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For immediate release

Civic Heart Community Services Relocates to One Emancipation Center

New office provides collaborative space, synergy with like-minded non-profit organizations to create a thriving Third Ward community

HOUSTON, June 29, 2023 — Civic Heart Community Services (Civic Heart) relocated its headquarters to One Emancipation Center at 3131 Emancipation Avenue in Houston’s Third Ward in June 2023. The 34-year-old organization, the largest black-founded non-profit organization in the Gulf coast region, formerly known as Change Happens!, recently announced its name change to Civic Heart Community Services.

As it continues to add programs and services, Civic Heart has outgrown its previous location on Elgin Street, home to the organization for the past 18 years. The new 10-year lease for 13,028 square feet allows Civic Heart to remain in the historic Third Ward, while adding much needed space to accommodate the growing number of programs and services.

Just since 2019, the organization increased its investment in the community by 240 percent and now offers 25 programs in 59 Texas counties through grants and partnerships with a wide range of partners, thanks to its dedicated team of 75 culturally diverse employees and more than 280 volunteers. The organization helps avert youth from a life entangled in the youth justice system; enables families to access health insurance; acts to end HIV and prevent substance misuse; helps those experiencing homelessness with housing and other essential support including connection to employment and mental health treatment; provides mentoring to refugee youth as they adapt to living in a new country; and much more.

Located across Emancipation Park in Houston, One Emancipation Center was developed by the Midtown Redevelopment Authority (MRA) in partnership with the Center for Civic and Public Policy Improvement (CCPPI) as Houston’s first central headquarters for affordable housing programs. Serving as a hub for affordable housing initiatives, office space, and community gatherings, the building opened in 2021 and houses a mix of organizations engaged in affordable housing advocacy, administration and support services.

“Civic Heart has been a part of the historic Third Ward for the past 34 years,” said Helen Stagg, Civic Heart CEO. “There is still a great need for community services in this area, so it was important to find our new headquarters right here to continue our work in this community and preserve our heritage. We are delighted to find our new home in One Emancipation Center, with its tenant mix including several other

non-profit organizations working to create a thriving Third Ward community. We are excited about the synergy of working in kinship with others whose mission closely aligns with Civic Heart.”

The new office space provides additional meeting rooms to host community groups and projects and to work on collaborative issues that affect people in the community. In addition, the expanded technology center will provide technology resources for area residents needed to learn, apply for jobs, complete resumes, or apply for health insurance. It also allows for students without access to computers or internet at home to use technology to study, do homework and for tutoring on-site. The site also provides functionality to accommodate the hybrid work model, allowing Civic Heart to not only meet the changing workforce demands but also address their growing space demands in a more cost-efficient manner.

John Guess, III, president of The Guess Group, represented Civic Heart in the lease transaction. Vergel Gay & Associates provided project management services and assisted throughout the lease, build-out, and move-in process.

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About Civic Heart Community Services

Civic Heart Community Services is one of the largest minority-founded social service organizations in the Gulf Coast Region of Texas. For more than 33 years the organization has successfully developed and implemented outreach, education, prevention, intervention, and collaborative partnerships to serve marginalized and vulnerable communities. The organization offers a wide array of program and services that includes: education, workforce and employment; after-school and summer enrichment programs; housing and supportive services; substance misuse prevention and co-occurring mental disorder treatment; HIV prevention; teen pregnancy prevention; increased access to health care coverage; reentry program and employment; implementing a resident-driven community plan to increase affordable housing and transportation and mobility options, and enhanced civic engagement to address challenges and facilitate a greater sense of inclusion. Learn more at www.civicheart.org.