



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**For more information, contact:**

Brian Paff, (312) 432-2239 or [bpaff@eriehouse.org](mailto:bpaff@eriehouse.org)

### **Erie House Memos to the Mayor Focus on Access to Mental Health Services**

*The agency hosted conversations in West Town and Little Village in conjunction with The Chicago Community Trust's On the Table initiative.*

May 28, 2019 (CHICAGO)—Erie Neighborhood House produced two “Memos to the Mayor” on the topic of mental health following The Chicago Community Trust’s citywide On the Table initiative earlier this month.

Program staff facilitated conversations at Erie House sites in West Town and Little Village in order to gather feedback, perspective and ideas from a cross-section of participants and families.

The bilingual dialogue and resulting memos focused almost entirely on the need for greater access to affordable mental health services, particularly in communities that are currently underserved.

Specific recommendations outlined in the memos included increasing funding for services, educating the community around mental health needs, and reducing stigma.

Increasing the availability of free or low-cost mental health services provided by schools and community based organizations was also of top concern for individuals participating in the conversations.

Additionally, they noted that investing in mental health services can serve as a “turning point” for residents, allowing them to have greater access to well-being and thereby supporting stronger, healthier households and communities.

The memos were submitted to The Chicago Community Trust and will be sent to Mayor Lori Lightfoot, who was sworn into office on May 20.

“Our staff did an excellent job facilitating these conversations,” said Erie House executive director Kirstin Chernawsky, who was also a member of the new mayor’s health and human services transition team.

She noted that Erie House offers clinical services to children and youth participants and their families at its West Town sites as well as individual therapy through the Proyecto Cuidate program in Little Village.

“The demand for mental health services at Erie House is high,” she said. “As we explore ways to build on what we currently provide and make recommendations to Mayor Lightfoot regarding equity and access to these services, this was an invaluable opportunity to gain insight from folks in our community.”

For more information on The Chicago Community Trust's On the Table event and the Memo to the Mayor initiative, visit [www.onthetable.com](http://www.onthetable.com).

**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 Latinx 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](http://www.eriehouse.org).*

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