



METRO/STATE NEWS CHICAGO

Aunt Martha's Health and Wellness gets \$9 million donation from MacKenzie Scott

Aunt Martha's Health and Wellness, which serves over 105,000 children and adults each year, learned last month it had "garnered the attention of Ms. Scott and her team."

By Isabel Funk and Sun-Times staff | Nov 1, 2023, 11:35am CDT

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Billionaire MacKenzie Scott gave \$9 million to nonprofit Aunt Martha's, which operate more than 30 health centers across Illinois, including several in the Chicago area. | AP file

Community health nonprofit Aunt Martha's received a surprise donation Tuesday of \$9 million from billionaire MacKenzie Scott.

Aunt Martha's Health and Wellness, which serves over 105,000 children and adults each year, learned about seven weeks ago it had caught Scott's attention, CEO Raul Garza told the Sun-Times.

This week, the nonprofit received a \$9 million award from MacKenzie Scott's Yield Giving fund through The Chicago Community Trust.

"It's a reflection on the collective work of the organization over 51 years, to be at this point, and that's what makes it meaningful," Garza said, adding that all the donations since Aunt Martha's founding would total around \$2 million.

Garza said Scott's team performed "quiet research," only reaching out to the group after a funding determination had been made.

The day after receiving an initial call, which Garza said had very little information or details, Garza learned of the donation through another call. He said he was "in shock" and described the amount as "life changing."

"(They said) 'We love what you do, and we love the spirit in which you do it, in terms of standing up for what you believe in and also, the care that you're providing people that are in the most need of care,'" he said.

Aunt Martha's Health and Wellness operates more than 30 sites statewide, including several in the Chicago area, and is licensed by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services to care for youth in out-of-home placements.

Garza said Scott's staff told him the organization is in the best position to determine how to use the funds, which are unrestricted. Although he's not yet sure how the funds will be used, he's hoping to put it toward a sustainable program or service.

"The goal here is to really try to make the greatest impact on the most amount of people we can that are in need of services, and ideally, if we do something like that, we want to make sure it's sustainable over a long period of time," Garza said.

Aunt Martha's operates more than 30 clinics across Illinois and serves thousands of adults and children every year. | Provided

Scott's staff wouldn't tell him how exactly Scott became aware of Aunt Martha's but said he was told multiple sources put it on her radar.

Last week, Scott broke the donation record at another area organization with an \$8 million donation to [Chicago-based workforce development nonprofit Cara Collective](#), and on Monday, she broke another record at Skills for Chicagoland's future with a \$5 million donation.

Scott, an author whose ex-husband is Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, has given away more than \$14.1 billion of her fortune since 2019.

Last year, Scott also broke donation records for local organizations with gifts to the [Chicago Urban League for \\$6.6 million](#) and [Chicago disability services nonprofit Access Living for \\$8 million](#).

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