



# Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street  
Chicago, IL

## Legislation Text

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File #: 22-2549, Version: 1

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### PROPOSED RESOLUTION

#### HONORING SUSAN GARCIA TRIESCHMANN FOR HER SERVICE TO THE EVANSTON COMMUNITY

**WHEREAS**, after a decade of teaching restaurant and life skills to more than 500 young people, Susan Trieschmann, a founder and executive director of Curt's Café has announced that she will depart the enterprise later this year. Curt's Café founded in 2012 is a workforce training program whose motto is "Dine with a Purpose. Enjoy great food and help build community;" and

**WHEREAS**, Susan began working in food service at the age of 13. She became the Director of Catering at the legendary Pump Room before becoming an original owner and 25-year partner of Food for Thought Enterprise. Under her leadership the company grew from a small catering business into a food service industry specializing in upscale catering and café food service management; and

**WHEREAS**, Susan got the idea to start Curt's when she enrolled in a social justice course while working on a business degree. The course introduced her to the concept of restorative justice, which seeks to restore wholeness to victims and offenders. As her final exam, the instructor sent her to the prison to do youth circles. It was a life-changing event for her, watching young men from different gangs speak from hearts about fear, about family. Subjects that would never be broached in prison. She learned from her work with those and other young men about the need for jobs and a safe, accepting environment for 15- to 24-year old males coming out of prison; and

**WHEREAS**, building on that knowledge and her background in the culinary arts and industry, Susan developed a business plan to raise funding for a program that would provide life and work skills for those young men. Though the plan initially found little support, she and her partner Lori Dube forged ahead. Curt's, Cultivating Unique Restaurant Training, came into being for the express purpose of working with justice-involved youth. Of the more than 500 young people who have worked their way through the program, only 4% have been re-arrested. That compares to a national recidivism rate of above 80%; and

**WHEREAS**, at Curt's, the emphasis is on teaching marketable skills and then assisting participants in securing employment including providing instruction needed to fill in educational gaps, gain confidence, and become job-ready. Some teaching is done on café lines, some in a classroom setting, and some by individual mentors. Students are referred by probation officers, Youth Job Centers, social service agencies, police officers, city outreach personnel, and family and friends of graduates or current students. Several graduates have gone on to take leadership and management roles with the café and community members have had the privilege of meeting these talented, resilient young people with whom they may never have otherwise crossed paths; and

**WHEREAS**, Susan says that part of the success of Curt's Café is the involvement of trained professionals who provide trauma-informed care to the participants. She recognizes that every single one of those young people have experienced significant trauma in their lives. Working with them has elevated her sense of empathy; but she has also experienced the trauma of losing young people to gun violence with whom she has worked and grown close. She is happy to have been able to give birth to this endeavor, proud of the accomplishments of the young people who have gone through the program, and frustrated and angry with the society that allows the kind of trauma to exist that these young people have overcome. At 64, Susan says she is not ready to retire and is already planning the next way in which she will continue to benefit our young people and build bridges in our community; and

**WHEREAS**, in addition to founding Curt's, Susan is also an original member of Restorative Justice Evanston (RJE). RJE is a non-profit organization in Evanston that works with youth and community on peaceful dialogue around harm caused, celebrations, and conflicts; and

**WHEREAS**, Susan and her husband Tom raised their two children, Trevor and Anna, in Evanston. Susan is passionate about giving youth a second chance and potential for a positive future for themselves and their families. The Evanston community will be forever grateful for the work she has done to help young people, including people who were harmed by them, and to make Evanston a better place; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Commissioners of Cook County, on behalf of the 5.2 million residents of Cook County, honors the work and contributions of Susan Garcia Trieschmann, and herewith expresses its sincere gratitude for the invaluable contributions she made to the Citizens of Cook County, Illinois; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that a suitable copy of this Resolution be spread upon the official proceedings of this Honorable Body and that an official copy of same be tendered to Susan Garcia Trieschmann.