

PM Insights

A publication for members of the PMI Chicagoland Chapter

September 2026

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PMI CHICAGOLAND CHAPTER MISSION

To be the Association of choice
advancing Project/Program/
Portfolio Management
discipline including fostering
professional growth and
empowering individuals to
fulfill their potential.

President's Message



Dear PMI Chicagoland Community,

I hope you had a safe and enjoyable summer and found time to recharge with family and friends. As summer winds down and we return to our routines, the PMI Chicagoland Chapter is also entering an exciting new season — one of **new leadership, new opportunities, and renewed purpose.**

I want to thank our Board Nominating Committee for supporting the 2026–2027 Board selection process and welcome our new volunteer leaders. With PMI's **New Membership Model arriving in March 2027**, we have an important opportunity ahead of us — to listen more closely, think differently, and create greater value for every member we serve.

Our Board recently came together for our **Strategy & Innovation Planning Session**, aligning around five strategic areas for the year ahead. Our next step is turning those priorities into action and measurable outcomes. I strongly believe that **strategy is not defined by what we put on paper, but by what our members experience because of the choices we make.**

August also gave us an opportunity to celebrate the **heart of the PMI Chicagoland Chapter — our volunteers.** More than 100 volunteers joined us for our Annual Volunteer Appreciation Event. I often say that **volunteers are the oxygen of our chapter.** Behind every program, connection, and member experience are people who freely give their time and talents in service to others.

That is what inspired my **Volunteer Impact Triangle: People. Purpose. Service.** We connect people, lead with purpose, and serve to make a difference. When those three come together, we create something much greater — **a community that leaves a lasting impact.** My heartfelt thanks also go to the families who support our volunteers and share their time with us.

This quarter, I was also privileged to represent the PMI Chicagoland Chapter at the first **North America Presidents Meeting** and participate in a **Day on Capitol Hill.** Conversations with PMI President & CEO Pierre Le Manh, chapter leaders, and representatives of elected officials reinforced the importance of member engagement, member experience, and preparing our profession for the impact of AI and the future of work. I returned with new perspectives, but also with an even stronger belief in the direction we are shaping together in Chicagoland.

As we head into fall, our monthly chapter meetings return, followed by our flagship **PM Symposium in October** and **Career Conference in December.** I encourage you to participate, connect, learn — and perhaps most importantly, **find an opportunity to help someone else grow along the way.**

Thank you for your membership, your engagement, your service, and your trust.

Together, we are building more than a chapter. We are creating a community that leaves a lasting impact.

With gratitude,

Ravi Avasarala, PMP, DASSM
President, PMI Chicagoland Chapter

**Lead with Purpose.
Create Lasting Impact.**



www.pmichicagoland.org



Youth Project Execution Program: Real Projects, Real Leadership, Real Impact

On July 18, the PMI Chicagoland Chapter's Youth Outreach team successfully concluded its first Youth Project Execution Program at India Hub.

Throughout the program, young participants worked in teams to plan and execute community service projects supporting the Evanston Animal Shelter, Niles Township Food Pantry, and Loaves & Fishes Community Services. With guidance from volunteer project managers and mentors, they gained hands-on experience in teamwork, communication, leadership, planning, and problem-solving.

During the final event, each team presented its project outcomes to a panel of judges and shared the challenges it encountered, the solutions it developed, and the impact of its work.

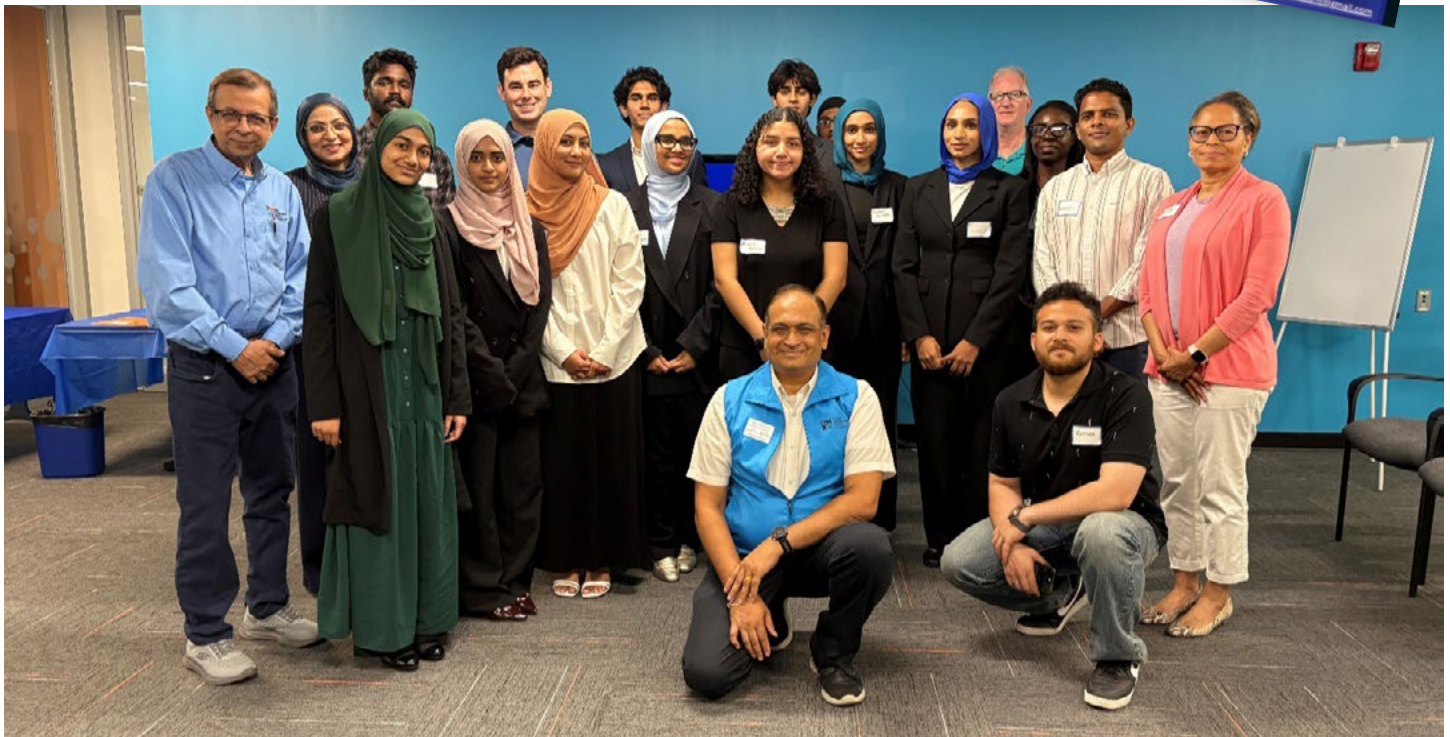
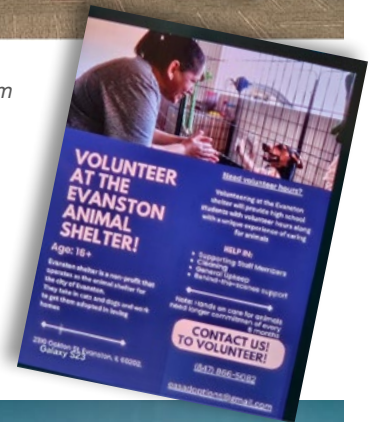
A special thank you to our participants, mentors, project managers, judges, volunteers, community partners, and India Hub for making this program possible. Their time, encouragement, and support created a meaningful learning experience for the next generation of project leaders.

The program truly demonstrated its message: Real projects. Real leadership. Real impact.



Congratulations to the first-place team for its outstanding project execution, teamwork, and presentation.

The winning team's project flyer highlights its goals and community impact.



Participants, mentors, project managers, judges, and volunteers at the program's final event.

Healthcare Project Management SIG: Connect. Learn. Grow.

The **PMI Chicagoland Chapter Healthcare Project Management Special Interest Group (SIG-HPM)** brings together project professionals from across the healthcare ecosystem to connect, exchange experiences, and explore challenges unique to healthcare project delivery.

Since launching in April, SIG-HPM has focused on creating practical learning and networking opportunities for healthcare project professionals.

In May, SIG-HPM welcomed **Desiree Underwood-Williams, MBA, PMP, CLSSBB** for “EHR Implementations: Operational & Change Management Strategies.” The interactive session explored how successful healthcare technology implementations extend beyond technology to people, workflows, ownership, adoption, and measurable outcomes.

Key Takeaways

- Go-live is the beginning of operational reality — not the finish line.
- Project success should consider adoption and value realization, not only scope, schedule, and budget.
- Project managers can evolve from delivery managers into transformation leaders by focusing on stakeholders, workflows, adoption, and outcomes.

Coming September 22



Join **Robert Johnson, PMP, CPTM, MBA** for “Relationships That Deliver: Moving from Cooperation to Co-Elevation in Healthcare Projects.” The virtual session will explore building trust, strengthening stakeholder relationships, and influencing without formal authority.

September 22, 2026

6:00 PM – 7:00 PM CT

Virtual

[LEARN MORE & REGISTER](#)



Empowering people to make ideas a reality

Boost your career with the training, learning, development programs, and resources needed to stay ahead.

Attend a program!

pmichicagoland.org



Join the PMI Chicagoland Chapter for the 16th Annual PM Symposium

THE FUTURE IS NOW!

On Friday, October 9, the PMI Chicagoland Chapter will bring project professionals together for the 16th Annual PM Symposium, a full-day professional development experience centered on the theme “Adapt. Innovate. Amplify.”

The Symposium will take place from 7:00 AM to 4:00 PM CT at:

College of DuPage
425 Fawell Blvd.
Glen Ellyn, IL 60137

The Symposium invites project professionals to challenge themselves to go beyond execution — to think differently about how they create value, lead others, and deliver meaningful results in dynamic environments.

ADAPT. INNOVATE. AMPLIFY.

Today's project professionals operate in an environment where priorities can change quickly, technology continues to evolve, and organizations expect more from their project leaders.

The 2026 Symposium encourages attendees to:

Adapt with purpose.

Build the ability to respond thoughtfully and effectively when circumstances change.

Innovate with intention.

Look beyond traditional approaches and explore new ideas, technologies, and ways of working.

Amplify your impact.

Move beyond simply completing tasks and projects to creating outcomes that matter to your organization, your teams, and your stakeholders.

As the PMI Chicagoland Chapter describes it, the Symposium is an opportunity to “**go beyond execution**” by aligning outcomes to what matters most, taking ownership of results, and continuously evolving your skills in dynamic environments.

Become a Sponsor

Position your brand in front of an engaged project management community, and connect with leaders, practitioners, and decisionmakers across industries.

As a sponsor, you'll reach 300+ in-person attendees and tap into a nationwide network of 60,000+ professionals at the [2026 PM Symposium](#):

Showcase your expertise to a targeted, engaged audience.

- Build meaningful connections with decisionmakers across industries.
- Align your brand with innovation, leadership, and professional excellence.

Partner with the PMI Chicagoland Chapter to support the project management community while expanding your reach and impact.

[Complete this form](#), and we'll reach out to you.

REGISTER FOR THE
2026 PM SYMPOSIUM





Featured Keynotes



Ray McElroy

The 2026 Symposium will feature Ray McElroy, former NFL player and Founder & CEO of A Ray of Hope on Earth.

Ray brings a unique perspective shaped by professional athletics, leadership, entrepreneurship, and community service. His experience in a highly competitive environment provides an engaging lens through which project professionals can think about performance, teamwork, resilience, and achieving extraordinary results.

His keynote is an opportunity to step outside the ordinary and consider how our mindset, our teams, and our willingness to embrace challenges can influence the results we achieve.



Erin Ramirez

Erin Ramirez is an Adaptability Strategist and Organizational Scientist and the owner of Real Change Studio. Earlier in her career, she served as a senior leader at a global Fortune

500 company, helping prepare teams and organizations for enterprise-wide changes impacting as many as 70,000 people.

Her message is especially relevant for today's project professionals: When the plan changes, adaptability isn't a nice-to-have — it can be the difference between simply reacting and successfully leading through change.



Bill Benjamin

Bill Benjamin is an Emotional Intelligence Expert and High-Performance Culture Strategist and a Partner at the Institute for Health & Human Potential (IHHP).

With more than 30 years of experience, Bill has worked with organizations including NASA, the U.S. Marines, Amazon, Marriott, and Mayo Clinic. His background combines leadership development, emotional intelligence, and a strong analytical foundation.

Bill will provide practical strategies for managing emotions under pressure, strengthening relationships, increasing trust, and creating cultures where people can have the conversations that need to happen.

Why Attend?

Whether you are a longtime member of the PMI Chicagoland Chapter, a new project professional, or someone exploring project management as a career, the Symposium offers a chance to step away from the daily demands of your projects and invest in your professional growth.

FOR PMI MEMBERS

The Symposium is an opportunity to reconnect with the Chicagoland project management community, expand your professional network, learn from experienced leaders, and gain ideas you can take back to your organization.

It is also a chance to make the most of your PMI membership by engaging with fellow practitioners and continuing your professional development.

FOR NON-MEMBERS

You don't have to be a PMI member to benefit from the Symposium.

If you manage projects, lead teams, work with stakeholders, support business transformation, or are considering a career in project management, this event is an opportunity to connect with professionals across the Chicagoland area and experience what the PMI community has to offer.

You may arrive looking for professional development and leave with new ideas, new connections, and a renewed perspective on your career.

Make an Investment in Yourself

Professional development isn't simply about earning credentials. It is about remaining relevant, building confidence, expanding your perspective, and developing the skills needed to navigate what comes next.

The 2026 PMI Chicagoland PM Symposium is designed to help project professionals do exactly that.

ADAPT. INNOVATE. AMPLIFY.

Three simple words — but a powerful challenge for every project professional.

Join us on October 9 and discover how you can go beyond execution and amplify the impact you make through your projects, your teams, and your leadership.

2026 PMI Chicagoland PM Symposium

Friday, October 9

7:00 AM – 4:00 PM CT

College of DuPage

425 Fawell Blvd., Glen Ellyn, IL 60137

Adapt with purpose. Innovate with intention. Amplify your impact.

Register today!

For questions, please contact Syeda Ali at SymposiumRegistration@pmichicagoland.org.