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Depicting the Transformative Power of Debate Through Art: Chicago Debates Featured on the Wintrust Building Mural

The Wintrust and Chicago Debates partnership dates back nearly a decade, which was highlighted at their 2020 Make Room for Debate event where Founder and CEO Ed Wehmer was honored as their [Champion of Debate](#). *“Chicago Debates is a great program that encourages young kids to stand up and rely on themselves. That’s an invaluable skill to learn and why Wintrust wanted to be involved with Chicago Debates. Debate is hard. Learning these skills now sets these kids up for success moving forward. As a bank that’s working to help build a stronger Chicago, this is just the type of program we’re proud to get behind,”* said Mr. Wehmer.

Most recently that partnership has continued through a project that depicts the transformative power of debate through art. Chicago Debates will be featured on the Wintrust Building Mural. *“The mural is Wintrust’s way of aligning its community banking model with its community organization, aiming to highlight the positive happenings throughout the city. The piece is really amplifying the people doing the work. Those are the organizations like Chicago Debates, that are empowering our youth, that are changing lives, creating strong leaders both in the classroom and in our communities,”* said Elizabeth Okey, Wintrust Assistant Vice-President of Community Impact. *“It’s about showcasing the work that’s being done daily in our communities.”*

“We are excited and grateful for this opportunity,” said Executive Director, Dr. Toinette Gunn. *“We hope the mural not only introduces viewers to Chicago Debates, but also communicates the transformative power of debate, captures the critical lifelong skills cultivated through debate and the ability of one’s voice to enact change, and that it inspires hope and a belief in our students as our future leaders. Depicting all of this through art was not an easy task, but the Wintrust design team did an amazing job and we are overly pleased with the finished product!”*

Those interested in seeing the mural can join Chicago Debates for their **Exclusive Virtual Unveiling Event on June 8th**. Register for the free event [HERE](#). The mural can also be seen in-person at 1735 N. Ashland Avenue (just off the Kennedy Expressway) through June 30th.

This school year, nearly 1000 Chicago Public School students have participated in 47 tournaments hosted by Chicago Debates. You can support Chicago Debates by making a donation at ChicagoDebates.org/donate or by texting **CHIDEBATES** to **243725**.

About Chicago Debates: *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 next generation includes some of Chicago's most marginalized youth.