

A circular portrait of Paul Dickerson Jr. He is a Black man with short black hair, wearing black-rimmed glasses and a white baseball jersey with red pinstripes. He has his hand resting on his chin in a thoughtful pose. The background of the portrait shows a street with trees and a car.

YES, TOGETHER WE CAN

PRESIDENT/FOUNDER

PAUL DICKERSON JR

Paul Dickerson Jr is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker with nine years of professional experience. He earned his undergraduate degree from Aurora University in 2015, followed by a Master of Social Work in 2016, also from Aurora University. Throughout his career, Paul has taken on various roles, including supporting individuals and families facing mental health challenges, end-of-life decision-making, and crisis management. For the past seven years he has served as the primary social worker for the UChicago Medicine Care-network Oncology/ Hematology Department.

Over the last four years, Mr. Dickerson has witnessed firsthand the profound impact hunger can have on individuals battling illness. This experience, combined with his dedication to addressing the inequities faced by the population he serves, motivated Paul to take action against hunger among cancer patients. In 2018, he began to question how his healthcare system could better address hungry, specifically within the context of cancer care. After nearly three years of discussions, meetings, and planning, his vision came to fruition.

With the support of a team of dedicated internal and external partners, including The Center for Food Equity in Medicine, founded by Dr. Ann Jackson, Paul led the creation of two Complimentary Nutrition Stations, which opened in the summer of 2021, followed by a third in November of the same year. These nutrition stations located within the cancer center, are unique to the UChicago Medicine health system and, to the best of our knowledge, are not found in any other community hospital cancer care centers. Paul's work has been recognized by the American Cancer Society, which partnered with him and the Ingalls team to donate 60 health-conscious meals each week, allowing patients to enjoy nutritious food while receiving treatment or to take home.

In the fall of 2023, Paul launched the Ingalls Food Brigade Program, which delivers groceries to patients who are unable to utilize the clinic's nutrition stations.

In addition to his work within the healthcare system, Paul has dedicated the past four years to combating food insecurity in his community of Joliet and surrounding areas. In November 2024, he founded Yes, Together We Can, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization aimed at ending food insecurity for individuals living with chronic health conditions or those caring for someone with a chronic health condition.

