



# 2024 - 25 ANNUAL REPORT





## DEAR FRIENDS,

Every week, I feel immense gratitude and joy to spend time in a room filled with young voices, each one carrying a spark of hope, creativity and exceptional potential. Yet beyond that room, the world moves at breakneck speed: technology accelerates toward unimaginable frontiers, social media and gaming redefine how young people connect. The cultural and political landscape reshapes the future before their very eyes. Our youth are coming of age in a moment of extraordinary possibility, but also profound challenge. It is our shared responsibility to equip them with the tools not just to survive this era of change, but to lead and thrive within it.

This report highlights the ways in which the 2024–25 season built upon Uniting Voices’ commitment to accessible music education, fostering community and belonging at a time when the world feels increasingly divided, and underscoring that the need for our programs is greater than ever. We have also witnessed “Little Voices, Big Growth” through our Prelude program, where we have expanded access to the life-changing power of music to our youngest singers, ages 6–8.

This year, our singers traveled abroad across Italy and to six cities across the United States, building coalitions of harmony among other young artists. Through these connections, we are empowering the next generation of leaders to step forward with courage and understanding.



I am deeply grateful to have been honored at the 2024 Red Jacket Optional gala. Even more remarkably, we raised over \$2 million, affirming the incredible support that sustains our mission.

As we approach our 70th anniversary, which will commence during our 2026–27 season, I am struck by the countless young voices who have shaped our organization’s history. Each generation leaves its mark on the world.

Today, a new generation is waiting for guidance, connection and a chance to shine. Our enduring work is to help their extraordinary potential take shape as empathetic and compassionate leaders, a mission Uniting Voices has pursued since 1956. In that same room where I witness this generation’s sparks of promise each week, I see the future taking shape. It gives me hope that, together, we can ensure every young person has the chance to find their voice, discover their strength and lead the way forward towards our vision of a harmonious world.

With gratitude,

Josephine Lee  
President

Ellen-Blair Chube  
Chair of the Board

*"...we are empowering the next generation of leaders to step forward with courage and understanding."*



View our 2024-25  
Year in Review Video

View the 2024-25  
Annual Report Online



# Our Programs



**5,000+**

youth served annually through core programs, workshops and tour activities



**100%**

high school graduation and college acceptance rate



**145**

ensembles

**86**

schools

**6-18**

ages served



**2**

Chicago citywide ensembles



**12**

Neighborhood Choir Programs



**1,400+**

youth served through workshops and tour activities



**3,600+**

youth served through core programs



**6,300+**

instructional hours per week

# Core Programs By the Numbers

**76** PRELUDE SINGERS

**2,854** SCHOOL PROGRAM SINGERS

**562** NEIGHBORHOOD CHOIR PROGRAM SINGERS

**26** DIMENSION SINGERS

**90** VOICE OF CHICAGO SINGERS





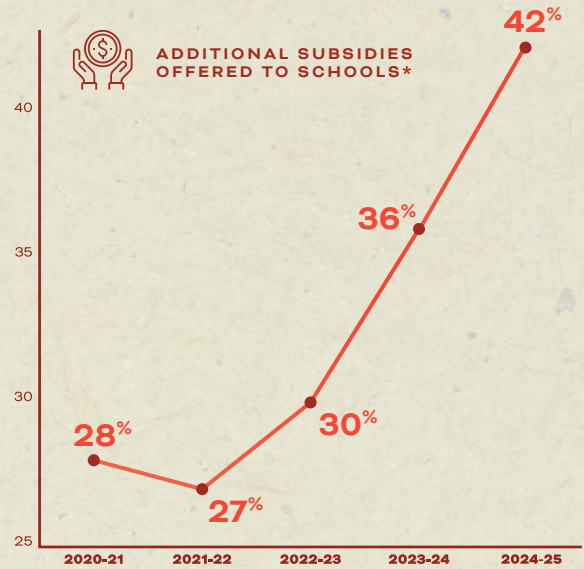
# Meeting the Moment

## Bridging the Gap for Every Singer

At Uniting Voices, we are committed to keeping our programs accessible through a sliding-scale tuition model based on reported family income. Yet the need for subsidies continues to grow as family income decreases year-over-year and cost of living increases.

From FY23 to FY25, the percentage of singers from low-to-moderate income households increased by 11.7%—and because our overall participation has grown, that represents a 43% increase in the number of families who reported a low-to-moderate income. Moreover, the specific distribution of singers within this range compounds the issue—from FY23 to FY25, the number of singers whose family income fell within the lowest bracket of our sliding-scale increased by 330%.

Support from our community makes it possible to meet this rising need, ensuring that **every child has the opportunity to experience the life-changing power of music.**



\*Uniting Voices Chicago School Program pricing is subsidized by more than 50% thanks to the generosity of our donor community.

# Meeting the Moment

## Bridging the Gap for Every Singer

The need for School Program subsidies has steadily grown year after year since 2020, underscoring how essential support is to keeping music education accessible. This rise reflects the economic pressures schools are facing. Our school programs are vital to a thriving generation of youth in Chicago, fostering creativity, confidence and connection in young people.





Little Voices—

# Big Growth!

**Music isn't just fun!** It can play a critical role in cognitive and behavioral development for our youngest singers. Children who sing and learn music may experience improvements in language skills, better performance in reading, math, science and memory skills and improved attention spans.

20%  
growth in  
Prelude  
programs

The Prelude program provides beginning level vocal instruction and literacy for first and second grade students.



**CANTO LATINO:  
ALMA DEL SUR  
October 2024**

Uniting Voices singers of all levels joined together for a day of celebration featuring South American rhythms, young voices and vibrant community joy.



**SONGS OF THE SEASON  
December 2024**

Alumni, Voice of Chicago and select Neighborhood Choir Program singers joined together on stage at the Harris Theater to celebrate the season of wonder.



**COMMUNITY CONCERTS  
December 2024–June 2025**

Neighborhood Choir Programs, School Programs and Dimension brought Chicago’s vibrant communities to life at performances throughout Chicago.

# 2024-25 Season Highlights





### GET AMP'D SOLO SHOWCASE

January 2025

At our first-ever Get Amp'd Solo Showcase, 59 soloists rocked out on the iconic Metro stage with powerhouse performances of hits and originals.

*A heartfelt thanks to Metro Chicago for amplifying young voices! Photo credit: GlitterGuts*



### BLACK FUTURES CONCERT SERIES: AFROFUTURISM: THE FREEDOM METROPOLIS

February 2025

Thousands of Chicago students joined together in song and envisioned their dynamic future over three days of performances at Chicago Symphony Center.



### CHICAGO TOUR & PERFORMANCE AT RATE FIELD

April 2025

The Rogers Park Neighborhood Choir and Dimension delivered a home run of a performance singing the National Anthem at Rate Field, a stop on the Bridging America Tour in Chicago.



### PAINT THE TOWN RED

May 2025

Thousands of young voices joined together in song for one joyful day at Navy Pier! Students celebrated the transformative power of music together all day long.



# 2024-25 Season Highlights



# Expanding Horizons

Uniting Voices Chicago's Bridging America Tours provide opportunities for youth to travel outside of their communities and connect with other young people across the U.S.

Touring is an essential opportunity Uniting Voices provides, expanding horizons through travel and connection for the young people in our after-school programs.

## **MINNEAPOLIS**

**May 1-4, 2025**

Austin, Beverly, Humboldt  
Park and Gage Park  
Neighborhood Choirs

## **CHICAGO**

**May 2-4, 2025**

Dimension  
& Rogers Park  
Neighborhood Choir

## **NEW YORK/ WASHINGTON D.C.**

**March 27-30, 2025**

Off the Street Club & Pilsen/  
Little Village Neighborhood  
Choir

## **ST. LOUIS**

**May 8-11, 2025**

Albany Park & West  
Town Neighborhood  
Choirs

## **ATLANTA**

**May 15-18, 2025**

Englewood, Lincoln Park/  
DePaul and Hyde Park  
Neighborhood Choirs



# Learning Resources

## Expanding and Empowering Our Singers' Imagination

Our world-class music education programs emphasize social-emotional learning and a culturally responsive curriculum. Our singers don't just learn music from many genres, cultures and languages, but understand how the music is created and engage in conversation about the historical and social context of the songs. They also develop social-emotional skills like self-awareness and empathy alongside musical skills.

Our learning resource packets, created by our faculty and provided to singers at every level of our programs, assist the singers in learning the songs and their cultural contexts, and participating in reflections on their meaning. In these packets, our faculty uses storytelling as a teaching tool and way to convey knowledge and build a sense of empathy and belonging, following epic journeys of a young person who represents perspectives born out of real cultural experiences. Then, at our pillar programs, like Canto Latino, Black Futures Concert Series and Paint the Town Red, singers from around the city come together to perform the songs and forge connections through this shared experience.

Scan or click below for a deep dive into the learning resource packets provided to our singers!



[Canto Latino](#)



[Black Futures Concert Series](#)

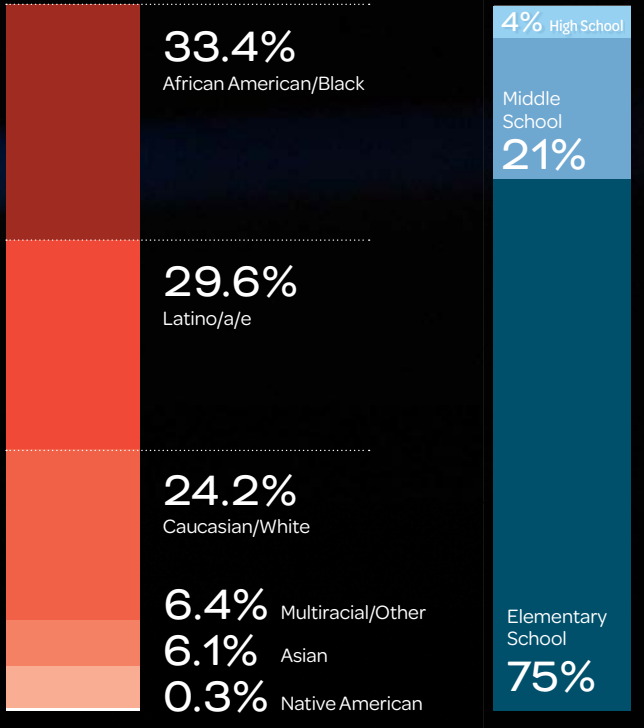


# VOICE OF CHICAGO Italy Tour 2025

**Creating Global Leaders:** When young people learn to lead through connection, they become global changemakers. Voice of Chicago, our premier ensemble, reflects the rich diversity of our city and shares that spirit with the world on international tours.



# Who We Serve



## Our Impact

**100%**  
of singers participate  
at a subsidized cost

**70%**  
of youth come from low-to-  
moderate income households.



# The Next Generation

Your support of Uniting Voices equips the city's youth with the necessary skills to become the next generation of leaders.\*

80%

Demonstrate curiosity and excitement for learning

80%

Explore the perspectives of others with kindness and compassion

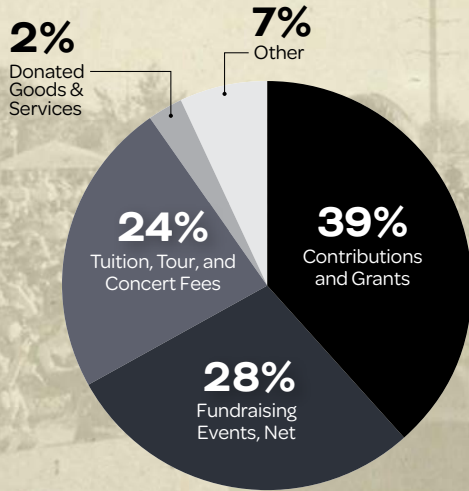
87%

Demonstrate leadership to achieve personal goals and positively inspire others

*\*Data collected from 2024-25 annual spring assessment of Uniting Voices Chicago singers*

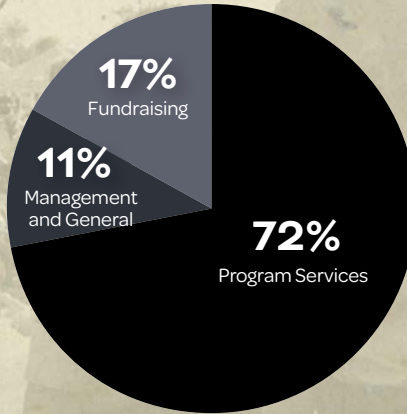
# UNITING VOICES

## 2024-25 Financials



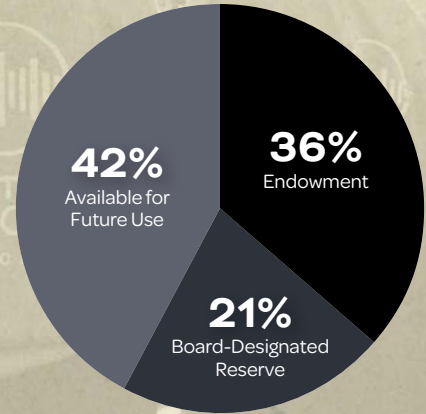
### Operating Revenue

Total Operating Revenue: \$5,535,964



### Operating Expenses

Total Operating Expenses: \$5,414,194



### Net Assets

Total Net Assets: \$12,478,668

# Celebrating Josephine Lee's 25 Years of Visionary Leadership at Red Jacket Optional

This year at our Red Jacket Optional gala, we honored our President and Artistic Director, Josephine Lee, for 25 years of visionary leadership and the indelible impact she's had on a generation of young people.

Under her leadership, we raised over \$2 million to support accessible music education and youth empowerment.



"She pushes us to be better every day. I think it's so powerful to teach young people how to take music seriously. It's something that can really change our lives."

—MYRA, VOICE OF CHICAGO SINGER





# OUR DONOR COMMUNITY

Our work wouldn't be possible without the generous support of our donor community. **Thank you to our supporters for making it all possible.**

# RESONATING IMPACT: A CRESCENDO OF SUPPORT

## Katie & Rob Ashcroft

The Ambassadors Board of Uniting Voices Chicago is a group of Chicago's next generation of philanthropic leaders who collaborate on a range of events and initiatives to develop their skills as advocates for cultural diversity, while raising significant funds in support of our mission to inspire and change lives through music. For the past three years, Katie Ashcroft has served as the Chair for this group, leading the way to increasing success in member growth and funds raised. At the end of the 2024-2025 season, Katie and the Ambassadors Board achieved a total of 48 active members and raised a record-breaking \$148,000 at their annual fundraiser, SoundBites. Katie and her husband Rob have long served as advocates for the mission of Uniting Voices Chicago. They are deeply valued members of the Uniting Voices community and provide a much-needed example of the future for arts and culture philanthropy in Chicago.

## Peoples Gas

Peoples Gas has provided financial support to Uniting Voices Chicago for more than 25 years as part of its commitment to a strong arts and culture sector in Chicago. The company's donations include support for the annual Red Jacket Optional gala, as well as general program support. Peoples Gas also provides employee volunteers for Uniting Voices Chicago's pillar programs. The long-term partnership between Peoples Gas and Uniting Voices has improved accessibility to arts education programming in Chicago, enhancing the overall well-being of the communities served by the company and organization.

## Genesis Inspiration Foundation

Through the generous support of Genesis vehicle owners and dealers, and in partnership with Genesis Motor America, the Genesis Inspiration Foundation has invested significantly into youth arts programs since its inception in 2018. Committed to connecting youth with the transformative power of the arts, the Genesis Inspiration Foundation awarded a \$50,000 grant to Uniting Voices Chicago in 2025. This partnership reflects a shared belief that the arts can inspire and change lives, and together, we are opening doors for the next generation, ensuring access to Uniting Voices' programming for every young person in Chicago.



# OUR COMMUNITY

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Tracey Benford

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Laura Stern

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**Guy Rozentsveig, Vice Chair**

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**Conley Pollard, Co-Chair, Development & Events Committee**

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**Karena Brown, Co-Chair, Community Engagement Committee**

**Zach West, Co-Chair, Community Engagement Committee**

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# OUR COMMUNITY

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Sima Cunningham  
Madeline Dowling  
Terry Henderson  
Cece Hill  
Jackie Johnson  
Caroline Kagan  
Allie Kersten  
Kala Moynihan  
Wylene Patterson  
Nikita Sekhar  
Courtney Ward  
Ayanna Woods

### Community Council

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Jonathan Brooks  
Angela T. Ingram  
Abigail Muldoon  
Josephine Robinson  
Michael Strautmanis  
Angela Sedeño, Ph.D.  
Tanya Woods

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J. Nicole Brooks  
Nick Cave  
Peter CottonTale  
Brendan Fernandes  
Theaster Gates  
Thomas Kehoe  
Azeeza Khan  
Eileen LaCario  
Rob Lewis  
Abby Pucker  
GQ & JQ Qaiyum  
Monica Royer

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Garley Briggs  
Steven Carlson  
Ladonna Freidheim  
Anna Gonzalez  
Cece Hill  
Laura Maheshwary  
Yessenia Martinez  
Ranjanan Rajendra  
Annalee De Ramos  
Antoniya Reed  
Margarita Reina  
Jocelyn Smith  
Leah Talmers  
Stacy Wilson

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Dr. Natasha Buckner-Pena  
Anjie Lipsett  
Dan Moore  
Bill Riddle  
Dr. Erin Roche  
Dr. Wanda Withers

### DEI Task Force

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Alex Bravos  
Bailey Haynes  
Jackie Johnson  
Georgie Morvis  
Kyla Paguyo Steman  
Matt Roan  
Kelly Fekety  
Veronica Román Meyer

# OUR COMMUNITY

## FACULTY & STAFF

Elisabeth Baker  
Conductor

Dewey Bolz  
Conductor

Alex Bravos  
Conductor

Farlanda Buchannon  
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Geo Cooper  
Conductor, Pianist

Magdalena Delgado  
Conductor

Ashley Dingle  
Senior Manager of Special Events

Wesley Dziedzic  
Pianist

Kell Fahey  
Multimedia Designer

Kelly Fekety  
Chief Financial Officer

Amaranta Flores-Gualtieri  
Program Assistant

Chieko Garling  
Pianist

Zaria Gilmore  
Program Assistant

John Goodwin  
Principal Pianist

Stephanie Gregoire  
Conductor

Judy Hanson  
Senior Director

Gavin Harper  
Conductor

Bailey Haynes  
Conductor

Cece Hill  
Senior Neighborhood Program Director

Jackie Johnson  
City-wide Program Director

Elinor Keener  
Program Assistant

Daniela Lakosilova  
Program Assistant

Chelsea Lauing  
Chief Development Officer

Josephine Lee  
President

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Georgie Morvis  
Digital Marketing Manager

Krystal Navarro  
Program Assistant

Aubry Nelson  
Program Assistant

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Director of Africana Studies, Conductor

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Director of Marketing

Veronica Roman-Meyer  
Conductor

Shoumi Roy  
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Kevin Rudzinski  
Program Assistant

Adrian Ruiz  
Pianist

Maria Sanchez  
Senior Manager, Donor Services

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Production Coordinator

Drew Smith  
School Program Director

Jocelyn Smith  
Chief Program Officer

Kyla Paguyo Steman  
Grant Writer

Kyle Stephens  
Pianist

Heather Stewart  
Conductor

Charlie Stock  
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Amy Alvarado Tinucci  
Chief Operating Officer

Tina Villapando  
Program Assistant

Alex Whalen  
Operations Associate

Amanda Wolff  
Conductor

Lindsey Yap  
Development Associate

Sara Zimmerman  
Director of Production

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR  
LEAD PHILANTHROPIC PARTNERS



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FAMILY FOUNDATION



ELLEN-BLAIR CHUBE



ROSE & BOB FEALY ◊

LLOYD A. FRY  
FOUNDATION



GENESIS INSPIRATION FOUNDATION

JACQUELINE GRIESDORN  
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THE JOYCE E. AND KURT A.  
REICHARDT FAMILY TRUST ◊

RENEE & JOHN SALOMON

MRIDU & CHANDRA SEKHAR

JEAN-PAUL SPIRE TRUST

◊ Member of Voice of Tomorrow, which recognizes donors who have made planned gift commitments

# VOICE OF TOMORROW

*Generous gifts from Uniting Voices Chicago's Voice of Tomorrow planned giving society ensures life-changing opportunities are available for future singers.*

Susanne & David Baker

Veronica Davis

Rose & Bob Fealy \*

Jude & Diana Fernandes \*

Carrie L. Hedges

Melissa Kibler & Vincent Lazar \*

Ann Marie Lipinski & Steve Kagan \*

Jim & Ginger Meyer \*

Jean-Paul Spire Trust

The Joyce E. and Kurt A. Reichardt Family Trust

Dr. Doris Wineman Ph.D.

# CRESCENDO FUND

*Uniting Voices Chicago gratefully recognizes the cumulative, multi-year support of generous individuals and institutions who have made commitments to Crescendo Fund, a special fundraising initiative to support the objectives of the 2022-2026 strategic plan.*

**\$1M +**

Anonymous (2)

Rose & Bob Fealy \* ◇

David & Lesly Koo \*

**\$250,000 – \$499,999**

The Elizabeth Morse Charitable Trust

**\$50,000 – \$249,999**

Ellen-Blair Chube \*

Good Chaos

Michael & Meeghan Nemeroff \*

Matt & Carrie Parr \*

Renee & John Salomon \*

**\$25,000 – \$49,999**

Heiji Choy Black & Brian Black \*

Ruth & Pat Boehmer \*

Marion Cameron-Gray

Monica & Max Carney \*

Brian & Amber Egwele \*

Melissa Kibler & Vince Lazar \* ◇

Erin & Peter Lane \*

Kala & Mike Moynihan \*

**\$5,000 – \$24,999**

Erin & Dan Brown \*

Jude & Diana Fernandes \* ◇ / KPMG

Donielle & Michael McCutcheon \*

Millennium Bank /  
Himal Agarwal & Shimul Lahoti \*

Matt Roan & Shannon O'Brien \*

Jeff & Betsy Steele \*

Laura & Scott Stern \*

\*Board Member

◇ Member of Voice of Tomorrow, which recognizes donors who have made planned gift commitments

# CORPORATE ENSEMBLE

## LEAD CORPORATE PARTNERS - \$30,000+



BUILDERS VISION

## \$15,000 - \$29,999



## \$10,000 - \$14,999



## \$5,000 - \$9,999

Anonymous (2)

## \$1,000 - \$4,999

Alight Solutions

Anonymous

Law Rocks

QBE Americas, Inc.

Sahara Enterprises, Inc.

Solution Tree

Stout

Toast

Workday, Inc.

# FOUNDATION, CORPORATE AND GOVERNMENT DONORS

Uniting Voices Chicago gratefully recognizes the following institutions that made gifts in support of our mission from July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025.

## **\$100,000+**

Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and  
Special Events  
Richard L. Duchossois Foundation

## **\$50,000 – \$99,999**

Amazon  
Paul M. Angell Family Foundation  
CIBC  
Lloyd A. Fry Foundation  
Genesis Inspiration Foundation  
Illinois Arts Council  
Jackson Legacy Foundation  
John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur  
Foundation  
National Endowment for the Arts  
Polk Bros. Foundation

## **\$25,000 – \$49,999**

Builders Vision  
Crown Family Philanthropies  
Damico Family Foundation  
John R. Halligan Charitable Fund  
The Negaunee Foundation  
Peoples Gas Community Fund at the  
Chicago Community Foundation  
PwC  
Smart Family Foundation of Illinois

## **\$15,000 – \$24,999**

Allstate  
An anonymous donor advised fund at  
The Chicago Community Foundation  
Anonymous  
Bank of America  
Foundation To Be Named Later  
J. S. Frank Foundation  
Good Chaos  
Robert R. McCormick Foundation  
Millennium Bank  
Quad  
Shure Incorporated  
Sidley  
The Van Horne Foundation

## **\$10,000 – \$14,999**

Anonymous  
Ariel Investments  
BMO  
Capital One Healthcare  
Choose Chicago  
Craig & Co.  
Douglas A. Hirsch and Holly S. Andersen  
Family Foundation Inc.  
KPMG  
Latham & Watkins LLP  
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Lincoln Park Preschool & Kindergarten  
Metro/Gman/Smartbar  
Neuberger Berman  
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Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Foundation  
The Siragusa Family Foundation  
The Windhover Foundation  
Wynnchurch Capital

## **\$5,000 – \$9,999**

Accordion  
Anonymous (2)  
Anonymous Fund of the Community  
Foundation of St. Joseph County  
Antares Capital  
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J.P. Morgan Private Bank  
Katten  
Lewis Greenwood Foundation  
Pritzker Pucker Family Foundation  
Ropes & Gray LLP  
Charles and M.R. Shapiro Foundation  
Sloan

## **\$1,000 – \$4,999**

Alight Solutions  
Anonymous  
Baker & McKenzie LLP  
The Berghorst Foundation  
Alexander Charitable Foundation  
The Chicago Bulls  
First Unitarian Church of Chicago  
Google, Inc.  
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The Scott Group | Compass  
Solution Tree  
StoneX  
Stout  
Workday, Inc.

# INDIVIDUAL DONORS

Uniting Voices Chicago gratefully recognizes the following individuals who made gifts in support of Uniting Voices Chicago's mission, including contributions made in support of Uniting Voices Chicago's Red Jacket Optional gala, from July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025.

## \$1M+

Rose & Bob Fealy \* ◇

## \$100,000 – \$999,999

The Hatherly Family \*

David & Lesly Koo \*

Mridu & Chandra Sekhar

## \$50,000 – \$99,999

Ellen-Blair Chube \*

Jacqueline Griesdorn &

Kevin Matzke \*

Michael & Meeghan Nemeroff \*

Matt & Carrie Parr \*

The Joyce E. and Kurt A. Reichardt

Family Trust ◇

Renee & John Salomon \*

## \$25,000 – \$49,999

Anonymous (2)

Hejji Choy Black & Brian Black \*

Ruth & Pat Boehmer \*

Carnelian Trust

Judi Duchossois

Priscilla & Steven Kersten

Melissa Kibler & Vince Lazar \* ◇

Dr. Stephen & Valerie Madry

Kala & Mike Moynihan \*

Joan Craig & Peter Ruggiero

Rahul Sekhar &

Lauren Johnson Sekhar

Kanwar & Avanti Singh \*

Crista Sumanik & Chris Pemberton

Dr. Steven Won &

Dr. Rosemary Bush \*

## \$15,000 – \$24,999

Lorin Adolph

Erin & Dan Brown \*

Tim Calkins & Carol Saltoun

Caroline & Adam Dettman \*

Brian & Amber Egwele \*

Suzanne EL-Moursi &

Dr. Bassel Ericoussi \*

The Global Village Charitable Trust

Erin & Peter Lane \*

Deneese Walia Levin &

Matthew Levin

D. Elizabeth Price

Brian Whiting

## \$10,000 – \$14,999

Katie & Rob Ashcroft

Tracey & Ed Benford \*

Michael & Michelle Episcopo

Edward & Jennifer Gong

Cornelia Grumman & Jim Warren \*

Jeff & Laura Haxer \*

Carrie L. Hedges ◇

David Herro & Jay Franke

Nora Jaskowiak &

Matthew Hinerfeld

Tom & Linda Kapfer

Ann Marie Lipinski &

Steve Kagan \* ◇

Donielle & Michael McCutcheon \*

Suzanne Muchin & David Brown \*

Stephanie & Neil Murray

Diane & Jim Pearse \*

Larry & Corinne Richman

Matt Roan & Shannon O'Brien \*

Joe & Jennifer Shanahan \*

Jeff & Betsy Steele \*

Laura & Scott Stern \*

Jamie Vandenberg

Ron & Patty Weiss \*

## \$5,000 – \$9,999

Tamara & Rod Beeler

Lilla & Morrie Bossen

Christopher & Susan Burke

Marion Cameron-Gray &

J. Douglas Gray

Monica & Max Carney \*

Nick Cave & Bob Faust

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*Thank you to the tremendous number of volunteers—alumni, families and community members—who generously provide their time to support our programs.*

# In Memoriam

## **In Memory of Brian Vandenberg, Uniting Voices Board Member**

Uniting Voices Chicago mourns the loss of Brian Vandenberg, a beloved husband, father, and longtime member of our Board of Directors whose 15 years of service left a lasting impact. His generosity and advocacy, from providing vital support during the pandemic to championing events and scholarships, opened doors for thousands of young people to experience the power of music. We will always remember Brian for his compassion, leadership and dedication to our mission.





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