

A collage of casino-related items including playing cards (Ace of Hearts, King of Spades, Queen of Diamonds, Jack of Clubs), poker chips, and a roulette wheel, all in a golden-yellow color, arranged around the word "CASINO".

CASINO

Night

A stylized logo consisting of two overlapping circles, one light and one dark, forming a shape reminiscent of a yin-yang or a crossroads.

Youth Crossroads

FRIDAY, APRIL 19

6:00 - 11:00 PM

CRYSTAL SKY BANQUETS

7941 47th St, McCook, Illinois, United States



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We proudly support Youth Crossroads' mission that supports youth, guiding them through life's challenges, and inspiring them to discover new opportunities for personal development.

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WELCOME TO YOUTH CROSSROADS 50TH ANNIVERSARY GALA CASINO NIGHT

We are honored to have you join us this evening and for the vital support you provide to Youth Crossroads. Our annual gala brings together our extraordinary business, civic and community leaders to celebrate our work, our supporters, and the remarkable youth we serve. It is also an opportunity to shine a spotlight on the outstanding individuals and organizations that enrich the lives of the youth and families in our community.

Tonight we also celebrate 50 years of service to Berwyn, Cicero, Stickney and neighboring towns. What began as a small community-based project in 1971 and officially incorporated as a non-profit in 1974, is now a multi-million dollar organization employing over 40 people and serving tens of thousands of youth in our 50 year history.

As we look towards the next 50 years, it is clear that youth today are facing unique challenges not faced by any previous generation. At YC we have responded to this new reality by integrating counseling services, academic support, youth leadership training, workforce development, and violence prevention into a comprehensive system of support for our youth. All of these programs are making an enormous difference in the lives of youth and families in our community. Our gala is our largest annual social and fundraising event of the year. All proceeds from tonight's activities support our programs and services that we provide to our community free of charge.

We hope you truly enjoy yourselves this evening with our Casino and fundraising activities. Tonight's award winners exemplify a long-term commitment and dedication to the well-being of youth. Each one truly reflects Youth Crossroads' mission to guide, support, and inspire young people to achieve their best in school, at home, in their community, and in life.

Special thanks to our event sponsors, auction contributors, and volunteers who helped make this evening an enjoyable experience. With your generous support tonight and in the future, Youth Crossroads will continue to make a positive difference in the life of our young people and our community.



Josephine DiCesare
Executive Director



Gil Pena
Board President



HEALTHY COMMUNITIES FOUNDATION IS A PROUD PARTNER OF **YOUTH CROSSROADS**

Congratulations to Youth Crossroads for 50 years of supporting the mental health and well-being of youth and families in Berwyn, Cicero, and surrounding communities! Thank you for all you do to advance an equitable recovery for community members in our service region.

Healthy Communities Foundation is a community-informed foundation that supports efforts that promote health equity, quality and access in our service region located in Chicago and western suburbs of Cook County.

Learn more at www.hcfdn.org.



MISSION

Youth Crossroads supports youth and their families, guiding them through life's challenges, and inspiring them to discover new opportunities for personal development, healthy relationships, and positive community involvement.

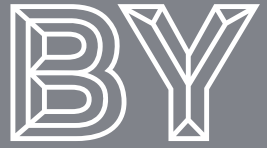
VISION

Youth Crossroads envisions a future where equitable outcomes are not just a goal, but a reality. We seek to remove barriers that prevent youth from reaching their fullest potential and envision a society where all youth thrive.

HISTORY

Youth Crossroads began as the Youth in Crisis Project in 1971 to provide crisis intervention for homeless youth, drug abuse counseling and support services for underserved teens in the western suburbs. The project proved successful enough that in 1974, organizers incorporated as an independent non-profit known as West Suburban Youth Outreach, Inc, which was later changed to Youth In Crisis. In 1978, the agency moved into its own facility and continued to evolve and expand services over the next three decades.

In 2007, the agency changed its name to Youth Crossroads, Inc. to better reflect the evolution of services towards prevention of problems rather than only reacting to problems that had reached crisis stage. The Youth Leadership Program was started in 2008, and the Community School Initiative and After-School Programs for middle school students was launched in 2009. In 2022, the Workforce Development Program was launched and a satellite location opened in Cicero. Since its creation, Youth Crossroads has served tens of thousands of youth and their families from Berwyn, Cicero, Stickney, and neighboring towns. We've partnered with more than 100 community organizations to create a network of referral sources to address the complex issues confronting youth and families. Today Youth Crossroads offers a continuum of services to help local youth heal, grow, lead, and thrive. We also serve as the fiscal agent for the Cicero Community Collaborative and All Our Kids Network Cicero.



Inspired



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makes this city great.**

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SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- 6:00 PM -

Registration - Cash Bar - Wine Grab
Raffle Sales - Merchandise Sales
Spin the Wheel of Fortune

- 6:30 PM -

Dinner
Welcome - Gil Pena, Board President
and Josephine DiCesare, Executive Director
50th Anniversary Proclamation
Cook County Commissioner Frank Aguilar

- 7:15 PM -

Video Presentation

- 7:25 PM -

Awards Program
Mission Moment

- 8:00 PM -

Casino opens
Open Bar

- 8:00 to 10:00 PM -

Raffle winners announced every 15 minutes

- 11:00 PM -

Casino + Bar Close

BMO



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Linda Sokol Francis, E.A.

**Awards conferred on five remarkable members
of our community who exemplify the spirit
and excellence of Youth Crossroads:**

INSPIRE AWARDS

**Alejandro Mendoza, Khotan Romero
and Yahel Hernandez**

GUIDE AWARD

Anna Monroy

SUPPORT AWARD

Robert J. Lovero

- - - - -

INSPIRE AWARDS

Alejandro Mendoza, Khotan Romero and Yahel Hernandez
in recognition of dedication to social responsibility

Alejandro Mendoza: Since joining Youth Crossroads, Alejandro has been an outstanding leader in program as well as in the community. He is very active in our community service events, fundraisers, field trips, and program. He never hesitates to help out his classmates, staff, and members of the community. The growth he has shown since the first day of program has been remarkable and something that has not gone unnoticed. We are excited to see what the future holds for him but wherever that may be we know that he will do great things.

Khotan Romero is an 8th grader at Berwyn's Lincoln Middle School. He has been involved with YCA for almost two years and is one of the most consistent and committed students in program. He is a friendly face in program and manages to be friends with everyone. He is involved in all activities including field trips and community service, which has helped him complete his school requirements to graduate. Khotan and his family are thankful for Youth Crossroads and their services.

Yahel Hernandez has been involved with Youth Crossroads for almost two years. He has participated in individual and group counseling services at Heritage Middle School. Yahel expressed that his time in services helped him to become more confident in himself, develop leadership abilities, and how to establish boundaries with others. Also, more importantly, Yahel found his safe space to share his thoughts and feelings with a trusted adult. A place to heal physically and mentally from the challenges which confronted him daily. Recently, Yahel had the opportunity to attend Advocacy Day and speak about the importance of the services provided by Youth Crossroads, especially the need for mental health services for youth. He continues to advocate to his peers about the importance of services. Throughout this year, Yahel has shown tremendous improvement in his mental health, his willingness to take the lead and be a role model for his peers and focused on himself. He's devoted to continuing counseling services to help him overcome the challenges ahead in high school and beyond.

City of Berwyn Mayor

RJ LOVERO



— “ —

*Thank you, Youth Crossroads for the **invaluable work you do** in shaping the future of our community by empowering our youth to reach their full potential.*

— ” —

Congratulations

To the inspiring members of our community who embody the Spirit and Excellence of Youth Crossroads:



Khotan Romero



Yahel Hernandez



Alejandro Mendoza



Anna Monroy



GUIDE AWARD: Anna Monroy

for extraordinary accomplishments Youth Leadership Alumnus

Anna Monroy was part of the Youth Leadership Program from 2008 to 2011. As a member of the original YLP cohort, Anna played an essential role in establishing the trajectory of the program. Throughout her time in YLP, Anna was involved in many different service opportunities and community events, including the development of an anti-bullying campaign and traveling to New Orleans on a service trip to support those impacted by Hurricane Katrina. Through her experiences in the Youth Leadership Program, Anna developed a passion for helping and supporting others and her community. Anna continues to change the world today in her role as a Social Worker, working with young children and their families to support children's development and emotional well-being.

SUPPORT AWARD: Robert J. Lovero

in recognition to his commitment to our community
and exceptional support of Youth Crossroads

Robert "Bob" Lovero has lived in Berwyn for over sixty years with his family and made public service an integral part of his life.

Bob graduated from St. Mary of Celle school and Fenwick High School before earning a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice at Loyola University and graduating from Northern Illinois University College of Law. After passing the bar in 1981, Bob served as Assistant City Attorney and City Prosecutor to the City of Berwyn. He also practiced at a few Chicago law firms before opening the Berwyn practice that continues today. He served the City of Berwyn as 7th Ward Alderman from 2000 to 2009, when he was elected Mayor.

Since then, Bob has played a leading role in a business renaissance that has revitalized the Depot District, Route 66 along Ogden Avenue, Cermak Road and Roosevelt Road — the "Veltway". In collaboration with the Berwyn Development Corporation, Bob has presided over upgrading streetscapes throughout the Berwyn community. This beautification of Berwyn, along with his actively seeking out and welcoming new business, has brought great companies to Berwyn.

For over 14 years, Bob has provided Thanksgiving dinner to feed underprivileged Berwyn residents and has provided several hundred food baskets to families each Christmas season.

Bob has consistently been active in several community and professional organizations: West Central Municipal Conference Executive Board, 2010 to 2015, and served as President from 2013 to 2014; American Bar Association; Chicago Bar Association; West Suburban Bar Association; Justinian Society of Lawyers; Illinois State Bar Association; The Italian-American Civic Organization of Berwyn, President 1996–1998, 2010 Man of the Year; Berwyn Democratic Organization; Township Democratic Committeeman 2005 – present; Berwyn Township 708 Mental Health Board, 1987–1990; Berwyn Development Corporation; Blue Ribbon Historical Committee; Local Law Enforcement Advisory Board; co-chairman of the Berwyn Holiday Fund.

Bob continues to evolve as a city leader, embracing youth leadership initiatives and community coalitions. With more than 25 years of service, Bob continues to energetically serve the residents of Berwyn by example and through intelligent leadership.



Paul N. Lekousis, LUTCF
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**Congratulations to the five
award-winners on behalf
of Gil and Alma Peña, and
the Youth Crossroads
Board and Staff**



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Mario Serrano, DDS
Sara Vafa, DMD
Lawrence J. Toledano, DDS

Our Mission Moment Appeal is your opportunity to give our youth the resources they need to be successful in school, at home, and in life. All funds raised during our Mission Moment Appeal go to our operating budget which makes it possible for us to offer in-school counseling, community counseling, crisis intervention, after-school enrichment, youth leadership training, workforce development, and community service.

Your support makes it possible for us to continue to:

- Offer programs and services to youth and families free of charge in English and Spanish
- Respond to the youth mental health crisis and gun violence epidemic that has profoundly impacted our community
- Recruit, train, and retain the best staff
- Expand our counseling services, after-school enrichment, violence prevention services, youth leadership training, and workforce development to teens and young adults who are most at-risk of being impacted by gun violence

Our programs and services help youth:

- Improve school attendance and performance
- Have fewer disciplinary problems
- Feel more connected to school and family life
- Reduce street gang association, fighting, bullying, illicit drug and alcohol use, depression, and self-harm tendencies
- Reduce the negative effects of violence, trauma, and other life difficulties while building new skills and attitudes to move forward in safe and productive ways
- Stay learning and engaged after school when antisocial behaviors take root
- Build self-confidence, self-reliance, teamwork, social responsibility, and mentorship
- Connect with role models/mentors to guide, support, and inspire to achieve their best

The need is great, and your role is critical – The youth and families we serve face many challenges including lack of access to mental health services, community violence and trauma, and inequalities in income, education and opportunity that makes it difficult for them to build meaningful careers and lives.

Please respond to our Mission Moment Appeal and help us reach our fundraising goals.

Support Youth Crossroads

Thank You for Being a Thoughtful & Generous Person!
Local children & their families face many serious life-changing situations these days. Your gift provides the emotional, educational & enriching support to face those situations, thanks to a caring team by their side.



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I love this town.

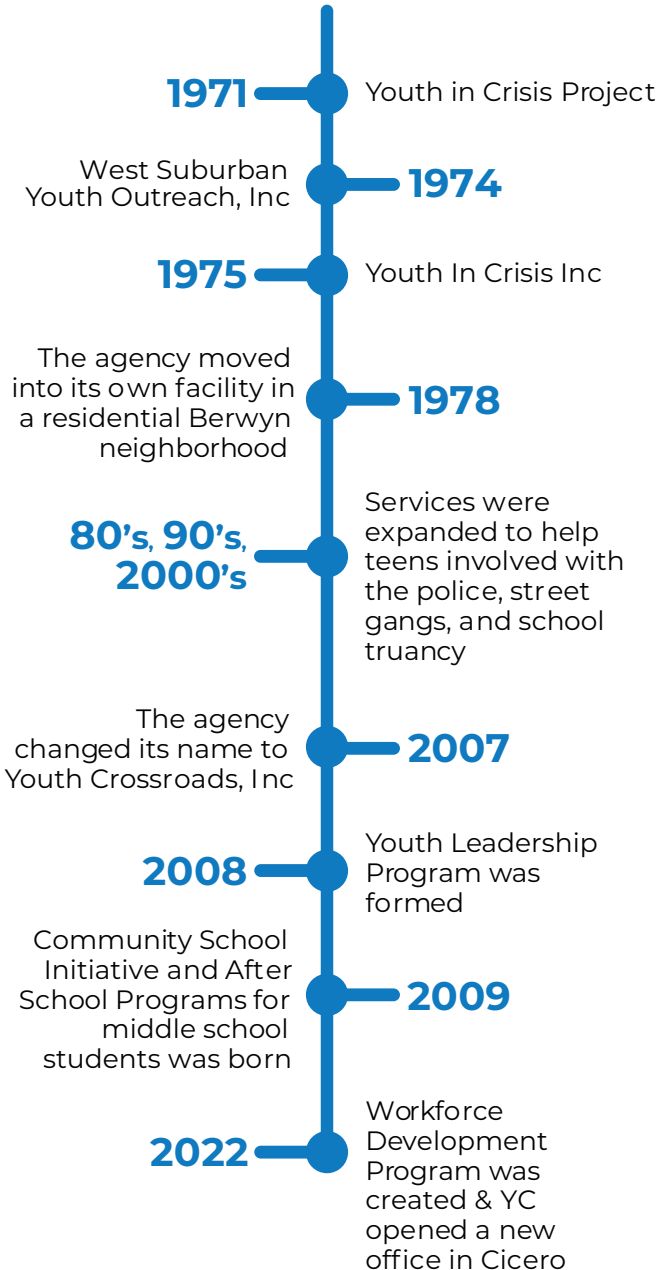
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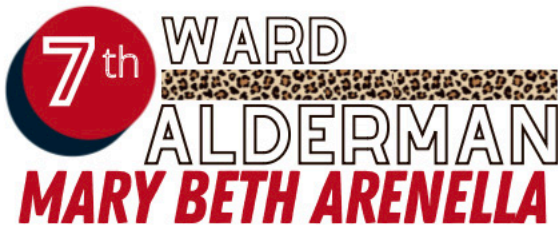
Thanks, Youth Crossroads.

I love being here to help in a community where people are making a difference every day. Thank you for all you do.



OUR HISTORY





BERWYN'S 3RD WARD ALDERMAN

Richard^{E.}
Leja

FOR YOUR ACCOUNTANT

We thank you for supporting Youth Crossroads, Inc. 50th Anniversary Casino Night Awards Gala and Fundraiser. As a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, some of your donations and purchases may be tax deductible.

Event tickets: \$20 of each ticket purchased is tax-deductible.

Mission Moment: Donations are 100% tax deductible.

Raffle Tickets, Wheel of Fortune & Wine Grab: Purchases are not tax-deductible.

FUNDRAISING

Wine Grab: Choose white or red wine in the bag of your choice to see what bottle you have won. Wines range in value from \$14 to over \$50 per bottle — it's the luck of the draw!

1 Bottle for \$20 or 2 Bottles for \$35

Wheel of Fortune: Take a spin at the Wheel of Fortune and see where you land. Prizes include jewelry, beauty items, gift cards and more. Every spin wins! One spin for \$5, or 5 for \$20

Raffle: Enter to win one of our prizes that promises to provide entertainment and pampering. Price: 3 for \$5 / 7 for \$10 / 15 for \$20
Winners will be announced at the event from 8:00 to 10:00pm and need to be present to win.

Merchandise Sales: Visit our table in the lobby and grab yourself some fashionable 50th Anniversary items. You will always be in style.
\$15 to \$30



SCOTT
LENNON
1ST WARD ALDERMAN

JIM

WOYWOD



BERWYN'S 2ND WARD ALDERMAN



Joe
Carmichael
8th WARD ALDERMAN ★ ★

SPECIAL THANKS

Kim Grigsby, Auctioneer
George & Niko Lykouratzos, Crystal Sky Banquets
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Commissioner Frank J. Aguilar
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Robert Jousef Mondragon
Gilbert and Alma Peña
HMS Video
Angelica Soto
Linda Rios
Turano Bakery
Ericka Cuenca

We would like to give a heartfelt thank you to all of the board members, staff, interns and volunteers who worked so hard to make this gala a success. Gracias, for all you do for Youth Crossroads!

**Any omissions to this program book are unintentional*



State Representative
ELIZABETH "LISA"
HERNANDEZ
2nd District

congratulates
Youth Crossroads on a
successful 2024 gala

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Vanessa Cervantes, *Human Resources Administrative Assistant*

Josh Harris, *Data Specialist*

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Mercedes Delgado, *Youth Development Specialist and Parent Liaison*

Stavros Kossenakis, *Youth and Workforce Development Specialist*

Cesar Juarez, *Youth Development Specialist*

Tracey Luong, *Youth Development Specialist*

Maricela Nateras, *Youth Development Specialist*

Galilea Mendez, *Social Media Manager and Youth Development Specialist*

Ashley Shropshire, *Alumni Coordinator and Youth Development Specialist*

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Jacquilyn Frausto, *Workforce Development Coordinator*

Raquel Olivares, *Workforce Development Case Manager*

Jacqueline Medrano, *Workforce Development Specialist / Community Outreach*



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Tayra Romo, *Associate Director of Counseling Services*

Monica Escarpita, *Community Counselor*

Brittney Bastida, *Community Counselor*

Natalia Dorsz, *Community Based Counselor*

School Based Counselor:

Katrina Diaz

Nicholas Miller

Kelsie Madock

Jessica Ruiz

Cristina Robles

April Valenzuela

Diana Villalobos

Kristin Norman

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Natalie Palm, *Associate Director*

Laura Mena, *Case Manager*

DeJonna Robinson, *Outreach worker*

Desmond Feltus, *Counselor*

Jayanna Arnold, *Coach*

ALL OUR KIDS NETWORK

Linda Rios, *All Our Kids Network Coordinator*

Michelle Ramirez, *Family Engagement Specialist All Our Kids*

CICERO COMMUNITY COLLABORATIVE

Elida Ortiz, *Director of Cicero Community Collaborative*

Janette Andrade, *Community Outreach Coordinator/Parent Ambassador*

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Brittney Bastida

Maximo Hernandez

Evelyn Delgado

Stavros Kossenakis

Coline Duncan

Allyson Spiva

James (JD) Ferrell

Nya Stroud

Jacquilyn Frausto

Grasiela Victor

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT INTERNS

Briana Tapia

Mayra Jaramillo

Jasmine Orozco

Molly Hayes

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EDUARDO "EDDIE" GARCIA

REALTY OF CHICAGO
CEO FOUNDER

Born into a low-income family, I learned early on that I had to work hard to achieve the American Dream. My family and I immigrated to America illegally in 1991, and when we arrived in Chicago, we had to share a one-bedroom apartment with 11 other people. Despite the challenges we faced, I was determined to find a career that would not only change my life but also my family's. After years of hard work, sacrifice, and dedication, I founded Realty of Chicago in 2012. Since then, we have closed \$2.5 billion in business and helped thousands of families achieve their dream of homeownership. But while our success is certainly something we're proud of, we're even more proud of our commitment to giving back to our community.

At Realty of Chicago, we believe that it's our duty to help those in need. That's why for the last 10 years, we have organized an annual Turkey Giveaway, where we have fed over 60,000 people in our community. We also have a Back-to-School event that we have been hosting for a decade, providing new school supplies to 10,000 kids, ensuring that they have the tools they need to succeed. Furthermore, we are proud to offer real estate school scholarships to deserving students who want to pursue a career in real estate but may not have the financial means to do so. We believe that education is the key to success, and we are committed to helping those who are willing to work hard and follow their dreams.

