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The Humanity Institute Launches to Challenge Systems of Privilege and Power
*Non-profit Executive Shari Runner takes the Lead in Developing a “Collaborative Approach”
to Problem-Solving for Marginalized Populations*

(CHICAGO) – Today, seasoned non-profit executive Shari Runner announced the launch of The Humanity Institute (THI), a pioneering think tank created to engage diverse and marginalized populations in Chicago who increasingly have little influence in the decisions that impact growth and desired change in their communities.

Runner recounts that in decades past, the sectors of the population who suffered the most discrimination and mistreatment often became the catalysts of social justice movements leading to significant advancement on a variety of fronts. The modern-day shift of viewing the disadvantaged and marginalized as invisible and voiceless caused her to act.

“In this time of high volatility, disparity and discord, we cannot acquiesce to the normalization of marginalized people in our society,” said Runner. “At The Humanity Institute, we will break down the communication barriers while making sure that everyone acknowledges humanity as a conscious act.”

The core beliefs of THI are as follows:

- We believe that humanity is a noun and a verb and requires a series of conscious acts, defining not just who we are, but how we must consciously act towards one another.
- We believe that you cannot silence people or keep them in the margins in an effort to ignore problems. You must see and embrace the people to identify the things that need changing.
- We believe that there is a return on investing in communities. Charity provides short-term relief, but does little to disrupt the systems of power and influence that prevent communities from truly growing, thriving and supporting its residents.
- We believe that radical thought and innovation are critical to creating lasting change.

Although still in its developmental stages, THI has already begun to draw interest from a cross-section of influencers who have the capacity and experience to comprise a strong governance body added Runner. Local stakeholders will lead a Community Advisory Board that will advise Runner and the governing Board of Directors.

“Our work will be achieved through engaging diverse communities as they share their experiences through authentic narratives,” said Runner. “From their input, we will create and disseminate socially impactful research and concept briefs, but most importantly, we’ll develop real, solutions that shake up the norm. In essence, THI will bring likely and unlikely allies together to advance policies that create change and enliven our collective humanity.”

Recognizing that all aspects of the community should be equally valued, Runner emphasized that real action will only take place with genuine and collective commitment.

“It is time for a change with the knowledge that the work is hard, but we can do it,” said Runner. “We must examine the question, ‘Do we really mean it?’ and then get to work.”

Beginning in December 2018, staff will host monthly forums to advance the discussion around issues regarding humanity including race and equity, followed by a public launch in January 2019. For interviews, more information or to get involved, call 312-366-0360, email info@thichicago.org or visit www.thichicago.org.

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About The Humanity Institute

The Humanity Institute challenges the systems of privilege and power that lead to existing social inequities. Follow us on Facebook @CHiHumanity, Twitter @THI_Chicago and Instagram @THI_Chicago.