

It is with gratitude and celebration that the Center for Changing Lives family announces the year end transition of its Executive Director, Ellen Ray.

Almost nine years ago, then Executive Director, Delia Ramirez, and Ellen Ray realized they both had a passion for social justice and a love of community. Delia also realized she had an open Program Director position and Ellen had a Master of Social Work degree. In 2008, Delia and Ellen came together, with many other extraordinary leaders and partners, to advance the vision of a community where everyone thrives. Almost nine years later, CCL is stronger, advancing the same vision in new and innovative ways and achieving impact we only dreamt about in 2008.

Under Ellen's leadership, as Executive Director since 2013, Center for Changing Lives has grown, matured, and advanced its impact and influence in the field of financial opportunity. During her tenure, CCL relocated to a new, larger facility, celebrated its 25th Anniversary, developed a five year strategic plan, and achieved a second Social Innovation Fund award. Through its commitment to leadership and innovation, CCL seeded new programs and pilots that advance impact, shaped and trained the field it operates within, and built a community of mutual support built on radical acts of sharing.

Ellen shared, "CCL reflects my hope for the world: that we acknowledge the strengths, gifts and talents of our neighbors, envision a world that more perfectly reflects our commitment to mutual support and mutual understanding, and act in small and large ways to build that world every day, wherever we find ourselves. Working here and leading here has been a gift, entrusted to me by those who claim CCL as their own. And there are many of you. Thank you for your trust, your passion, and your commitment to this life changing work."

The transition, spearheaded by a Transition and Search Committee of board members and CCL leadership and partners, is being convened to execute CCL's carefully designed Succession Plan, which was put in place in January 2016. The search will publically commence October 17th.

CCL's leaders go on to make an impact on our city. From CCL, Delia Ramirez went on to leadership at Common Cause and, currently, Community Renewal Society. Ellen will join Chicago Cares as Director of Program Innovation in January 2017. Founded in 1991, Chicago Cares is the city's leading nonprofit service organization that has mobilized more than 500,000 volunteers to build a stronger, more united city. In her new role, Ellen will develop programs that foster civic engagement by educating and empowering volunteers to be agents of change, and that strengthen the efforts of more than 240 schools and human services organizations in communities throughout Chicago.

It is important for CCL's community to know that this change--and the solidarity it has and will continue to engender between CCL's board, leadership, clients and staff—is a testament to our connection, capacity, and commitment to building a community where everyone thrives.

CCL will hold a series of conference calls to share information and gather feedback as the process proceeds. Stay tuned for details. If you have questions about the transition, please feel free to contact Ellen Ray at ellen@cclconnect.org or Dennis Rossow, Board Chair, at dennisrossow@comcast.net.