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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Oak Park-River Forest Community Foundation Announces Pause on Community Grants**

OAK PARK, Illinois (August 9, 2023) — The Oak Park-River Forest Community Foundation announced today that it is pausing its Community Grants for one year in order to evaluate and revise its grantmaking operations to align with its enhanced mission. The Community Grants program is a process through which nonprofit organizations apply for funding to support general operations or specific needs. This means there will be no Community Grant applications or disbursements made for 2023. The program will restart in the summer of 2024 with a new process designed to advance a more racially just society and more equitable outcomes for residents in Oak Park, River Forest and surrounding communities.

“This decision is based on the work conducted by the Foundation staff and board over the past three years, learning and listening and gathering perspectives from those in our community whose voices are not always heard,” said Tony Martinez, Jr., president and CEO of the Foundation. “These conversations informed the top priorities outlined in the landmark Community Voices report the Foundation released last year. Over the course of its 60-plus year history, the Foundation has evolved to reflect the changing needs and priorities of the communities it serves. This pause will allow the organization time to reflect and recalibrate to truly address racial equity and how our community wishes to move forward.”

The pause affects only the Foundation’s Community Grants program; donor advised funds, scholarships and enrichment grants, the Russell & Josephine Kott Charitable Memorial Trust, and giving groups will continue to operate and distribute funding. More than \$4 million is awarded by these funds and groups each year.

“While the Community Grants are an important resource for nonprofits, the program represents only a portion of our overall work and impact in the region,” Martinez said. “The funds that would normally be disbursed through Community Grants are invested, and will be made available when the program resumes in 2024 – effectively doubling the available funds for even greater impact.”

In addition, the Foundation's staff is available to meet with donors to answer questions and offer philanthropic advice, and will continue to offer other important support and services, such as capacity-building programs, to its nonprofit partners and other constituents.

**About the Oak Park-River Forest Community Foundation**

Founded in 1959, The Oak Park-River Forest Community Foundation has built lasting, impactful connections among area residents and locally-based service programs. Today as an integral presence in the community, the Foundation's mission is to unite community members and mobilize resources to advance a racially just society and equitable outcomes for residents of Oak Park, River Forest and surrounding neighborhoods in western Cook County. Learn more about the Foundation's programs and services online at [oprfcf.org](http://oprfcf.org).

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