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Future of Promise Awards Dinner Raises \$540K for Erie House Programs

Highlighting the agency's mental health resources, the annual gala event aimed to invest in greater well-being across the city of Chicago.

March 21, 2019 (CHICAGO)—Erie Neighborhood House successfully raised \$540,000 to support mental health programming at the 2019 Future of Promise Awards Dinner on Thursday, March 14.

Hosted at Chicago's Radisson Blu Aqua, the event was chaired by HBK Engineering chief executive officer Ronald G. Kaminski and benefitted the agency's *Proyecto Cúidate* program and its efforts to build greater well-being for individuals, families and the communities in which they live.

"In times like these, it should come as no surprise that the demand for mental health services is high," noted Erie House executive director Kirstin Chernawsky as she introduced the evening's featured program. "In a community where people of color are disproportionately impacted by economic hardship *and* a lack of access to resources, the necessity [for programs like Proyecto Cúidate] is even greater."

The evening's program helped make the case for increased investment in these resources that are all too often in short supply in Little Village, a densely populated Mexican-American neighborhood on Chicago's Southwest Side, and touted the impact *Proyecto Cúidate* is making there.

During the event Erie House debuted a short film produced by Fig Media, Inc., that gave the audience an up-close look at the program and introduced them to Pastora Ramirez and Felix Garcia. The mother and son became the first-ever recipients of the inaugural Future of Promise Award, sponsored this year by The Custom Companies, Inc.

Felix is a member of the youth mentoring initiative at Erie House and Pastora has participated in parenting workshops, and in their remarks they spoke highly of their experiences in the *Proyecto Cúidate* program.

"We don't know what our life would be like without out the support we have received from Erie House," said Felix, a 13-year-old student at Daniel J. Corkery. "It really is *una casa para todos*—a home for everyone."

In addition to the Future of Promise Award, Erie House presented awards to inQUEST Consulting (Diversity & Inclusion Award, accepted by CEO Scott Hoesman);

VistaNational Insurance Group, Inc. (Corporate Impact Award, accepted by managing director Brian Walsh and director of operations Kahlil Hogan); and John Burns Construction Company (Community Investment Award, accepted by CEO William O'Malley). All three companies served as Influence-level sponsors for the event alongside PNC Illinois and The Custom Companies, Inc.

Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker gave remarks at the top of the program, highlighting the important role community-based organizations play in the well-being of the state.

Joining Pritzker at the event from the public sector were Deputy Governors Sol Flores and Jesse Ruiz, State Representative Delia Ramirez, City Clerk Anna Valencia, and Alderman Elect Mike Rodriguez (22nd Ward).

A large portion of the event's total revenue came through event sponsorships and individual ticket sales, but Erie House raised more than \$100,000 night-of during a live auction paddle raise as well as a silent auction.

"We were overwhelmed by the incredible support we felt tonight," said Chernawsky. "From the governor's commitment to immigrant communities throughout the state all the way to that last \$100 gift that helped us surpass \$100,000 in our live auction, it was evident that our mission resonates deeply with folks and that together we can continue working toward a more just, inclusive society."

Next year Erie Neighborhood House will mark 150 years as an organization, and plans are already underway to celebrate that achievement. The Future of Promise Awards Dinner will be co-chaired by Joseph Dominguez, CEO at ComEd, and PNC Illinois president Scott Swanson.

For more information about Erie House or to support its work in the community, please visit www.eriehouse.org.

About Erie Neighborhood House

Erie Neighborhood House (ENH) is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization that reaches nearly 18,000 people annually, empowering them to build better lives while strengthening their communities. ENH offers Chicago's Latino and diverse low-income residents a range of community-based education programs. With forward-thinking leadership, ENH is committed to continuing its legacy of cost effective, award-winning programming. For more information, please visit www.eriehouse.org.

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