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COMMUNITY CREATED PERFORMANCES STORIES AND SONGS OF CHICAGO

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September 10, 2017 Harris Theater for Music and Dance





LYRIC OPERA OF CHICAGO Community Created Performances STORIES AND SONGS OF CHICAGO

We Get Free

KUUMBA LYNX

Script by Kuumba Lynx and Derek Lee McPhatter Lyrics by Sodiq "Superboy" Fajulo, Marshan "Shan the Mac" Hall, Jaelyn Hammond, Clayton "Cee Baby" Harris, Nayia Jackson, Samuel J. Ross, Moshea Sykes, and Mike Przygoda Music by Nayia Jackson, Clayton "Cee Baby" Harris, and Mike Przygoda

Scribbles Zakar Strong Sway Clayton "CeeBaby" Harris

Penn Kontrell "KB" Burks 99 Marshan "Shan the Mac" Hall Igbari Darius Parker

Harmony Rachel Blakes

J.C. Jaelyn Hammond

TruNayia JacksonSamsSamuel J. RossGhostRashad "Rebel76" HarrisDizzKevin "Kevo" Magee, Jr.AfeniAlexis PettisEnsembleIsis CosmeJohn RennaissanceNeiyah "Yah Yah" Villegas

Animateur Cheryl Coons

Off Our Rockers YOLO BOOMERS

Script by YOLO Boomers and Derek Lee McPhatter Lyrics by Michelle Coughlin, Cardi Fleck, Barbara Selvaggio, Tery Veras, Vivian Williford, Derek Lee McPhatter, and Mike Przygoda Music by Mike Przygoda

Cheryl	Joan Mulcahy	Paul	Bob Garcia
Donna	Barbara Selvaggio	Anita	Marsha Fogle
Liz	Rhona Jacobs	Cynthia	Trish Hinkes
Nadine	Cardi Fleck	Thomas	John S. Kirby, PhD
Frank	John Ragir	Geraldine	Dorothy Soltys
Ellen	Michelle Coughlin	Kathy	Tery Veras
Gracie	Vivian Williford		
Doris	Mary Pat Dillon	Choreographer	Elizabeth Luse

Animateur Jacob Watson





Out of the Blu BLU RHYTHM COLLECTIVE

Script by Blu Rhythm Collective and Derek Lee McPhatter Lyrics and music by Griffen, Lea Violet, Miles Comiskey, BrittanE, Jasmin Williams, and Mike Przygoda, with additional music by Bionic and Soulplusmusic

Steph JC Hopkins Ricki Ricketa "Boss" Davis Marcus Mikie Thomas London Nadell Jackson Joyce / Tonya Tanji Harper Avery Griffen Kara / Club Talent Lea Violet Monique BrittanE Carmen Brandy Ford Naya Jasmin Williams Nu Blues Alan Freitag, Marcus Thomas Chicagoans Tre Daniels, Summer Griffin Arden Harris, Jazleen Hunter Chelz Jordan, Madison Marshall Sydni-Celeste Sawyer Band Miles Comiskey

Animateur Sophie Wingland

Creative Team

Artistic Supervisor and DirectorJess McLeodScriptwriterDerek Lee McPhatterSongwriter and Music SupervisorMike Przygoda

Band

Kristina Lee *bass* Suzanne Osman *drums, percussion, vibraphone* James Robinson-Parran *keyboards* Mike Przygoda *drums, keyboard*

Production Team

Scenic Designer Collette Pollard Costume Designer Stephanie Cluggish Lighting Designer Lee Fiskness Sound Designer Matt Chapman Properties Designer Kathryn Johnson Associate Lighting Designer Kaili Story Assistant Director Alexandra Kunath Stage Manager Donald Claxon Assistant Stage Manager Adrienne Bader Assistant Stage Manager Alaina Bartkowiak Assistant Set Designer Yeaji Kim Assistant Costume Designer Anna Wooden Audio Engineer Josh McCammon



SYNOPSES

The stories of these communities are based on the real-lived experiences of the participants and may contain strong adult themes and language.

KUUMBA LYNX We Get Free

When a family emergency calls away one of their rising stars, Kuumba Lynx must push their talents in song, rap, dance, art, and poetry to get the show back on track. It's a behind-the-scenes glimpse of young urban artists working together to turn political activism and creative passion into an unforgettable live theatrical experience.

YOLO BOOMERS Off Our Rockers

For this eclectic group of older Chicagoans, the day ahead is full of possibility. Follow the YOLO Boomers through a series of vignettes – searching for love, new creative experiences, and opportunities to make a difference. Between marching in the streets, tweets, leather jackets, bike rides, selfies, and finding new community, these boomers share a secret: there's no one way to embrace your golden years in the 21st century.

BLU RHYTHM COLLECTIVE Out of the Blu

Four young dancers face an opportunity of a lifetime when a legendary choreographer returns to Chicago. But to succeed they must choose to carry their passion beyond the studio and into the streets of a city riddled with crime, violence, and poverty. Blu Rhythm Collective finds a way forward from tragedy through artistry in song, drama, and movement.

Chicago Voices is made possible by major support from:

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Additional support provided by:



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This project is partially supported by an IncentOvate Grant from the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs & Special Events.

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Welcome

It's hard to believe that only a year and a half ago, on a cold evening early in January, 2016, we announced the start of a major new initiative called **Chicago Voices**. The announcement and launch event took place at The Hideout, an iconic Chicago music venue and a fitting spot to kick off an initiative that would take Lyric Opera into a multitude of new directions.

The Lyric Unlimited staff, with input and guidance from creative consultant **Renée Fleming**, had already been planning the wide-ranging and ambitious set of activities for over a year, engaging in research, pilot programming, and the creation of a new website, **chicagovoices.org**.

Since that announcement in January, more than 7,000 people from all over the city have participated in **Chicago Voices** programming through participatory arts experiences, discussions and panels, concerts and performances, master classes, and much more. 30,000 viewers tuned in to WTTW this March to watch a broadcast of the star-studded **Chicago Voices Concert**, presented at the Lyric Opera House in February. More than 20,000 individuals saw a photographic exhibit of iconic Chicago vocalists at one of three locations across the city. An additional 26,000 voted online to see the groups of their choosing have the opportunity to participate in **Community Created Performances**, culminating in an event like the one you will see today. In all, more than **80,000** people have taken part in the initiative since it began.

In order to maximize the impact of **Chicago Voices**, Lyric Unlimited collaborated with The Chicago Public Library, Columbia College Chicago, The Chicago History Museum and the School of the Art Institute. We are incredibly grateful for their partnership.

Today we celebrate the culmination of the **Chicago Voices Community Created Performances Program** in which three Chicago groups participated in an intensive, 15week creative journey to transform their community's stories into fully-produced music theater pieces. You may have come to the performance this afternoon to support one of the three featured groups. Your presence and encouragement is a part of the strength of this experience: you are helping to create a supportive environment for creativity and self expression.



I hope, too, that you learn or understand something new today about another community that might not be a part of your day-to-day world. The artistic teams that Lyric Unlimited assembled to support each group through the creation process strove to always let the community's voice lead. These are the authentic words, songs, and experiences of each group and its members.

Thank you for coming today, and enjoy the performance!

Cayenne Harris Vice President, Lyric Unlimited Lyric Opera of Chicago





KUUMBA LYNX is an urban arts youth development organization founded in 1996 by three women: Jaquanda Villegas, Leida Garcia-Mukwacha, and Jacinda Bullie. For two decades, alongside many of Chicago's artists, activists, educators, and youth communities, KL has honed an arts-making practice that presents, preserves, and promotes Hip Hop

as a tool to reimagine and demonstrate a more just world. KL's Program Facilitators are a collective of artists, activists, educators, and healers. Kuumba Lynx provides performances and productions, film screenings, art-making workshops and residencies, youth artist apprenticeships, community cultural events (battles, exhibitions, festivals, and poetry slams), and praxi sharing, all rooted in an indigenous culture of urban artistry and activism. KL energizes affirming spaces that challenge youth and their communities to deeply engage and listen, critically observe and react, and creatively speak with one another. Annually, KL Hip Hop Arts Programs directly support and create opportunities for approximately 1,000 participants directly and another 1,500 indirectly through free-to-public activities. KLPE (Kuumba Lynx Performance Ensemble) reaches an estimated audience of 15,000+ people.



The **YOLO BOOMERS** are a dynamic group of active seniors who came together through the North Center Senior Center. Prior to this program, the group worked together in several other programs offered at the center, including a memoir and poetry writing group called GeNarrations, a weekly improv group, and a group called Radio Players, which performs

pre-existing and original radio scripts. The groups regularly perform at various Chicago venues, including the senior center, schools, and local book stores. The GeNarrations program also performs at the Goodman Theatre three times a year. The fourteen members of YOLO Boomers are retired teachers, nurses, engineers, musicians, grant writers, and a few theater people, among others. They regularly create memoir material about family origins, challenges of disease, death, or divorce; as well as funny bits, and their stories are about the joys and heartbreak of living and working in Chicago neighborhoods. They have the unique perspective of decades of experience living in Chicago and are excited and eager to share that perspective through the Chicago Voices program.





BLU RHYTHM COLLECTIVE (BRC), part of Blu Rhythm Chicago, is a community of artists who produce original music, choreography and authentic storytelling, to offer Chicago a unique theater experience and provide a platform for thriving adult creatives. Led by founder Tanji Harper, the Collective explores all forms of art and media content to fully engage audiences and

spark conversations, possible solutions, and inspire change in the city of Chicago. Since its inception in 2015, BRC has performed in *Portrait of a Young Blu Artist* (Lyric Opera of Chicago, Chicago Voices Community Created Performances Pilot), *Ellen Bond, Union Spy* (The House Theatre of Chicago), and has put on numerous seasonal dance intensives that serve to provide Chicago's up-and-coming dance professionals with high-level instruction and opportunities.

CREATIVE TEAM



MATT CHAPMAN's (Sound Designer) 's credits with Chicago companies include Earthquakes in London, The Few, Posh, The Cheats, The Life and Sort of Death of Eric Argyle, Motortown, If There Is I Haven't Found It Yet, The Knowledge, 2000 Feet Away, and Harper Regan (Steep Theatre Company, where he is an artistic associate). Chapman created the sound design for the world premieres of The Burials (Steppenwolf Theatre Company), Give It All Back and Mai Dang Lao (Sideshow Theatre

Company), *Prowess* (Jackalope Theatre), and *Body and Blood* (The Gift Theatre). Other Chicago credits include *Kill Floor* (American Theatre Company), *The Orchestra* (Akvavit Theatre), *Butcher* (Signal Ensemble), and *Balm in Gilead* (Griffin Theatre). Chapman is currently the technical coordinator for Steppenwolf's 1700 Theatre.



STEPHANIE CLUGGISH's (*Costume Design*) recent projects include *T*. (American Theatre Company), *The Firebirds Take the Field* and *Winter* (Rivendell Theatre Ensemble), *Betrayal* (Raven Theatre), *How We Got On* (Haven Theatre), Phillip Glass's *In The Penal Colony* (Chicago Fringe Opera), *Posh* (Steep), *Good For Otto* (The Gift), *The Marriage of Figaro* (Wolf Trap Opera), and *Melancholy Play* (Piven Theatre Workshop). Other credits include serving as assistant costume

designer with Mara Blumenfeld on *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (The MUNY, St. Louis), *The Year I Didn't Go To School* (Chicago Children's Theatre), *One Man, Two Guvnors* and *The Secret Garden* (Court Theatre), *East of Eden* (Steppenwolf), *Out of Shadowland* (Disney Tokyo, Japan), and the Metropolitan Opera's recent new production of *Rusalka*, directed by Mary Zimmerman. Stephanie received her M. F. A. from Northwestern University and is the costume supervisor at Lookingglass Theatre Company.





CHERYL COONS (*Animateur*) is in her second year with Chicago Voices' Community Created Performances. Her original musicals have been honored with the ASCAP Foundation Harold Arlen Musical Theatre Award, two Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Awards, the Theatre for the American Musical Award, the Carbonell Award, and the Joseph Jefferson Award. Her original musical, *The Kiss*, written with composer Peter Eldridge, will be performed at Northwestern University's American Music

Theatre Project in November. She is a program manager with Storycatchers Theatre, a resident playwright at Chicago Dramatists, and the Chicago Regional Rep for the Dramatists Guild. Coons has performed her original songs as a featured singer/songwriter at Carnegie Hall, in an evening hosted by Michael Feinstein.



LEE FISKNESS (*Lighting Designer*) is based in Chicago, where he has designed for companies including Steppenwolf, Chicago Shakespeare, Lookingglass, Drury Lane, The Marriott Theatre, Writers Theatre, Victory Gardens, Windy City Playhouse, Northlight Theatre, About Face Theatre, and The Hypocrites. Other companies include the Manhattan School of Music, Opera Colorado, Portland Opera, People's Light Theatre (Malvern, Pennsylvania), Indiana University, Milwaukee Rep, Two River Theatre

(Red Bank, New Jersey), and Minneapolis Music Theatre. Fiskness has worked on the lighting teams for daytime television, including The *Oprah Winfrey Show*, *The Rosie Show*, and *The Steve Harvey Show*. He received an M. F. A. in lighting design from Northwestern University. He is an adjunct professor at both Northwestern and Columbia College. Fiskness is lighting director at The Santa Fe Opera, where he has worked for 16 seasons.



JESS MCLEOD (Artistic Supervisor, Director) previously worked with Chicago Voices on Kumovi (2016, with the Kirin-Gornick Band) and Portrait of a Young Blu Artist (2015, with Blu Rhythm Collective). Highlights among her Chicago productions include Marry Me a Little (Porchlight Music Theatre); Idris Goodwin's How We Got On (Haven Theatre); Shawn Pfautsch's Season on the Line (The House Theatre of Chicago); Kevin Coval's L-vis Live! (Victory Gardens); and Suzan-Lori

Parks's Venus (Steppenwolf Next Up!). Her New York credits include Joyce Carol Oates's *The Corn Maiden*, Harrison David Rivers's *Fell*, Rachel Axler's *Kitchen Sink*, Brad Ross & Joe Keenan's *The Times, The Last Five Years*, and *The Unauthorized Musicology of Ben Folds*. McLeod served as director of programming of The New York Musical Theatre Festival (2005- 08) and coordinated the Louder Than A Bomb Youth Poetry Festival for Young Chicago Authors (2016-17). She is currently a teaching artist with Storycatchers Theatre. Upcoming projects include Short Shakes! *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Chicago Shakespeare Theater) and *Ellen Bond, Union Spy* (The House). McLeod is the Goodman Theatre's 2017 Michael Maggio Fellow and resident director of Broadway in Chicago's *Hamilton*.





DEREK LEE MCPHATTER (*Scriptwriter*), a member of last season's Community Created Performances creative team, has recently worked on numerous innovative theatrical projects, including *This App is Not the Business*, a corporate America cyberspace dramedy, and *Bring the Beat Back*, an afro-futuristic queer music-theater experience. McPhatter's plays have been presented by The Institute of Contemporary Arts (London), Horse Trade Theater Group, and Harlem9, among others.

Recipient of awards from the Jerome Foundation, Harlem Stage, and the U. K.'s United States Embassy, he has had three plays published by Indie Theater Now. He is developing new works with both Chicago Dramatists (where he is currently a Tutterow Fellow) and Harlem's National Black Theatre (where he is a Resident Playwright). McPhatter holds a B. A. in English from Morehouse College and an M. A. in humanities from New York University. The Ohio native splits his time between Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles.



COLLETTE POLLARD (Scenic Design) recently designed HIR at Steppenwolf Theatre Company along with others including The Fundamentals, Between Riverside and Crazy, Head of Passes, 1984, and To Kill a Mockingbird. Pollard is a company member at Chicago's House Theatre Company, where she has designed more than 20 productions, among them Death and Harry Houdini, The Nutcracker, The Hammer Trinity, Rose & The Rime, and The Sparrow, all remounting at The

Adrienne Arsht Center, Miami. Other recent Chicago credits include *The Hunter & The Bear* (Pigpen Theatre & Writers Theatre) and *Thaddeus and Slocum* (Lookingglass Theatre). Among Pollard's regional credits are productions at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Cleveland Playhouse, Syracuse Stage, Santa Cruz Shakespeare, San Jose Repertory Theatre, and Alliance Theatre. An artistic associate at Timeline Theatre, Pollard is the recipient of several Jeff Awards. She has joined the faculty at UIC as an associate professor of design at the School of Theatre and Music.



MIKE PRZYGODA (*Songwriter, Music Supervisor*), a composer and multi-instrumentalist, worked with Chicago Voices last season. This summer he also was a teaching artist for the Chicago Voices Student Songwriting Workshop, working with high-schoolers to write and record their own songs. Other recent theatrical adventures include *Another Word for Beauty, The Matchmaker*, and *Sarita* at the Goodman Theatre. As a composer he has written an opera, several musicals, chamber

works, scores for film/theater/dance, Big Band jazz songs, and arrangements for other people's songs. By day, Przygoda is a teacher and accompanist for the dance department at The Chicago High School for the Arts. By night he works as a producer and as a session musician on recordings for a variety of bands from Chicago. Later this year his band, The Przymatics, are releasing their debut album.





KAILI STORY (Assistant Lighting Designer) earned a B. A. in dance production and management from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas before coming to Northwestern University to pursue an M. F. A. in stage design. She has toured shows to Adelaide, Australia, Turks and Caicos Islands, and Seoul, Korea as a lighting designer and stage manager. Past work includes *The Tempest* and *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (Barber Theater, 2016), *Pygmalion* and *The Taming of*

the Shrew (Oak Park Festival Theater, 2016), *Ad Hoc: Home* (About Face Youth Ensemble, 2015), and *In the Next Room: The Vibrator Play* (Louis Theater, 2015).



JACOB WATSON (*Animateur*), a director, designer, educator, and facilitator, is in his second season with Chicago Voices. He most recently worked at the Center for Community Arts Partnerships at Columbia College, where he managed a series of arts-integrated learning initiatives in partnership with local K-12 schools. Previously, he spent three years as the arts education consultant at Creative Directions, where he facilitated arts-based workshops and institutes for communities of teachers

nationwide. As an independent artist, Watson has collaborated with theater companies across the city, including Erasing the Distance, Theatre Unspeakable, Piven Theatre Workshop, Albany Park Theatre Project, Redmoon, and the Goodman. He is a founding member of the FYI Performance Company at the Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health, for which he recently co-conceived and directed *Gray Area*, a new play about consent. Jacob holds a B. A. in theater from Northwestern University and is currently pursuing his Master's of Education degree at Harvard University, with a focus on arts in education.



SOPHIE WINGLAND (*Animateur*) is a musician, facilitator and yoga teacher, originally from California. She is a classically trained singer and plays ukulele, hang drum, cello, slide whistle, and toy accordion has and enjoys creating instruments out of found objects. Rooted in the belief that everyone is a musician, her work explores the nature of collaboration, playfulness and healing. Wingland has a Bachelor's in Music from Oberlin Conservatory, a Master's in Music in Vocal Arts

from USC Thornton School, and a Master's in New Audiences and Innovative Practice from The Royal Conservatory in the Hague. She is currently working for Harmony, Hope & Healing, facilitating peace circles and teaching music with individuals and families recovering from trauma, homelessness and addiction. She also teaches yoga and music meditation classes which encourage body positivity, compassion and community. CHICAGO PREMIERE MAR 17 21 23 25 Bold = Matinee



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Lyric Unlimited, a division of Lyric Opera of Chicago, offers a multifaceted program of education, community engagement and artistic initiatives. The purpose of Lyric Unlimited is to provide a relevant cultural service to communities throughout the Chicago area, including communities for whom opera and opera companies have been largely irrelevant; to explore a wide range of ways in which Lyric can collaborate with cultural and community organizations throughout the area; and to advance the development of opera, exploring ways in which opera as an art form can resonate more powerfully, and in a range of different ways, with people of multiple backgrounds, ethnicities, and interests.

Chicago Voices is a ground-breaking new Lyric Unlimited initiative celebrating the stories of Chicago's communities and the diversity of the city's vocal traditions. Through Chicago Voices, Lyric will expand the traditional role of an opera company within the cultural ecosystem of its city, engaging audiences through participatory arts experiences and dynamic cross-genre programming.

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ABOUT HARRIS THEATER FOR MUSIC AND DANCE





The Joan W. and Irving B. Harris Theater for Music and Dance is Chicago's primary residence for music and dance, connecting diverse audiences with outstanding artists from across the city, the nation, and the world.

Opened in November 2003 in Chicago's Millennium Park, the 1,525-seat state-of-the art performance venue was the first multi-use performance venue built in downtown Chicago since 1929. Now in its fourteenth season, the Theater features the most diverse offerings of any venue in Chicago, and has earned national recognition as a distinctive model for collaboration, performance, and artistic advancement.

The Theater's activities fall under three central

strategies: support for local music and dance companies, presentation of national and international artists, and community engagement and educational programs.

Today, the Harris Theater's original group of 12 resident companies has grown to include 30 diverse music and dance companies, including Chicago Gay Men's Chorus, Chicago Symphony Orchestra's MusicNow, Giordano Dance Chicago, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, and Music of the Baroque. The Theater supports resident companies with subsidized rental, technical expertise, marketing support, and professional development opportunities, allowing the organizations to focus on what they do best—bringing the finest in music and dance performances to the public.

The Harris Theater is also dedicated to presenting the highest quality artistic programming, bringing celebrated artists and ensembles from throughout the world to Chicago through the Harris Theater Presents series. The Theater has achieved widespread recognition as a vital cultural anchor in Chicago, bringing artists such as Daniel Barenboim, Mikhail Baryshnikov, Joshua Bell, Renée Fleming, Angélique Kidjo, Hamburg Ballet, Paris Opéra Ballet, and Stephen Sondheim to the Elizabeth Morse Genius Stage.

The Harris Theater's community engagement initiatives take advantage of access to the world's leading musicians and dancers, building bridges to people from throughout the Chicago region and nurturing the next generation of artists and audiences. Ongoing programs include Arts Education Partnerships, which offers master classes and artist talks, and Access Tickets, which has provided over 13,000 free tickets to youth and families from more than 35 partner organizations.

To learn more about the Harris Theater, please visit HarrisTheaterChicago.org. Call the Box Office at 312.334.7777 to request a brochure or additional information.

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(Listing as of August 10, 2017)

INFORMATION HARRIS THEATER FOR MUSIC AND DANCE

Rental information: If you have any questions about the Harris Theater, including rental of the facility, group tours, or volunteer opportunities, please call the administrative office Monday through Friday, 9AM–5PM, at 312.334.2407.

Ticket purchases: To purchase tickets, visit HarrisTheaterChicago.org. Call or visit our Box Office at 312.334.7777 Monday through Friday, 12–6PM or until curtain on performance days.

In consideration of other patrons and the performers: Please turn off all cell phones. Photography is not permitted in the Theater at any time and texting during performance is strictly prohibited. Film or digital images will be confiscated or deleted by the Harris Theater house staff; violators will be subject to a fine. Latecomers will be seated at the discretion of the house management. Smoking is prohibited within the Harris Theater. Allowance of personal items and baggage into the auditorium space is at the sole discretion of house management.

For your safety: Please take a moment and note the nearest exit. In the event of an emergency, follow the directions of the Harris Theater house staff. In the event of an illness or injury, inform the Harris Theater House Manager.

Accessibility: Infrared assisted listening devices are available from the Harris Theater house staff. The Theater is equipped for easy access to all seating levels for patrons needing special access. Please advise the Box Office prior to the performance for any special seating needs.

Parking: Discounted parking validation is available for all ticket holders using the Millennium Park Garage. A validation machine is located next to the Box Office on the Orchestra Level, as you enter the Theater lobby.

Lost and found: Retrieved items will be held for 30 days with the Harris Theater house staff at 312.334.2403.

