the Summer, Starz players pull double duty - playing on their in house teams during the week and then traveling with their Starz team for weekend tournaments, usually once a month.

2023 QoL Project Proposal 1: *2023 Boys Baseball of Aurora - Summer and Fall Sessions*

These funds will be used to offset league operations costs, so we can work to maintain the same expense for our families and not have to raise rates on them.

2023 QoL Project Proposal 2: *2023 Aurora Starz Teams*

These funds will be used to offset league operations costs, so we can work to maintain the same expense for our families and not have to raise rates on them or require additional fundraising efforts.

10. **Applicant:** Boys and Girls Club of Elgin

Agency Background: Our Mission: To enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens. Our Vision: Provide a world-class Club Experience that assures success is within reach of every young person who enters our doors, with all members on track to graduate from high school with a plan for the future, demonstrating good character and citizenship, and living a healthy lifestyle. Our Service Model: #1: To provide out of school program and services to all youth, removing barriers of cost and transportation. #2: To meet the basic needs of families and youth who attend our program by providing clothing, warm meals, and other basic essentials. #3: To provide support for social and emotional learning. #4: To provide help with homework, tutoring, and basic reading/ math skills. #5: To support career & workforce readiness to ensure all youth have a path laid out to achieve success. #6: To achieve our ultimate mission of helping all people reach their full potential.

2023 QoL Project Proposal: *BGCE - Aurora After School Youth Development Program*

These funds will help support after school youth development programs at 5 Aurora locations (Godwin Elementary, Fearn Elementary, Jewel Middle School, Washington Middle School, Blackhawk Academy).

11. **Applicant:** CASA Kane County

Agency Background: The CASA movement began in the late 1970's when Superior Court Judge David Soukup felt that children were not being adequately represented in court. It was then that he conceived the idea to recruit and train community volunteers to serve as Court Appointed Special Advocates to gather information about these children, be a stable presence in their lives and ensure they are placed in safe and permanent homes. CASA Kane County was established in 1988. The mission of CASA Kane County is to advocate for the best interests of every child in our local Juvenile Court system to help ensure they are placed in a safe, permanent home in the quickest amount of time. The CASA/GAL volunteer acts as the eyes and ears of the judge to help make the best decision for a safe, caring and permanent home for each child. CASA Kane County is a nonprofit, volunteer organization that serves the best interests of abused and neglected children from the age of birth through 21. For over three decades, CASA Kane County has recruited, trained and supervised community volunteers who serve as a child's Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) and Guardian ad Litem (GAL) for children in court due

to abuse, neglect, or private guardianship. CASA/GAL volunteers assist judges in making very difficult and life changing decisions about the determination of each child's placement, as well as services they need to help restore them to good physical and mental health. The CASA/GAL regularly visits and collects information to help the judge make the best decision for each child.

2023 QoL Project Proposal: *Child Advocacy for Abused & Neglected Children in Aurora*

Our mission is to serve and advocate for the children ages birth through 21 in the foster care system from until their well-being and safety to reach permanency is achieved. The children are in court due to abuse, neglect, or private guardianship.

12. **Applicant:** Changing Children's Worlds Foundation

Agency Background: Founded in 2010, the Changing Children's Worlds Foundation (CCWF) has based "ICDP-USA: The Best Start"™ on the International Child Development Program (ICDP). In 2011, CCWF held its first ICDP-USA Facilitator Training Workshop in Chicago, and on March 21, 2012, was incorporated as a 501c3. (Established in 1985, ICDP-International was founded by 4 Psychologists from Norway, Sweden and England, and is recognized by the World Health Organization and UNICEF globally.) CCWF has trained 536 professionals in the "Best Start." Facilitators at schools, mental health agencies, community organizations, jails/detention centers, social services and others, support social/emotional skills and social advancement for parents and children, especially in communities with high levels of poverty, exclusion and violence.

2023 QoL Project Proposal 1: *Agency Expansion*

2023 QoL Project Proposal 2: *The Best Start for Aurora Families - A Healthy Equity Approach for Parents, Youth, Children and Professionals/Community Leaders Who Serve*

City of Aurora-based home for "Best Start for Families-A Health Equity Approach" includes: Parenting Support/Learning Groups/parallel Children's SEL programs; Youth SEL programs & Training of professionals/paras/parent leads to facilitate and coach.

13. **Applicant:** Cities In Schools Aurora 2000, Inc.

Agency Background: Cities In Schools Aurora 2000, Inc. (CISA), formerly known as Communities In Schools of Aurora, Inc., maintains collaborative projects with community partners that engage families, youth, neighborhoods, social service agencies and schools. Since the organization was founded in 1993, CISA has partnered with East Aurora School District 131, West Aurora School District 129, Indian Prairie School District 204 and Oswego School District 308 to deliver daytime and afterschool programs to children who are most in need. The organization works collaboratively as a broker of services by linking more than 30 community agencies and resources to 43 area schools and hires over 300 supplemental staff, which includes school district employees and college and high school students who provide services each year. Services offered by CISA include after school programs, summer camps, individual student and group counseling, truancy prevention, parenting programs, substance abuse prevention/education, violence prevention and intervention, tutoring, mentoring, conflict resolution and peer mediation. CISA was responsible for securing 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) grants and currently manages 10 sites for East Aurora and four CCLC sites for West Aurora.

2023 QoL Project Proposal: *CISA Comprehensive Services Program*

Level 1-school supplies/services for students; Level 2-students/families with long-term needs - tutoring, mentoring, literacy, enrichment/recreational, and community programs for Aurora students at risk of academic failure/dropping out of school.

14. **Applicant:** DuPage Senior Citizens Council/dba Kane Senior Council

Agency Background: The DuPage Senior Citizens Council/dba Kane Senior Council (DSCC/KSC) is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3), volunteer-driven organization committed to helping older adults. DSCC/KSC's

mission is to initiate, deliver, monitor, and coordinate services that promote the ability of older people to live their lives in dignity. Our goal is to provide services that allow older people to remain healthy, active, and independent. DSCC/KSC is committed to older adults' well-being, socialization, and health. Our services: Home Delivered Meals (Meals on Wheels), Community Dining, Drive-Thru Food Events, Health & Wellness Education, Well-Being Checks, Pet Care & Food Assistance, Minor Home Repairs, Contractor Referrals, Yard Clean-Ups, Friendly Phone Calls, & Intergenerational Activities. DSCC/KSC's services address the importance of the Social Determinants of Health (SDOH). SDOH are the non-medical factors of healthcare that account for up to 80% of health outcomes. Factors such as access to transportation to pick up medication or food insecurity could have a detrimental effect on a person's ability to follow treatment plans and ultimately lead to costly hospital readmission. Our services are designed to ensure the safety, independence, and mental/physical well-being of older adults, particularly those who live alone or do not have family close by.

2023 QoL Project Proposal: *Home Delivered Meals (Meals on Wheels), Community Dining, Drive-Thru Food Events, and Well-Being Checks - Aurora*

Your support of Home Delivered Meals, Community Dining, Drive-Thru Food Events, and Well-Being Checks will help DSCC/KSC continue to serve the 40% increase in the number of older adults in need through these services since the onset of COVID-19.

15. **Applicant:** Fox Valley Hands of Hope (FVHH)

Agency Background: Fox Valley Hands of Hope provides compassionate guidance and support to the grieving, at no cost to clients. We serve children, youth, and adults who are suffering from loss due to death.

2023 QoL Project Proposal: *Operational Expenses*

Funding would benefit operations like the training of our volunteers and programmatic costs for the services that we provide free to the community. We serve multiple counties but would designate these funds towards our percentage of Aurora clients.

16. **Applicant:** Fox Valley Music Foundation

Agency Background: Fox Valley Music Foundation (The Foundation) is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to preserve, protect and present the music of the Fox Valley while providing music education to people of all ages and from all walks of life. The Foundation provides educational opportunities through free lectures and performances by local area musicians. These performances take place in various locations including The Venue (operated by the Foundation), libraries and public parks as well as utilizing social media channels to livestream events. The Foundation's website is a resource to all, providing facts, statistics and other related data on music history and current music events and performances. The Foundation also produces music documentaries in an effort to preserve the rich history of music in the Fox Valley area and provides these to educators. Similarly, the Foundation records performances that take place at The Venue making them available for the benefit of the artists while preserving these performances for generations to come. The Foundation/The Venue has become a gathering place for the music community as well as the community at large providing free and affordable music and educational programming to its patrons.

2023 QoL Project Proposal: *Big Band Student Jazz Fest*

The project will allow participating student bands from Aurora and surrounding areas to have access to internationally known musicians and clinicians offering an amazing educational and performance experience through group and individual instruction.

17. **Applicant:** Fox Valley Park District

Agency Background: The Fox Valley Park District promotes health and wellness through parks and outdoor spaces, recreational opportunities, and a wide range of programs to bring vitality to our communities. We encourage healthy lifestyles and enlightening residents of the benefits through active pursuits, education, and enjoyment. Feeling good – and living it.

2023 QoL Project Proposal: *Sports Saturday*

The program is a free, eleven-week program that is offered to grade school students for children to remain active through a variety of gym activities, general fitness and arts/crafts. Hall, McCleery, Schneider, Hermes, Gates & O'Donnell Schools

18. **Applicant:** Fox Valley Special Recreation Foundation

Agency Background: Fox Valley Special Recreation Foundation (FVSRF) supports the ancillary programs and services for Fox Valley Special Recreation Association. Projects supported by the Foundation go above and beyond the scope of services provided but are still essential to the quality of life of individuals with disabilities within the community. FVSRF was formed to provide a diverse range of year-round recreational activities to enable residents with disabilities to experience active, healthy, and fulfilling lifestyles. FVSRF offers a wide range of programs and services for individuals of all ages and abilities. Annually FVSRF implements more than 600 programs and special events, assuring and promoting choice for all individuals. The mission of FVSRF is to enrich the lives of people with disabilities. Working collaboratively with member agencies and community partners, we pledge to put people first.

2023 QoL Project Proposal: *SootheSpace*

The entire community scope of FVSRF is from Oswego to South Elgin. About 30% would be residents of Aurora. FVSRF is requesting 35% of the overall budget to be supported to match the percentage of population estimated.

19. **Applicant:** Fox Valley United Way

Agency Background: Fox Valley United Way is committed to ensuring that all young children, birth to age 5 have access and equity to early childhood resources and education. Investing in the health, education and financial stability of all individuals in our community provides a child a strong foundation to achieve success in school and life. Fox Valley United Way's history began in 1922 with the founding of the Aurora Social Service Federation. The organization incorporated the United Way name and community tenets in 1972 and was renamed the United Way of the Aurora Area. The name was changed. The impact of our SPARK Early Childhood Collaboration initiative has proven that to advance the common good, we need to ensure that children birth to five years old in the communities we support have equitable access to early childhood resources and education. We hope to achieve this goal by focusing on the whole child and the whole family.

2023 QoL Project Proposal: *Gateway to Early Childhood: Play.Learn.Connect*

Play.Learn.Connect provides parent-child education sessions that encompass learning through play; Developmental Screenings; and family interviews for parents seeking information and support regarding early childhood programs.

20. **Applicant:** Girl Scouts of Northern Illinois

Agency Background: The Girl Scouts mission is to build girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. The Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE) is the nation's premier leadership development program designed specifically for girls, and is based on three keys: discover, connect, and take action. The GSLE helps girls discover by encouraging exploration of not only their own interests, talents, and skills, but also the world around them. This year we are adding an emphasis on serving our Latina girls and families as we have seen a rise in membership of Latina's. We want to ensure that all materials and communications to families are translated into Spanish so that families can fully

understand the programming and events that are available for their girls. Furthermore, we have been working to build a pipeline of volunteers in the community that represent their community. We have successfully completed one cohort of Latina's Taking the Lead in Aurora.

2023 QoL Project Proposal: *Project Opportunity - Aurora*

Girls in Aurora in grades K-8 will participate in the Girl Scouts Leadership Experience by completing skill-building work and earning badges. Adult women will participate in Latina's Taking the Lead building their own leadership skills.

21. **Applicant:** Hope for Tomorrow, Inc.

Agency Background: Hope for Tomorrow, Inc. (HFT) was founded, in October 2001, to fill an inconceivable void in Kane County's Continuum of Care. HFT is a 501 (c) 3 not-for-profit social services agency that operates three (3) highly structured, clinically directed, substance-free homes - in Aurora, Illinois - for twenty-six (26) homeless men and veterans suffering from the diseases of mental health (post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety disorders, bi-polar disorder, major depressive disorders...) and/or chronic substance use disorders (alcohol, opiates, marijuana, cocaine, prescription pain medications...). HFT's mission is to professionally, ethically, and compassionately provide evidenced-based clinical and residential services that empower our clientele to transform their lives and permanently reintegrate into society as accountable, responsible, substance-free citizens in the community. HFT's vision is to provide a safe, secure, and nurturing environment where people can overcome the obstacles that prevent them from achieving their life's purpose, while finding their way back to a loving relationship with God of their understanding. Hope for Tomorrow does not discriminate and provides services to all persons regardless of race, ethnicity, creed, gender identity, gender orientation, HIV/AIDS status, or financial ability to pay.

2023 QoL Project Proposal: *Homeless Men's & Veteran's Recovery Home Programs (HMVRHP)*
HFT is requesting approval of \$30,000 Quality of Life grant to provide a "hand-up", as opposed to a "hand-out", to an estimated 28-30 City of Aurora resident's struggling with substance use/co-occurring disorders, so they can become self-sufficient.

22. **Applicant:** Imperfect Angels Organization

Agency Background: Imperfect Angels Organization was founded in Aurora, IL in 2016 with a mission to enhance the lives of at-risk youth girls to help them reach their full potential. Our curriculum consists of four major concepts, self-love, self-respect, self-responsibility and self-happiness, and they are broken into 3 lessons each that creates the monthly workshop's topics. Our workshop contains a positive and caring environment which provides a topic-based lesson, hands-on activity and expression session for the participants. In addition to the workshops, we started the annual Girls Bonding Retreat. The retreat's itinerary is a batch of mini workshops and lessons on mental health, physical health, cooking lessons, self-defense lessons, journaling, careers and trades, resilience training, financial literacy, cultural and agricultural lessons and much other needed education on the facets of womanhood and living a healthy, positive lifestyle. Each participant is awarded a completion certificate at the end of the retreat to celebrate their growth and accomplishment. Each program and/or event has its own focus, but the overall mission is to build the female leaders and mothers of the next generations while keeping them away from destructive behaviors and thoughts. Our vision is to serve 1,000+ girls annually by 2025. With new chapters of Imperfect Angels developing around the county, making us a national organization, we know that our home is Aurora, IL and this chapter sets the tone and expectations for the others.

2023 QoL Project Proposal: *Imperfect Angels of IL - Youth Advancement Program*

Our 2023 Youth Advancement Program's workshops and/or events will be held in Aurora, IL. Our services will include on-going mentoring workshops, Support events for parents/adults, Support Our Sisters Giveaway, and the annual Girls Bonding Retreat.

23. **Applicant:** Indian Prairie Educational Foundation

Agency Background: In partnership with Indian Prairie School District 204, the Indian Prairie Educational Foundation enriches education for students by supporting their academic, artistic, emotional and physical needs. We share a vision where students achieve success through out-of-the-box thinking, unique opportunities and exposure to inspiring possibilities.

2023 QoL Project Proposal: *Kid Essentials Program*

The Kid Essentials Fund exists to support the large number of homeless and at-risk students in District 204 by providing timely support to meet the essential needs of these students when all other resources have been exhausted.

24. **Applicant:** Kane County United

Agency Background: Our organization is staffed by leaders with decades of experience in leading, mentoring, and working with young people to enable them to optimize their life choices. We provide training on navigating the workplace, entrepreneurship, organizing and mental health and will continue these activities for Aurora area youth.

2023 QoL Project Proposal: *Youth Training and Mentorship*

The Youth Training and Mentorship project focuses on training young people for the workforce and entrepreneurship. The project is specific to Aurora youth in current programs across the area.

25. **Applicant:** Ladder Up

Agency Background: Ladder Up provides free financial programs to help clients secure the tax refunds they deserve, gain the knowledge to navigate today's complex financial systems, and obtain financial aid to make college dreams a reality. Ladder Up's programs are designed to alleviate poverty by increasing the financial stability of Illinois families and communities. Ladder Up operates three programs: The Tax Assistance Program (TAP), the Financial Capability Program (FCP), and the Tax Clinic. Ladder Up operates one of the nation's largest Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) programs. Ladder Up offers free, high-quality tax preparation services through the Tax Assistance Program (TAP), helping low-income Illinois residents access millions of dollars in tax credits and refunds, including the EITC. Thousands of low-income clients visit Ladder Up's community sites and now also have the option to access the virtual program. The organization offers free tax preparation services both during the regular tax season and in the off season.

2023 QoL Project Proposal: *Ladder Up Tax Income Preparation and Financial Support Services for Low Income Aurora Residents*

Ladder Up will provide free tax return preparation services to help low-income Aurora residents secure valuable tax refunds and obtain eligible tax credits as well as provide them with access to legal counsel and financial educational services.

26. **Applicant:** Loaves & Fishes Community Services

Agency Background: Loaves & Fishes Community Services is an anti-poverty, hunger-relief organization that has served the community since 1984. Our mission is to provide healthy food and impactful programs to promote self-sufficiency. We believe to eliminate hunger we must address its root causes. We provide access to nutritious food and resources that help families overcome the barriers that prevent them from living healthy, economically stable lives. Our Grocery Assistance Program provides access to nutritious foods through a client-choice market, online market, and offsite deliveries. Targeted

programs provide extra nutrition for infants, children, and seniors. Integrated with our mission are our core values: compassion, dignity, health, hope, and service. We believe in the power of community to change lives; that by working together we can accomplish great things; that each person possesses inherent dignity; the opportunity to serve is a gift; and food is a right and not a privilege. In addition to food assistance, Loaves & Fishes CARES Programs help families stay housed and employed and include the following agency-run programs: emergency financial assistance, car donations, resource meetings, public benefits applications, tax return preparation, and job search assistance. Through community partners, Loaves & Fishes is also a site for financial literacy, legal assistance, emotional counseling, and health screenings.

2023 QoL Project Proposal: *Emergency Assistance for Aurora Residents*

The Emergency Assistance Program supports families in need by providing rent and utility assistance to sustain a family's housing situation. The program seeks to end homelessness by preventing it. Funds from QoL will support Aurora residents only.

27. **Applicant:** Marie Wilkinson Child Development Center

Agency Background: The Marie Wilkinson Child Development Center (MWDC) has kept to its original goals for 52 years to provide quality service to the Aurora Community through early childcare, educational readiness, technological skill development, safe/healthy environment, before/after school programs, homework assistance and variety of family support. The Mission of the MWDC is to "Provide assistance in a diverse area of education and charitable provisions to our families". Our service has been a constant in the lives of many of the city's poorest and most at-risk vulnerable residents who in most cases would be unable to pay for childcare programming. We have provided that critically needed beginning for children to succeed in school ages 2-12 years of age.

2023 QoL Project Proposal: *Marie Wilkinson Child Care & Youth Before & After School Care*

Quality of Life fund will help MWDC to continue to provide a comprehensive development program for the social, emotional, physical, intellectual growth, preschool, before & after school homework assistance readiness program. Our service area is 60505

28. **Applicant:** Marie Wilkinson Food Pantry

Agency Background: The Marie Wilkinson Food Pantry's (MWFP) history of work to eliminate food insecurity in the Aurora area dates back to 1957 when a civil rights activist, for whom the pantry is named, began handing out food from the front door of her home to those in need. Her philanthropic work to combat food insecurity in the region grew from its humble beginnings and culminated in the opening of the current MWFP in 2004. Today the Pantry offers two sites for area residents to access food support, a community garden boasting a substantial, yearly harvest of organic produce, and a wealth of meaningful partnerships to allow the provision of wrap-around services to the clients who visit the MWFP. The mission of the MWFP is to meet the hunger needs of individuals and families in Aurora, Illinois, and surrounding communities by educating, empowering, and enlightening people to be self-sustainable through collaborations and partnerships.

2023 QoL Project Proposal: *Community Growing Food Needs - Reducing Food Insecurity*

This project is an ongoing project to include the provision of healthy food to those experiencing food insecurity; additionally working to support the community seniors, veterans, and students.

29. **Applicant:** Northern Illinois Food Bank

Agency Background: Northern Illinois Food Bank's mission is to provide nutritious food and resources for our neighbors, with dignity, equity and convenience through partnerships and innovation with a vision of everyone in Northern Illinois having the food they need to thrive. Since 1983, we have been committed to advocating for and with our neighbors by telling their stories and engaging a diverse

community of supporters, who unite in giving their time, donating food and contributing funds to improve access to nutritious meals to increase food security throughout our 13-county service area. Northern Illinois Food Bank's BackPack Program serves children at risk of food-insecurity on weekends when they do not have access to other meal programs through school or after-school activities. Our Senior Grocery Program delivers 1,500 boxes of shelf-stable foods selected with seniors' dietary needs in mind, including whole grains, protein, low-sodium canned soups and vegetables, along with a bag of fresh produce, each month, to seniors in subsidized housing and those living independently through member food pantries.

2023 QoL Project Proposal 1: BackPack Program

The Food Bank is requesting funding to support our BackPack program in Aurora. Children identified as at risk of food-insecurity on weekends receive a backpack of nutritious shelf-stable, easy to prepare food to take home on Fridays.

2023 QoL Project Proposal 2: Senior Grocery Program

Northern Illinois Food Bank is requesting support for our Senior Grocery Program in Aurora that supports senior health and wellness by providing nutritious groceries to food insecure older adults age 60 and over.

30. **Applicant:** Quad County Urban League, Inc.

Agency Background: Quad County Urban League, Inc. (QCUL) was founded in 1975 by a diverse group of local leaders responding to the absence of a community-based organization to address the needs for academic achievement, job placement and training, equal access to employment, housing, and cultural enrichment for low-income and displaced citizens. QCUL, an affiliate of the National Urban League, serves the DuPage, Kane, Kendall, and Will counties of Illinois, securing equal opportunities for all underrepresented persons including people of color, women, and persons with disabilities. QCUL is a member agency of United Way. The QCUL mission and vision ensures civil rights for all people by eradicating barriers to equal participation in the economic and social mainstream. Participants in work-based learning have the opportunity to gain an understanding of employer expectations, develop strong employment skills, and good work habits, acquire skills connected to specific job functions, and identify career pathways, opportunities with a company and an industry. These programs include, but are not limited to, a pre-apprenticeship program, careers program for solar pipeline training, Aurora youth careers program for construction and TDL, and federal and state YouthBuild grants.

2023 QoL Project Proposal: *The Quad County Urban League's (QCUL) Economic Empowerment Center – Youth*

Evidence-based programs such as Edgenuity (credit recover) and Apricot for management; employment skills training; and community resources, serving Youth and young adults ages 16-24, Unemployed adults, and Families in poverty. Service area is Aurora.

31. **Applicant:** R.I.T.A.S. Ministry (Restoring Inmates To America's Society)

Agency Background: Beginning in 1997, R.T.A.S. Ministry has been a pioneer in working towards criminal justice reform and reentry efforts. R.I.T.A.S. Ministry provides a total aftercare program for anyone who has been involved in the criminal justice system. Services include substance abuse & anger management counseling, mentoring, employment assistance, emergency housing and personal needs. Also, in addition to providing assistance to client's in successfully navigating parole or probation, R.I.T.A.S. Ministry offers guidance and support to family members facing the incarceration of a loved one.

2023 QoL Project Proposal: *Prisoner reentry services include mentoring/support, employment assistance, counseling and family support*

This program is a total aftercare reentry service offering exoffenders and their families the assistance needed to navigate successfully through the complex issues they face in order to become productive citizens in the City of Aurora.

32. **Applicant:** Riverwalk Adult Day Services

Agency Background: Riverwalk Adult Day Services (Riverwalk) provides full-day, half-day, and drop-in programs. The Riverwalk conducts appropriate programming and activities for adults 18 and older that cannot be left home alone safely. Although most of our participants are over the age of 60, Riverwalk is the only center in the area that provides services starting at age 18 who may be navigating conditions with cognitive decline (Down Syndrome, intellectual disability, stroke, etc). The Riverwalk was founded in 1983 as the Ecumenical Adult Day and changed its name in 2018. We have served over 750,000 hours of service to seniors, adults, and their caregivers. Our activities are planned by the activity director and alternate between passive and active activities every half hour to help engage the participants. Nursing staff monitor medical conditions, track monthly vital signs, administer medications, communicate with participants' doctors and family members as needed, and advocate and educate people on medical needs.

2023 QoL Project Proposal: *Staff Salaries*

The grant would help fund the salaries of highly trained staff for the participants. The grant request for \$10,000, which is 4% of the annual cost of salaries, is less than the salary cost to service the 17% of Aurora participants we currently have.

33. **Applicant:** SciTech Hands on Museum

Agency Background: SciTech Hands On Museum is an educational resource that serves students and families in Kane County and the surrounding areas. It is a nonprofit, charitable organization classified as a 501(c) (3) public charity by the Internal Revenue Service. During the course of the last 30 plus years we have provided leading educational programs in science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics (STEAM). The mission of SciTech Hands On Museum, a Science and Technology Center, is to inspire learning through creative, interactive activities and educational programs. While SciTech has been challenged due to Covid and loss of lease, rather than move into a new physical museum space which would require significant capital expenditures, we decided to focus on how we could use the many hands-on, mobile resources and developed curriculum to serve our clients and our mission in a more agile way. We will have an office and base of operation in Aurora While recently we have been focused on our exit, we continued to be good stewards of our resources. We also donated exhibits and resources to local Scout troops, local and international science museums and local non-profit organizations such as Heses House, Wayside Cross and Fox Valley United Way. While we are still in the rebuilding phase, we are staying focused on reimagining SciTech as a STEM education resource, provider and convener and plan to continue to bring STEM programming and resources direct to the community using a mobile, agile model.

2023 QoL Project Proposal: *SciTech Wonder Clubs & STEM Programming*

SciTech's mission is to inspire STEM learning through creative, interactive activities and educational programs serving the greater Aurora area.

34. **Applicant:** Simply Destinee

Agency Background: Services provided include workforce development, peer support, parent support, arts and dance as well as life skills provided for all ages. Simply Destinee Youth Program is a community-based creative arts after-school and out of school program for at-risk youth in Aurora. The mission is "Help the Grow, Teach them to Dance, Watch them Live." Beginning as an open dance program, Simply

Destinee has grown into a youth center for vulnerable, underserved youth, giving support, education, engagement, dance and arts programs.

2023 QoL Project Proposal: Seeds

Support, Educate, Empower & Dance (S.E.E.D.) - Engage physically & socially isolated Simply Destinee youth and families through relationship-building, workforce development and technology for improved physical & mental health in the Aurora area.

35. **Applicant:** The Judah Robinson Foundation, NFP

Agency Background: The Judah Robinson Foundation, NFP (JRF), was founded by Dr. Amanda Goldman, LCPC, in response to the obvious shortage of targeted mental health services available to individuals impacted by homelessness and psychosis. For nearly 5 years now, JRF has provided mobile counseling and case management through its Homeless Mental Health Intervention program and (during the height of the pandemic), office-based services, as well.

2023 QoL Project Proposal: Homeless Mental Health Intervention

We provide mobile counseling and case management, and plan to add a permanent drop in center this year. We are requesting funding for Aurora residents primarily. We have served populations from other communities and even surrounding states, as well.

36. **Applicant:** The Sandwich Board

Agency Background: For many years, Trinity Church of Aurora has supplied meals every Thursday for the less fortunate in the Aurora area. In 2019, The Sandwich Board became independent from Trinity Church, although it continues to utilize its facilities. The Sandwich Board became a 501c3 tax exempt entity on August 5, 2019. In addition to meals, The Sandwich Board provides clothing and winter gear for its clients as these items are available.

2023 QoL Project Proposal: The Sandwich Board Facility Improvements

A vent hood for the kitchen, advised by the County Health Dept., will be purchased to enhance safety and a comfortable environment for volunteers to work. Currently, the used restaurant equipment market has many such items at reasonable prices.

37. **Applicant:** The START Program

Agency Background: The START Program (TSP) is a recognized 501c3 youth organization. Our mission is to equip youth with the necessary pieces to be successful at the puzzle of life. We utilize a straight talk approach, believing that communication is key to building any relationship. TSP originally started in 2011 in Chicago, Illinois and later moved to Aurora. As recent as September of 2022, TSP relocated to our new location which will provide more classroom space, a full gym, and new opportunities to serve our community. TSP provides life skills classes where youth engage with real life exercises to help prepare them for the future, barbershop rap where young men get haircuts in a group setting and participate in mentoring sessions, peace circles, fitness and sporting programs, tutoring and educational support, and much more. At TSP, we pride ourselves in our passion, dedication, and willingness to provide quality programs that help challenge all youth, engage families, and change lives.

2023 QoL Project Proposal: 3F Program (Family, Fun, Fitness)

Our 3F Program would take place in our location in the Aurora area where we provide fitness and sporting activities accompanied by a mentoring component. Promoting family unity, fun, and of course fitness in order to encourage a healthy lifestyle.

38. **Applicant:** Urban Youth Ministry, a division of Wayside Cross Ministries

Agency Background: For over 34-years, UYM has been providing academic enrichment and youth leadership development programming, free of charge, for under-resourced families with children in

Aurora. Many of the children served are at-risk of a myriad of challenges that threaten their current quality of life and the success of their future. They are at-risk of issues like gang indoctrination and violence, sexual promiscuity, underage pregnancy, academic failure, trouble with the law, abuse and neglect, truancy, hunger after school and during summer months, and a lack of adult supervision, to name a few. UYM's programming is structured to help mitigate these issues and serves as a safety net for the children and respite for their families. To help mitigate the many challenges faced by impoverished families with children, UYM has strategically implemented structured, high-quality programming through an after school program, summer camp, and baseball league. These programs are offered year-round and free to children in Aurora. Additionally, an optional part of UYM's programming is Bible study, where children learn the word of God and how to apply it to their lives. To offer parents/guardians a participation option, this portion of the program is provided at the end so that children can leave if they are not interested in participating.

2023 QoL Project Proposal: *2023 Urban Youth Ministry Academic Enrichment & Youth Leadership Development Program*

In 2023, UYM will serve over 300 children in Aurora who are Hispanic and African American, ages 6-17. Students receive meals, homework help, tutoring, other academic support, physical activities, art/crafts, and learning enrichment, to name a few.

39. **Applicant:** Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America

Agency Background: Balvihar Hindi Pathshala is an educational program of the Chicago Chapter of World Hindu Council of America (VHPA A non-profit) and is committed to educating, cherishing and celebrating Hindi language and Hindu cultural heritage. Balvihar operates on an educational, social, cultural and spiritual basis and is open to all. Balvihar is balanced in its approach: physical, intellectual and spiritual. BalVihar is a nationwide initiative of Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America which has been running Sunday Hindi Language School in various states across United States since 1975 (around 40 Years). Balvihar members work on a purely voluntary basis. We are driven by the simple desire to serve and educate our youngsters about our great Hindu heritage. All volunteer teachers go through several levels of consistent professional training to enable students to learn in fun filled environment. Balvihar syllabus & curriculum is based on foreign language standard currently applied in schools and purposeful real life task-based, age appropriate communicative activities. Our curriculum also helps students to take AAPPL test (ACTFL Assessment of Performance towards Proficiency in Foreign Language) to achieve Foreign language credits which is offered by IPSD 204/203 district schools in Illinois as Seal of Bi-literacy at high school level. Hindi is one of the language offered by AAPPL. Balvihar program is equally divided in academic & cultural parts. Lesson plans are developed keeping the main focus on Hindi language and culture. It is mandatory for students to participate in the whole program.

2023 QoL Project Proposal: *Bal-Vihar*

This program serves needs of K-12 Students and provides instruction approved by IBSE in Hindi Language which is considered qualified instruction required for High School Foreign Language Credits.

40. **Applicant:** Wheatland Athletic Association

Agency Background: The Wheatland Athletic Association, WAA, is a 44-year-old non-profit, volunteer organization whose purpose is to provide athletic programs for families living in and around the Aurora, Illinois area. The Wheatland Athletic Association was founded in 1977 to provide T-Ball for 66 children and has since grown to thousands registrations annually in many different programs. WAA offers recreational and competitive programs in soccer, baseball, softball, basketball, flag football, and more, and travel programs in soccer, softball, baseball and basketball. Participants range in age from toddler through adult. Wheatland's philosophy is to progressively develop children's skills by offering programs for various age levels. Many of the WAA programs are recreational, which provides a non-threatening

and a positive experience for the children. Competitive and traveling leagues are also available for the more skillful and experienced players. Scholarships are available to all participants who may need financial assistance. Wheatland Athletic Association structures programs so they are geographically convenient to residents by establishing teams and scheduling events in close proximity to neighborhoods and schools. WAA works closely as a community partner with the local school districts, park districts, and churches, to provide, maintain and upgrade fields and facilities.

2023 QoL Project Proposal: *Fee Assistance and Scholarship Program for Aurora Residents in Need*
Annually, WAA provides scholarships and fee assistance to families in need. We seek to continue to increase our assistance and utilize additional funds, specifically for Aurora residents that request help and demonstrate a need.

41. **Applicant:** World Relief Corp of the NAE ("World Relief Chicagoland")

Agency Background: World Relief has served immigrants and refugees in the Chicago area for more than 40 years, initially resettling refugees in Chicago and DuPage County in 1979 and in Aurora in 1999 before eventually expanding services to include all low-income immigrant groups. WRC's Refugee and Immigrant Youth Services program involves early childhood support, academic tutoring for school-aged students, parent education, and school enrollments. These services help children of all ages grow and learn while helping their families become well-integrated into the community. All of WRC's services seek to address families' complex needs and help them overcome socioeconomic, language, and cultural barriers and, eventually, achieve social and financial stability. To that end, WRC intentionally engages volunteers and local partners, who provide both relational and tangible support to participants in WRC's programs and contribute to creating a welcoming community environment. A network of paid and volunteer interpreters who speak dozens of languages help to make all services accessible for clients who speak more than 60 languages and dialects. Additionally, strong relationships with Aurora school districts, teachers, training providers, government agencies, and peer organizations comprise a network of support that helps to meet WRC's clients' unique needs and connect them with a broad array of community resources.

2023 QoL Project Proposal: *Refugee and Immigrant Youth Services*

The Refugee and Immigrant Youth Services program will provide early childhood support, academic tutoring, parent support and mentoring to promote academic improvement, socioemotional development, and community integration of youth in Aurora.

42. **Applicant:** Xilin Association

Agency Background: XiLin Association is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with 30+ year history which provides comprehensive and diverse social services for underserved seniors and families. It is the second largest Asian Community Center in Illinois. We serve 5 counties including Kane, Will, Dupage, Suburban Cook and Lake. We have 6 locations across Illinois including Aurora, Elgin, Naperville, Arlington heights, Chicago-Pilsen and Chicago-Chinatown. Our main social services include: In-home Service for seniors, Community health, Senior's Day Care, Welcome Center for new immigrants, Youth education and performing arts.

2023 QoL Project Proposal: *Manage aging life*

Recruit caregivers and seniors in Aurora. Caregivers provide care to seniors, and assist with the public welfare benefits application/renewal. Conduct 6-8 health workshops at senior buildings, along with activities. We serve solely in Aurora

43. **Applicant:** YWCA Metropolitan Chicago

Agency Background: Founded in 1876, YWCA Metropolitan Chicago is a social enterprise dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women, and promoting peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all. As a

leading association among a national network of more than 200 YWCAs, the YWCA Metropolitan Chicago impacts tens of thousands of individuals and families through programming that focuses on assisting women and families throughout Chicago and the western and south suburbs in the areas of Personal Safety and Wellness, Quality Education and Training and Economic Sustainability. We provide a comprehensive suite of services that meets the changing needs of our clients, helping them to transition from surviving to thriving. A commitment to racial justice, equity, and inclusion runs through all YWCA activities. Located in the third-largest American city, YWCA Metropolitan Chicago serves as a national incubator for innovative programming, outreach, and engagement strategies. YWCA Metropolitan Chicago offers a variety of programs to individuals and families that we serve to provide support and tools they need to heal from trauma, obtain skills and credentials, access resources and opportunities, and build stronger communities.

2023 QoL Project Proposal: *Early Childhood Emergency Fund Project*

The Early Childhood Emergency Fund Project will provide access to resources for families enrolled in early childhood programs in Aurora exclusively. Resources include groceries, transportation assistance, and weather-appropriate clothing.