

# *A Proclamation*

*adopted by* **The City Council**  
*of the* **City of Chicago, Illinois**



**Presented by** Alderman Walter Burnett **on** October 4, 2023

**WHEREAS**, It's with great pleasure that I'm writing to share about the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Urban Initiatives;

**WHEREAS**, in 2003, while serving as a substitute teachers for Chicago Public Schools, Jim Dower and Dan Isherwood founded Urban Initiatives to create a safe space for inner-city students to develop essential life skills and improve their well-being; and

**WHEREAS**, drawing from their lifelong passion for soccer, they partnered with one Chicago Public School, secured donated equipment, funded nutritious snacks, and coached twelve students at Seward Park in Cabrini-Green before and afterschool. They aimed to increase physical activity and impart values such as teamwork, commitment, respect, and nutrition, believing these principles would transcend the soccer field, benefiting both the classroom experience and students' lives; and

**WHEREAS**, prompted by the program's success, Jim and Dan standardized a soccer curriculum, leading to an expansion in popularity and reach; and

**WHEREAS**, from its humble beginnings with just one school partner and 12 students in soccer, Urban Initiatives now extends its positive influence to the lives of over 50,000 youth across 80 diverse Chicago Public School communities; and

**WHEREAS**, Urban Initiatives accomplishes this by offering a comprehensive suite of sport and play-based programs, catering to students from pre-k to high school, with the dedication of over 300 local coaches and staff members, along with the invaluable support of committed donors, partners, parents, public officials, and volunteers; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2023, as Urban Initiatives celebrates their 20th anniversary, they endeavor to set forth on another ambitious goal in honor of this milestone year - to serve 100,000 Chicago Public School students by 2025 and advocate with traditionally underserved communities to significantly expand equitable access to sports and play opportunities throughout Chicago, as they believe all Chicago youth deserve the opportunity to achieve academic success, cultivate social-emotional skills, and build social capital through sport and play regardless of their zip code; now, therefore

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that this assembly commends Urban Initiatives for their two decades of remarkable dedication to Chicago's youth and their visionary commitment to expanding equitable access to sports and play-based programs. We endorse and support their ambitious goal to serve 100,000 Chicago Public School students by 2025, recognizing the transformative and equitable impact it will have on Chicago's youth and beyond.

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**Walter Burnett**  
**Alderman, 27<sup>TH</sup> Ward**