



Donnita Travis

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“God is so good, and He wants us to treat all people with love and respect. I am constantly in awe of how unique and special each child is. And I have been touched by the kids and their families.”

—Donnita Travis

Donnita Travis | Founder, President & Chief Executive Officer

Donnita Travis is the founder, president and chief executive officer for By The Hand Club For Kids. She serves as the organization’s visionary, guiding operations, programming and fundraising while forging key partnerships with community stakeholders, donors, supporters and policymakers that support the organization’s mission.

Donnita founded By The Hand in 2001 after witnessing a group of students from Cabrini-Green who had no place to go after school, widely recognized as the most dangerous part of the day. Heeding God’s call to help youth in Chicago’s most under-resourced neighborhoods have abundant life, she left her job as the president of an advertising agency to start By The Hand, where she has remained as a full-time volunteer since.

Under her leadership, By The Hand has grown from serving 16 youth in a single site in Chicago’s Cabrini-Green neighborhood to helping more than 1,800 students across six sites in the city’s most under-resourced communities have abundant life. She has shepherded the organization through tremendous growth and mission expansion, overseeing an operating budget of \$20 million and partnerships that include the nation’s most recognizable athletes.

Donnita was named the Kellogg School of Management Social Entrepreneur of the Year in 2010 and recognized as Chicago Magazine’s Chicagoan of the Year in 2012. She earned her MBA from Northwestern University and lives in Chicago with her husband, Daryl.