



# Performance Trust and Chicago Debates, Bridging the Education Gap for 10 Years

## Preparing Chicago Youth with 21st Century Skills for College, Career, and Leadership Success

*Empowering Chicago Youth to Find Their Voice*

Performance Trust is excited to announce 10 years of continued partnership with Chicago Debates. We are grateful to have the opportunity to support an organization like Chicago Debates that does such meaningful work in our local Chicago community.

As an organization, we are so inspired by Chicago Debates' mission and purpose. While debate has long been offered to students from affluent backgrounds, Chicago Debates exists to bring debate to students who otherwise would not have access to its benefits. Annually, they serve as many as 1700 sixth through twelfth grade students across 90+ Chicago Public Schools. For students in local Chicago communities, the organization unlocks and enables the capacity to be intellectually curious, find their voice, and become leaders in their communities. As a part of our joint partnership anniversary celebration, we caught up with a Chicago Debates' program alumnus. We chatted and discussed his involvement in the program and more—read on to discover his story and how his involvement in Chicago Debates continues to have a positive impact on his life today.



### The Journey

Marco Avila joined Hancock College Prep's debate team his sophomore year, which happened to be the inception of the school's debate team, under coach Ray Salazar. Bright-eyed, Marco was seeking extracurricular involvement that provided academic challenge, mentorship, and peer connection, and he found these opportunities and more with the Chicago Debates program.

As a member, Marco participated in debate preparation, practice, and competition throughout the school year, engaging with his peers and learning principles foundational to his success along the way. Through his involvement in the after-school program, Marco developed four crucial skills—critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity—skills needed to succeed in college and beyond.

### Continuing Impact

Marco is now a student at DePaul University located in a northern neighborhood of Chicago. Participating in the Financial Literacy Tournament while in the program inspired him to study finance—just one of the ways his involvement continues to positively influence his future.

"Debate is important to Chicago Public School students because it provides an academically competitive but fun environment, while also creating the space to meet peers and make friends with other CPS students, especially on the South Side," says Avila.

**“Debate shows how capable and successful CPS students can become through the activity.”**

For Marco, supporting Chicago Debates is important. He is grateful for the education and opportunities it has

provided him and his peers, and thankful for the funding provided to the organization, especially for schools that don't have the funds to support debate programs on their own.

### Looking Forward to Another 10 Years

It was a pleasure connecting with Marco and learning more about his individual story and journey through Chicago Debates.

*We are inherently a learning organization built on a foundation of intellectual curiosity and debate and we are committed to intellectual honesty, integrity, and results. We are celebrating 10 years of partnership with Chicago Debates empowering urban youth through academic debate, we look forward to another 10 years, and countless more stories like Marco's.*