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## **Foundation of Little Village Celebrates Graduation of Next Wave of Entrepreneurs**

*The Juntos entrepreneurial programming equips aspiring business owners with the knowledge and tools to launch a successful business*

**Chicago, Dec. 18, 2023** – Today, the Foundation of Little Village, a nonprofit focused on building community wealth, cultural preservation, and corridor revitalization in Little Village, hosted its final graduation ceremony for the fall cohort of its Juntos entrepreneurial programming. The nonprofit hosted graduation ceremonies for: Juntos Lanzamos, Juntos Emprendemos, and the first-ever Juntos Lanzamos in English.

“We’re so proud of our Juntos Lanzamos, Juntos Emprendemos, and Juntos Lanzamos in English graduates,” said Kim Close, executive director of the Foundation of Little Village. “These programs are rigorous, but the graduates have shown their resilience, determination, and entrepreneurial spirit. I can’t wait to see how these graduates utilize their new knowledge and skills to launch and grow their businesses.”

30 entrepreneurs graduated from Juntos programming this round: Juntos Lanzamos graduated on November 29, Juntos Emprendemos graduated on December 14, and Juntos Lanzamos in English graduated on December 18. Since its inception, Juntos programming has graduated 159 entrepreneurs and provided more than \$44,000 in small business grants to program graduates.

“I joined the program to gain more financial education as a small startup. This specific area of the course helped me better understand where to improve and organize my numbers so we may become profitable versus just viable,” said Melania Nunez, 2023 Juntos Lanzamos in English graduate and owner of Xicana Moss. “This will allow me to grow my business and overcome the four to five-year average survival rate of a start-up. With this knowledge, I’ll continue to showcase in the BIPOC community and help bridge the gap in the holistic and naturopathic wellness space, as representation matters in all areas.”

The Foundation of Little Village supports community wealth building and corridor revitalization by encouraging business growth through its Xquina Business Ecosystem, which provides entrepreneurs with unparalleled access to capital, a business incubator, a referral network, and the Juntos entrepreneurial programs.

“It’s critical for us to listen and provide culturally relevant programming and coaching to serve our community in the best way possible,” said Lisandra Martinez, Foundation of Little Village instructor for Juntos programming. “That is why we translated Juntos Lanzamos from Spanish to English. Now, the



next generation of Little Village entrepreneurs, who are bilingual, can access our culturally relevant entrepreneurial training resources in whichever language they feel most comfortable learning in.”

The Foundation of Little Village offers three levels of entrepreneurial programs: Juntos Lanzamos, which is now offered in English and Spanish, Juntos Emprendemos, and Juntos Avanzamos. These programs are strategically designed to equip entrepreneurs with the knowledge and financial capital necessary to create a successful business. Juntos Lanzamos is the entry-level program that provides entrepreneurs with the technical assistance and mentorship to move a business from concept to reality; Juntos Emprendemos equips entrepreneurs with business planning and strategy tools to build sound financial and business operations for growth and sustained success; and Juntos Avanzamos provides a boot-camp style format for Juntos Emprendemos graduates to pursue funding.

“The Juntos programming is a valuable resource for current and aspiring entrepreneurs,” said Ramiro Atristaín-Carrión, Managing Director at Atristaín Financial Advisors, LLC. and financial literacy instructor for Juntos programming. “The program goes beyond by providing mentorship opportunities, guiding business strategy, and aiding in planning. Most importantly, these programs are accessible at no cost to participants, and they reach their pinnacle in Juntos Avanzamos, where entrepreneurs have the opportunity to consult with me and other experts and coaches on financial issues to pursue funding.”

Learn more about the Foundation of Little Village or enroll in its entrepreneurial Juntos programming at [flvchicago.org](http://flvchicago.org).

### **About the Foundation of Little Village**

The Foundation of Little Village was founded in August 2018 with a mission to create a socioeconomic impact system for Little Village entrepreneurs. In this time, the Foundation of Little Village has supported more than 250 local small businesses with culturally relevant educational programming, professional services, workforce training, access to capital, and technical assistance to bridge the digital divide between youth and local businesses. In pursuit of these goals, the Foundation of Little Village equips local entrepreneurs with access to bilingual, professional programming designed to support and encourage economic growth, educational opportunities, and vibrant wealth creation to more effectively propel the Little Village community forward.