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**Mayor Emanuel Interviews Chicago Community Trust President Dr. Helene Gayle on  
"Chicago Stories" Podcast**

On this week's episode of "[Chicago Stories](#)" podcast, Mayor Emanuel sat down with Chicago Community Trust president Dr. Helene Gayle for a conversation about the connections between public health and community development, what brought her to Chicago, and the impact she hopes to have on her new home.

Dr. Gayle has spent over 30 years tackling issues like HIV/AIDS, economic development and female empowerment at the Centers for Disease Control, the Gates Foundation, CARE, the McKinsey Social Initiative and now the Chicago Community Trust, but that wasn't her plan when she started her career. All Dr. Gayle knew was that she wanted to make a difference.

"I always had a real interest in how do you create positive change," Dr. Gayle said, "but I was also was practical enough to know that it would be good to have a tangible skill, and medicine was one of those skills."

As Dr. Gayle told Mayor Emanuel, her work began in pediatrics in an inner-city teaching hospital in Washington, D.C., but it didn't take long before she began "diagnosing" the larger picture.

"You'd see a lot of the kids who'd come in and out of that hospital and you'd realize it wasn't just about the disease process, it was really about systems, and whether or not we had adequate systems, and did we have the right policies in place, and so many other things that really impact health," Dr. Gayle said, "so I started thinking about public health as a way of having greater impact than you do as a clinician taking care of individuals."

After taking on the problems of public health and human development on a global level, Dr. Gayle decided to come to Chicago in order to tackle those same issues on the ground floor.

"I was drawn to the opportunity to take a lot of the things I had done nationally and globally and look at them from a local perspective in a city that I think has the potential to really demonstrate what it takes to make a difference," Dr. Gayle told Mayor Emanuel. "I think it can be a model for the rest of the nation in many ways."

For her part, Dr. Gayle hopes to build on the Chicago Community Trust's legacy of over 100 years of impact.

"You can write checks and you can provide grants, but there is more that we can do as an organization that has been here for 104 years," Dr. Gayle said. "We want to think about how do we make sure people have careers and incomes and pathways. How can we help to increase economic opportunities and activities in communities that have been disinvested, and how do we look at some of the policies that can actually make a difference."

Be sure to listen to the rest of the episode as Dr. Gayle talks about the ingredients to effective public health programs, the political evolution of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and creating enduring economic opportunity.

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