



June 12, 2020

Remembering Maria Whelan, longtime advocate for Illinois children

At the Greater Chicago Food Depository, we mourn the loss of Maria Whelan, who served as the CEO of Illinois Action for Children.

Maria was a lionhearted advocate for children in Illinois – a fierce and joyful force of nature who over the years improved the lives of hundreds of thousands of children in this state. She was relentlessly committed to all children having equal opportunities.

We live in a time when many are just now coming to terms with the racial and social injustices that have plagued our society for far too long. Maria dedicated her life to confronting those barriers for children. She believed that we could all do better. She never stopped believing that.

Maria was a longtime friend and partner of the Food Depository. She was instrumental in helping us launch the Lunch Bus, one of the Food Depository's modes of providing free summer meals to children in need. She was an inspiration and a role model for advocacy in Illinois. No one did it better.

We're so grateful to have known Maria. We wish her family peace in this painful time.