



## THE CHICAGO CEO COVID-19 COALITION BEGINS DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS FROM THE SWEET HOME CHICAGO TELETHON

CHICAGO, June 24, 2020 – The Chicago CEO COVID-19 Coalition announced that it has begun distributing more than \$1.25 million in proceeds from its successful Sweet Home Chicago Telethon in support of the city’s urgent relief and recovery needs, with additional pledged funds forthcoming. Founded and led by John Koudounis, CEO of Calamos Investments, the Coalition has united Chicago business leaders in a humanitarian campaign for COVID-19 relief and recovery benefiting ten Chicago-based charities in four critical areas: food; shelter/homelessness; counseling services; and PPE. Funds are being distributed through the Coalition’s partnership with [GoFundMe](#).

“It has been extremely gratifying to see the extent to which Chicago’s leading companies have embraced the Coalition’s efforts, including the Chicago Bulls, who have been instrumental in their assistance and support of the campaign. We are also proud that 99% of Calamos Investments employees made donations to the campaign. John Calamos, Sr. and I have matched our employees’ donations as well as the individual donations received during the telethon broadcasts,” Koudounis said.

“The Coalition’s GoFundMe page remains live and open for donations. The problems of the COVID crisis are far from over and our city’s needs are still great as Chicago begins to reopen. We urge those who can contribute to support critical assistance and ongoing recovery for our Chicagoland residents,” Koudounis said.

The telethon can be viewed on the Chicago CEO COVID-19 Coalition [website](#) and on Facebook and YouTube. For more information or to donate, log on to <http://www.chiccc.org> or donate through the Coalition partnership with GoFundMe <http://charity.gofundme.com/sweethomechicago>

The Coalition has received broad support from Chicago’s business community. Joining with Calamos Investments as Founding Circle Members, the highest sponsorship level, are Wintrust Bank, Cinespace Chicago Film Studios and Hightower Advisors. Additional sponsors and benefactors include GCM Grosvenor, Northern Trust, Madison Dearborn Partners, Mesirow Financial, Astor Investment Management, PNC, UBS, CIBC, Guggenheim Partners, Republic Bank of Chicago, Leopardo, Sterling Bay, and Hub International, among others.

Chicago charities receiving the donations raised are the Chicago Community COVID-19 Response Fund; Greater Chicago Food Depository; the Salvation Army Metropolitan Division; The Night Ministry; Catholic Charities, Archdiocese of Chicago; Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Chicago; Jewish United Fund; Metropolitan Family Services; the 100 Club of Chicago; and Howard Brown Health.

The Sweet Home Chicago telethon was broadcast on NBC Sports Chicago in May, and available on social media. Hosted by Chicago's own Deon Cole, Sweet Home Chicago featured the city's celebrated entertainers, musicians and athletes. Mike Ditka and the Chicago "Superfans," Joe Mantegna, George Wendt and Robert Smigel, performed a "corona" version of their routine first made famous on Saturday Night Live. Musical performances included Common and the classic rock band Chicago, along with Jeff Tweedy, Jamila Woods, the O'My's with Kevin Coval, and the Chicago Children's Choir. Bob Odenkirk, Buddy Guy, D.B. Sweeney, Jenny McCarthy, Donnie Wahlberg, Vic Mensa, Billy Zane and other Chicago celebrities made appearances.

Sweet Home Chicago also featured many Chicago sports stars from the Bulls, Blackhawks, White Sox, Cubs and Bears. The '85 Bears Steve McMichael, Otis Wilson and Kevin Butler appeared, along with star athletes and sports legends including Horace Grant, Zach LaVine and Toni Kukoc of the Chicago Bulls; Patrick Kane of the Blackhawks; Paul Konerko of the White Sox; Fergie Jenkins, Ryne Sandberg and Joe Maddon of the Chicago Cubs; and Brian Urlacher of the Bears. In addition, the telethon spotlighted deserving local heroes who are giving back and making a difference.

The Sweet Home Chicago Telethon's Executive Producer was Chicago-born film producer Robert Teitel, with Alex Pissios of Cinespace Chicago as Co-Executive Producer; digital production and distribution was provided by Nick Buzzell and NBTV, Inc. The event would not have been possible without the inspiration and support provided by Richard Rubenstein and his team at Rubenstein Public Relations, Inc.

#### **About the Chicago CEO Covid-19 Coalition**

The Chicago CEO Covid-19 Coalition is uniting local business leaders for humanitarian relief and recovery in our community, now and in the months to come. As the result of the pandemic, there remain needs for first responders, for food and shelter, and for urgent assistance to those who are struggling because of the loss of jobs and income. The crisis won't be over once Covid-19 subsides, and the effects on our city will be deep and far-reaching. The C-suite of leading local companies has come together to marshal resources for the relief that Chicago desperately needs today, and for essential and ongoing recovery in the tomorrows ahead. John Koudounis, CEO of Calamos Investments, is leading the Coalition initiative as founding member and lead sponsor.

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