

# ANNUAL REPORT

2025

**CHRISTOPHER**  **HER**  
LEARN DREAM ACHIEVE **HOUSE**



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## A Letter from our CEO

**Dear Friends and Supporters of Christopher House,**

Thank you for being part of the Christopher House community. Your support makes our work—and our impact—possible.

Over the past year, we have continued to advance our strategic plan with a strong focus on student achievement, staff experience, and equity, and we are incredibly proud of the progress made both in our classrooms and alongside the families we serve. This includes a 37% increase in kindergarten readiness among preschool scholars transitioning to kindergarten, more than 1,300 hours of parent workshops supporting financial literacy, career development, and positive parenting, and significant strides in pay equity for educators and professionals in historically undercompensated sectors—ensuring that all Christopher House staff now earn at or above a living wage.

Building on this momentum, we have reaffirmed our commitment to this work by extending our strategic plan through FY27 while introducing a fourth strategic pillar: community impact. This addition reflects a deepened commitment to supporting families not only within our programs, but throughout the neighborhoods we serve by expanding partnerships, strengthening connections, and advancing outcomes at a broader, systems level.

We remain deeply grateful to our staff, families, and supporters whose partnership fuels this progress and continues to inspire what comes next.

It is our pleasure to share this Annual Report, highlighting the progress and impact of the past year, including updates on our leadership, an overview of Christopher House, insights into our model and outcomes, highlights from our Early Head Start programs, our financials, and recognition of the generous donors who make this work possible.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie Dakers".



**Julie Dakers**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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# About Christopher House

## Our History, Mission, Vision

Since its founding in 1906, Christopher House has created opportunity and advanced equity by delivering high-quality, innovative programming that serves the needs of our community. From being one of the first Head Start providers in the 1960s to launching the Christopher House Elementary School in 2013, Christopher House has honed a continuum of education model with immersive family support that enables scholars and their caregivers to thrive.

Today, we deliver this model to thousands of scholars, starting at birth through the 8th grade, across our family of schools located in Belmont Cragin and Uptown. We build strong, trusting relationships with families – scholars and their caregivers – to provide coordinated support and care to create pathways to success for the whole family.

## Our Community

### Christopher House Scholars and Families

Through our continuum of education, Christopher House promotes overall success for children and families in school, the workplace, and life. We serve BIPOC communities on the North and Northwest sides of Chicago – communities that have been disproportionately impacted by systemic, institutionalized racism and further affected by COVID-19.

Belmont Cragin was an epicenter of Covid-19 in 2020, with infection rates as high as 40%. With a targeted Public Health campaign, which Christopher House participated in, Belmont Cragin has since become one of the highest vaccinated BIPOC communities in Chicago. (<https://www.wbez.org/stories/chicago-targets-15-hard-hit-communities-for-a-vaccination-bltz-to-fight-disparities/>).



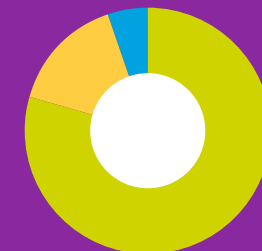
90%

of our community has been identified as low-income (proxy: FRL and/or average annual household income).

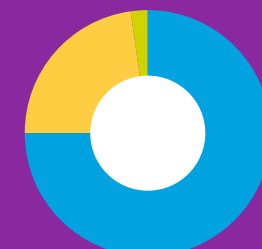
77% of Scholars were from single-parent households.



Many of our families are first-generation, immigrant or migrant families.



**FAMILIES:**  
**78%** Latinx  
**15%** Black or African American  
**5%** Multiracial



**SCHOLARS:**  
**73%** Latinx  
**22%** Black or African American  
**2%** Multiracial

SCHOOL/PROGRAM	# OF SCHOLARS	# OF FAMILIES
Infant and Preschool	297	248
Elementary and Middle School	480	365
After School	210	129

# Our Model

Christopher House is a family of schools that helps children and families succeed in school, the workplace, and life. Our unique two-generation model combines a continuum of personalized education and immersive family support, which extends well beyond the classroom.

Christopher House works at the nexus of education and social services to holistically address the individual needs of our scholars and their families. Two generation models like ours recognize that parents are a child's first teachers, and research shows multigeneration support both in and outside of the classroom is essential for success. According to the Aspen Institute, a two-generation model – like Christopher House's – increases economic security and helps create long-term impact for the family unit, including a 17% increase in the child's future earnings and postsecondary success. Through our approach, we work to ensure the wellbeing of our scholars and their caregivers, which positions the whole family unit to gain access to the tools and resources needed to thrive.



We are thrilled to share that  
**in FY25:**



## PEOPLE SERVED

Christopher House served

**1661**

individuals (**934** scholars and **727** parents/caregivers across our family of schools)

## GRADUATION




Christopher House celebrated its **fifth graduating class** to complete their full continuum of education, with **100% of 8th graders graduating.**

## FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE



**+500** families received emergency financial assistance throughout COVID to prevent crisis and support stable, healthy home environments.

## ACCREDITATION

**ALL 3** of our preschools are accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). 

## EARLY CHILDHOOD LITERACY



As of Spring FY25, **95%** of scholars ages 0-5 met the "Widely Held Expectations" for literacy development, measured using Teaching Strategies GOLD.

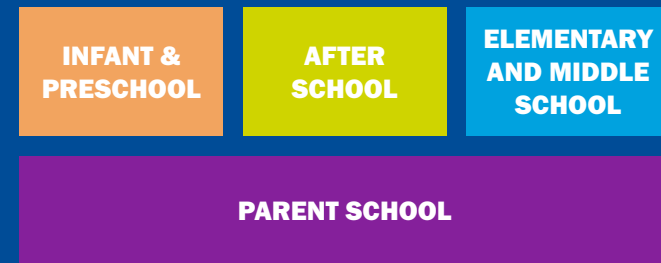


## PARENT SATISFACTION

**98%** of parents/caregivers of our Infant and Preschool scholars felt that their children feel safe and happy here at Christopher House.

# Our Impact & Program Highlights

In FY25 (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025) Christopher House served a total of 1,629 scholars and families across our family of schools – Infant and Preschool, Elementary and Middle School, After School, and Parent School.



## Infant & Pre-School

enrolled over 300 children, ages 0 – 5 years old this year. All three preschools are accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) – a distinction awarded to only 10% of early learning schools across the country – and each school has received the highest Gold Circle of Quality ranking from ExceleRate Illinois. Across our Infant & Pre-School classrooms we implement a methodology that is centered on personalized education, with immersive family support. We meet every scholar and their caregiver where they are, embracing an educational pedagogy that is child-centered, social justice motivated, and Reggio Emilia inspired. We are pleased to share that last year:

**95%** of children transitioning to kindergarten were developmentally ready in Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and cognitive development.

**97%** of three- to five-year-old scholars met the widely held expectations (WHE) in literacy development.



### Our Stories

Christopher House's unique continuum of education model provides support to scholars through key moments of transition, ensuring that they are prepared to take each and every step on their educational journeys.

To ensure our scholars have a positive and healthy transition from Preschool to Kindergarten, Christopher House offer a Summer Bridge Program - a program that relies on the collaboration of our Early Childhood Program and Elementary School - for graduating Preschool scholars. Through this five-week summer program, Preschool scholars preparing to matriculate to Kindergarten have daily opportunities to receive additional individualized and focused instruction to strengthen specific skills while being introduced to teachers, classroom environments, and resources that students will be interacting with in the coming school year.

By easing the transition with early and intentional exposure, scholars experience reduced stress and can more easily interact with their new learning environments in positive ways, leading to higher educational outcomes.

In partnership with Julian Lomax (Lead Preschool Teacher), Kimberly Lopez (English Language Learner Teacher and Summer Bridge Teacher) spent this past summer helping our young scholars prepare for Kindergarten.

*“Throughout the summer, scholars became more fluent in their numbers, letter identification and print awareness. They also improved rhyming skills and by the end of the program, could recognize rhyming words based on sound, images, and letter recognition. If you were to see all of my students now in Kindergarten, they look like pros walking down the hallway and listening to their teachers! I am so proud of each and every one of them, and I'm excited for their next educational adventure.”*

After completing last year's Summer Bridge program, we are pleased to share that of the 63 preschool scholars transitioning to kindergarten, 95% scored developmentally ready in social emotional learning, 95% in cognitive, 84% in math, and 49% in the literacy domain.

## Elementary & Middle School

provided 480 scholars – including the graduates of our Infant & Pre-School – with a personalized education, including a STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) curriculum, ongoing professional development of Christopher House's qualified staff, and a college-going culture that ensures every scholar is prepared for the bright future ahead. We are pleased to share the following scholar successes, including math and reading scores. These are critical as we support students on their post-Covid continued learning journeys.

**92%** of Elementary and Middle School maintained an attendance rate of 90%.

**100%** of our 8th grade scholars graduated, with 17% being accepted to CPS Selective Enrollment High Schools.

**62%** of graduating scholars will be attending a Charter Public High School

**34%** will be continuing a STEAM-focused program at ITW Speer Academy, a Christopher House partner in the Belmont Cragin community.



### Student Voices

At the 2025 8th Grade Graduation Ceremony, Valedictorian Bridgette Sanchez delivered a heartfelt speech that reflected on the shared journey of her class and the values they've embraced along the way.

“Three years ago, we went into middle school not knowing what to expect. Some of us were nervous and others were excited, while the rest just wondered how long before school ended.” She recalled the bonds formed over time, saying, “Since then, we've laughed together, learned together, and supported each other through both good and hard times.”

Bridgette emphasized the life lessons learned beyond academics: “I'm not only referring to the lessons we've learned in class but the values we've learned as a community—the kindness, leadership, and the perseverance we need to take on the real world.”

Reflecting on the friendships that defined their middle school years, she said, “From the questionable fashion choices to the cringeworthy trends we followed, we all had our share of embarrassing moments. But that's what made our experiences so great. We weren't afraid to be ourselves. It didn't matter if we were weird or awkward—we accepted each other anyway, and that acceptance made all the difference.”

She closed with a powerful message to her peers as they move into high school: “Change means we're growing. It means we're learning about ourselves and the world around us. Don't be afraid of it, embrace it. Give yourselves the space to grow, the courage to try new things, and the strength to stay true to who we are becoming.”

Bridgette's words left a lasting impression, capturing the heart of the Class of 2025's journey and the hope they carry into their next chapter.

# After School

worked with 201 students – including our Elementary School scholars and graduates – from age six to fourteen, to explore new opportunities, achieve academic excellence, and develop healthy behaviors and the soft skills needed for success in school, home, college, and the workplace. After School operates year-round, providing programming from 2:30 – 5:30PM during the school year and during non-school days operates full-day programming. Scholars participate in a variety of academic and social activities that focus on SEL, academic support, and community exploration.

**100%** of After School scholars – school age – achieved two of the three SMART goals they set for themselves by the end of the school year.

**85%** of school age scholars and 50% of youth scholars improved their grades from first semester to second semester or maintained a B average.

**70%** of school age and 67% of youth were engaged in learning as evidenced by the SAYO-Staff assessment.

**74%** of school age and 50% of youth demonstrated that they were able to effectively express themselves and communicate as evidenced by the SAYO-Staff assessment.



## Our Stories

The After School Program at Christopher House plays a critical role in supporting students – both school age and youth – beyond the classroom. It’s more than just an after-school program—it’s a space where students feel safe to be themselves, explore their interests, and grow emotionally, socially, and academically. This program is made possible due to the dedicated teachers and staff who commit themselves each day to supporting the positive development of our scholars, people like Andreana, our Youth Leadership Coordinator.

“Youth Leadership (YL) is vital for our kids,” shared Andreana. “It gives them the opportunity to experience things they might not otherwise—and express their thoughts and feelings in healthy ways. Teenagers are often guarded, but here, they start to open up and feel seen.”

Through mentorship, activities, and consistent support, students learn to take responsibility for their choices, build confidence, and improve academically. “I’ve seen students become more attuned in school because they know someone is in their corner, especially when they’re struggling.” For many students, YL becomes a place where they can finally relax and be their full, authentic selves. “In school, they have to follow the rules and stay in line—but in YL, they can be goofy, creative, and expressive. That freedom is what helps them grow.”

Watching students transform—academically and personally—is one of the most rewarding parts of the work.

The YL program supports students during a critical stage of development—when they’re navigating big emotional and physical changes. “We’re helping shape the minds of future doctors, teachers, leaders. Being there for them during this time matters, even on the hard days. Those small, good moments? They stick—and they help shape who these kids become.”

# Parent School

partners with every parent of each scholar in the Infant & Pre-School, Elementary School, and After School – a total of 605 families – in order to create a stable, healthy home environment that advances their child’s academic and social-emotional development. From infancy through young adulthood, we recognize there is no greater driver in a child’s success than an active, engaged caregiver and we respect and nurture the power of caregivers in every step of a scholar’s educational journey. Parent School supports families year-round by providing holistic resources, including family advocates, parent education workshops, counseling services, and additional family support, like on-site food pantries and emergency financial assistance. By recognizing our scholars’ parents as their first teachers, we are able to form deep, meaningful connections with them, understand their needs, concerns, strengths, and areas of need to ensure they have access to all of the culturally responsive support and resources they need to thrive.



**93%** of parents of Infant and Preschool scholars reached 2 out of 3 goals they created for themselves to enhance their child’s healthy development.

**864** children and families (unduplicated) received food from our on-site food pantries last year.

**1,250** families received food and gifts through the Family-to-Family Holiday giving program.

**139** adults and children received financial assistance, therefore preventing crisis such as eviction, and/or having their electricity or heat turned off.

## Parent Feedback

In April 2025, Christopher House invited parents and caregivers across all three school sites to share feedback on their experiences with our programs and services. To ensure accessibility and encourage broad participation, families were offered multiple ways to complete the survey, including through Class Dojo, during on-site lobby events with coffee and donuts, and via iPads available at workshops and food pantries. Through this intentional outreach, we received 167 responses from Early Childhood families and 79 from Elementary and Middle School families, providing valuable insight into the experiences and priorities of our community.

We are proud to report that 96% of Early Childhood respondents and 87% of Elementary and Middle School respondents indicated overall satisfaction with Christopher House services. Notably, 80% of Early Childhood families shared that their children feel safe and happy at school—an important reflection of the nurturing, supportive environments our teams work to cultivate each day. This strong feedback affirms our commitment to delivering high-quality, relationship-centered programming that supports both children and their families.

At the same time, we view this feedback as an opportunity for continuous growth. In response, Christopher House leadership is prioritizing several key areas for improvement, including strengthening communication through more consistent site-level updates and parent center meetings, increasing leadership visibility during daily arrival and dismissal times, and expanding opportunities for family engagement through platforms like Class Dojo. By listening closely to our families and acting on their input, we are continuing to refine and strengthen our programs to better meet the evolving needs of our community.

# Statement of Activities and Changes in Net Assets

Years Ended June 30, 2025 and 2024

	2025			2024		
	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
<b>Revenue and Support</b>						
Government grants (Note 10)	\$ 18,948,755	\$ -	\$ 18,948,755	\$ 17,901,171	\$ -	\$ 17,901,171
Contributions of cash and other financial assets	733,548	183,654	917,202	971,805	274,600	1,246,405
Contributions of nonfinancial assets (Note 12)	242,195	-	242,195	214,198	-	214,198
Program service fees and incidental revenue	140,667	-	140,667	141,801	-	141,801
Special event revenue	461,191	-	461,191	481,750	-	481,750
Investment income - Net	110,912	-	110,912	97,800	-	97,800
Miscellaneous income	64,101	-	64,101	90,768	-	90,768
<b>Total revenue and support</b>	<b>20,701,369</b>	<b>183,654</b>	<b>20,885,023</b>	<b>19,899,293</b>	<b>274,600</b>	<b>20,173,893</b>
<b>Net Assets Released from Restrictions</b>						
	338,723	(338,723)	-	363,603	(363,603)	-
<b>Total revenue, support, and net assets released from restrictions</b>	<b>21,040,092</b>	<b>(155,069)</b>	<b>20,885,023</b>	<b>20,262,896</b>	<b>(89,003)</b>	<b>20,173,893</b>
<b>Expenses</b>						
Program services:						
Early childhood development	8,215,048	-	8,215,048	8,005,248	-	8,005,248
Youth development	1,103,222	-	1,103,222	1,229,864	-	1,229,864
Family support services	1,351,688	-	1,351,688	1,417,319	-	1,417,319
Elementary school	7,947,265	-	7,947,265	7,926,123	-	7,926,123
<b>Total program services</b>	<b>18,617,223</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>18,617,223</b>	<b>18,578,554</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>18,578,554</b>
Support services:						
Management and general	1,451,140	-	1,451,140	1,384,292	-	1,384,292
Fundraising	453,626	-	453,626	608,305	-	608,305
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>20,521,989</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>20,521,989</b>	<b>20,571,151</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>20,571,151</b>
<b>Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets - Before nonoperating income</b>	<b>518,103</b>	<b>(155,069)</b>	<b>363,034</b>	<b>(308,255)</b>	<b>(89,003)</b>	<b>(397,258)</b>
<b>Nonoperating Income (Loss)</b>						
Net realized and unrealized gain on investments	92,450	-	92,450	216,396	-	216,396
Net unrealized loss on interest rate swap	(133,685)	-	(133,685)	(13,646)	-	(13,646)
<b>Total nonoperating (loss) income</b>	<b>(41,235)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(41,235)</b>	<b>202,750</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>202,750</b>
<b>Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets</b>	<b>476,868</b>	<b>(155,069)</b>	<b>321,799</b>	<b>-105,505</b>	<b>(89,003)</b>	<b>(194,508)</b>
<b>Net Assets - Beginning of year</b>	<b>19,648,721</b>	<b>1,347,325</b>	<b>20,996,046</b>	<b>19,754,226</b>	<b>1,436,328</b>	<b>21,190,554</b>
<b>Net Assets - End of year</b>	<b>\$20,125,589</b>	<b>\$ 1,192,256</b>	<b>\$21,317,845</b>	<b>\$19,648,721</b>	<b>\$ 1,347,325</b>	<b>\$20,996,046</b>

# Statement of Financial Position

Years Ended June 30, 2025 and 2024

	2025	2024
<b>ASSETS</b>		
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$3,564,857	\$2,155,055
Investments (Note 4)	1,969,896	1,803,905
Receivables:		
Grants	1,772,469	2,322,328
Pledges - Net of allowance (Note 11)	280,200	285,200
Fair value of swap agreement (Note 6)	281,501	415,186
Prepaid expenses and other current assets	185,822	191,133
<b>Total current assets</b>	<b>8,054,745</b>	<b>7,172,807</b>
<b>Pledges Receivable - Net of current portion (Note 11)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>100,000</b>
<b>Property and Equipment - Net (Note 5)</b>	<b>19,408,152</b>	<b>20,254,547</b>
<b>Right-of-use Operating Lease Assets (Note 8)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>21,550</b>
<b>Finance Lease Assets (Note 8)</b>	<b>108,444</b>	<b>18,280</b>
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>\$27,571,341</b>	<b>\$27,567,184</b>
<b>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>		
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Accounts payable	\$ 298,231	\$ 225,521
Accrued liabilities:		
Accrued payroll and vacation	870,638	923,869
Advances from government and funding agencies	20,988	43,940
Other accrued liabilities	271,639	387,836
Current portion of long-term debt (Note 6)	-	21,907
Current portion of lease liabilities - Operating (Note 8)	42,787	18,801
Current portion of lease liabilities - Finance (Note 8)	1,504,283	1,621,874
<b>Total current liabilities</b>	<b>4,678,935</b>	<b>4,949,264</b>
<b>Notes Payable - Net of current portion and deferred financing costs (Note 6)</b>	<b>70,278</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Lease Liabilities - Operating - Net of current portion (Note 10)</b>	<b>6,253,496</b>	<b>6,571,138</b>
<b>Lease Liabilities - Finance - Net of current portion (Note 8)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>10,999,709</b>	<b>11,520,402</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>20,125,589</b>	<b>19,648,721</b>
Without donor restrictions	1,192,256	1,347,325
With donor restrictions (Note 9)	21,317,845	20,996,046
<b>Total net assets</b>	<b>\$27,571,341</b>	<b>\$27,567,184</b>
<b>Total liabilities and net assets</b>	<b>\$ 28,411,874</b>	<b>\$ 30,125,845</b>

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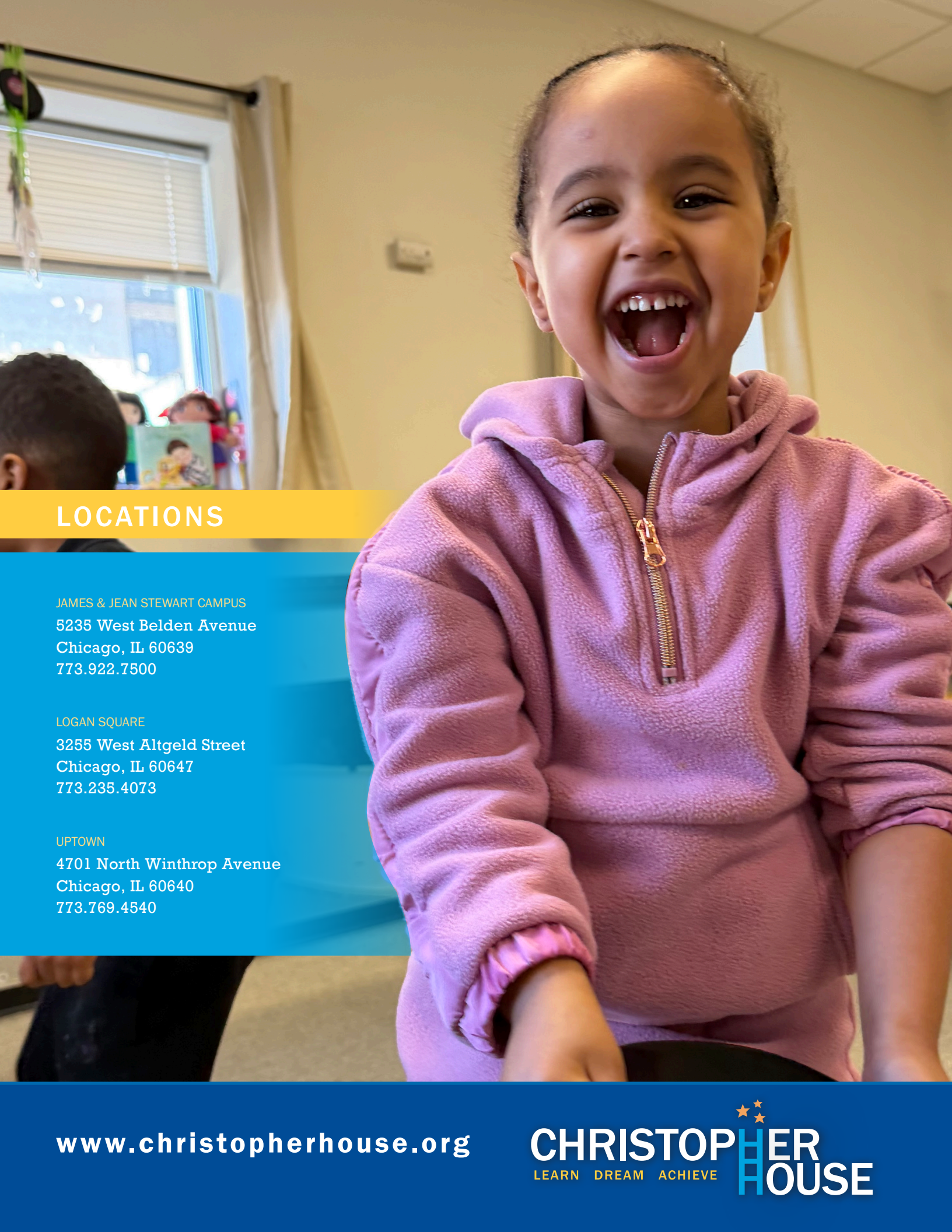
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