

## Passion, Passed Down

Myetie Hamilton (M.P.P.A. '03) didn't have to look far for inspiration as a child growing up: her grandfather, and his actions, instilled in her a passion to advocate for and help others succeed.

### Inside this Issue

#### FEATURES



#### Amy Campanelli

An unemployed veteran with mental health issues commits a nonviolent crime in Chicago's North Lawndale neighborhood, which could put them behind bars for years. Instead, they visit the Cook County Veterans Treatment Court

#### FEATURES



#### Myetie Hamilton

Public service—and Chicago—run in Myetie Hamilton's blood. At 48, Hamilton (M.P.P.A. '03) serves as vice president and executive director of City Year Chicago and as board president of the Chicago Park District. Rewind to her

#### FEATURES



#### A 'Powerful Way to Open Doors'

In an industry where there aren't enough internships for everyone—and competition for those that are available is steep—Vinesh Kannan (CS '19) and his peers realized they could fill a void.

#### ON CAMPUS



#### Planting a Connection to the Community

The seeds of innovation—and interaction—have been planted at the corner of 33rd Street and Michigan Avenue in Chicago's

#### ON CAMPUS



#### Leading the Way:

With the academic year in full swing at Illinois Institute of Technology, a new group of leaders who will play key roles leading the university now and into the future are taking hold.

#### RESEARCH BRIEFS



#### Putting a Charge in Fuel

It was only a matter of time—before Influit Energy would need to hire more scientists, before the 2,100-square-foot lab space that the company occupies in Chicago's West Loop neighborhood would

#### ALUMNI NEWS



#### Harnessing the Ripple Effect

The term "ripple effect" is used to describe the spreading effect of a single action or event and serves as a representation of the idea that we are all connected. Each moment is like a stone being



*Illinois Tech Magazine* is published two times a year by the Office of Marketing and Communications

Send Letters to

*Illinois Tech Magazine*  
Office of Marketing and Communications  
10 West 35th Street, IIT Tower  
Suite 13D8-2  
Chicago, IL 60616-3717





# Rethinking Justice

By Thaddeus Mast

An unemployed veteran with mental health issues commits a nonviolent crime in Chicago’s North Lawndale neighborhood, which could put them behind bars for years. Instead, they visit the [Cook County Veterans Treatment Court](#) and walk out under an individualized program to stay out of the criminal system.

The veterans court is one of several groundbreaking reforms and programs that [Amy Campanelli](#) (LAW ’87) created as Cook County public defender from 2015–2021. Courts specializing in mental health and drug-related offenses were also brought to a department that is charged with legally defending people who cannot afford private attorneys.

Now, Campanelli has joined [Lawndale Christian Legal Center](#) as vice president of restorative justice, where she uses her decades of courtroom experience to guide her staff, and clients, toward a better future. She knows what programs can succeed and can give a second chance to those who are trapped in the legal system. Beyond providing representation in court, the legal center has partnered with nonprofit and government groups to provide housing, employment, and other basic needs to help people escape the criminal cycle.

“[The legal center] is meeting the social and justice needs in the community,” Campanelli says. “We provide the legal and social needs of everyone we represent. Meeting legal needs is important, but social needs are just as important.”

Lester Finkle has worked with Campanelli on and off since 1987, the year that Campanelli became a public defender. Finkle served as chief of staff during Campanelli’s term as Cook County public defender, and he says that he knew Campanelli’s drive would bring changes to Chicago’s legal system.

“She was always very enthusiastic in that she did everything possible for the client. She was the one who put herself on the line, who was there for the client,” Finkle says.

Campanelli’s first major initiative was in helping to create the Cook County Mental Health Court Program. She saw the problems that public defenders faced, but it wasn’t until becoming a high-level manager in 2003 that she began implementing new ideas to support clients. Campanelli began working with judges to start the first felony mental health court in the nation.



“I thought it was a great, brilliant idea. People in the sheriff’s office said a quarter of prisoners in jail were mentally ill, and that it was the biggest mental health institution in the state,”

Finkle says.

As the county’s chief public defender, Campanelli implemented a program ensuring that a defender was available at Chicago Police Department stations where arrestees could be “forced to sign a confession,” Campanelli says.

“[Chicago] has a reputation for wrongful conviction,” she says. “We have to have lawyers available 24/7.”

“There are all these issues [in the legal system]. Let’s go to the root cause: What is going on in their life, and how can we support rehabilitation instead of arrest, incarceration, release, repeat. We’ve got to stop that,” Campanelli adds.

When her term as Cook County public defender ended in 2021, Campanelli wanted to continue helping people avoid incarceration.

“I became a public defender with the goal to make [the office] much more holistic and client-centered. I had six years to do it, and I did everything I could possibly do,” Campanelli says.

Campanelli worked with Lawndale Christian Legal Center during her time in public defense. As a community-focused organization, the center was able to support local residents facing the criminal system in ways that Campanelli only dreamed of as a government employee, such as providing housing, legal assistance, and other basic services.



“I became a public defender with the goal to make [the office] much more holistic and client-centered. I had six years to do it, and I did everything I could possibly do,”

—Amy Campanelli

“When someone says [their clients] need to ‘pull themselves up by their bootstraps,’ they don’t understand what the youth in these neighborhoods are going through. It’s not good

public safety to trap youth in a flawed, racist system,” Campanelli says.

Campanelli is an advocate for restorative justice, which she says is a philosophy of “looking at a crime as a harm to the community and, therefore, how can we heal that harm?” The idea brings the victim of a crime and the perpetrator into a “healing circle” where they discuss the crime, a person’s needs, and whether there should be consequences. Campanelli is also helping the legal center connect with other community-based organizations to bolster what her clients say is their greatest need: housing.

“We’re identifying landlords to place clients in wonderful apartments. It’s guaranteed money [for the landlords], and the clients don’t want to lose a stable home that many haven’t had before,” Campanelli says.

Lawndale Christian Legal Center is growing as ideas about rehabilitation—not arrest—become reality, and Campanelli wants to help realize these plans in the coming years.

“I love being in North Lawndale. The legal center is right in the middle of a residential block in the community, and people embrace the center,” Campanelli says.

---

**From Issue:** [Summer 2022](#)

📌 **Category:** Features





## ‘A Cornerstone of Hope’

By Linsey Maughan

Public service—and Chicago—run in Myetie Hamilton’s blood. At 48, Hamilton (M.P.P.A. ’03) serves as **vice president and executive director** of City Year Chicago and as **board president** of the Chicago Park District. Rewind to her childhood, and you’ll find the first-born daughter of a teenage mother growing up in the South Side Chicago neighborhood of South Shore.

Hamilton was a child who found inspiration in her family: in her young mother’s resilience and determination; in her grandmother, who she says embodied “elegance, grace, and strength”; and in her grandfather, whose steps Hamilton would ultimately follow.

“I was fortunate to have my first mentor in my home, and that was my grandfather,” she says. “My grandfather was a service man, a man of the people. He was a courageous advocate. When I was a young girl, I experienced my grandfather as a fierce and compassionate leader in his role as the vice president of a labor union for health care workers. My grandfather had an impeccable work ethic. It wasn’t as much what he said, but what he modeled. He was one of the most brilliant people I knew.”

Among his accomplishments, Hamilton’s grandfather, James W. Mykes, founded **Provident Foundation**, a nonprofit that “helps under-resourced youth of color achieve their dreams of becoming medical practitioners,” Hamilton says. After he passed away in 2012, Hamilton became a board member and board chair of the organization, a position she still holds.

The oldest of four children, Hamilton attended college at Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University, where she majored in business, in part, because she first perceived her grandfather as a businessman. Eventually, she recognized that his work was truly in service to others, and she sought to emulate his commitment to excellence as well.

“I was taught that what matters is what you do when no one’s looking,” Hamilton says. “I think of it as how I show up; I think it’s representative of who I am. No matter what I’m doing I try to give it my all, my 150 percent.”

After college, Hamilton moved back to Chicago, where a former high school guidance counselor helped her land a finance internship at Chicago Public Schools.

“My entire career at Chicago Public Schools launched from that internship. I was a business manager intern for a year, and by the end of that year I had three job offers,” Hamilton says. “I ended up taking a full-time role as a business manager at a school on the South Side.”

---

**“She’s one of those people who you can’t say no to because she’s very competent, she’s very respectful of people, but she also has high ideals of how the world could be,”**

—Bill Gerstein

---

Hamilton’s career with CPS would span close to two decades. She rose through the ranks, starting in 1999 as manager of school business support services and by 2009 holding the title of chief officer for CPS’s Business Services Center. The office provided business consultation and operational support services to principals and administrative staff in schools across the district and was the first-ever shared services model to be launched at CPS.

“That was one of the greatest achievements in my career, and it was centered around supporting principals so they could focus more on classroom instruction, so they could make sure that teachers and children were successful,” Hamilton says.

Among those school principals was Bill Gerstein, who first worked with Hamilton when he was principal of Austin Polytechnical Academy High School, now known as Austin College and Career Academy High School. Gerstein now serves as a board member at City Year, and Hamilton describes him as a champion mentor to her, stemming from those years at CPS.

“She’s one of those people who you can’t say no to because she’s very competent, she’s very respectful of people, but she also has high ideals of how the world could be,” Gerstein says. “Not everybody is like that, and some people who say that don’t really [follow through]. But Myetie is really able to make it happen.”

Eventually, Hamilton became chief officer of the School Support Center at CPS, then chief of staff, and finally deputy chief of schools, a role she held from 2014 through 2017.

During Hamilton’s stint as deputy chief, she hired Kendall Straughter to serve as a program coordinator of attendance, culture, and climate.

“I met her when I hadn’t completed my undergrad degree,” Straughter says. “As my mentor and also my supervisor, she engaged a space where she was able to really get to know me personally and identified that I could use some mentorship. She encouraged me to go back to undergrad and finish my degree. I wasn’t very confident, and she challenged me to think bigger. It’s not only the ability to transform the workplace—she has this ability to really love on you and help you think differently. For me she has been a cornerstone of hope to really push forward.”

With Hamilton’s encouragement, Straughter completed his undergraduate degree and is now pursuing his master’s degree in social work at the University of Chicago. He now serves as dean of students of the Lower School at the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools and has adopted two sons.

“The same investment that Myetie provides to me, I provide to them,” he says. “I’m very fortunate to have her in my space, but she also makes me feel like she is fortunate to have me.”

Having recently left CPS for other opportunities, Hamilton wasn’t planning to make a career move in 2019. But when an opening at City Year Chicago arose, it was too enticing to pass up. City Year is a national nonprofit that places AmeriCorps members in schools to provide near-peer mentoring, tutoring, and social-emotional support to students to help keep them on track to graduate. All AmeriCorps members working with City Year Chicago provide support to CPS schools.

“Service is really tied to my heartbeat, and [City Year Chicago offers] a dual reward of really [honing] the next generation of civic change agents and supporting young people in 27 schools across the city,” Hamilton says. “This was a perfect tie-in and fit for me to still have that incredible impact on students but also to invest in our future leaders.”

What she couldn’t have anticipated, as she was joining City Year Chicago, was the forthcoming pandemic and its impact on education.

“In leading [City Year] through the pandemic, nothing fell to the wayside from the standpoint of our financial stability and value proposition,” Hamilton says. “We were able to rebound from the first year. We were identified as an essential partner organization with CPS, so our services never stopped. We were able to support teachers and students in the virtual space, and then we were working along with teachers and principals when CPS transferred back into in-person learning.”

Emerging from the pandemic, City Year Chicago has been recruiting its AmeriCorps workforce at a faster pace than any other branch of the national organization, starting the school year with 143 AmeriCorps members supporting CPS students.

“None of this would have been possible without the grace and favor of God and the hard work and commitment of my incredible staff, corps members, and the executive board at City Year Chicago,” Hamilton says. “I’m really proud of not only what we’ve been able to accomplish during a time of challenge that I think no one could ever imagine, but of being a part of a powerful service-minded and socially conscious community where we all share a common understanding and belief in equity and the power of service—supporting others and uplifting young people.”

Hamilton continues to meet her desire to serve in other capacities. In September 2021 Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot appointed her as a commissioner of the park district. In February 2022 Hamilton became board president.

“This is an opportunity to establish a stronger, more accountable park district and governance structure,” Hamilton says. “We’re the third-largest parks facility and park district in the nation. This is so closely related to expanding opportunities for young people, providing more options around activities and curbing violence.”

For now, Hamilton, who lives in Bronzeville with her husband and twin daughters, says she remains committed to the city of Chicago, and to public service and philanthropy.

“Myetie, I don’t think, has much of a ceiling. Whatever she wants to do,” Gerstein says, “she’ll be really good at it.”

---

**From Issue:** Summer 2022

 **Category:** Features





# A ‘Powerful Way to Open Doors’

A Q&A with the Alum Behind Scarlet Data Studio, an Alumni-Run Internship Program

By Andrew Wyder

**IN AN INDUSTRY** where there aren’t enough internships for everyone—and competition for those that are available is steep—**Vinesh Kannan** (CS ’19) and his peers realized they could fill a void.

Thus, **Scarlet Data Studio** was created. A six-week summer internship program for Illinois Tech students interested software engineering, the program is run by Illinois Tech alumni. Kannan, who is a staff software engineer at Nuna Inc., funded the first two cohorts of interns—two in 2020 and 10 in 2021—with bonus money that he earned from his full-time job. He served as the interns’ mentors the first year, with five more alums joining in 2021 as mentors. In 2022 the program partnered with Illinois Tech’s Career Services office to serve 20 interns, with nine total mentors, including Edwin Zamudio (CS ’21), one of the program’s first two interns in 2020 and its first alum-turned-mentor.

Of the 12 interns in the first two cohorts, 11 have accepted offers for their next roles: working professionals.

“They have an alumni who’s worked with them closely and can advocate for them in new ways. We can say [to prospective employers], ‘This is someone that I’ve managed as an intern. I’ve seen them tackle the challenges that a real software-engineering team would run into,’” Kannan says, adding, “That’s a much more powerful way to open doors for our students.”

**Q: Why is a program like Scarlet Data Studio important?**

Kannan: Career Services emphasizes the importance of talking to alumni and industry professionals—ideally, the best scenario is when alumni see the potential in students. Still, connecting with industry professionals can be challenging. Students will talk to industry professionals, and instead of those professionals recognizing the huge amount of potential they have, or the obstacles they’ve overcome to even be at this point where they’re working on their degree, they’ll see all the things that are missing and say, ‘Well, OK, you don’t have what I have,’ or ‘You’re not ready to be a software engineer.’ That’s shooting us in the foot as alumni as well, because we are depending on an influx of strong graduates so that we can help our teams be more successful, so that we can build new kinds of digital innovations, so that we can have a group of really smart and thoughtful technologists who are tackling the problems that we face both in our careers and in our industry. I used to think it was the name brand of another university, the reputation that gets them there. But it’s also a really strong alumni and student connection where you have alumni who are pushing their companies to hire more people from their schools, alumni who are opening up the path for those students to land internships, other students and upperclassmen who are telling their classmates here’s exactly what you have to do to find an internship.

**Q: How does the internship program work?**

**Kannan:** Students get the chance to launch features in a production system. This year, the 20 interns worked on building Butterfly, a social matching app that pairs people with others in their community every week. Students worked on developing new matching algorithms, building features for the chat app, creating new data sources, building pipelines for new services, and other projects that are technically challenging and provide ownership over a part of the system. Students learn how to read and contribute to a large codebase, how to write tests, how to participate in code review, and how to launch a new feature. After their first big launch, students meet with their mentor to design a stretch project that will elevate their technical skills and explore an area that interests them. The students submit a schedule of when they’re available next to all of their other commitments. I match them up with mentors who have a similar schedule, and then they’ll have several meetings throughout the week to check on their progress. They’ll have a one-on-one with their mentor where they can discuss their career interests, how projects are going. They also have a pair of programming sessions, which are a time for the mentors to give them specific feedback on their code to help them get unblocked. Outside of that time, the students have time to work. They can plan their 10 hours whenever they want to make progress in their code, ask other people for questions on our Slack channel, talk to their mentor, or to ask for resources when they get stuck.

**Q: How do you create a balance between your professional life and Scarlet Data Studio?**

**Kannan:** There’s a similar reality that a lot of students run into, which is that the technology industry is changing so fast that often you need to have time to learn outside of your job to pick up new skills. I’m really lucky to work for a company that makes that time for me during my workday. A challenge that all of us on the alumni mentor team face is we do have to do a lot of work outside of our existing jobs to go through this program. The same is true for the students. They’re realizing, even outside of their coursework, they have to take on other projects and learn new things to really explore the interests that are important to them. Our hope is that by creating this kind of environment we can do a lot of that within this context where we’re supported by the school, we’re supported by our support network. It makes it easier to do that than if we were all just doing it on our own.

## Hawks Helping Hawks

### Mentors for Scarlet Data Studio include:

**Aleksandra Kukielko** (CS, M.S. ’18)  
summer 2021

**Andrew Tolentino** (CS ’20)  
summer 2021

**Anna Benson** (CS ’19)  
summer 2022

**Arushi Rai** (CS ’20)  
summer 2022

**Divya Soopal** (CS, M.S. ’20)  
summer 2021

**Edwin Zamudio** (CS ’21)  
summer 2022

**Erik Quintanilla** (CS ’20)  
summer 2022

**Morgan Peters** (CS ’18)  
summer 2021

**Prince Hodonou** (CS ’20)  
summer 2022

**Rachael Brooks** (CS ’19)  
summer 2021 and summer 2022

**Ramir Aguilos** (CE ’19)  
summer 2022

**Spriha Jha** (CS ’17)  
summer 2022

**Vinesh Kannan** (CS ’19)  
winter 2022, summer 2021, and summer 2022

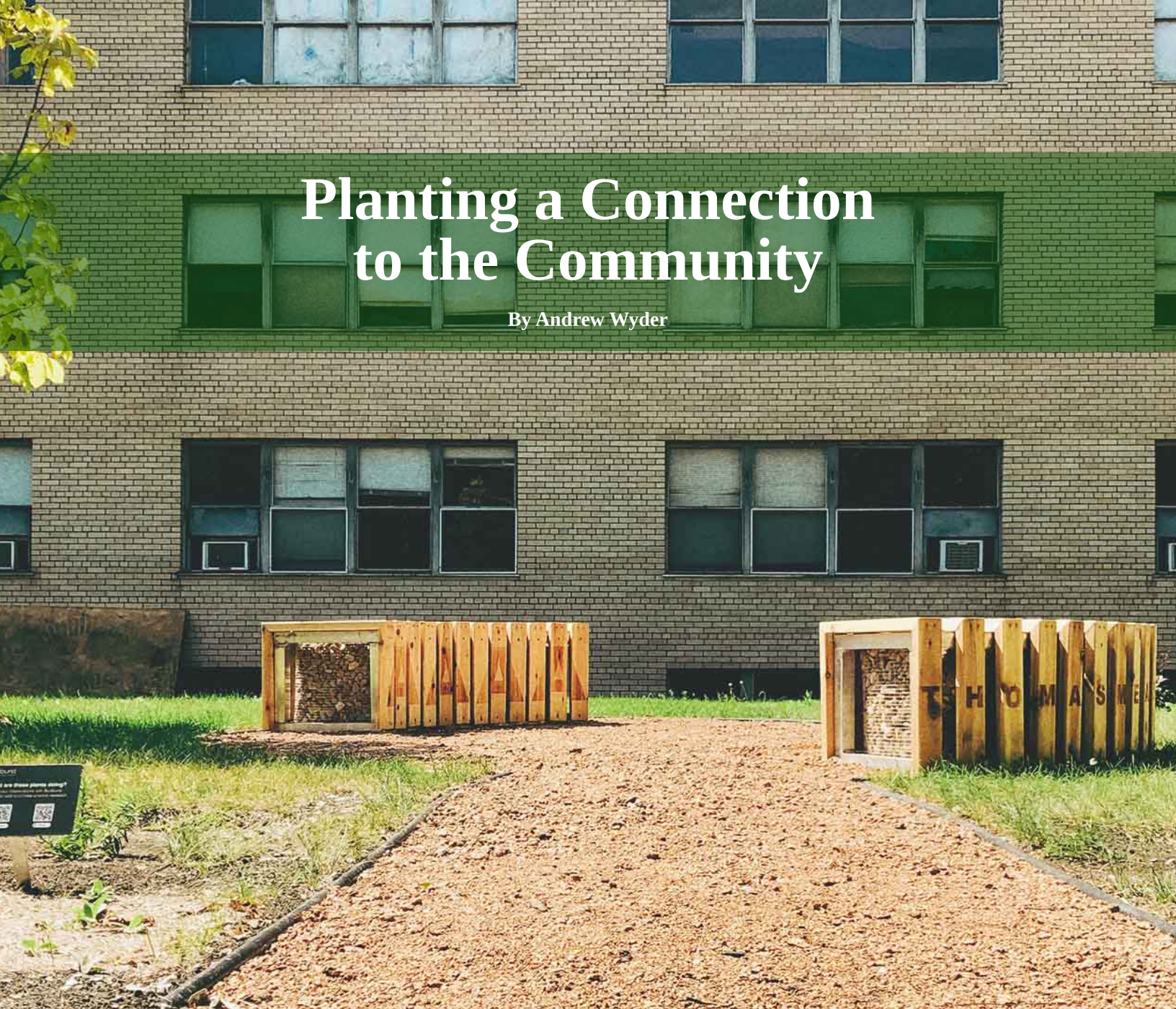
**From Issue:** **Summer 2022**

**Category:** Features



# Planting a Connection to the Community

By Andrew Wyder



**THE SEEDS OF INNOVATION**—and interaction—have been planted at the corner of 33rd Street and Michigan Avenue in Chicago’s Bronzeville neighborhood, the beginning of a budding partnership between Illinois Institute of Technology and the community.

It’s there that the faculty, students, and staff who make up Illinois Tech are renewing the university’s connection to the communities on Chicago’s South Side through a new venture initiated by the university’s Office of Community Affairs and Outreach Programs and Assistant Vice President for Community Affairs Alicia Bunton.

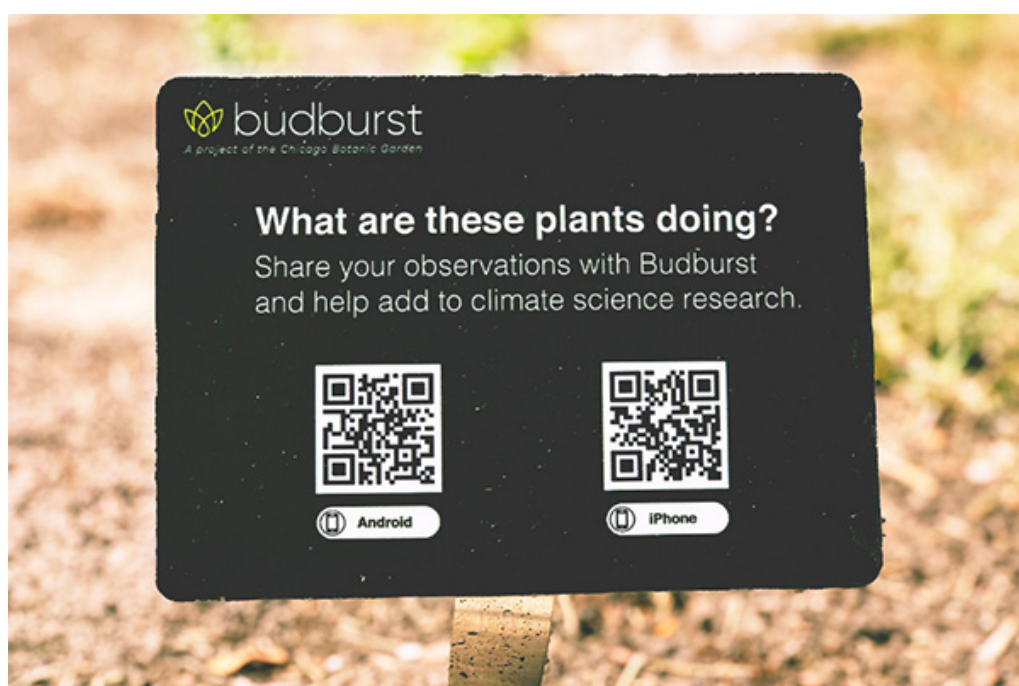


The **Budburst Garden at Nate Thomas Memorial Meadow** is a community-based garden and ecological research center that is designed to bring together neighbors, students, researchers, educators, horticulturists, and community scientists.

The meadow is a part of Chicago Botanical Gardens’ **Budburst program**—a network of community gardens that was established to answer specific, timely, and critical ecological research questions—and honors Nathaniel “Nate” Thomas, who established the trailblazing Early Identification Program for minority recruitment at Illinois Tech. Thomas passed away in November 2020 at age 84. He held a variety of executive positions—including director of admission, head of minority affairs, and vice president of external affairs—during his 22 years at Illinois Tech. He came to the university in 1973 as the assistant director of co-op education, with a focus on recruiting and supporting students from underrepresented communities in STEM fields. His efforts led to a 433 percent increase in students from underrepresented communities in his first year alone.

At the Illinois Tech site, the Budburst team aims to collect vital information on the timing of seasonal changes in plants, the evaluation of plants and pollinators, and

the restoration of habitats for monarch butterflies through the Milkweeds and Monarchs project.



Members from across the Bronzeville and Illinois Tech communities come together at Nate Thomas Memorial Meadow as Budburst citizen scientists to help provide much-needed data to biological and ecological researchers. By snapping photos from their phones while using the Budburst app, community members submit their observations to Budburst’s international database, joining critical research on the impacts of climate change.

---

From Issue: **Summer 2022**

📌 **Category:** On Campus



# Leading the Way:

## Experienced Professionals Join Illinois Tech

By Andrew Wyder



With the academic year in full swing at Illinois Institute of Technology, a new group of leaders who will play key roles leading the university now and into the future are taking hold.

Illinois Tech President Raj Echambadi announced in May that Kenneth T. Christensen, who was serving as the Carol and Ed Kaplan Armour College Dean of Engineering Endowed Chair, would serve as interim provost, succeeding Peter Kilpatrick, who was appointed as the president of the Catholic University of America. Christensen took over as interim provost on July 1.

Two experienced professionals also recently joined Christensen on the university’s leadership team.

Angela Manning-Hardimon has joined Illinois Tech as its vice president for finance, chief financial officer, and treasurer. She joined the university on July 11. A deeply respected and experienced financial manager, Manning-Hardimon has more than 20 years of experience as a CFO and more than 30 years in finance. She came to Illinois Tech from the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, where she oversaw the agency’s operating budget and significant federal and state metropolitan planning transportation funding for the region’s transit agencies and for seven counties and 284 municipalities across Northeastern Illinois. She had also previously served as the managing deputy commissioner and CFO for Chicago’s O’Hare International Airport and Chicago’s Midway International Airport.

In early July, Echambadi announced that Mallik Sundharam is joining Illinois Tech as its new vice president for enrollment management and student affairs. He came to the university from Northeastern University, where he served as the associate vice president of enrollment management and the dean of the Office of Global Services. Sundharam’s data analytics-driven approach to enrollment management has reaped great rewards in his career, including directly contributing to Northeastern’s rapid growth in undergraduate and graduate applications over the last four years: applications rose to a record 95,000 in fall 2021 and fall 2022. This approach led to innovative strategies that supported exponential growth such as establishing institutional partnerships, developing nationwide community college pathways, and evolving Northeastern’s digital marketing infrastructure. He also built Northeastern’s global recruitment network, which included its international student enrollment growing to be the largest in the United States and its graduate student body population increasing by more than 20 percent since 2020.

---

**From Issue:** **Summer 2022**

**Category:** On Campus





# Putting a Charge in Fuel

By Linsey Maughan

It was only a matter of time—before Influit Energy would need to hire more scientists, before the 2,100-square-foot lab space that the company occupies in Chicago’s West Loop neighborhood would grow too small, and before the three co-founders of the startup whose history is inextricably linked to Illinois Institute of Technology would be ready to publicly disclose what they have created: the world’s first rechargeable, safe, electric fuel.

“We have created a new type of flow battery that is predicated upon a composite material that we invented, which is a nanofluid where the nanoparticles are battery-active materials, which we called nanoelectrofuel, or NEF,” says John Katsoudas (M.S. PHYS ’03), co-founder and CEO of Influit Energy. “All of the technology has come together—we have a crystal-clear path before us.”

Leading the company alongside Katsoudas are co-founders Elena Timofeeva—chief operating officer, director of research and development, and a research associate professor of chemistry at Illinois Tech—and Carlo Segre, who serves as chief technology officer, chief financial officer, and as a professor of physics at Illinois Tech.

The United States government has played a critical role in Influit Energy’s growth, awarding the company more than \$10 million in contracts to fund the design and fabrication of NEF flow battery prototypes that will allow several agencies to utilize Influit Energy’s batteries in electric vehicles and aircraft.



**Discharged fluid can be returned to a recharge/refuel station for recharging or be charged inside the device by plugging into the power source.”**

“The unique high-energy density liquid format of the NEF flow batteries allows use of the same fluids in different devices, meaning fluid, charged at the recharging station from renewable energy sources or a grid, can be used to rapidly refuel vehicles, or for stationary storage and other large portable applications,” Timofeeva says. “Discharged fluid can be returned to a recharge/refuel station for recharging or be charged inside the device by plugging into the power source.”

The company’s current client roster includes NASA, the U.S. Department of Defense’s Defense Advanced Research Project Agency (DARPA), and two grant-awarding programs operated by the U.S. Air Force: AFWERX, a team of innovators fostering collaborations across the military, academia, and industry, and the Small Business Innovation Research program.

---

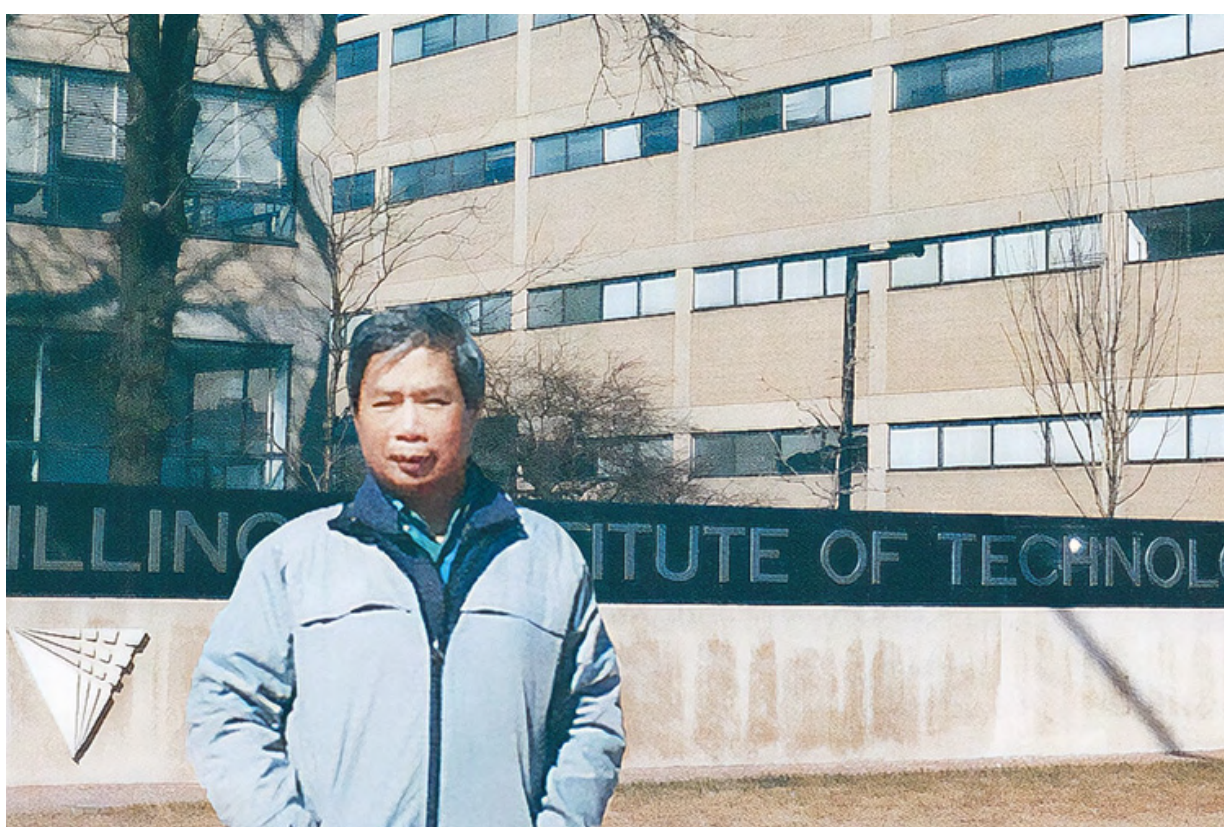
**From Issue:** Summer 2022

**Category:** Research Briefs



# Harnessing the Ripple Effect

By **Brianne Meyer**



The term “ripple effect” is used to describe the spreading effect of a single action or event and serves as a representation of the idea that we are all connected. Each moment is like a stone being dropped into a body of water; it creates an awe-inspiring pattern that keeps multiplying and expanding outward.

As a young adult, Peter Chan (M.S. CS '75) experienced a particularly profound moment in his life—one that has since created a powerful chain reaction of events that continues to transform our communities and our world to this day, including Illinois Institute of Technology.

Chan was born and raised in Hong Kong, where he graduated high school. When it came time to think about college, his father, KC, made a compelling case that his son should expand his horizon and pursue his undergraduate studies abroad. Little did Chan know that this was just the beginning of something much bigger than himself.

With the support of his family, Chan made the difficult decision to leave his home and enroll at the University of Prince Edward Island, located in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Canada. Although he studied math, he found his passion for all things computer science after working in the data processing center on campus.

Chan started at Illinois Tech a few years later, where his journey in computer science truly took off—forcing the ripples that his father had created to quickly expand. He found himself immersed in the computer science program, absorbing all that he could from his professors and mentors.

After graduating, Chan led a highly successful career in the computer science industry, most recently as senior software designer at Tandem Computers, based in California, before retiring around 2010.

“Having lived through our technological revolution is enriching,” says Chan. “I have seen a lot, from the early '70s, when the computer was just becoming popular, all the way to today, when a single chip has the ability to power millions of handheld devices around the globe. We have made so much progress, and I consider myself very lucky to have been a part of such life-changing transformations.”

For Chan, Illinois Tech has always been the place that fostered his passion for computer science and unleashed his full potential—something that changed his career, and life, forever. This caused Chan to stop and reflect on how he, too, could leave an impact on the lives of others, as his father did for him. And so, feeling exceptionally inspired after reading a recent issue of Illinois Tech Magazine, he took action and established the KC Chan & Family Scholarship. This endowed scholarship aims to support students within the College of Computing so that they may continue their studies without a significant financial burden.

“My father always supported me in my decision to leave Hong Kong and see the world, which I am very grateful for,” says Chan. “My family has played an important role in my success, so I wanted to honor my family, especially my father, by establishing an endowment in their name. They encouraged me to open my eyes to the world around me and be a part of something bigger than myself. And Illinois Tech paved the path for me to do that. I feel honored to be in a position to pay it forward and give back to future students at the university.”

Chan hopes that his scholarship will provide students now, and for generations to come, with the opportunity to develop their interests into meaningful careers. Technology is continuing to change fast, and Chan recognizes that “an Illinois Tech education will put today’s students at the forefront of the technology world.” It is his expectation that they take advantage of the unique education provided to them at Illinois Tech in order to ignite change and advance the world in which we live.

In many ways, the generous support of the Illinois Tech community, including Chan’s, builds upon the university’s founding mission and allows students and alumni to contribute to solving important problems facing humanity. As Illinois Tech students graduate and become the leaders of tomorrow, Chan’s gift will continuously be at work through their thoughtful leadership and service.

---

**From Issue:** **Summer 2022**

**Category:** Alumni News