



C.H. Robinson Employee Leads Neighborhood Cleanup and Supports Businesses in Need

Police brutality and social injustice have sparked a demand for change around the world. Like in many cities, local businesses in Chicago have been challenged with the task of rebuilding in the aftermath of riots and looting, separate from the peaceful demonstrations protesting the murder of George Floyd.

Charles Pickett, portfolio executive at the Chicago Central office, felt a call to action after recognizing this overwhelming need to help his community of West Humboldt Park which was hit hard by theft and destruction to many businesses in the city's under-resourced West Side.

He went into action mode and hosted a neighborhood cleanup and collected canned goods and health supplies for West Humboldt Park, the place he and his family have called home for decades.

Not only did Pickett help with clean-up efforts, he also wanted to do more to support minority business owners who are trying to stay afloat after impacts from looting, riots and COVID-19. In partnership with fundraising activity and Earth's Remedies—a nonprofit that Pickett's sister Mercedes started three years ago—they've raised more than \$43,000 so far that will go directly to more than 20 Black and Brown-owned businesses in Chicago's west-side neighborhoods.

Pickett started raising money to help businesses rebuild the Monday after the West Side was shook by theft and destruction, separate from the peaceful demonstrations. Initially, he set out to raise \$5,000, but the donations kept coming in. As donations continue, more grants will be given out to businesses in need.

Pickett says while there's no quick antidote to what's going on, positive actions can help our communities heal. "Minorities on the West Side of Chicago have entrepreneurial hearts and often find it hard to secure the financial support they need to jump start their businesses due to discrimination and redlining from banks," said Pickett. "Now more than ever, we need to support these businesses so that they can have a level playing field to succeed."

The grants are just the beginning for Pickett and Earth's Remedies, which serves as hub for financial, educational, career, health and conflict de-escalation resources to empower low-income businesses, individuals and families. "This isn't just a one action plan," said Pickett. "We're going to continue to help our community in any way we can. It doesn't just stop with the businesses." To learn more about Earth's Remedies and their mission, check out the organization's [website](#).