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Chicago Debates 9th Annual Make Room for Debate Luncheon Goes Virtual & Raises nearly \$200k to Support CPS Student Debaters

[Chicago Debates](#) virtually hosted its 9th Annual Make Room for Debate yesterday, September 15th, honoring one of its longtime supporters, Wintrust Founder & CEO Ed Wehmer. The event provided an opportunity for students and alumni of Chicago Debates to share how debate has positively transformed their lives.

Despite the global pandemic, the luncheon shifted to a virtual experience and garnered support from nearly 40 corporate sponsors from across Chicagoland with Allstate Insurance as their premier Platinum Sponsor and Gold Sponsors Faegre Drinker, iManage, Kirkland & Ellis, and Willkie Farr & Gallagher. Nearly 200 people virtually attended the event that highlighted special messages from Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot and Chicago Public Schools CEO Dr. Janice Jackson. ***“I’m so excited to see programs like Chicago Debates investing in our youth and helping mold Chicago’s future leaders. Our democracy rests on our ability to talk to each other and work towards common goals. Chicago Debates empowers young people to do just that,”*** said Mayor Lori Lightfoot. As a former debate coach and unwavering advocate for debate, Dr. Janice Jackson thanked Chicago Debates ***“for providing our students with this unique combination of rigor, empowerment, and fun. Debate builds communication, leadership, and critical thinking skills. It also strengthens intellectual curiosity. These are the skills that help students thrive in the classroom today so that they can go on to be the thinkers, leaders, and innovators our world needs them to be.”***

[Chicago Debates](#), in partnership with CPS, is committed to ensuring that debate remains an available activity for students and will host virtual tournaments this fall. Their goal is to support over 1700 students across 95 Chicago Public Schools this year.

If interested in supporting Chicago Debates, donations can be made at ChicagoDebates.org/donate or by texting **CHIDEBATES** to **243725**. Pledges can also be made at bit.ly/MRFDpledge.

Chicago Debates is bridging the opportunity gap for Chicago Public School (CPS) students by providing them with an after-school program that supports their academic, career, and leadership success. Our mission is to advance the educational achievement, community contributions, and life success of Chicago’s youth through the transformative power of academic debate. We envision a world in which Chicago youth are empowered to find their voice, succeed in college and career, and become leaders in their community. Debate may not fix all of the world’s problems, but it can shape the next generation of leaders who will. We exist to ensure that includes some of Chicago’s most marginalized youth.