



# Family host guide

Put your voice in a  
**Memo to the Mayor**

TUESDAY, MAY 14, 2019

## Thank you for Participating in On the Table with your family

Together, you will be part of an annual event in metropolitan Chicago that brings together residents at family dinner tables, local restaurants, church basements, community centers, classrooms and more. Community members—young and old—will come together on May 14 to discuss the ways we can make

our communities stronger, safer and more dynamic. Those discussions will result in a **Memo to the Mayor** with suggestions on how to improve lives and communities.

We are so glad that you have decided to join us!

**on the table.**  THE CHICAGO  
COMMUNITY TRUST  
AND AFFILIATES



**Memo to the Mayor**

## About On the Table

No matter where in Chicago you live, you have a story to share—a story that shapes your view of the challenges and opportunities found in our neighborhoods and cities.

At The Chicago Community Trust, we believe that when people come together to share their stories and discuss issues important to them, we all can be inspired to take action that makes a difference. *On the Table* connects individuals and communities of diverse perspectives and backgrounds to do just that.

On May 14, 2019, your family will join thousands of others throughout the Chicago region who are coming together to have conversations about what matters to them. By learning from and with each other, we have the power to impact both neighborhoods and lives.



🕒 Any time of day

## Why participate in On the Table?

*On the Table* is an excellent learning opportunity—a great way to model civic responsibility, learn about other perspectives and explore ways to become more engaged in your community. *On the Table* can help your family:

- Make a difference in your community or for the causes you care about.
- Get to know your neighbors and others in the community.
- Have fun and learn together.

## Having the conversation

During your *On the Table* conversation, share what inspires you, the causes you care about and the ways your family can play a role in strengthening the Chicago region. Your family's conversation will depend on your interests, the ages of the children involved and your family situation. No matter the conversation, the goal is to give everyone a chance to voice their opinions about how to improve our communities together.

Before your discussion, prepare your children for *On the Table* by letting them know you will be having a conversation about your community. You may even take a walk around your neighborhood to help them understand and define its boundaries and characteristics. Let your children know that they are part of a special event, where people across the region are gathering to discuss their hopes, dreams and desires for our community.

See the next page for some tips on how to guide the conversation, and use the conversation guides on a variety of topics at [onthetable.com](http://onthetable.com).

## Tips to guide the conversation

### Share the reasons you care about your community

Start by asking everyone to tell one positive memory or story about your community coming together—such as a church picnic, family reunion in a local park or a neighborhood festival. What are the key characteristics of a great neighborhood? What are the positive characteristics or qualities of your community? What are the needs of your community?

### Develop your child's understanding of civic responsibility

Ask your child to think about and discuss what the duties and obligations are of belonging to a community. What does it mean to work for the common good? What actions can you take to help improve your community?

### Ask your family members what they care about

What cause does each family member care about—and why? Are there issues or problems in your neighborhood that worry or concern you? Do you have an idea to help your school, community or neighbors? What can you do alone or as a family to make a difference in your school, neighborhood or community?

### What solutions would you include in a **Memo to the Mayor**?

What ideas can you offer the mayor for addressing the issues that concern you? Can families play a role in the solution?

### 5 guidelines for having an open dialogue

1. Listen carefully and treat each other with respect.
2. Each person gets a chance to talk one at a time. Make a plan to ensure everyone has an opportunity to respond. Don't cut people off or interrupt.

3. Speak for yourself. Don't try to speak for others.
4. If you feel hurt by what someone says, say so and say why.
5. It's okay to disagree.

## Taking action

During your *On the Table* discussion, prepare to write a **Memo to the Mayor** offering solutions to the issue(s) you're concerned about. Your group memo will be integrated into a larger memo and presented to the mayor to influence the mayor's agenda. The memo template on page 4 will help you get started. Email your group's **Memo to the Mayor** to [onthetable@cct.org](mailto:onthetable@cct.org).

Please complete your **Memo to the Mayor** at [onthetable.org](http://onthetable.org). There, you can also upload your table's notes, individual memos, drawings or diagrams you may have used in the discussion, or other supporting materials. Paper memos can be made available by special request. Please contact [onthetable@cct.org](mailto:onthetable@cct.org) to request paper memos in advance of your *On the Table*.

After your *On the Table* conversation, you may want to develop a plan for taking additional action to address the things your family discussed. To get started, here are two ways you can focus your efforts on a specific cause or issue that everyone cares about:

### What organizations are you involved with?

Consider volunteering for or donating to a place where your family is already connected—like your child's school, your place of worship, or a favorite museum or park. This will allow your children to directly observe the real impact of your family's efforts.

### What activities do you already enjoy?

Brainstorm activities your family already enjoys. There are many community service activities that you can do together. For example, you may decide to volunteer at a local community garden, participate in a charity walk or run, foster an animal from a local shelter or sign up for a local community service project.

*Template:*

on the table  THE CHICAGO  
COMMUNITY TRUST  
INCORPORATED



### Memo to the Mayor

Date: May 14, 2019

To: Mayor-elect Lori Lightfoot *(or name of your city's mayor)*

From: Concerned Citizens of Chicago *(or name of your city)*:  
Joe Smith, Alicia Ward, Kim Davis, Thomas Johnson  
*(add the names of people from your table here)*

Re: High unemployment rate of youth  
*(Enter the issue that you're concerned about here)*

Dear Mayor Lightfoot:

*(Greeting and statement of concern)*

Thank you for the opportunity to submit a letter on issues that concern us and possible solutions.

We're concerned about the high unemployment rate of youth in the Roseland community.

*(State how this problem affects your neighborhood or city)*

We believe this problem has triggered increased violence and drug use in Roseland. As you may know, children can't even play in their backyards anymore, let alone a park, because of parents' fear of their children being gunned down. If more youth are working, they're less likely to be idle and mixed up with unproductive or criminal activity.

*(Offer a solution)*

We know that the City of Chicago offers great programs to help put youth to work, like One Summer Chicago and After School Matters. Our group has an idea for another program to get youth employed. The city could offer churches grants to hire youth to work in church-run summer camps. In addition, the city could offer technical assistance and training to churches to help them establish the summer camps. In return, churches could teach youth moral values and the importance of loving your neighbor, in addition to academic lessons. The city could also offer the churches a youth development coach skilled in running programs for youth.

Thank you for hearing our concerns and our solutions. Should you want further information on our group's idea, contact Suzy Johnson as SuzyJ24@yahoo.com *(enter a contact person from your group)*.

# Your Community Matters.