

January
2024



Newsletter 1

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Inner City Youth and Adult Foundation, Inc.



Inner City Youth and Adult Foundation, Inc. celebrates 50 years of service.

The now 50-year old non profit organization founded in the Bronzeville neighborhood of Chicago reflects on its history as it makes plans for the future.

Where did Inner City Youth and Adult Foundation begin? Who founded this organization a half-century ago? Read below to learn about ICYAF's founders and origin.

In the heartbeat of Chicago, where hope met the challenges of the most concentrated area of public housing projects and the vibrant Bronzeville community, Inner City Youth and Adult Foundation Inc. (ICYAF) emerged as a beacon of transformation.

Established in 1977 by Chicago natives, Maurice and Christine Perkins, ICYAF was more than a non-profit; it was a manifestation of the Perkins' unwavering commitment to uplift young adults facing the formidable challenges of their surroundings.

In the shadows of their former life as nightclub owners, Maurice and Christine couldn't ignore the decline in jobs, support, and resources facing their community, and made a profound decision in 1982 to close the doors of their southside taverns. From the basement of their home on Michigan Avenue and 48th Street, Inner City Youth and Adult Foundation, Inc. was born. In a community grappling with the complexities of violence and limited resources, Maurice Perkins, known at the time for his annual Cadillac purchases, emerged as a champion for change.

Before ICYAF and their nightclub days, Maurice and Christine Perkins, along with their newborn son, spent 2 years in Frankfurt, Germany, as part of Maurice's US Army assignment. Maurice served as a Paramedic at the 97th General Hospital and Christine as a clerk at the Post Exchange. Maurice and Christine viewed this time as a transformative one, opening their eyes to life outside of

Chicago's south side. They returned home with an eagerness to cease the opportunities afforded to them by the US Army.

Maurice was an advocate of the people from the very beginning. He initiated formal complaints on the condition of emergency vehicles and their impediment on medic service while on Chicago's Fire Department. His tenacity resulted in new ambulance trucks city-wide. Maurice also challenged the corruption embedded within Chicago's Police Department and the over-policing and excessive use of force in black and brown communities while serving on the police force.

During his tenure with the Chicago Housing Authority, he fought tirelessly for a better public housing plan that did not perpetuate violence in the ways that the Robert Taylor Homes, Ickes, and Ida B. Wells housing projects in his community did.

During the 1980s through the 2000s, Maurice was a champion for job opportunities and gang mediation amongst young black men. Maurice led protests to apply pressure to Chicago's McCormick Place, Walsh Construction, Provident Hospital, and various other city-run programs to diversify their workforce, demanding that a percentage of jobs be reserved for minorities.

Maurice made regular trips to Sheridan Prison, Cook County Jail, and several other correctional facilities where he taught Life Skills Management classes to provide young men with tools to re-acclimate to society and deal with the inevitable adversities that come with it. The momentum that Maurice built allowed him to lead the 2-year gang truce that followed the murder of 7 year old [Dantrell Davis](#) of Cabrini Green.

In the Perkins' entrepreneurial journey, Christine played a pivotal and multifaceted role. Her sharp intellect, honed through being the eldest of 13 siblings, made her a natural director and leader. Possessing innate business acumen, she became instrumental in propelling Maurice and her entrepreneurial aspirations to unprecedented heights. Within Inner City Youth and Adult Foundation, Christine assumed various roles—director, accountant, secretary, grant writer, and more—ensuring the organization operated at peak efficiency.

Their impactful work in foster care, particularly Christine's role as a Reunification Foster Mother, garnered media attention in Chicago's Tribune. Employing what the Tribune called, "a neighborly approach", she acted as a bridge between the foster care system and birth families, aiding mothers in rehabilitation programs and job training while nurturing their children until they could reclaim parental responsibilities.

At Inner City Youth and Adult Foundation, Inc., Christine and Maurice transformed their three-story historical Bronzeville landmark, acquired from Chicago's Urban League, into a hub for local small businesses. A stalwart advocate for education, Christine initiated Reading to Build programs for youth and collaborated with community activist, Bobby Johnson, to facilitate computer classes and seminars.

Expanding her commitment to youth development, Christine orchestrated summer job programs in collaboration with After School Matters. In these programs, she guided students in conducting

legal research and mock trials on pressing community issues such as HIV/AIDS, violent crimes, and gang activity.

Christine extended her impact through job readiness programs and mentorship initiatives for women and men within the community. Her multifaceted approach within ICYAF not only provided crucial support for local businesses but also served as a catalyst for education and empowerment.

Nearly 50 years since the founding of Inner City Youth and Adult Foundation, our commitment remains unwavering in continuing the impactful legacy initiated by Maurice and Christine Perkins. Champions for equal job opportunities and education, Maurice and Christine identified the two greatest pillars of survival in minority communities. We continue to champion these causes, wielding education as our armor in the ongoing fight for a better future.



Maurice and Christine Perkins of ICYAF.

ICYAF Mission

The Inner City Youth and Adult Foundation aims to serve the community through the two greatest pillars of survival in the inner city: job opportunities and educational resources. Our mission is to break down the barriers to job entry and higher education by providing scholarships, professional and personal development programs, and ongoing support to unlock opportunities for those with limited resources.

Subscribe to ICYAF's official website to stay up to date on our latest initiatives, fundraisers, programs, and more!

[ICYAF Web](#)

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