

			<b>My Start Stories May 2021</b>
5-1-21	Mimi LeClair	President and CEO of Boys and Girls Clubs of Chicago	Mimi LeClair is President and CEO of Boys and Girls Clubs of Chicago, where she oversees 23 clubs serving 18,000 children each year through after-school programs. LeClair knows firsthand that it takes more than inspiration to rise as a female leader.
5-2-21	Camilla Webster	bestselling author and visual artist	Camilla Webster is a bestselling author and visual artist, Webster has exhibited her paintings at prestigious international art shows like Art Basel. Her portraits and abstracts are also housed in private collections around the world.
5-3-21	Alie Nguyen	daughter, Amy Ha	Alie Nguyen, 13, and her siblings Reagan, 15, and Thai, 11, have watched with admiration as their mom took on many different roles over the past year. Palliative Care Physician Amy Ha juggled patients, caring for her three children and taking care of a sick family member during the pandemic.
5-4-21	Andrew Scott	son, Terri Givens	When the pandemic sent Andrew Scott home from college, it created the opportunity for him to share meals, conversation, and special moments with his mom, CEO/Founder of Brighter Higher Ed Terri Givens, giving him a whole new appreciation for her.
5-5-21	Setlak Family	husband and children, Jessica Setlak	Jacob Setlak, 9, and his sister Olivia, 7, love any extra time they get to spend with their mom, Jessica Setlak these days. As an advanced care nurse who moonlights in an emergency room, she has worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic, treating and testing Covid patients. Her husband, John is in awe of all she juggles both at work and home.
5-6-21	Sandra Jasso	daughter, Pat Jasso	Sandra Jasso, daughter of Pat Jasso talks about how the pandemic grew their large family even closer.
5-7-21	Emerson Bunnell	son, Joyce Chen	Emerson Bunnell, 11 years old, is very thankful for his mom on this Mother's Day. Joyce Chen, Associate Professor in the Department of Agricultural, Environmental, and Development Economics at The Ohio State University had to put her research projects on hold to take care of him and his siblings, Bryn, 13, and Campbell, 7 because of the pandemic.
5-8-21	Oyler Family	husband and children Laci Jones Oyler	Davis Oyler, 6, loves spending lots of time with his mom, Laci Jones Oyler especially now that she no longer works outside of the home. Laci is a licensed

			counselor but had to quit her job to take care of Davis and his younger brother, Graham, 3. Her husband, Mike says he knows what Laci had to give up and is extremely grateful for her sacrifice.
5-9-21	Vlad Riley	son, Gabbie Riley	Vlad Riley says his single mom Gabbie Riley has always been his rock.
5-10-21	Margo Wolf O'Donnell	Partner, Benesch	Margo Wolf O'Donnell's father and grandfather were both lawyers, so her fascination with the courtroom started early. Now she's a partner in the law firm Benesch in Chicago. In addition to being a partner at Benesch, Wolf O'Donnell is on the boards of Women's Initiatives in Law, Yale Chicago, the Woman's Athletic Club of Chicago and the Auxiliary Board of the Art Institute of Chicago.
5-11-21	Dorri McWhorter	CEO, YWCA Metropolitan Chicago	Dorri McWhorter wrote a letter to Santa Claus when she was 11 years old, outlining her three primary wishes: (1) to make sure everyone alive was okay, (2) to prove Santa was real by sending a picture and (3) to help her be an accountant. Since writing that letter, she has worked in the accounting world for 20 years, and currently is the CEO of the YWCA.
5-12-21	Linda Frankenbach	Former HBO Executive	After business school, Linda Frankenbach began working at the start-up company we now call HBO. Frankenbach's entrepreneurial spirit eventually led her to start her own company. These days, she sits on a board of "She Should Run," a company that encourages and helps women run for office.
5-13-21	Tracy Baim	Publisher, The Chicago Reader	Award-winning journalist Tracy Baim is currently the publisher for The Chicago Reader newspaper. In 1985, Baim co-founded the Windy City Times, a Chicago newspaper serving the gay and lesbian community, and in 1987, Outlines newspaper. Baim is also the author of several books on LGBT history.
5-14-21	Namrata Nadav	SR.VP & Global Head of Inclusion Strategy, Bank of America	Namrata Yadav grew up in India and says she learned about the U.S. from TV shows like Oprah and Friends. After receiving her master's degree in industrial/organizational psychology she decided to "cold call" Bank of America and she's been there ever since. She currently leads the bank's company-wide initiative to promote cultural acceptance, diversity and inclusion among its employees.



5-15-21	Laura McNally	Attorney Loeb & Loeb Chicago	As a litigation partner at Loeb & Loeb, Laura McNally focuses on breaking down complex cases and resolving commercial legal disputes. She is an impressive legal expert whose achievements include representing the Chamber of Commerce while filing amicus briefs in the Supreme Court and features in Bloomberg News.
5-16-21	Carroll Bogert	President, Marshall Project	Carroll Bogert started her career as a foreign correspondent for Newsweek magazine, covering stories in China, Southeast Asia and Russia. She then joined Human Rights Watch, running their global media operations. Carroll now serves as President of The Marshall Project, a nonpartisan, nonprofit news organization reporting on the U.S. criminal justice system.
5-17-21	Janine Di Giovanni	War Correspondent, Author	Janine di Giovanni is a foreign correspondent best known for covering major violent global conflicts, including disputes in Palestine, Syria and Kosovo. She is also an active writer on global social crises.
5-18-21	Brenda Berkman	Retired Captain, New York City Fire Department	Brenda Berkman is a retired Captain with the New York City Fire Department. In 1982 Berkman and 40 other women became the city's first female firefighters. As of October 2019, there are 107 women firefighters serving in the FDNY. She went on to break new boundaries in defining what it meant to be a female firefighter, founding and becoming the first president of the United Women Firefighters, winning the Susan B. Anthony Award from the National Organization for Women, and appointed as a White House Fellow by President Bill Clinton.
5-19-21	Genevieve Thiers	Founder, <a href="https://www.sittercity.com">Sittercity.com</a>	As the founder of Sittercity and a former babysitter, Genevieve Thiers took the online dating concept and applied it to caregiving to establish a centralized place for parents and caregivers to meet. She is also a trained opera singer who's sung at Carnegie Hall.
5-20-21	Susan Axelrod	Founder CURE	As a mother of a child with epilepsy, Susan Axelrod founded CURE in 1998 with a group of other parents who were frustrated that they could not protect their children from seizures or from the side effects of medications. Since 1998, CURE has raised more than \$70 million to fund epilepsy research.

5-21-21	Emily Barr	President & CEO, Graham Media Group	As President and CEO of Graham Media Group, Emily Barr oversees local TV stations around the country. Prior to joining Graham Media, Barr was the President and General Manager of ABC 7 Chicago. She also served in the same position in Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina, and early in her career, she worked at TV stations in Baltimore, Houston, Washington D.C. and St. Paul, Minnesota.
5-22-21	Helen Zia	Writer, Activist	The daughter of Chinese immigrants, Helen Zia published her first book, Asian American Dreams: The Emergence of an American People, in 2000. She is the former Executive Editor of Ms. Magazine. Zia is also featured in the Academy Award-nominated documentary Who Killed Vincent Chin? Her latest book The Last Boat Out of Shanghai chronicles the mass exodus from China following the 1949 Communist revolution.
5-23-21	Sarah Kustok	Brooklyn Nets TV Analyst	Sarah Kustok's passion for sports developed early on. She grew up playing a variety of sports with her brother, and later landed a scholarship to DePaul University in Chicago. She went from starring in basketball games for the Blue Demons to calling them for the NBA, as the league's first solo female analyst for the Brooklyn Nets.
5-24-21	Deb Amos	International Correspondent, NPR	Deborah Amos is an international correspondent for National Public Radio (NPR) and has been for decades. From Beirut and Baghdad to Amman and Cairo, Amos has reported on nearly every major story in the Middle East since 1982.
5-25-21	Mary Nguyen Aregoni	Founder & CEO, Saigon Sisters Restaurant Group	Mary Nguyen Aregoni was still a child when her family was forced to flee their native Laos during the Vietnam War. They arrived on foot in Thailand, where they lived in a refugee camp immigrating to the United States. Aregoni later spent 20 years in marketing and IT at Procter and Gamble. After living through 9/11 as a New York City resident, she decided it was time to follow her dream: to open a Vietnamese restaurant. With the help of her sister Theresa, Saigon Sisters was born. The brand now includes three locations in Chicago, as well as Thai restaurant Bang Chop Thai.

5-26-21	Avis Brodess	Dystonia Warrior	Avis Brodess was a nationally ranked tennis player as a teenager, and the first female arbitrager on Wall Street in her 20s. But her most grueling challenge came in her 30s when she was diagnosed with cervical dystonia, a rare and incurable neurological disease where the brain can't control the neck muscles. Brodess discovered a medical breakthrough, a procedure that involved implanting electrodes in her brain and a rechargeable battery-powered stimulator in her chest wall.
5-27-21	Josephine Lee	President & Artistic Director, Chicago Children's Choir	Josephine Lee serves as the President and Artistic Director of Chicago Children's Choir (CCC), where she has revolutionized the field of youth choral music. She has led the CCC in collaborations with well-known artists, as well as performing for many dignitaries, including former President Barack Obama, First Lady Michelle Obama and the Dali Lama.
5-28-21	Natalie Shmulik	CEO The Hatchery	Natalie earned an M.L.A. in Gastronomy from Boston University. She opened her own restaurant in Toronto and went on to become a specialty consultant for one of Ontario's largest supermarket chains. After discovering her passion for innovation, she was hired as a brand strategist for the first cold brew tea company in Chicago. She went on to head The Hatchery, one of the largest food incubators in the country.
5-29-21	May Tsupros	Co-Founder, Gardeneers	As a teacher, May Tsupros quickly learned that her students lacked the knowledge and accessibility to healthy, nutritious food. That led her to co-founding Gardeneers, a food education program that offers students the support and opportunity to grow school gardens. Tsupros believes food equity is a foundational element to achieving educational equity.
5-30-21	Roma Maffia	Actress	Roma Maffia first began acting in off-Broadway productions. Soon after being cast in Ron Howard's film The Paper she landed a role on the TV series Chicago Hope. Following that series, she played Grace Alvarez, the forensic pathologist for the Violent Crimes Task Force for four seasons on NBC's Profiler.
5-31-21	Juanita Silva	Chicago Fire Marshal	Juanita Silva works in fire investigations, working to find the cause of a blaze. After working her way up



			the ranks, Silva is now the only female fire marshal in her fire department.
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## **JUNE 2021 MY START STORIES**

### **6-1-21 Simone Elkeles- Young Adult Author**

After picking up a romance novel while at the library with her young daughter, Simone Elkeles was hooked. She read more than 100 before trying her hand at writing the genre, and quickly became a New York Times bestselling young adult author. She is best known for her teen romance Perfect Chemistry.

### **6-2-21 Alexandra Lebenthal- Financial Expert**

Alexandra Lebenthal is a financial expert with more than 30 years of experience on Wall Street. In 1995, she became President and CEO of Lebenthal & Company, the municipal bond firm founded by her grandparents in 1925. In 2012, Fortune magazine dubbed her "The New Queen of Wall Street." Lebenthal served as CEO of the firm until it was sold in 2017.

### **6-3-21 Betsy Ziegler- CEO, 1871, Tech Innovation Hub**

Betsy Ziegler is the first female CEO for the tech incubator company 1871. Before joining 1871, Betsy was the Chief Innovation Officer at the Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University, and a Principal at McKinsey & Company.

### **6-4-21 Monica Rochester- Capt., U.S. Coast Guard**

Monica Rochester was only one of two women in the Coast Guard when she first enlisted. Most recently she served as the Sector Los Angeles-Long Beach commander. As a captain in the U.S. Coast Guard, she was a Prevention Operations specialist with focus on commercial vessel safety and security, marine investigations, and waterways management. She also served in the US Department of Homeland Security as a chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear defense expert.

### **6-5-21 Ivy Kagan Bierman- entertainment labor attorney and partner**

Before Ivy Kagan Bierman became an entertainment labor attorney and partner at Loeb & Loeb in Los Angeles, she was an actress seeking her start on Broadway. Today, she counsels entertainment and advertising companies in guild and union matters.

### **6-6-21 Nancy Rotering- Mayor, Highland Park, IL**

Nancy Rotering is currently the Mayor of Highland Park, Illinois. Before becoming mayor, Rotering served as a Council Member for Highland Park. She was also a candidate in the 2018 race for Illinois Attorney General.

6-7-21 Pilar Ortega- Emergency Room Physician Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center

Dr. Pilar Ortega is an emergency room physician at Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center. She is also an Assistant Clinical Professor at the University of Illinois Chicago, where she teaches the Medical Spanish program. Her expertise is in Hispanic Healthcare, and her dedication to it led her to found and lead the Medical Organization for Latino Advancement (MOLA), a nonprofit outreach organization.

6-8-21 Mindy Lynch-Flight Nurse

Lynch began her job as a nurse at the age of 20, in the emergency room. The first time she saw a flight team with a patient, she knew that was the path she wanted her career to eventually take. Though her first interview with Flight For Life didn't go as well as planned, she got another chance and blew her interviewers away.

6-9-21 Dineen Simpson- Transplant Surgeon Northwestern Memorial Hospital in Chicago

Dineen Simpson knew she wanted to be a surgeon, but it was a rotation with a transplant surgery team during her residency that led her down the path to become a transplant surgeon. Dr. Simpson became the first female African American transplant surgeon at Northwestern Memorial Hospital in Chicago.

6-10-21 Alina Moran- President of Dignity Health California Hospital Medical Center

After working as a mechanical engineer for years Alina went back to school pursuing her master's degree in public administration. Alina began working in a variety of finance positions in New York's hospital system before becoming the CEO at NYC Health + Hospitals/Metropolitan. Alina was named president of Dignity Health – California Hospital Medical Center (CHMC) in February of 2020 and leads the overall direction, strategy, and operation of the hospital.

6-11-21 Brittani & Brandi Jackson- Physicians and Founders Med Like Me

Brandi and Brittani are twin sisters and best friends. They were separated for the first time when they attended different medical schools. The sisters reunited in Chicago after med school, and are now both practicing physicians working with vulnerable populations on Chicago's West and South Sides. They also created Med Like Me as a resource to help guide minorities who may want to follow in their footsteps.

6-12-21 Sandy Goldberg- Clinical Nutritionist

After losing 183 pounds, Sandy Goldberg wanted to help others have a similar experience. She went back to school and studied nutrition, got her degree and opened her own practice. Goldberg is a regular on NBC5 in Chicago and has even started a foundation, A Silver Lining, which provides women with respectful and equal access to cost-free breast health testing.



6-13-21 Nahiris Bahamon- Pediatrician at Esperanza Health Centers

After coming to the U.S. as a refugee from Columbia at age 18, she continued her studies.

Today, Nahiris Bahamon is a Board Registered Pediatrician at Esperanza Health Centers, a group of community healthcare providers in Chicago. She is also a board advisor for Physicians for a National Health Program, and an advocate for children and families as a member of the Illinois Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

6-14-21 Cervantes Family- Happy Father's Day: Miguel Cervantes

Jackson Cervantes, 9, loves when his dad Miguel puts him to bed, something Miguel couldn't do prior to the pandemic because he was performing every night in his role as Hamilton in Chicago's production, then on Broadway in New York.

6-15-21 Yadav Family Happy Father's Day: Akash Khanna

Being home the last year has convinced Shyra Khanna, 7, that all her dad Akash does is talk on the phone, but in reality, he's a Global Director of Corporate and Investment Banking at Bank of America.

6-16-21 Davis Family Happy Father's Day: Marcus Davis

Esmé, Aida and Hudson Davis say Sunday dinner is one of their favorite times they spend with their father Marcus, Co-Owner of Princeton Group, Inc., a sports marketing firm.

6-17-21 Huffman Family Happy Father's Day: Craig Huffman

Sofia and Solomon Huffman say the most important thing to their father Craig Huffman, CEO at Metro Edge Development Partners, is his love for his family.

6-18-21 Harris/Scales Family Happy Father's Day: Norman Scales

Her dad's cooking and words of encouragement are just a few of the reasons Kylie Scales, 6, loves her dad, Norman Scales, Co-Founder of the Confidence Foundation.

6-19-21 Ortega Family Happy Father's Day: Joey Cooper

Because of the pandemic, Joey Cooper now homeschools his children; Rosalía, 12, Adso, 10, Soren, 6 and Güel, 4 and they love it. He also happens to be a neuropsychiatrist.

6-20-21 Worden Family Happy Father's Day: Gordon Crovitz

Gordon Crovitz may be a prominent American media executive and advisor to media and technology companies, but to his three sons, Jack, James, and Tom, he is a great family man and father.

6-21-21 Suzanne Tracht- Chef & Owner, Jar Restaurant

Suzanne Tracht began cooking professionally at 19 when she began her apprenticeship at the four-star Arizona Biltmore Resort and Spa. From there, she moved to California's legendary Hotel Bel-Air. She served as sous chef and then chef de cuisine for various popular Los Angeles restaurants before opening her first restaurant Jozu. She opened her latest chophouse restaurant Jar in 2001.

6-22-21 Emilia DiMenco- President & CEO of the Women's Business Development Center

As President & CEO of the Women's Business Development Center, Emilia DiMenco's mission is to support and accelerate business development and growth for women and minorities. With her decades-long career in banking, DiMenco's business and financial background serves the women well. DiMenco believes if individuals and entrepreneurs work together and support one another, they can create a better business environment for generations to come.

6-23-21 Candice Savino- Former VP of Engineering, Trunk Club

Candice Savino has been a leader in the tech industry, working for such companies as Trunk Club, Groupon, IBM, WMS Gaming and Encyclopedia Britannica. She became CTO at Farmer's Fridge in 2019.

6-24-21 Michele Martinez- Paramedic Chicago Fire Dept

Michele Martinez was managing life as a single parent when she responded to a lifelong calling to save lives. 16 years later, she is still working as a paramedic at the Chicago Fire Department. In her line of work, Martinez also contributes to NBCUniversal's Chicago Fire as a consultant to writers, directors and actors about paramedic skills, procedures and policies

6-25-21 Gale Gand- pastry chef, cookbook author, restaurateur and TV personality

Gale Gand is a pastry chef, cookbook author, restaurateur and TV personality.

She was the host of the Food Network show Sweet Dreams, as well as a contestant on Iron Chef America and winner of the 2001 James Beard Foundation Award for Outstanding Pastry Chef.

6-26-21 Julie Harris Walker- Director, Production Diversity and Inclusion WarnerMedia

After earning her BFA in acting, Julie Harris Walker pivoted and began her career in commercial production and production finance in Hollywood, where she became interested in the issue of gender equality. Never losing her passion for entertaining and performing, Harris Walker launched her own podcast network.

6-27-21 Olivia Clare- Associate Professor of English University of Southern Mississippi  
Olivia is currently an Assistant Professor of English, Creative Writing, in the Center for Writers at the University of Southern Mississippi. She is also a published fiction writer and poet having received several awards. Olivia began her career as an actress on Any Day Now. A series which first aired in 1998 explored issues on racism and the recurrence over the years. She played the part of Kelly Sims Williams.

6-28-21 Chris Linkletter- Section Chief Lifeguard Division, Los Angeles County Fire Department  
The first woman to ever be appointed to the position of Section Chief in the Lifeguard Division of the Los Angeles County Fire Department, Chris Linkletter still trains with and works alongside her team of lifeguards to help prepare them for emergencies on the L.A. County coastline.

6-29-21 Nancy Opel- Broadway actress and singer  
Nancy Opel is a Broadway actress and singer. In 2002, she was nominated for the Tony Award for Best Leading Actress in a Musical for her performance as Penelope Pennywise in the satirical comedy Urinetown. Now Opel works as a coach, encouraging other young talents with the same wisdom that drove her own success.

6-30-21 Vicky Hernandez- Paramedic Field Chief, Chicago Fire Department  
Being a paramedic field chief in the city of Chicago isn't an easy job, Hernandez loves being a part of the action. Hernandez is noticing that more and more women are taking on roles with the fire department and quickly working their ways up through the ranks.