



CHICAGO IDEAS WEEK | OCTOBER 8-14

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Dear Friend of Chicago Ideas Week:

Great communities, and great societies, have always been distinguished by a common trait – great connectivity between diverse sets of people, great collaboration, and an openness to new ideas and new perspectives that pave the way for progress and innovation. I am a big believer that the more we understand our own community, and the amazing people and pursuits that live among us, the more we can improve our city, our region, our country, and our world. In fact, studies have shown that the more a community is connected, the more that community produces new initiatives, new businesses, new jobs, new patents, and more.

When I first conceived of Chicago Ideas Week, my vision was clear – let’s create a world-class ideas and innovation platform, in the form of a week-long series of events, along with a year-round schedule of thought-provoking speakers, seminars, and initiatives to “connect the dots” and create intellectual recreation as a permanent part of the Chicago landscape. My vision was not local, and it was not regional – I believed we could create a globally important event that would attract the best thinkers and doers from around the world, bringing them to Chicago to inspire, instigate, and challenge us all to work together to achieve disruptive and innovative goals. And the vision was unique in its inclusiveness. While there are fantastic ideas conferences in Europe, California, Colorado and others, there is no ideas conference of global magnitude that is priced and positioned in a way to invite diverse in-person participation and engagement.

So, friends, it brings us to the opportunity of starting on a path as bold and meaningful as the path of Chicago Ideas Week. CIW is a 501c3, a nonprofit entity whose focus is to produce the annual Chicago Ideas Week, and eventually intellectually provocative events on a year-round basis. I have pledged to never take a penny from CIW, and in fact, I am a major donor. To achieve the promise of a globally important ideas platform that is affordable and inclusive, we need to rely on the support of many people, companies, foundations, and other partners. Our supporters including many leading corporations in Chicago, many significant foundations, many individual donors, and in-kind supporters including media companies, event production companies, and many many more. In short, if there was ever an event that personified the theory of “it takes a village,” CIW is it!

With that context, I invite you to join us as we continue our labor of love. Love for our community, love for the power of ideas, love for interaction and collaboration with others inspired by provocative thinkers and inspiring doers, love for building something from scratch and realizing the power of a strong vision, and love for the unknown promise that results from connecting the dots and seeing what good things happen. Supporters of Chicago Ideas Week will be at the foundation of this terrifically enjoyable journey. We are only in our second year, and look how far we have come! Now, just imagine where we will be in year five, year ten, and beyond – we have a unique opportunity to build an important global institution in our own backyard!

I hope you will support us, and become a part of the vibrant Chicago Ideas Week community. As always, the CIW team and me are here to answer any questions you might have, or give you more information that can help you consider the most effective way you can join us on our journey.

Thanks, and I hope to share the intellectual recreation of Chicago Ideas Week with you!

Very truly yours,

Brad Keywell
Founder and Co-Chairman