



HEALING THROUGH JUSTICE:

A Community-Led Breakthrough Strategy for Healing Centered Communities



Ann & Robert H. Lurie
Children's Hospital of Chicago

THE OPPORTUNITY

At a time when we are facing a national youth mental health crisis, Chicago youth are leading a first-of-its kind partnership between Communities United and Ann and Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago to advance *Healing Through Justice*, a youth-led community healing initiative aimed at transforming health outcomes for young people across the city.

Healing Through Justice is based on the premise that if one invests in the leadership of young people by incorporating their lived experiences as a root of their wisdom and power to create change, the result is a dynamic process of healing that occurs individually and collectively, and within families and communities. Systems also begin to transform to be healing-centered, through the leadership of directly impacted youth.

Through the *Healing Through Justice* initiative, this partnership is creating a new ecology of youth-led and community-centered healing. Tired of hearing that they are the broken ones, young leaders are turning the tables and transforming systems to become more racially just through their personal narratives, lived experiences and collective power.

This innovative idea was recognized by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation's Racial Equity 2030 initiative, which named *Healing Through Justice* a top 10 finalist in the global competition to advance equity.



"We need to look at breakthrough ideas such as Healing Through Justice that will develop bold new leaders with new ideas that can sustainably address the current mental health crisis. Our mental health system will never go far enough to provide the needed long-term solutions to address this tragic health disparity."

– John T Walkup, MD, Chair, Pritzker Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Health

OUR STRATEGY

Healing Through Justice builds on 20 years of successful youth and community organizing led by Communities United. This bold new phase of the initiative will:

- Support the development of more than 3,000 young people as leaders and healing practitioners.
- Carry out youth-led community research to learn more about wellness needs and develop healing-centered approaches.
- Convene a network of community-based partners to support youth leaders, engage thousands of community residents in systems advocacy, and support implementation of new mental wellness strategies.
- Hold open Learning Labs twice a year to document lessons learned, expand alliances, and gather feedback.
- Prioritize narrative change through which youth-led storytelling will uplift young people as powerful community leaders and show how communities most impacted by racial injustice can lead systems transformation.

Healing Through Justice has the potential to become a regional and national model for transforming systems to be racially just through centering the people the systems are intended to serve. The initiative will include a *Roadmap for Change* with stories, findings and lessons learned that will be shared broadly in the fields of youth development, mental health and community organizing.



“The Healing Through Justice Initiative is based on the premise that racial equity is not just an outcome, it is a process through which individuals and communities most directly impacted by the harms of structural racism are at the center of developing and advancing solutions.” –Meyiya Coleman, Youth Leader and Organizer

OPPORTUNITY TO DEEPEN OUR IMPACT:

An investment of \$1 million would allow us to develop an expanded network of young people and adult allies needed to support and sustain a youth-led movement for healing.

An investment of \$5 million would support an expanded learning hub of young people, adult allies, and community-based organizations from across Chicago’s Black and Brown communities to advance this breakthrough initiative.

An investment of \$10 million would allow us to develop and sustain a pipeline of Black and Brown youth through career pathways in the fields of health and community healing.