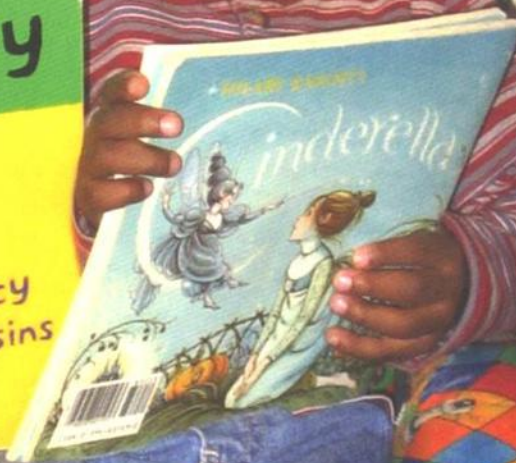
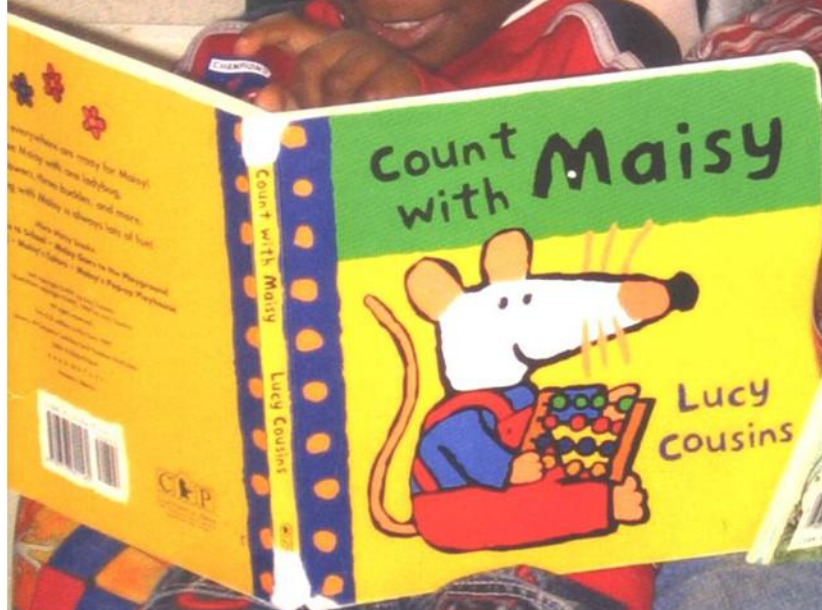


Mosaic

exploring social justice in Chicago piece by piece



Assault on literacy

Programs face budget cuts, 22 and 37

Boystown

Unique neighborhood grows, 26 and 27

Changes at Cabrini

Public housing evolves, 48

2006 edition

Mosaic

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Letter from the Editor

Dear Reader,

This year we are pleased to share with you the third issue of Mosaic, an annual publication produced by students of Loyola University Chicago. Focusing on social justice, this year's theme centers on the subject of tolerance, and many of the stories featured in this edition highlight people who are making a difference in Chicago and the issues that presently have an impact on the local community.

Creating Mosaic allowed us the opportunity to embrace the rich cultural diversity that this city offers. Every face in this issue has a different story to tell, and local heroes and issues are the vibrant and colorful pieces that form Chicago's cultural mosaic.

Under the leadership and direction of Professor John Slania, our student staff was encouraged to seek out the people and events influencing our community. We were responsible for writing and editing the stories, designing the layout, selling advertisements, and promoting its publication. This unique class provided us with the valuable experience of publishing a magazine firsthand.

It was an honor to have worked with such a talented young staff. Every piece of this "Mosaic" that fills these pages is a testament to their hard work and dedication to this project.

The importance of encouraging tolerance in our community was a central goal this year, and it reminds us of the value of compassion and humanity. We hope that the stories and perspectives presented in these pages will inspire you to take a renewed, open-minded look at our city.

Thank you,
Nicole Torres

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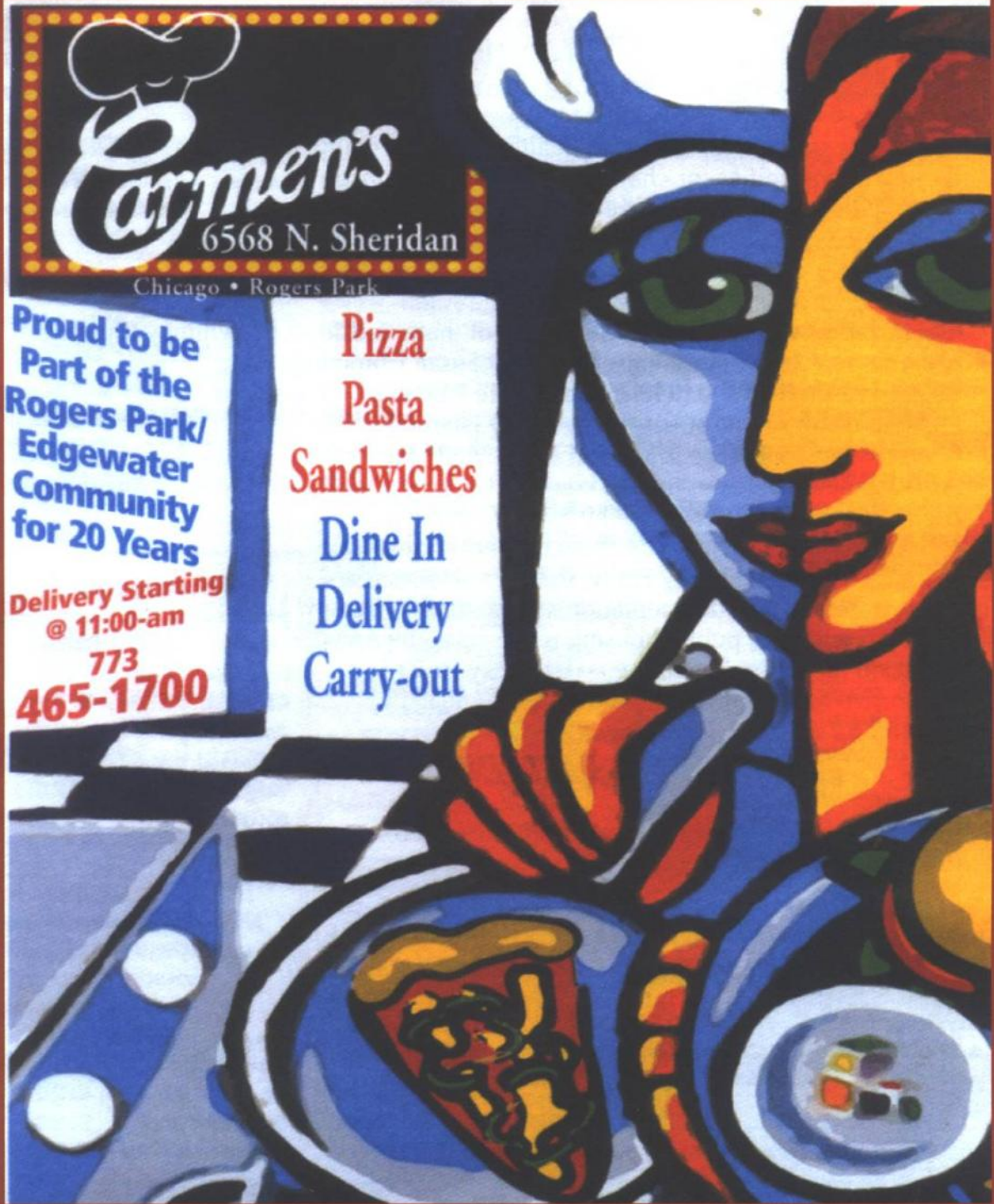
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by Emily Sisser

A grassroots struggle for universal healthcare

The north-facing windows of the small rectangular office let in a harsh autumn light, highlighting the whiteness of the room's bare walls. Only a desk and small round table with a few mismatched chairs occupy its limited space.

Except the conservative gray and white plaque to the right of the office door, no one would ever guess this is the office of the Executive Director of CommunityHealth, a volunteer-based clinic located on Chicago's near West Side. But to Judith Haasis, a tall, lean and ever smiling dynamo, this is home.

The small West Side clinic was founded in 1993 by Dr. Serafino Garella, an Italian immigrant whose dream was to bring free medical care to the uninsured.

CommunityHealth does not receive any government funding and therefore relies on grants and donations to keep its doors open. Staff members, like Haasis, and hundreds of volunteers are crucial to the life of the clinic. It is their work and time which provides those without health insurance a free clinic to receive the healthcare and medications they would otherwise go without.

Small work spaces and less than glamorous trappings of non-profit work have never bothered Haasis. Since college, she has wanted to "change the world," and realized that non-profit work was how she was going to make a difference.

"The best niche for me is finding organizations with a compelling mission," Haasis said.

After working at Planned Parenthood in New York city for nine years, she became particularly interested in the fight for universal healthcare. CommunityHealth's mission, "...because no one should go without healthcare," is what brought Haasis to the West

Side clinic last year.

Taking a grass roots approach to the healthcare issue, the free clinic has served more than 25,000 patients, 80 percent of which are from working families that live at or below 250 percent of the Federal Poverty level. The clinic's 400 volunteers provide patients with quality primary healthcare, including laboratory tests and access to specialists, like cardiologists, physical therapists and ophthalmologists – services which would normally cost patients hundreds to thousands of dollars.

"I have learned what is possible when dedicated people come together around our guiding philosophy. I have also learned that while our mission keeps us focused and vigilant, it is the people behind the mission that give it life and give our patients hope," Haasis said.

In her first year, she has worked closely with CommunityHealth's 21-member board of directors to strategize and develop ways in which the non-profit organization can expand its services and spread awareness about the lack of universal healthcare.

"Our biggest challenge is working to clarify the organization's direction. There is no way we can do everything so we need a way to make the greatest impact," Haasis said.

The people who work with Haasis on a daily basis understand her passion and desire to make a difference. Madalyn Messer-Brooks, assistant director of development, explained how inspiring it is to work with Haasis.

The two worked together to organize CommunityHealth's, To Your Health Gala, which raised approximately \$100,000 to purchase supplies and equipment for the clinic.

"She is great to work with and is amazingly smart and dedicated," said Messer-Brooks.

"The longer you're around Haasis the more you understand that she is fulfilling a life goal," said CommunityHealth's director of development, Barbara Reed.

"Judy is a thinker and a doer. Her vision to take CommunityHealth to the next level of achievement is matched by her organizational and interpersonal skills to motivate staff and volunteers to get us there," Reed said.

Haasis recalls an incident last December when she knew she had made the right decision to join CommunityHealth. That's when she got a call from a benefactor who wanted to make the single largest donation ever received by CommunityHealth.

"The donation made so many great things possible and secured our financial destiny," said Haasis, with a look of pride.

Her office may be small, but the work Haasis is producing from within its bare walls is making a substantial difference for CommunityHealth and its patients. The only motivation Haasis needs to keep striving for change is the daily reminder of the people she helps.

"Walking into CommunityHealth every day and seeing the faces is always a reminder to me of the important work we are all doing," Haasis said.





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Creating opportunities for change

Organization provides shelter for the homeless

Life was always hard for Greg. As a foster child growing up, he began experimenting with drugs that eventually led him in and out of jail. Greg even stole money from coin boxes at newspaper stands in order to survive.

After years of living like this, Greg found Connections for the Homeless, an organization in Evanston that aims to help prevent and reduce homelessness. He began living Connections' year round shelter, Hilda's place.

Even though things were beginning to look better, Greg found himself following his old ways after leaving the shelter. He continued to steal coin boxes and live on the streets.

But soon, after having feelings of guilt from stealing, Greg decided to turn himself into the police. Greg's first and only visitor at the Chicago jail was Kevin Foss from Connections.

"He really made me feel that life was worth living," said Greg, who asked that his name not be used.

After being released, Greg returned to Hilda's Place. With the help of staff counselors and doctors he was able to turn his life around.

Today Greg is part of Community Supportive Housing, another program 'Connections' offers its' clients to help guide residents towards living independently. Now Greg has a place to call home, and workers at Connections to help him along the way.

Connections for the Homeless, established in 1984 in Evanston, continues to celebrate years of "creating opportunities for change," according to Sandra Robinson, development manager. Connections concentrates on issues of poverty, hunger and homelessness, and tries to make a difference through these programs.

The organization, crafted by faith communities in Evanston, originally served as a basic shelter. Over the years it has expanded into three distinct programs: EntryPoint, Family Housing Services and Hilda's Place.

EntryPoint is available to individuals and families. Staff members welcome those needing assistance; whether it is a shower, change of clothes, or a referral to another facility.

Family Housing Services provides families with emergency funding or supportive case services, including housing, with the goal of independency. The housing for this program is located throughout Northfield Township and Evanston. Robinson stresses that the program does not just provide temporary housing, but tackles the issue of homelessness.

Hilda's Place, the third program, provides long-term help and shelter year round as well. The shelter reaches out to all adults. Hilda's Place bills itself as the only shelter, north of Chicago below the state line, and east of the Tri-State Tollway, that focuses on transition to independence.

Connections is currently building on its Community Supportive Housing program, which offers permanent housing for disabled Evanstonians. The program aims to grant assistance to those with some sort of income and a disability that hinders an aspect of their everyday life.

"Homelessness is a disaster period," said Robinson.

Hilda's Place is set up to provide the homeless with their own space and a sense of comfort. The actual space accommodates 26 men and eight women. Each resident is given a bed and locker where they can keep their belongings, something the organization finds important.

"It enables our clients to feel that they have something to call their own, because for so long many individuals haven't had that," Robinson said.

One room in the shelter called "the cage," holds all donations including clothing, toiletries and nonperishable food, which are collected and organized by staff and volunteers. Different groups or families from the local community donate these items to the shelter, which are utilized by all of the organization's programs.

The shelter also provides medical services in the form of a consulting doctor, staff nurse and volunteers who all come to help with any medical problems that the clients might be facing. Not only is each person provided with medical attention, but they are also able to meet with a psychiatrist in the shelter.

"Our goal is to help them, help themselves, to transition into a positive environment," Robinson said.

If a client is capable of working, the shelter partners with other community groups to help to assist clients to find work. The shelter houses a library that contains donated books available for the clients to take home, the use of computers for internet searches, and finally, access to computer

games to play, in order to relax at the end of the day.

"We really want our clients to feel apart of a community, a reconnection with society. Our volunteers and staff are so important for that," Robinson said.

The 22-person staff has the help of

"It enables our clients to feel that they have something to call their own, because for so long many individuals haven't had that."

— Sandra Robinson, development manager

what Robinson calls, "a strong base of volunteers that are extremely valued by the agency."

Rosemary West volunteers each month at the soup kitchen with her parish, St. Norbert Catholic Church. "It is something small that we can do to help a growing organization that does so much everyday," West said.

Connections recently added Mary Ruth Coffey as the organization's new executive director.

"I hope to bring to Connections and the wider community the experience and passion needed to contribute to working toward a larger vision for which we must continue to strive—the end of homelessness and its underlying causes," Coffey said, "the satisfaction of human rights for each and every individual in our community."

Blogging for justice

Rogers Park resident takes to the Web

Over the past few years, the gang members in his neighborhood have come to know him on a first name basis. In fact, he has even earned an affectionate nickname from them.

In reference to the popular cartoon dog that teaches kids about safety and drug awareness, they call him "McGruff."

Craig Gernhardt, 44, worries as little about his new nickname as he does about approaching these individuals, who scare most of his other neighbors in to walking on the opposite side of the street.

Since November 2004, Gernhardt has taken to Chicago's streets, approaching public offenders, public officials and public protectors alike, all to get his story, and some social justice.

The founder of "The Broken Heart of Rogers Park," a daily Internet news blog (morsehellhole.blogspot.com), Gernhardt has been the main contributor, photographer, and investigative reporter for a site he believes will

bring about change and fairness.

"My hopes are for people to start taking stock in their neighborhood," he said, over the roar of an ambulance in the background.

Individuals like James Ginderske, 50, have done just that. As a neighbor in the same community, Ginderske began paying more attention to issues brought up in Gernhardt's blog.

"I couldn't help but keep suggesting ideas for Craig to cover," said Ginderske. "I finally just realized that I could help out and write things too."

After moving from a small Wisconsin

town to the North Side of Chicago in 1968, Gernhardt settled in only to find his community deteriorating.

He began to see that opposite forces such as overdevelopment in some areas and abandonment in others, were all proving "extremely destructive to the fabric of the neighborhood."

Instead of standing idly by, however, Gernhardt reached a breaking point near the end of 2004 where he felt he had to do something.

His response was a Web site where people

could communicate, share information, and express opinions. His efforts have quickly become much more.

"I believe in the underdog," he said. "I want to have the underdog get a fair shake."

Originally speaking out on Web sites such as RogersPark.com and Forum49, which are heavily affiliated with city officials and area developers, his ideas have since been banned at both addresses.

Nobody from either site would even agree to discuss the issue.

"I have no comment on Craig Gernhardt, no offense to you but I do not want to answer your questions if they are about him," said Charlie Didrickson, RogersPark.com marketing and web content manager.

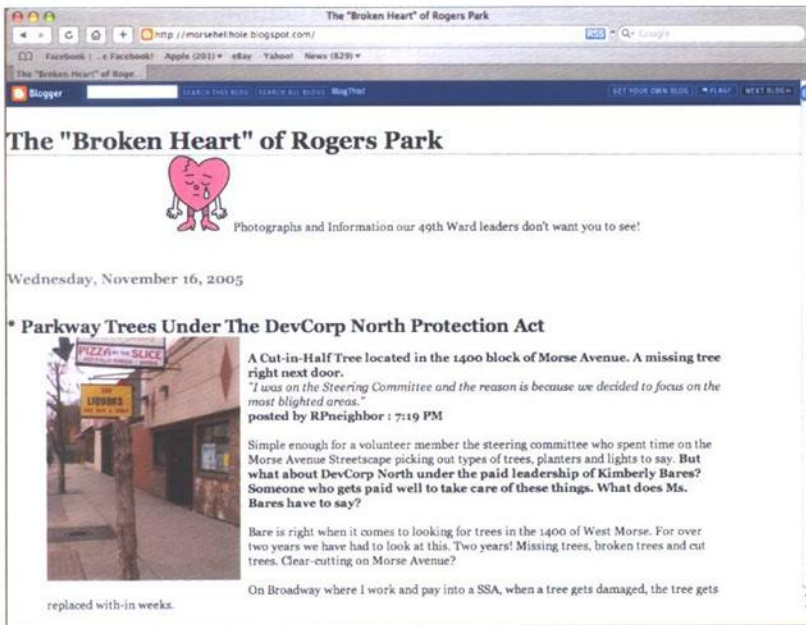
As a result, Gernhardt has taken a more aggressive role in trying to inform neighbors of his view of the truth.

At a recent CAPS (Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy) meeting, Gernhardt showed up to criticize police for their poor response and follow up to a domestic dispute that resulted in the death of a husband and wife a week later.

In response to his comments, however, Gernhardt was told to "shut up." Tired of

"I believe in the underdog... I want to have the underdog get a fair shake."

— Craig Gernhardt, Rogers Park Blogger



Craig Gernhart's Web log, "The Bleeding Heart of Rogers Park," is updated daily and addresses Rogers Park/Northside of Chicago issues. Gernhart says he tries to address all kinds of issues ranging from politics to street crime.

SEE BLOG, PAGE 9

hearing his inquiries and complaints, police told him that they no longer want to respond to his calls.

While normally police may respond in 15 minutes to a call, Gernhardt said they typically take an extra 20 minutes in getting to him now.

"When they know I am reporting something they take their time to have an extra cup of coffee and donut," Gernhardt joked. "I have to protect myself now."

Yet even with instances of breaking up gang fights between drug dealers and stepping in front of a man who was hitting his wife, Gernhardt insists that he has never felt his life was in danger.

At 6 feet 4 inches tall, Gernhardt speaks as if nothing scares him, and the stories on his Web site support his claim.

In one photo, taken so close that the time on a man's watch is visible, viewers can witness two people sharing a joint on the corner. In another shot, viewers can practically see how much one man in a dark hooded sweatshirt is paying for drugs.

While taking pictures of public service officials not doing their jobs may garner him a threat from time to time, he refuses to scale back his efforts.

"I've been around," Gernhardt said. "I was the daredevil when I was young, trying things others wouldn't try. I race motorcycles on the weekends. I have a high tolerance for pain."

For Gernhardt, the possibility of a punch thrown his way is just an extra challenge he faces in working for social justice.

Running the blog on the side, Gernhardt faces difficulties in his real career as the Associate Publisher of *Gay Chicago Magazine*.

The son of a gay man, Gernhardt, who is straight, took over the publishing duties for his father when he became too sick to effectively run the magazine.

Still, he continues his fight for fairness in two arenas at the same time, contributing any success to the simple spread of truth.

"This is life. This is truth. There are homeless people in the park, there is police brutality, there are people not doing their jobs," Gernhardt said.

Claiming that he looks more like a 20-year-old anarchist rather than his own age, Gernhardt realizes that there are a lot of factors contributing to our problems, but hopes that his work can make everyone more aware and active.

"I don't let fear overrule my goals and passion," said Gernhardt.

by Mollie K. Dixon

Declining church attendance: A touchy subject



After 18 years of being forced to go with my mother to church every Sunday morning, going away to college meant being able to forego going to church if I chose to do so.

I grew up in the Catholic Church and attended Catholic grade school, high school, and now Loyola University Chicago — a Catholic university. Although I attended Catholic schools, I never felt a deep connection with the Church or was very interested in paying attention when I was at church. I went on the Kairos retreat as many high school juniors and seniors in Catholic schools did, but I did not feel closer to my faith when I left.

I welcomed the weekends (at school) away from my parents because I dreaded going to church when I was home.

Part of my dislike for going to church has to do with the pastors at my home parish. I feel that they are unfriendly and arrogant. The head pastor is always petitioning for money and yet he is living alone in a three bedroom home that is fully paid for by my parish. He was living with another priest in my church but they did not get along, so the parish bought another home for the other priest. The head pastor also drives a nice car.

It was my understanding that when men entered the priesthood they took on a vow of poverty; I did not know that "vow of poverty" included a three-bedroom home and car. This all tarnishes my image of the Catholic Church especially when I consider the amassing student loans and debt I have because I am trying to put myself through a Catholic university. Also my parents have significantly sacrificed to put five children through Catholic grade school, high school and college.

Another reason for my dislike of the Catholic Church is the scandal with the molestation of young boys by priests who are supposed to be trusted figures in the community. One of the priests at my home parish was arrested on molestation charges and the leaders of my church would not take down a large picture of him until he was formally convicted. This truly upset many parishioners in my hometown.

Recently I got into an argument with my

mother about going to church. She seems to believe that you are not a good person if you do not go to church every week. I pointed out to her that my father, who is Lutheran, does not go to church and he is not a "bad" person. I also let her know that my three older siblings, all of whom went to Catholic schools, do not go to church.

I believe that having the opportunity to go to Catholic school all of my life has taught me to think for myself and that my liberal arts education has benefited me in many ways. I believe that now I should be able to choose whether or not I want to attend church.

I discussed with my mother my qualms about going to church and how I feel about practicing my faith. At one point in my life, I might be more apt to re-embrace my faith and practice it more by going to church, but unlike my mother, I don't think that someone is a "bad" person because he or she chooses not to go to church. I think a person's character is based on many more characteristics than church service attendance.

by Leila Allen

New school program decreases dropout rate

Denise Brown has always hoped that her son's life would be better than her own.

"He got into a lot of trouble and was skipping school," Brown said.

But when her oldest son, James, 16, got involved with the programs started by the Chicago Public Schools to prevent students from dropping out, his life started to change.

"He's a new kid," said the proud mother of three.

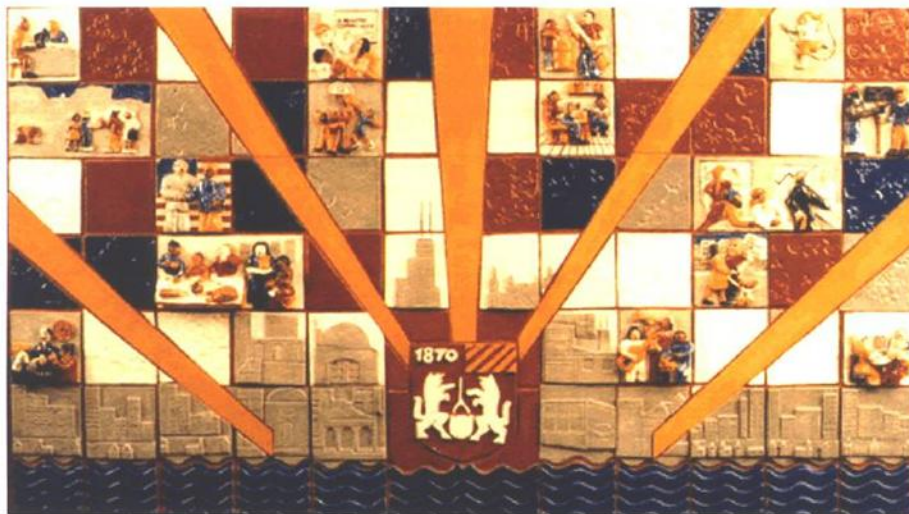
As the one-year dropout rate for the Chicago Public Schools is at an all-time low, this dream may be coming true for many Chicago parents.

Current dropout rates are estimated at 10.4 percent, marking a significant decrease from last year's 11.9 percent.

Chicago Public Schools chief Arne Duncan attributes the results to the creation of a Department of Dropout Prevention and Recovery. The Department creates programs targeting at-risk students, both in and outside of school.

"The rates of dropout have been on a steady decline over the last 10 years, but the recovery program has really helped to coordinate and identify the problem," said Tim Tuten, a media representative for the school district.

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by Leila Allen

Hope

Comes in small packages

Marcella Kent found herself in a precarious position: she was a recovering addict with three children and no means of supporting herself on the mean streets of Chicago.

In desperation, she sought help from the Enterprising Kitchen, a workforce training program in Rogers Park that helps struggling women get back on their feet.

After spending more than a year at the Enterprising Kitchen, Kent, 40, is on the road to recovery. She not only succeeded in the training program, she was hired by the Enterprising Kitchen as a full-time receptionist and office assistant.

"It's given me a sense of self worth and stability in my life...and a desk of my own," Kent said.

The Enterprising Kitchen is not a kitchen in the normal sense.

Visitors walking into the main office are bombarded by the scents of lavender, citrus, herbs, and spices. It eventually becomes quite obvious that the workers there do not make food, they make soap.

The Enterprising Kitchen, located at 4426 N. Ravenswood Ave., is a workforce development program that gives Chicago women the chance to work and receive skills training at the same time.

Joan Pikas, co-founder and Program Director of the Enterprising Kitchen, was

teaching a general educational development class in Evanston when she noticed an alarming trend: most of the women she was teaching could not find stable employment.

"It's not just a job. We're like one big happy family."

— Marcella Kent

Pikas thought that someone needed to combine the ideas of education and employment to help women in difficult situations. Pikas looked into the dilemma and, along with Kathi Libe, founded the Enterprising Kitchen in 1996, basing it

on a similar organization in Denver called the Women's Mean Project.

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Two employees at the Enterprising Kitchen put their education to work in making the company's trademark product, soap. The Kitchen makes several other bath products.

HOPE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

The name came in pieces, "...we wanted to name it something about home and heart and support, which is what a kitchen is all about," Pikas said.

The "enterprising" part came from creating a business.

The Enterprising Kitchen, for the first 18 months, truly was a kitchen, producing natural grain foods, complete with in-house chef. "We couldn't compete with the grocery stores," Pikas said.

So she looked for a new venture.

After a friend told her that she could make soap, Pikas bought a book to learn the process and thus began the re-invention of the Enterprising Kitchen.

Currently employing and educating 17 participants, the women go through a six month transitional employment process, including learning about the soap business, making and selling the soap, and attending seminars on everything from workplace ethics to computer skills.

Participants also receive help with creating resumes, leading healthy lifestyles, and money management.

After graduating from the program, most of the women go into the workforce in entry level jobs as office assistants or housekeepers, making up to \$9 an hour. Other graduates are taken on as employees at the Enterprising Kitchen.

The Enterprising Kitchen also keeps volunteers on hand to help with the actual soap-making process and to help sell their products.

Bren Murphy, an associate professor of Communication and Women's Studies at Loyola University Chicago, is one of these volunteers.

Murphy got involved with the Enterprising Kitchen three years ago as the director of the Lakeside

Community Partnership at Loyola. Her committee identified eight to 10 local groups and organizations to help, one of them being the Enterprising Kitchen.

Murphy organizes the sales of the Enterprising Kitchen products on Loyola's campus through the Women's Studies Programs and the Gannon Scholars.

"They really help to make women feel better about themselves and we do what we can to help them," Murphy said.

The Enterprising Kitchen produces two

different product lines of organic soaps and bath necessities, named "Choices" and "The Enterprising Kitchen."

Products range in price from \$4 for a bar of soap to \$250 for a complete spa package,

including bathrobes.

The Enterprising Kitchen is out to prove that great things come in small packages.

"It's not just a job," Kent said. "We're like one big happy family."



An employee at the Enterprising Kitchen packages some soap for sale and distribution.

by Whitney Woodward

Organization works to limit distribution of 'hate' music

Wearing a T-shirt bearing a swastika and the words "Aryan Power," a young adult approaches the counter of Chicago's Crow's Nest record store and asks for the newest CD from the band Hatemonger. He leaves disappointed.

"Sorry, but we no longer carry music by that band," the cashier explains.

This Crow's Nest, at the intersection of Wells Street and Washington Boulevard, is one of three music stores the Chicago-based "Turn It Down" campaign has successfully lobbied to stop selling racist music such as that by Hatemonger.

The band is one of more than 100 groups the campaign has identified as part of a controversial subgenre of rebellious

punk music that promotes a racist ideology.

Initiated by the Center for New Community, a democracy-building organization, the campaign has sparked national interest in reducing the influence racism has on youth.

"White Power" music is an attempt by white supremacists to bridge the gap between youth rebellion and racism," said Devin Burghart, director of the CNC. "It promotes a hateful ideology that has a negative effect on impressionable young listeners."

Burghart said the success in Chicago has prompted organizers to take its music-store petitioning to the national level.

by Susan Cummings

Helping people to help themselves



On an early fall morning, a Catholic charity worker delivers food and other needed supplies for the Howard Area Community Center. The center is home to a continuing-education program, a food pantry and a full-time preschool.

Each morning, a group of rambunctious 4-year-olds arrive at their preschool ready to greet the day. As they kiss their parents goodbye and say hello to their friends, they don't exhibit any apparent differences from any other 4-year-old class.

The difference though, is that this group of children attends preschool at the Howard Area Community Center; a center that works with underprivileged families.

Located in Chicago's Rogers Park neighborhood, the center offers low-income families a place where they can come for help and care.

The center has five main programs: social services; adult education and employment; early childhood; youth; and an alternative high school.

"The low-income people who participate in our programs or use our services appreciate the opportunity to improve the quality of their lives," said volunteer coordinator Bonnie Wagner.

Originally a stay-at-home mom, Wagner's job now is to recruit, train, and place volunteers in the center's various programs.

With more than 140 staff members and volunteers, Wagner said, "[They] are dedicated, compassionate individuals who treat each program participant with respect and dignity."

"Parents in the community really appreciate our programs for kids, especially the preschool because they know it is a safe learning environment for their children," said intern Ashley Kuhl, 21, a senior psychology student at Loyola University Chicago.

The preschool program, known as Head-Start, offers 4-year-old students a chance to

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experience what kindergarten will be like. The center provides students breakfast, lunch, and dinner while classes are taught by certified preschool teachers.

The cost of daycare can range anywhere from \$250 a week and up for the same services the center provides. But because of the economic conditions of their clientele, payment is on a sliding scale in which everyone pays a different amount depending on their income. Most families pay around \$10-\$20 a month.

The mission of the center is to help adults and their families. The staff realizes the importance of an education. They believe in helping young children in addition to assisting adults who are already working.

While the preschool is one of their more popular programs, the center also runs initiatives to help adults within the community. For instance, a food pantry once a week provides individuals with groceries. Classes are also offered that help adults receive their high school diplomas. An after-school program for 6th, 7th and 8th graders helps students with

their homework.

"These students come from very poor backgrounds, you can see it in their book bags, jackets, and shoes; this is not regular wear and tear from being a child, this is like their 20-year-old sister's book bag and clothing," said Kuhl, who works with this program twice a week.

According to Kuhl, volunteers and staff members who work with this program not only provide help with homework and fun activities but they also talk with the students when fights break out.

The majority of residents in the area are supportive of the center and its many initiatives.

"I am having my first child and I cannot afford daycare on my salary. Just knowing the center is available is a big relief," said Rogers Park resident Mari Villa. Villa, 23, says she appreciates that her neighborhood has a program that looks out for its poorer members.

"Most people just need a helping hand to get back on their feet and the center is trying to accomplish just that," said Kuhl.

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(Above) The Howard Area Community Center's preschool offers educational services on sliding scale to families on Chicago's Northside. (Right) The facility features traditional classrooms, a playground and a kitchen to prepare meals for the children.



by Angie Trudeau

Café serves hope to homeless

The mid-afternoon sun floods through the freshly cleaned windows of Café Too. As the light filters through, it's no accident that it shines past the modern cabana décor of the main café and into the kitchen.

John Pfeiffer, deputy director for Inspiration Corp., points out architectural features which

allow natural light to illuminate the most important part of the café, the kitchen.

Not only is the kitchen the source of contemporary American cuisine, ranging from spicy chicken wontons to homemade cheesecake, it also provides a space for internship and employment opportunities for students and alumni

of the Café Too culinary training program.

Located at 4715 N. Sheridan Road, the café serves the Uptown neighborhood of Chicago. Patrons are invited to enjoy high quality food while supporting a comprehensive culinary training program focused on assisting homeless, or other low-income individuals, and refugees jump-start their careers in the food industry.

"I love it here," said Tony Reinert, a student of the Café Too culinary training program. Only two weeks from completing the intensive 13-week program, the 30 year old is excited to use his skills in the real world.

Like many other students, Reinert was referred to the program through a recovery organization. In Reinert's case, Heartland Alliance became what he called "a network of friends" helping him along the way.

Shelters and social service agencies refer clients based on their motivation levels and potential success and benefit of the training.

Along with culinary skills, students learn "soft skills," like hygiene and workplace communication, explained Judith Bobbe, director of clinical services for Inspiration Corp.

A job placement specialist also provides guidance and training to prepare students with skills like writing resumes and interviewing.

At the end of the first six weeks of the 13 week program, students test for their Food Service Sanitation Management Certificate, an industry standard. This \$300 test is fully subsidized by Inspiration Corp.

The remaining seven weeks focus on experiential culinary training through an internship at Café Too.

A network of employers has been established to help alumni find sustaining employment. Hospitals, restaurants and nursing homes are typical of the places with openings for graduates.

Before Café Too opened in late September 2005, hands-on experience was limited to Thursdays and Fridays. At Inspiration Café, the main Inspiration Corp. site located at 4554 N. Broadway Ave., students would cook and serve



One of the many meals served at Café Too.

SEE CAFE, PAGE 16

lunch to local residents.

"Now, students make brunch and dinner items, as well," Pfeiffer said.

"The Café Too restaurant has allowed us to make this program as close to a traditional culinary program as possible" said Jenny Urban, soup-chef and Café Too chef instructor.

Café Too has met such accomplishment since its opening.

"With relatively little marketing Café Too has had great success," Bobbe said.

Inspiration Corporation's staff members are crucial to the success of their many programs. Staff members often meet with each other at the Café over a hot bowl of Uptown Soup. Margaret Haywood, director of training, often visits the Café on her day off work.

"If I see her in here on her day off, I tell her to go home," jokes Richard Smith, 48, Café Too waiter and training program graduate.

The restaurant also provides a commercial outlet for the products of other employment programs in Chicago. Soap from the Enterprising Kitchen, jewelry and stationary from Deborah's Place, and Inspiration Café brand coffee line the shelves next to the dessert display.

The varieties of soap, the Café Too paraphernalia, and the diverse menu choices reflect Café Too's mission. This distinctive restaurant provides options and opportunities for individuals as unique and inspired as the Vegan Tofu Burgers and the Magnificent Mesclun Salads.

Perhaps Café Too is too inviting, however. For Reinert, "grandiose" plans like working downtown at the Mid-America Club do not sound as wonderful as staying at Café Too after graduation.

"I know the people, and I love the atmosphere," Reinert said. "Why would I want to go anywhere else?"



by Molly Fleming

Life and death on the streets



As any denizen of our arctic urban tundra can attest, Chicago winters are brutal. With temperatures often below 10 degrees and winds above 35 mph, snowflake bullets of gray-scale malevolence launch a horizontal assault on any pretentious pedestrian who dares to confront the weather's wrath.

While we curse the cold and shuffle from one heated haven to the next, slack-jawed, sunken-eyed mirages of men and women sink into the bitter pavement and nearly disappear.

The 166,000 homeless men, women, and children in this cutthroat city of schmoozing corporate executives and polished steel skyscrapers don't cease to be homeless when it gets cold. Lungs wheezing in the hollow, aching evidence of sleep without shelter, they dive into Dumpsters and huddle beneath overpasses to survive the night.

This is a climate that kills.

Nineteen homeless men froze to death in Chicago last winter, and with requests for emergency shelter assistance up 13 percent from 2004, even more icicle corpses are likely to be discovered this season.

Near Jefferson and Lake there's a vortex of warm wind that corkscrews from the El overpass to capture gusts of piercing snow so that they drift up peacefully and kiss the branches of Mayor Daley's aesthetically-planted trees. Below those branches, a shoeless son of the streets sits yoga-pose, rocking back and forth to a rhythm that nobody else can hear.

With cracked gray heels forged by the underbelly of alley asphalt and fierce night air,

he seethes solemn desperation at fur-coated urbanites clutching \$5 lattes and bores his sandpaper and silver eyes into every passerby. Nobody returns his gaze.

Frantically aching for refuge and craving the tender bliss of delving a stake into a swath of unnamed earth and claiming as one's own, Chicago's homeless also face public apathy. As temperatures drop, we walk faster, and we pass these hunched figures without acknowledging their suffering, let alone their humanity.

If interaction between the haves and the have-nots continues at this level of indifference, we will be witnesses to the suicide of civil society.

While slowly evolving into a nation of cyber-souls, we weep at tragedy manufactured in the latest blockbuster, yet we fail to react to those slung in the maw of real anguish.

We don't even make eye contact with them, for that matter.

Public policy often focuses only on the effects of homelessness while ignoring stringent social structures, archaic inequalities, and the simple truth that cleaning toilets for \$6.50 an hour is not enough money to sustain a body, let alone a being.

We construct the thinking that if we make panhandling a crime, panhandlers will cease to exist. If we deem welfare a shame and brand its recipients cheats, we can gut its funding while subtly quashing the simple dignity behind social justice. If we don't look the homeless in the eyes, we don't have to admit responsibility if the night is cold and they are frost corpses scraped from the gutter at daybreak.

As 35 m.p.h. gales slug Chicago and temperatures drop to 20, the shoeless sage of Jefferson and Lake stares stonily ahead. His jaw is set, and his eyes are steady, but he might not be there by morning.

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by Molly Fleming

StreetWise vendors face tough sell

Homeless newspaper-sellers endure cold weather, an indifferent public at their regular job

On the corner of Wells and Monroe streets in Chicago, where concrete financial buildings chafe the silhouette of a gray sky, the deep baritone of thick spun-honey reverberated in the air.

"StreetWise," sang a heavyset West Side man of vibrant molasses skin, his voice never venturing above its sweet, rumbling bass. "I've got your *StreetWise* paper right here."

In this frantic city of screeches, shrieks, sirens and scorn, two-year *StreetWise* vendor Renard Brauch's mellow, bluesy sales pitch lured more than 250 customers to buy his \$1 papers by the end of the week.

Brauch is one of more than 4,200 men and women, largely members of Chicago's homeless population, who glean stability and self-sufficiency from the simple revenue

of 65 cents earned with each sale of a newspaper created solely to provide income for its vendors.

"These people are essentially unplugged from society," said Dencen Weinze, executive director and publisher of StreetWise Inc. "While we work to meet the basic needs of our vendors so that they can move beyond selling the paper, we're in the trenches here. Some of these guys have lived on the streets their whole lives, and they have no idea how to assimilate into the real world."

To address these obstacles, StreetWise Inc. introduced the Work Empowerment Resource Center in 1998 where vendors can obtain access to GED training, resumé preparation, and computer instruction.

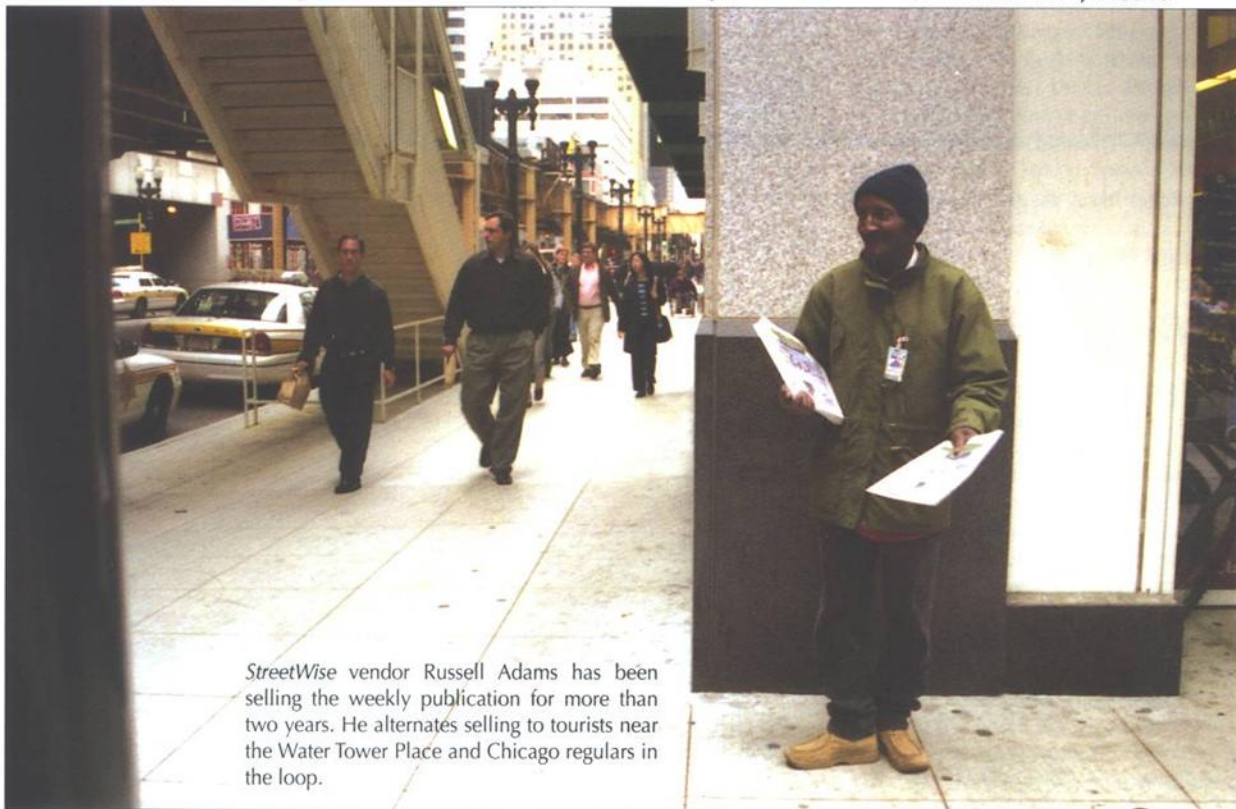
"StreetWise is about a hand up, not a hand

out," said Weinze. "We're not just selling a newspaper. We're helping people to help themselves become productive citizens."

Thanks to such initiatives, the peddling of papers amid the turmoil and rage of rush hour crowds is sometimes simply a stepping stone. StreetWise Inc. initiates the exodus from homeless life endured between a cold pavement and a merciless sky back to the stability of traditional society.

"I used to be a bum," said Russell Adams, a gaunt six-year *StreetWise* vendor on Michigan Avenue, whose stale whiskey-colored eyes leached saffron as he beamed a cracked-tooth grin. "Now I take care of myself. I keep myself neat, and I act polite. You have

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StreetWise vendor Russell Adams has been selling the weekly publication for more than two years. He alternates selling to tourists near the Water Tower Place and Chicago regulars in the loop.

to be polite to be a businessman.”

On Adams’ selling corner, the heavy scent of damp socks and aching, unwashed flesh—the exhaust fumes of poverty—wafted from rag-clad panhandlers rattling cups of change in front of Water Tower Place. Nearby, Adams practiced his scrupulously courteous sales pitches.

Unfortunately, most passersby shrewdly dodged confrontation with both Adams and his panhandling counterparts, engaging in the chronic avoidance of poverty that plagues non-profit organizations such as StreetWise Inc.

“I would never buy anything from those men,” said Lincoln Park resident, Rosemary Chathers as she perilously maneuvered in teetering Manolo Blahniks a wide berth around Adams. “StreetWise just facilitates organized begging. It’s sick the way people support it.”

When a pearl-encrusted shopper white-knuckling four bursting Neiman-Marcus bags stopped to buy a paper, Adams’ face exploded with his trademark grin. In the exchange of a mere dollar passed from her slim, egg-shell fingers to Adams’ calloused, chapped palm, there was a tender reckoning of fortune—the barren fate of privilege and poverty that eternally binds the affluent to the indigent.

“One day, I’m going to be the guy who buys *StreetWise*,” said Adams as he gingerly counted his day’s profits. “I’m going to walk down this fancy street right here, and I’m

going to buy a paper from every guy who’s selling one. And you know what else? I’m going to look them all in the eye.”

StreetWise Inc. has recently partnered with more than 89 member agencies to end homelessness through advocacy for systemic change. According to Weinze, the public fails to manifest its intrinsic instinct toward compassion.

“If we can make our vendors human to people, we will see a dramatic change in the way homelessness is viewed in this country,” said Weinze. “Until then, these victims will continue to fall through the cracks of our society. And we won’t even try to save them.”

Wrought by aftershocks of poverty and the sadistic tint of chance, the records of some vendors keep them from entering the traditional labor force. They are still welcomed at StreetWise Inc.

“We believe that it’s not about where you’ve been; it’s about where you’re going,” said Weinze. “We don’t care about the past. We don’t care if you’ve been in jail or if you sold drugs or if you stole a six-pack of cheap beer when you were seventeen. We just want you to make something of yourself, and this may be the best place to start.”

And as the tangerine sun melted over a skyscraper horizon at Adams and Wells streets, the spun-honey baritone of Renard Brauch echoed over the rush hour swarm of cell phones and three-piece-suits and high-heels.

“*StreetWise*,” bellowed the blues man, spiritual-singing king of the Loop. “Until the day I don’t, I’ve got your *StreetWise* right

by Susan Cummings

The Michigan Avenue Poor



Recently, a woman walked past me on Michigan Avenue in downtown Chicago carrying several large shopping bags, all of which were from very expensive designer boutiques. While these bags are commonplace along this very expensive shopping street it was her purse that really struck me. Written across the material of the bag was the slogan, “Think Rich, Look Poor.”

As she walked ahead of me a man on the corner asked her for money and instead of offering any sort of reply she put her head down and quickly crossed the street. I watched as dozens more did the same thing to this man. Why is it that we ignore the poor, yet trends in fashion can tell someone it’s cool to look poor but no one really ever says that it’s cool to help the poor?

While Michigan Avenue, known as the Magnificent Mile, is equated with designer stores and upscale restaurants, it has also become one of the places that the poor and homeless of our city stand in the hopes that someone will help them. Once you look past the windows of impeccably dressed mannequins you notice the homeless people sitting to the side. Some are asking for money and food while others simply hold signs that ask for help.

The distribution of wealth is definitely noticeable as shoppers quickly file past barely noticing the poor around them. By ignoring the poor and homeless are we implying that we are better than them? Do we ignore them so that we do not personally become involved in this issue? Or do we ignore these people so that the problem can be forgotten because we didn’t acknowledge it?

Later that same day a man approached me asking for money and I stopped to answer him. He looked at me, smiled and said, “Thank you for not ignoring me.” This man along with countless others is ignored day in and day out by so many people. Even if we do not want to offer monetary help still acknowledging these people shows that we are not forgetting them and that they are people worthy of acknowledgment.

by Nikki Palluzzi

Learning new languages opens new worlds for students

Classes across the Chicago area are saying “adios” to English this year and picking up a new language.

Schools in Wilmette, as well as Evanston, Skokie, and Chicago, are introducing a Spanish program into grades starting with kindergarten.

This is to help foster a connection between English and the prevalent Latin American culture present in Chicago and its suburbs.

Teaching another language early on and immersing children into another culture is becoming a popular trend in the United States. According to the Center

for Applied Linguistics, the number of elementary schools offering curriculum such as Wilmette’s increased by 40 percent between 1987 and 1997.

While some are afraid that the new program will take away learning time once devoted to math, science, and other traditional school subjects, most teachers are enthusiastic about the new changes to the curriculum.

“Multiculturalism shouldn’t be considered an extra, but an extension of what we already teach,” said Kathy Hofschield, a first-grade teacher at a Wilmette elementary school.

by Patricia Hernández

A woman on a mission: *Centro Romero's Doris Cabrera*

After doing a dance performance at the Chicago Children's Museum this summer, Cristian Munoz, 11, was approached by a woman who wanted to offer him a scholarship to attend her dance school the following summer. Cristian has always enjoyed dancing, and now, right in front of him, he had the opportunity to pursue his dream. He credited his opportunity to the education and training he has received from Doris Cabrera, the director of the after-school program at Centro Romero.

Cristian is one of the 30 children who are benefiting from the creativity and enthusiasm of

Cabrera, 43, the director of the youth learning and leadership development program at Centro Romero.

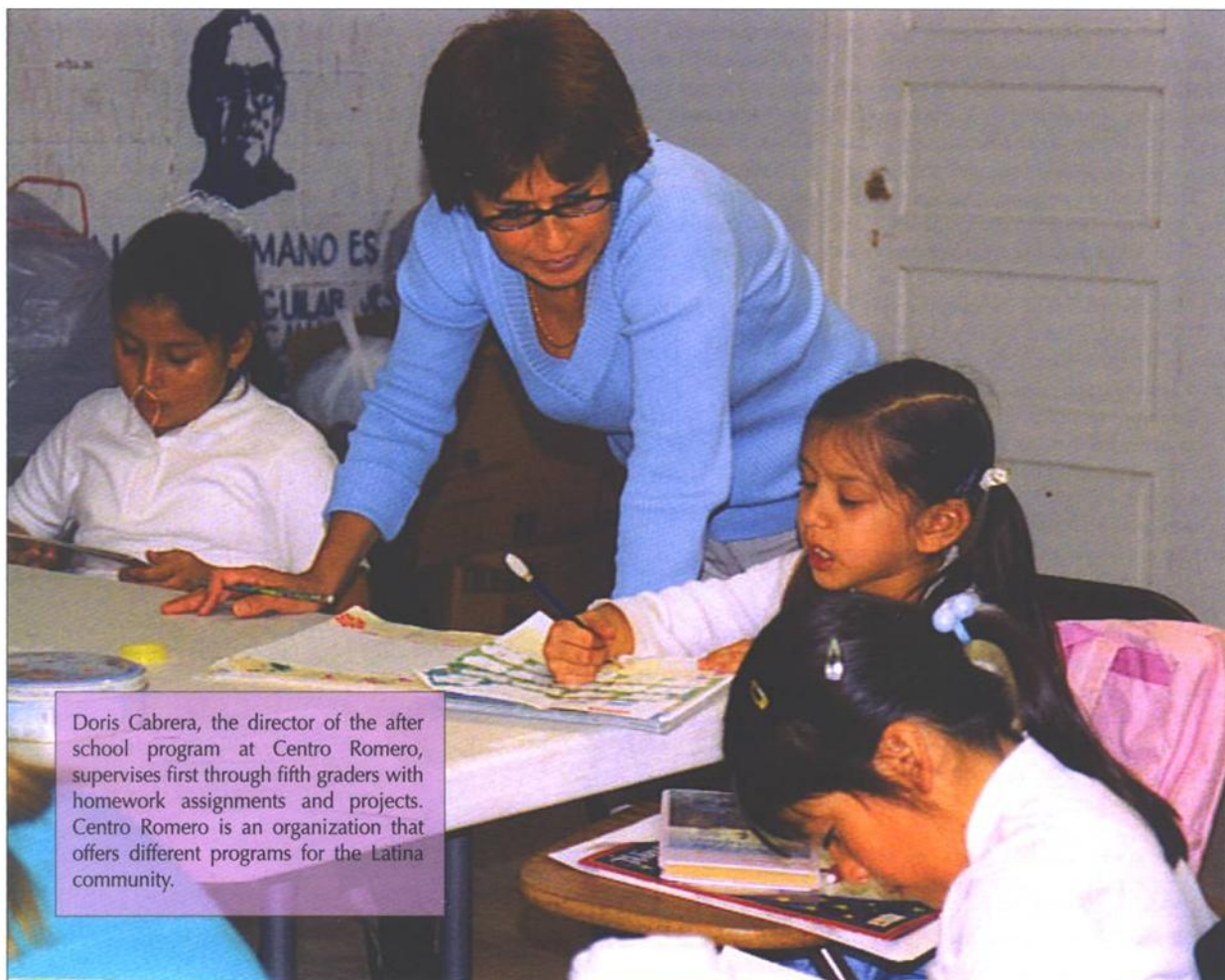
Centro Romero, located at 6216 N. Clark St. in Rogers Park, is a community-based organization that serves the refugee immigrant population on the Northeast Side of Chicago. The center offers programs such as youth learning and leadership development, women's empowerment projects, and legal assistance, among other services.

Cabrera came to the United States eight years ago from Peru, and has worked at Centro Romero

for six years, giving children the opportunity to have a place where they can do homework and enjoy educational activities.

Cabrera runs two after school programs. One is designed for children ages 6-11 and the other one for children 12-16. During the school year, it is a place where children from the surrounding schools go to do their homework and to explore new activities and opportunities. In the summer, the children are encouraged to continue their

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Doris Cabrera, the director of the after school program at Centro Romero, supervises first through fifth graders with homework assignments and projects. Centro Romero is an organization that offers different programs for the Latina community.

by Emily Sisser

The gift of tolerance



The other day I was talking to a friend from high school that still lives in the small Minnesota town we grew up in. My friend Jon moved back to our hometown after graduating from college and now finds himself at the local watering hole on a nightly basis. So when I, a stranger to his nightly routine, walked in on a recent visit home, he was more than surprised to see me.

As our conversation progressed, more and more people I went to high school with filtered into the poorly lit, smoke filled bar. With each new person who walked in I felt more and more out of place. These people, who I had once known so well, seemed like strangers.

Their small town mentality was something I had not been exposed to for a long while and frankly, I was annoyed with their disrespectful homosexual and racist jokes. I wrote them off for being the product of a small town and left.

"This is why I live in the city," I thought to myself as I drove home. "People in the city are more accepting and open," I thought.

However, the other day as I walked home I was reminded that intolerance is not isolated to small towns when an African-American man started calling me a "white haired, white skinned devil who hates the black man." I did nothing to provoke this man and am not a racist, but because my skin was white he felt the need to categorize me.

I realized then that intolerance is everywhere, and until people start to take the time to understand one another it will continue to exist. I also realized that instead of leaving the bar that evening, I should have shared with my old high school friends an alternative view point, my own, which does not believe in racism or sexism.

Then, at least I could say I did my best to spread the gift of tolerance. So when faced with the decision to walk away or share the gift of tolerance, share it, it may be the best gift you ever give.

DORIS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

education—with an emphasis on reading activities and other educational projects.

Cabrera arrives at Centro Romero at 9:30 a.m. to begin a day that will not end until about 6 p.m. or until the last child who attends the program is picked up. Throughout the day, she makes phone calls to different organizations that might provide grants for activities and projects for the children. The program works in conjunction with the American Red Cross, the Children's Memorial Hospital, and the Chicago Children's Museum, among others organizations.

Cabrera's goal is for the program to implement reading and writing as habits for the children. Cabrera also sees the program as "giving the kids the opportunity to get involved." She works at building leadership skills within the children so that they "take leadership to organize activities that they might want to do," she said.

"She believes in the kids a lot. She doesn't limit them, nothing is too hard. She thinks they can do any kind of activity," said Adriana Gallardo, 20, a Centro Romero volunteer.

Cabrera has designed the program not only to provide the children with an educational experience, but also to help them discover their talents. The children are involved with entertainment activities such as dance, art, research, and field trips.



Part of Doris Cabrera's job, as director at Centro Romero, is to look out for the well-being of the students who attend the program. Cabrera frequently calls parents to make sure children who miss sessions are okay.

"In her downtime, she is always looking for things to do with the kids," Gallardo said. Last year, Cabrera arranged for a dance instructor, Teddy, to come every Friday to Centro Romero and give lessons to children for a couple of hours. This is when Cristian began getting more involved in dancing.

Before performing at the Chicago Children's Museum, Cristian choreographed a group of classmates at Hayes Elementary School for the school's end of the year talent show. Their skills were impressive and his team won first place, Cristian said.

Cabrera receives great joy when she sees that the program is benefiting the children in different ways. She has made this program a big part of her life, sacrificing opportunities that would have helped her in her personal achievements.

Loyola University

Chicago offered her a scholarship to continue her education, however, she said, "the classes started at 6 p.m. downtown and the program doesn't end till 5:30 p.m. There was no way I could make it."

She wants to continue to better her English speaking and writing skills.

"I have never left the idea [to go back to school]. I want to see how I can manage," she said. But for now, "it's nice to see their [the children's] report cards and see they did well and they didn't fail the school year."

"It's nice to see their [the children's] report cards and see they did well and they didn't fail the school year."

— Doris Cabrera

by Amy Lueck

Literacy helps, but documentation still matters

Room 2814 began to fill in the early morning hours. The seventeen bleary-eyed students learning English as a Second Language settled into their seats. They gathered in quiet groups or scattered out as single, silent islands across the room.

These were some of the most advanced students of Truman College's government-funded English language program, learning at level six out of eight. Their numbers had diminished with each advancing placement level, until only the most dedicated remained.

A silent island somewhere in the middle, 19-year-old Misael Esquivel was one of those few. For three years he had been learning English through this program. He said the only thing he regretted about the classes is that he didn't start taking them sooner.

"If you want to stay here a long time, you have to learn something," Esquivel said of his

English skills. "You cannot get a good job without English."

However, a limitation has continued to hold Esquivel back in this country. "We don't have papers."

Esquivel arrived in Chicago nearly five years ago, at the tender age of 15. He left his parents in their home outside of Michoacan, Mexico and went to meet his brothers in "El Norte."

"My parents, they didn't want me to go," Esquivel said. "But I chose for myself. I wanted to come here."

With nearly \$2,000 loaned from his brother Mario in Chicago, Esquivel hired a "Coyote" to lead him on a 24-hour walk

across the border to Phoenix. From there, he was guided on by another agent to Chicago.

"Many people die of dehydration," he said of the journey. "I was not scared of the guards, I was scared of dying."

When he finally did arrive, Esquivel found it difficult to get work. He had fake papers and a social security number, but his age and lack of English skills were another problem. He bounced around several restaurant and factory jobs before finding a job at the restaurant where he currently works.

Esquivel has been working in the small Evanston restaurant for three years now, alongside three of his brothers.

"He is the baby of a pleasant family," Craig Michael Johnston, a 20-year-old waiter at the restaurant said of Esquivel. "You can tell they are all related because they are the four most pleasant guys on the kitchen staff."

Part of the popularity of Mario, Carlos, Ruben and Misael Esquivel has come from their ability to communicate with the English-speaking waitstaff.

Misael Esquivel, the youngest, has already surpassed his brothers in English through his courses at Truman.

"Carlos doesn't have time to learn English; he is working too much," Esquivel said of his brother. "He learns some English at work, but it is bad English."

Like Carlos, many Mexicans and other immigrants do not see a real need for English skills. They live in homogenous neighborhoods where everyone speaks their native language, and they work jobs that do not require or allow the time to study it, according to Jacqueline Heckman, director of the Loyola Community Literacy Center

"Carlos doesn't have time to learn English; he is working too much."

— Misael Esquivel, about his brother

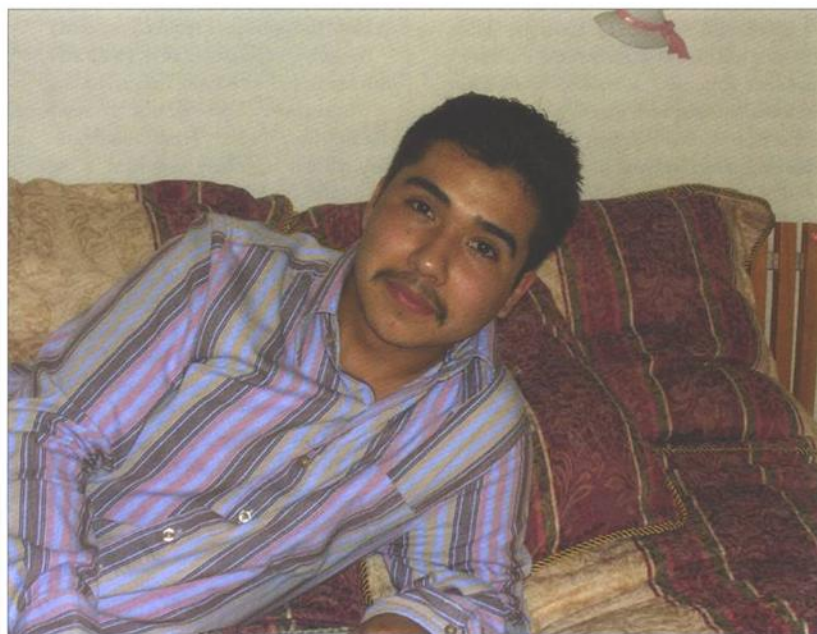


photo by Amy Lueck

Misael Esquivel, a Mexican immigrant, enjoys the luxury of his own bedroom in the Rogers Park apartment he shares with his brother's family of seven.

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that serves such communities.

"You don't need English here," Esquivel conceded. "Especially 26th Street [at Clark]. It's a little Mexico there."

But that hasn't stopped Misael Esquivel.

He has seen a real value in knowing English in his job and his everyday life.

"When I got here I didn't want to go out because people would speak English to me, and I was scared," he said.

Learning English has helped Esquivel make a place for himself outside of the limits of his Hispanic community. Most of the people in this community foster hopes of returning to Mexico someday when they have the money. Their goal is not necessarily to pursue the "American dream."

"If I would have a good job in Mexico, I would have stayed there," Esquivel said. He also has plans to return to Mexico someday but added, "We never know."

While some people would see this uncertainty as a reason not to learn the language and settle down, Esquivel has done what he can to fight against it. His status may limit his potential, but he has learned English to raise it as far as he can.

Even after all he went through to get here and all he has done while here, Esquivel knows that he will continue to face antagonism because of his status.

Nonetheless, when asked if it was worth it—if he would do it all again—Esquivel's response was telling.

"Next time I would pay the 'Coyote' more for a car instead of walking."

by Becky Parkinson

A second look at volunteering



It was the spring of my seventh grade year, and I was about to finish up and prepare to enter the infamous eighth grade. Soon I would be able to feel superior to all the younger kids, and even shadow a high school student; what I would one day become.

But before I could do that, I had to finish up the volunteer hours that needed to be completed as part of our curriculum. In the rush of the last weeks of school I decided to help set up and break down tables for school events, and even attend a few soup kitchens.

In the rush of it all, I finally completed my service hours, enjoyed my lazy summer and began the new school year.

Each year I completed community service hours, but I am not sure how much of it I really remember. I did what needed to be done, and received the signatures required for credit.

Years and experiences later, I look at service differently and with more understanding.

Throughout high school I developed relationships with other students and faculty that regularly attended a near-by soup kitchen. From their example, I began to participate and realize what a difference that help can make.

One conversation with a kitchen staff member really affected my outlook on this type of service. He told me the soup kitchen could operate without the fifteen volunteers that visit each day. That many hands were not essential for passing out soup, but volunteers' ears and mouths were needed at the soup kitchen.

Soup kitchen clients do not always need the meal; they need someone to talk to and someone to listen.

After I examined my help at the soup kitchen I discovered that little things like asking how someone's day is, or even offering a smile and hello can shape that person's day. It's the little acts of service, the outreach and welcoming someone back into society that can affect someone.

Initiative relocates public housing residents

Pat Jasper is now able to enjoy the flowers in her own garden, outside her very own home. "I think my children deserve to know how it feels to live in a home, not to live stacked on top of each other," Jasper said recently on the Chicago Housing Authority's cable show, "A Better Place."



The CHA's communication department produces a cable show, "A Better Place," to inform Chicagoans about its relocation initiative.

Jasper, a former Cabrini-Green resident, is just one of the numerous relocation success stories in Chicago's Plan for Transformation. The CHA's goal for this plan is to rehabilitate the existing CHA properties and promote self-sufficiency for public housing residents, said Sherry Henry of the CHA.

Eventually, the face of Chicago's public housing will have changed from deteriorating high-rise structures to modern town-home style and low-rise buildings in mixed-income areas. Approved in February 2000, the plan is now well under way and showing promise.

The big task for now is moving residents out of the properties into temporary or permanent housing options so the old properties can be improved. All 25,000 CHA leaseholders are asked to relocate at least once.

Though some families have been apprehensive about the relocation process at first, others have seen it as a new opportunity for a new way of life.

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by Elizabeth Newell

Supportive housing provides more than a meal and a blanket

Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach a man to fish and he will eat for a lifetime.

That is the basic philosophy behind supportive housing, one of the innovative solutions to homelessness, which is gaining popularity for its effectiveness in cities across the United States.

Unlike homeless shelters, supportive housing aims to provide permanent solutions rather than temporary fixes for people who are homeless or who are at risk of becoming homeless. Being bounced from shelter to shelter or from one social service agency to another just is not good enough for many individuals. In order to break the cycle, people need support. This is where Lakefront Supportive Housing comes in.

Aimed at helping people become self-sufficient, this Chicago organization is more than a roof. Lakefront combines permanent housing with supportive services through its unique “Blended Management” approach.

Each tenant has an assigned case manager who works closely with the property manager of the tenant’s building. Case managers link tenants to services such as job training, counseling, and health care. Property managers maintain Lakefront’s buildings both physically and financially.

“Shelters provide temporary or transitional care and lack the resources that Lakefront Supportive Housing offers,” said Maria Onesto, Lakefront’s marketing and communications coordinator.

One of the tougher issues that Lakefront’s staff faces is the lack of understanding that the general public has regarding the homeless population.

“People blame those that are homeless and wonder why they can’t just get a job,” said Onesto. “But how can you blame a 6-year-old for being homeless?”

By addressing the causes at the root of homelessness, Lakefront helps people to get their lives back together. If a resident suffers from physical or mental health problems, Lakefront helps them get the appropriate medical treatment. If a resident is illiterate, Lakefront has the resources to teach that person how to read. If someone needs computer skills for a job, Lakefront’s computer labs are there to help.

“I’ve taken advantage of some of the programs offered here. I am currently enrolled in a computer class and I also attended a Credit Report Workshop that was held recently,” said Carlissta Hall, 50, in a speech she gave at the Wentworth

“Children often are not allowed in homeless shelters for safety and liability reasons.”

— Maria Onesto, Lakefront Supportive Housing

Commons Grand Opening.

Hall was honored to talk about her experiences at the opening and it even gave her an opportunity to meet Mayor Richard Daley.

Wentworth Commons is the newest of Lakefront’s 10 apartment buildings across the city. These buildings house more than 1,100 tenants who were once homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Two more buildings are

SEE HOUSING, PAGE 24



photos by Elizabeth Newell

At present, Lakefront Supportive Housing owns and operates 10 buildings that provide affordable housing including (from top to bottom) Delmar Apartments, Harold Washington Apartments and Major Jenkins Apartments, all in Uptown.

HOUSING, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 23

currently under development. Of Lakefront's 1,024 units, 35 are family units.

The fastest-growing segment of the homeless population in the United States is families with children.

"Children often are not allowed in homeless shelters for safety and liability reasons," said Onesto. "But Lakefront reunites people with their families."

Hall's family was separated when she was forced to move into a homeless shelter because she could not find an apartment with affordable rent. She does not work because she is on disability. Her limited income simply was not enough to support her family so they had to leave their home and find temporary housing elsewhere. Hall's 21-year-old son was not allowed to stay at the family shelter because he was too old.

"Being separated from my son made the situation even more difficult," Hall said.

The turning point came when a worker at the homeless shelter told Hall about Lakefront Supportive Housing and encouraged her to apply. Lakefront welcomed Hall and her family into their community. Hall now lives in Wentworth Commons with her husband, two daughters and two sons.

"My apartment at the Wentworth was indeed a godsend...We have four bedrooms and two baths, all new appliances, and it was furnished by Lakefront," Hall said.

Lakefront furnishes apartments with beds, dressers, tables, and chairs but also depends on volunteers and donations to provide items such as linens and dishes. Clothing is accepted at Lakefront's Clothing

Closet which provides tenants with attire for important events such as job interviews.

Hall's long-term goal is to purchase a nice home for her family. Her husband is currently looking for work with the aid of Lakefront's staff and job training programs.

"The staff here is very helpful and caring. Homeless people need services like this in order to succeed,"

Hall said. "We [at Wentworth] want our home here to be a place where other members of the community can look at us and see our success...we want our building to be an asset to this community."

The growing demand for Lakefront's services is difficult to meet. Wentworth Commons has 51 units and a capacity for 182 people.

But when it was time to fill the building with tenants, more than 1,400 people wanted to live there. Lakefront almost always has a waiting list full of people hoping to take advantage of the safe, affordable housing.

High demand is due in part to the decreasing availability of affordable housing in major cities throughout the United States. When Lakefront was founded in 1986, single-room occupancy housing in Chicago was rapidly declining. Housing that was available was generally in bad shape and tenants often faced problems with crime.

Low-income housing is not very profitable for real estate developers while expensive

condos certainly are.

"Would you rather tell your friends and family that you own a building for low-income residents or that you own a building full of high end condos that is making you a whole lot of money?" Onesto said.

For some, hourly wages just are not enough to cover the rising cost of housing in the United States.

According to the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, today, in no state, does a full-time minimum wage job enable a family to pay fair market rent for a two bedroom apartment,

Lakefront's solution to this is a rent structure that requires tenants to pay a percentage of their adjusted gross income

during their year long lease. If someone has no income, then that person does not pay rent. This is made possible by government grants that subsidize many of the buildings. However, on a statewide level, there is not enough money to go around.

"Current funding falls far short of need," said Anne Bowhay, associate director of development at Chicago Coalition for the Homeless.

Chicago Coalition for the Homeless began a campaign in response to this. Lakefront is one of the 152 endorsers for the campaign, "It Takes a Home to Raise a Child."

This campaign led to the passing of the Rental Housing Support Program legislation in 2005. It will provide \$30 million in rental subsidies to 5,500 families in Illinois earning less than \$20,000 a year. While this is a strong step in the right direction, there is always more to be done.

"We are now working on an effort to get the state to double its prevention funding, which has hovered at about \$5 million for the past four years," Bowhay said.

Such funding is essential when it comes to facing the issue of homelessness. Without funding, Lakefront would not be able to help so many people get back on their feet.

There is no time limit to how long tenants can remain at Lakefront, but many leave after they are gainfully employed because they can afford better housing. For Onesto, this is one of the most rewarding aspects of her job.

"I love working with tenants and watching them improve their lives," Onesto said.

"My apartment at the Wentworth was indeed a godsend...We have four bedrooms and two baths, all new appliances, and it was furnished by Lakefront."

— Carlissta Hall



by Mary Ondrusek

A friend for all ages

Young volunteer aids elderly throughout Chicago

Brenda Weigand is a recent college graduate with 30 new grandparents. Letting these people know that she cares about them is her job.

Originally a pre-med major, Weigand, 23, graduated from Davidson University in North Carolina with a degree in psychology and is now employed by Dominican Volunteers USA as a program assistant for Little Brothers – Friends of the Elderly.

As a program assistant, Weigand has become a friend to more than 30 senior citizens in the Chicago area, each of whom she visits twice a month.

"I do anything a friend would do for them - whether it's going for a walk, taking them grocery shopping, helping them with their laundry, or just stopping by to talk," Weigand said.

Weigand knew she wanted to embark on the service path when she decided to put graduate school on hold. Feeling a pull towards helping the elderly, she cites them as a group that sometimes does not get enough attention.

College courses in adult development and aging also sparked an interest in her, as well as an occupational therapy internship working with the elderly population.

Little Brothers does its best to offer its services to anyone who needs it, but unfortunately sometimes the need is greater than the supply. Weigand said that Little Brothers calculates a "loneliness number" for each referral to help with the selection process, but never in that process is financial status a factor.

While it pains Weigand that Little Brothers has to turn people away, she believes that it is better to be able to help out a smaller number of people in a bigger way than just to help everyone a little bit.

Weigand feels that Little Brothers is different from many other volunteer organizations because it caters to an emotional need rather than a material one. She constantly feels the importance of her job and the appreciation of her clients, who may have little other human contact besides her visits.

"I may be the only person they've spoken to in days... but I'm a physical human being showing interest in their life," she said.

Fellow Dominican volunteer and housemate,

Jessica Johns, who is employed at the Lawndale Christianity Fitness Center in Chicago, believes that Weigand is a perfect fit for Little Brothers.

"Brenda is a great listener - she's always wants to know what's going on with you and your day," Johns said. "She also has such a positive attitude about everything - she's always able to see the brighter side of things."

Mary Bachman, who has worked with Little Brothers for 20 years and now serves as Director of Volunteer Services, believes that Weigand's high level of maturity helps her to be successful.

"Brenda has a good sense of herself... she's very responsible and takes her job very seriously," Bachman said.

Bachman has also seen Weigand in action.

"She is very warm and very welcoming... she makes these elders who are lonely and isolated feel good in a very kind way, but never by patronizing," Bachman said.

Christine Bartiromo has been one of Weigand's

senior clients for about three months, and said she greatly looks forward to her visits. Bartiromo says that Weigand's assists her with her reading and bill paying, and always greets her with a warm hug.

"We just talk, it's good to have company," Bartiromo said. "Brenda is very easy to get along with. It seems like I've known her so long, and it's only been a few months."

Weigand says her job isn't always easy. Recently, one of her clients with Alzheimer's needed to be moved to a nursing home.

She described it as an "uphill battle," trying to find a place for the woman to live and get the treatment she needs. The situation eventually worked out, slowly but surely.

"My job is challenging me in different ways I've never been challenged before," Weigand said. "Sometimes people try to write off my career decision as a break or a sacrifice. I wouldn't call it either of these things... I love my job. I get paid to make someone's day."



photo courtesy of Brenda Weigand

Brenda Weigand visits with one of her 30 elderly friends. When she visits them, at least twice a month, Weigand helps the senior citizens with activities such as grocery shopping, laundry and bill paying. Weigand graduated from Davidson University in North Carolina before moving to Chicago to assist Little Brothers-Friends of the Elderly in assisting Chicagoland residents.

by Mary Ondrusek

Chicago: Fabulously unfair



Chicago has always been thought of as a “gay friendly” city of America. It even has its own neighborhood, Boystown, with gay pride flags blowing in the lake breeze, and dozens of bars, clubs, eateries, parades and festivals catering to and celebrating the gay population.

A recent publication, “50 Fabulous Gay-Friendly Places to Live,” named Chicago to its list. Its selections were generally made based on nightlife, employment opportunities, local politics and gay-owned businesses.

While the outer façade and the general accord of the Windy City may be one of acceptance and diversity, there are exceptions to this semi-disguise.

I have personally witnessed these exceptions in the actions of small-minded people, like an older man who refused to sit in a particular section of a respected restaurant because the server working that section preferred dating men of his own sex.

Why do people like this customer feel they have the right to make such demands? Society allows them to do so. One of the managers of the restaurant claimed that while they did not personally agree with the gentleman’s politics, he was their customer and it was their job to please him.

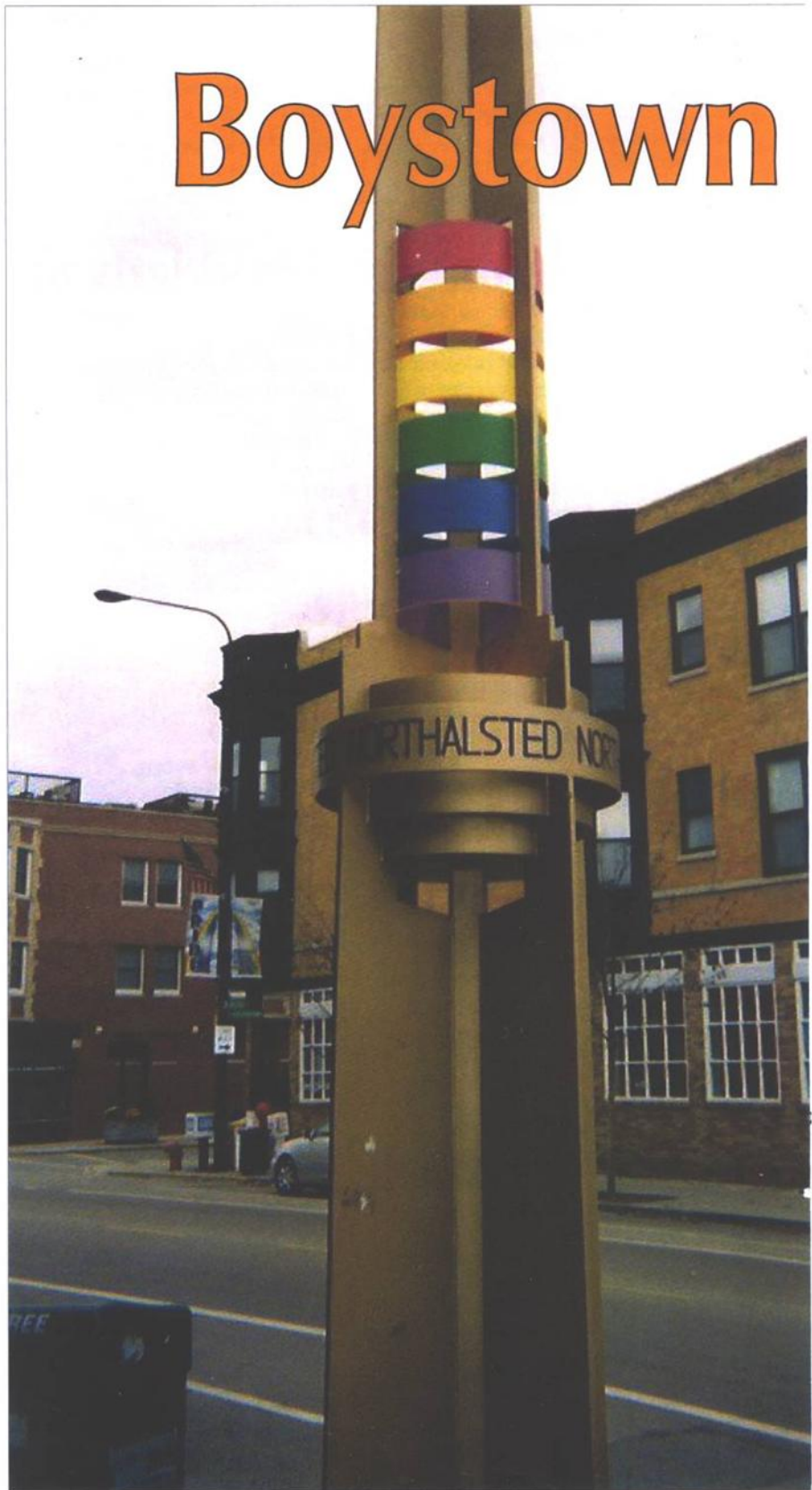
The same restaurant also admitted that sexual orientation can affect the hiring of a new employee. While it already employs a handful of gay employees, one manager said that if choosing between a gay and a straight candidate he would sometimes select the straight one to bring diversity to the wait staff, and to accommodate discriminatory customers.

While I believe that everyone is entitled to his or her own opinion, the man is passing personal judgment on people that he doesn’t know anything about – he simply refuses to interact with them because of their sexual orientation. That certainly doesn’t seem “Fabulous” and “Gay Friendly.”

While incidents like the aforementioned can certainly offend, unless stopped, the discrimination can continue to spread. I’m sure that this is not an isolated incident in Chicago.

So while there may be all sorts of outlets and gay friendly establishments for Chicago’s gay population to live, work, and play, there are still the unfriendly people and places that prevent the city from taking a step in the right direction – in the direction of true tolerance and acceptance.

Boystown



by Teila Allen

breeds acceptance

Looking north from the corner of Halstead Street and Roscoe Avenue, it is hard for residents to imagine what the street would look like without the rainbow banners and phallic statues scattered throughout the area. Though these symbols of the community have only been there since 1998, they are just a few of the things that let any tourist or resident know that they have entered one of Chicago's most famous areas, Boystown.

Technically part of the Chicago community named Lakeview, Boystown now covers the area from Lake Shore Drive west to Clark Street, and Irving Park Road south to Diversey Avenue.

When first deemed "Boystown" in the mid-1970s, the area was riddled with crime and gang activity. That soon changed when the gay bar, Little Jims, opened in 1975. Along with this new development came a virtual migration of gays and lesbians to the area for a variety of reasons, including financial.

The dangerous, "ghetto-ed" Boystown of the past is a far cry from the streets of today.

"They took back the streets," said Mark Liberson, owner of Hydrate, a club in Boystown, and XO Chicago, a restaurant across the street.

Located in the heart of Boystown, at

3458 and 3441 N. Halstead St., Liberson's establishments are only two of the many restaurants, bars, and night clubs, that make Boystown the "it" place that it is today.

"The area was very segregated for a long time," said Jim Ludwig, owner of another popular Boystown bar, Roscoe's. When Ludwig and his partner Ed Norris opened Roscoe's in 1987, it was still one of the first bars on Halstead to have open windows to the street and not hide that it was a gay bar.

"We wanted to serve a mixed crowd, men and women, and have clean restrooms," Ludwig said. "We wanted to be proud."

SEE ACCEPTANCE, PAGE 28

by Kevin Doheny

Center to bring new opportunities to community

Boystown has long been known as a Chicago neighborhood with a vibrant atmosphere that caters to those with alternative lifestyles, and as a home to members of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender (GLBT) community.

What the GLBT community hasn't had is a resource center providing cultural, emotional, social, recreational, and educational needs...until now.

Center on Halsted, the first of its kind in the Midwest, is a multi-million dollar center being completed to provide a safe and nurturing environment for the GLBT community. The center is projected to have meeting space for various community organizations, space to "drop in" for youth and adults, cultural programming, and recreational space providing both a basketball and volleyball court. Lower level retail, along with parking, will make up much of the ground level.



photo courtesy of www.centeronhalsted.org

The Center on Halsted will feature a recreation center, complete with basketball and volleyball courts.

SEE CENTER, PAGE 29

ACCEPTANCE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 27

Boystown is no longer just for gays and lesbians. The population of Lakeview has grown drastically over the last 30 years, which can almost surely be attributed to the rejuvenation of the area, including Boystown.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the population of Lakeview was 94,817, making it the second largest community in Chicago. This was over a four percent increase from 1990. And, there are now more than 30 gay

bars, clubs, and restaurants covering the streets, along with locally owned shops, and neighborhood organizations.

The area is a community of "friendly neighbors, both gay and straight," Liberson said. "The stigma has been broken down over the years."

The social acceptance in the area, as well as around Chicago, has evolved according to Roscoe's owner, Ludwig.

"Being gay is everywhere, in politics, on television, in our everyday lives...people

have accepted that," Ludwig said.

"It [Boystown] is more than just the bars, it's the community, it's the culture involved in it," said Evie Gonzalez, 31, of Edgewater. Gonzalez grew up on the Northwest Side of Chicago, but was never exposed to Boystown as a child. She discovered the area when returning from studying at the University of Illinois in 1997.

"There was a whole range of places to go...I had never seen anything like it," Gonzalez said.

When the phallic symbols were put up around the area in 1998, Gonzalez noticed the effect they had on the city.

"We were being recognized and accepted by the city of Chicago and the government," Gonzalez said.

Though the concept of Boystown is not too far-fetched for Chicagoans, it is an unknown fear for those not living in the large city.

"It's scary to think about my family seeing it," said Scott Lane, 22, a student at Loyola University Chicago. Lane comes from a small town in Central Illinois, where the nearest gay bar is 30 minutes away.

One of the issues people have with Boystown, both gay and straight, is that it segregates the gay and lesbian community from the rest of Chicago. According to Lane, it is good to be proud, but if the goal is for all people to be equal, the distinction might not be the best thing.

"I wouldn't mind it if they take away the rainbow signs and the phallic symbols," Lane said. "It would still be the same Boystown."

Others see the symbols as a unifying trend in the area.

"Of course there was some controversy over them in the neighborhood, but the situation was carefully massaged, until it blew over," Ludwig said.

Seeing as how most of the bars, restaurants, and stores in Boystown are historical, dating back to the 1930s and 40s, it is unlikely that Boystown, its boys, girls, and bars, are going anywhere.

"There is a stake in the community, a lot of the property is owned by the gay community. We don't step on our neighbors toes, they don't step on ours," Ludwig said.

The healthy mix of people that have recently moved into Boystown is a testament to the high level of acceptance that did not exist 30 years ago. Everyone, gays, lesbians, straight people, and families, live in the area now, and they are there to stay.

"I don't see Boystown going anywhere for a long time," Liberson said.



CENTER, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 27

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"No other center puts all these elements under one roof," said Robbin Burr, executive director of Center on Halsted. "We'll be able to intersect with other programs and be the glue to hold everybody together."

Burr's excitement is understandable, since the center took several attempts to get off the ground. It wasn't until the third attempt with the city that Center on Halsted finally got the go ahead to begin work on building. Property became available in June of 2001 on the corner of Halsted and Waveland Avenues, where work is well underway for the facility. The property, however, wasn't the

only reason the center got a jump start.

"Mayor Richard Daley was very instrumental and supportive," Burr said. Even the community at large and the support from the non-gay community helped get the vision of Center on Halsted off and running.

Money is always an issue in getting something of this magnitude established. The center is now in the midst of the last phase of their capital campaign, so far having raised \$16.5 million in a \$20 million campaign.

The City of Chicago, including Ald. Tom Tunney of the 44th Ward, has also been very supportive in working to fund the facility. "There's been a good amount of state and federal money for the center, as well as a personal check that Mr. Tunney wrote himself," said Bennett R. Lawson, director of community outreach for Tunney.

The center has been getting about half of its funding from the government and the other half from private donations. The center received a \$1 million donation from Miriam U. Hoover, whose nephew Michael Leppen has supported the GLBT community for years. "It gives me great joy to honor my nephew and his commitment to Center on Halsted," Hoover said.

The big question is whether or not people will really respond to the new facility once it's finally open. Right now, the office sees about 15,000 people a year which Burr says will hopefully double in the new facility. Eventually the center hopes to see about 300,000 people pass through the doors annually.

If other centers are any indication of the

results Center on Halsted can expect, then it will have a prosperous future. The GLBT Community Center in New York City, which was established in 1983, sees about 6,000 people visit every week.

The community surrounding the area where the center is being built has responded positively.

"Merchants in the area understand that having the center there will create somewhat of a boom to the area's economy," Burr said.

Other organizations, such as the Human Rights Campaign and Equality Illinois have the opportunity to host events at the center in order to bring more awareness to GLBT issues that the non-gay community might not know about. With events such as these, Center on Halsted can not only bring awareness to the GLBT community but to others as well.

"Space is desperately needed and [Center on Halsted] will be one stop shopping," said Rick Garcia, political director of Equality Illinois. "Even though we're not moving our offices there since we're involved in politics and want to be independent and distinct, a lot of services for others will be available under one roof. It's a great neighborhood and will be great for gay businesses."

Burr continues to show her excitement towards those interested in finding out more about volunteering or coming into the center once it's complete, which could be as early as the end of 2006.

"We're hoping the community will help, especially with the last phase of our capital campaign," Burr stated. "Stay tuned. There's a lot of support and excitement for what's to come."

The Center on Halsted facility, depicted here in an artist's rendering, is slated for completion by the winter of 2006-'07.



Consumers face inconvenience in methamphetamine battle

With a stuffy nose and 101 degree fever, Molly Clesen, 21, of Elgin walks into her local Jewel-Osco late one night on a mission to purchase Sudafed Maximum Strength Nasal Decongestant.

After dragging herself up and down the same three aisles in the pharmacy area, she finally notices the small, three by four cards on display sitting on the shelves in place of the medicine.

Each of the 12 individual cards is labeled to resemble the medicine it represents, except for the large bold text clearly present on top. It reads, "Take this tag to the pharmacy for purchase," and she does, only to find that the pharmacy is closed for the night.

"It's irritating when you expect

something to be there, and it's not," Clesen said. She unsuspectingly became a victim of a mounting methamphetamine epidemic in Illinois.

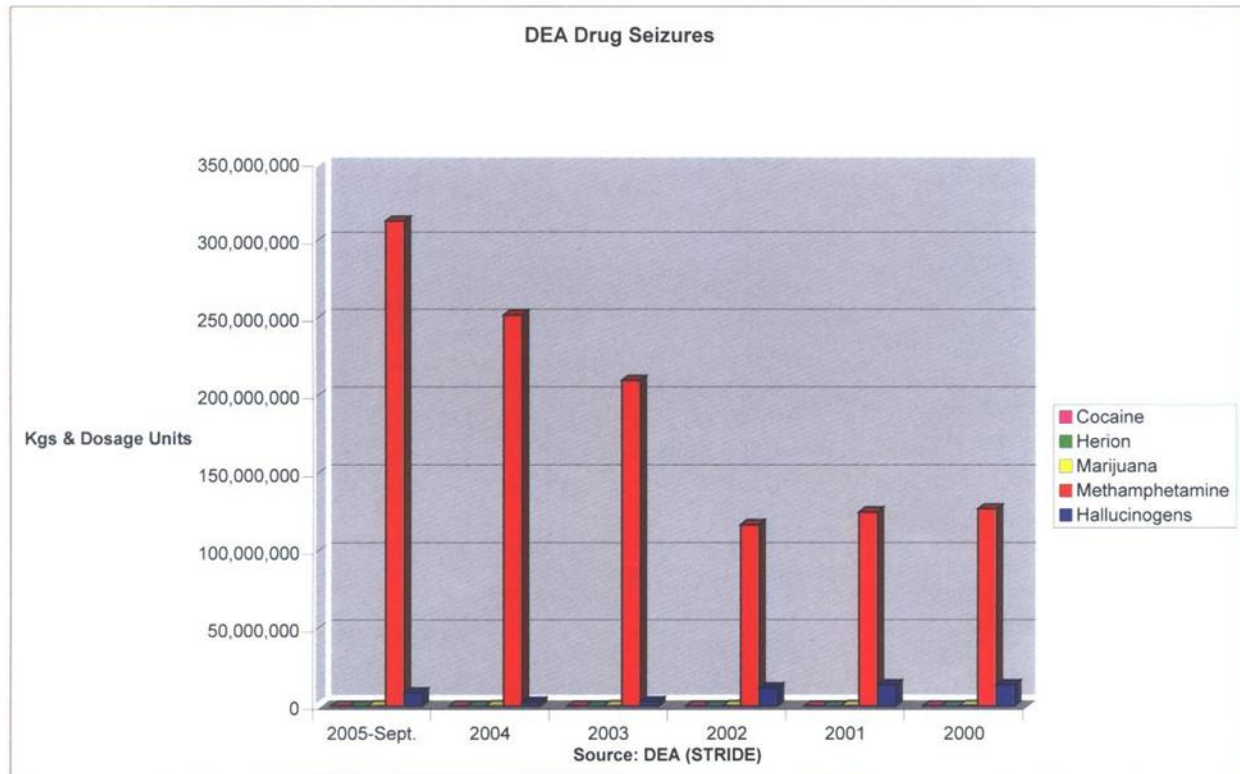
Methamphetamine is made from commonly found, over-the-counter medications such as Sudafed or Tylenol for Colds. Within the past few years, "meth" has become a household word, and the production, sale, and abuse of this illegal homegrown drug has become a top priority for anti-drug enforcement. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse in 2004, the number of methamphetamine labs found in the Midwest is increasing, with Illinois high on the list.

Methamphetamine is becoming more widely available to young people in Illinois.

It "now poses the primary drug threat in the rural areas of the state and is the second most serious threat after crack in urban areas of central Illinois," according to the Illinois Drug Threat Assessment. In 2003, 12.3 million Americans age 12 and older had used methamphetamine at least once in their lifetime (5.2 percent of the population), and 18 to 34 year olds make up the majority of users.

Also, in 2003, law enforcement seized more than 2,000 methamphetamine labs in this state signaling the dramatic increase in the drugs availability. Increasing meth sales are also adding fuel to the fire as the rising price for the drug makes the business

SEE BATTLE, PAGE 31



more lucrative. In urban areas throughout Illinois, methamphetamine is sold for \$7,300 to \$10,000 per pound, \$1,000 to \$1,300 an ounce, and \$80 to \$100 a gram.

It is made in clandestine labs often found in people's basements, motel rooms, or even inside car trunks with equipment bought at the hardware store or auto parts shop.

"All of these are flagged materials, so we have some knowledge of who's buying large amounts of these materials, and we know to look out for them," said Officer Mike Dale, 26, of the Westmont Police Department.

"It's hard to catch methamphetamine labs. They are very mobile," said Bhavish Bodalia, 31, a pharmacist at the Jewel-Osco in Buena Park.

However, law officials in Illinois want to take the war against methamphetamine a step further and restrict the sale of one the drug's key ingredients—pseudophedrine, which is found in many over-the-counter medications such as Tylenol for Flu, Tylenol for Cold, Claritin-D, and mot of Sudafed's products.

A new Illinois law requires that adult-strength tablets containing ephedrine or PSE as their only active ingredient be placed behind store counters. The law also limits the purchase of adult-strength cold tablets containing ephedrine or PSE as the sole active ingredient or in combination with other active ingredients.

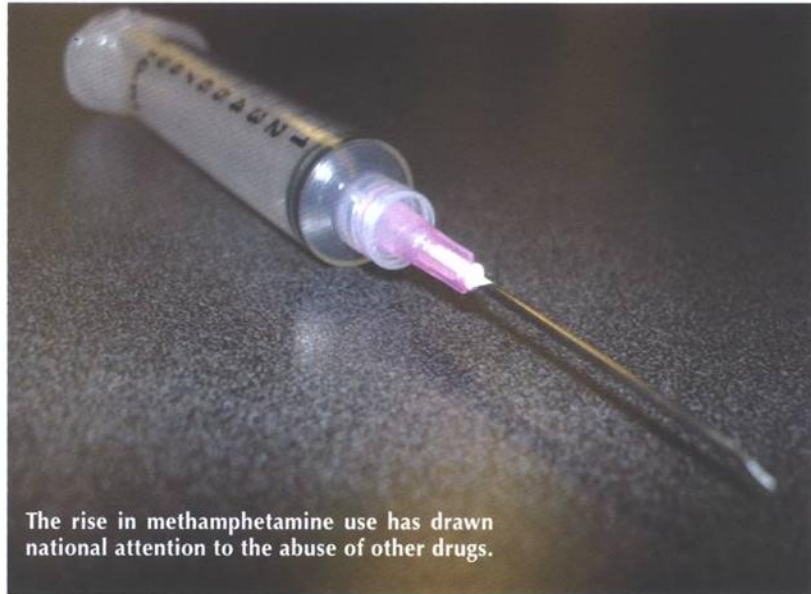
"There's not much of a problem here, but it's a pretty good idea. Methamphetamines have a bad effect on the nearby [neighborhood] especially on children," Bodalia, the Jewel-Osco pharmacist, said.

Officer Dale believes that methamphetamine use is a continuous problem that shows no signs of stopping anytime soon.

"I don't see why we wouldn't [keep medicine containing pseudophedrine] behind the counter," he said. "It's just another step in combination with what's already supposed to happen."

Pharmacists are eager to comply, but say it makes their demanding job more difficult.

"I mean, we have enough responsibility as it is with the prescriptions and all," said Donnita E. Hobson, 30, another pharmacist at the Jewel-Osco in the Buena Park neighborhood. "It could happen that all of aisle 14 could get locked up."



The rise in methamphetamine use has drawn national attention to the abuse of other drugs.

by Nicole J. Torres

Staying sober

Drug abusers are no longer just the stereotypical vagrants shooting up in the alley behind the public housing complex. Instead, the increasing use of methamphetamines has changed the face of drug addicts. They can look like your next-door neighbor.

Consider Tim, 43 of Chicago's Lakeview neighborhood. As a nurse at the New Hope Recovery Center at the Lincoln Park Hospital, Tim provides treatment for people suffering from drug and alcohol addiction.

Ironically, however, just one year ago, Tim was an alcoholic and addicted to drugs.

Tim, who has asked that his last name not be used, revealed that he had been addicted to numerous prescription drugs, including Vicodin and MS Contin.

"I couldn't go two hours without popping a pill," he said.

He calculated that he consumed 38 pills daily and that his addiction cost him around \$40 each day. Working as a nurse, Tim was able to fuel his drug use by illegally writing prescriptions for himself, then filling them at various different pharmacies.

"I didn't think so then, but now it's scary to think that I was breaking the law," Tim said.

Tim had been struggling with the battle to remain sober for several years.

"I need to be stopped physically," Tim said.

In other words, his employers interfered with his drug use after he failed company drug tests and mandated that he enter rehab.

"I've been stopped or caught five or six times," Tim said. "But you can't stop—it [drug use] gets worse every time you pick it up again."

Tim reached a low point in his life when he was arrested while trying to fill a fraudulent prescription at a pharmacy.

"It was pretty bad," Tim said. "I was looking at seven to 12 in prison for forgery and possession."

"My parents bailed me out—they are very supportive," he added. "I realized how serious it was. It was a matter of life and death. I'm lucky to be alive. I could've overdosed several times."

Tim recalled his experiences while in rehab. "Withdrawal was the most difficult part—getting over the sickness and clearing up the wreckage."

His fear of death and his motivation to help others are his inspiration to maintain his sobriety.

"That wasn't a good place to be...it [drug addiction] was like a monkey on your back," Tim said. "I want to be sober, self-sufficient, and know that I really helped some people, and hopefully have a meaningful relationship with someone."

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Preparing people to lead extraordinary lives

CeaseFire to stop gang violence

The night has just fallen over Chicago's West Garfield Park. Suddenly, gunshots pierce the air, and a gang member's body lies lifeless on the cold pavement. Soon, a procession of community organizers, residents and clergy fill the ground where the gang member died, praying while holding up anti-violence signs.

A decade ago, the police would have simply cleaned up the crime scene, as surrounding residents quietly sought refuge at home from further gang violence. But with the advent of the Chicago Project for Violence Prevention and its CeaseFire initiative, more communities are gathering after violent conflicts, making a big deal about each murder in order to spread awareness of lethal violence.

From its inception in 1999, CeaseFire's mission has been to partner with communities and government to reduce all forms of violence, especially shootings, by developing interventions and plans for anti-violence in gang-ridden neighborhoods.

Norman Livingston Kerr, director of CeaseFire, said that Chicago has been the murder capital for years. Moreover, homicide had been the top cause of death in Chicago

for individuals ages 1 to 34. Eighty percent of killings in the city are a result of shootings.

Since CeaseFire began partnering with communities early this decade, the initiative has been a significant factor in the decrease of violent crime around Chicago. Shootings in CeaseFire communities have decreased by an average of 69 percent. Also, killings have been reduced by about 45 percent in the first six months of CeaseFire implementation in communities.

"To impact the numbers, you have to go to the people who are shooting now," Kerr said.

CeaseFire begins to identify high-risk gang members by creating relationships with churches, schools, and community development organizations. Within these organizations faith leaders, outreach workers, and community leaders develop relationships with gang members, offering alternatives such as support services, community activities, and education programs.

CeaseFire is more concerned with enhancing community solidarity than punishing gang members through law enforcement.

"Our target is to identify who is at the

highest risk and get them to do something different," Kerr said.

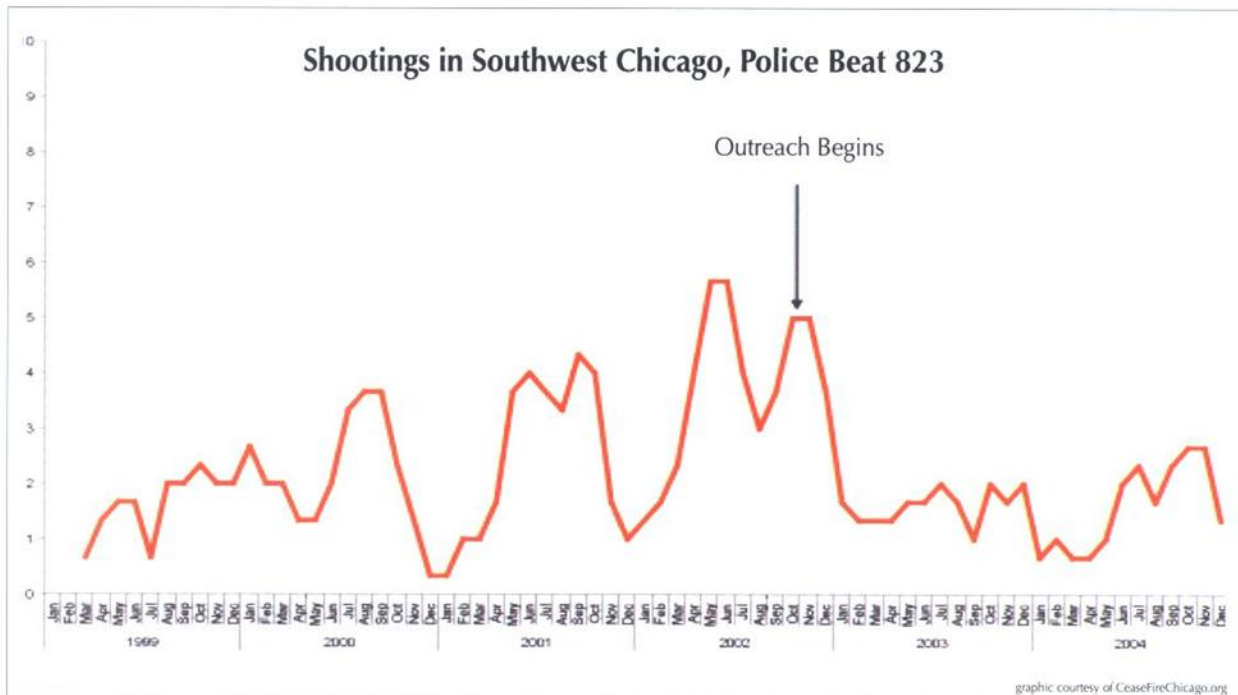
Each June, CeaseFire hosts an open barbeque at midnight in neighborhoods that are violently active. Although the barbeques are held late at night when potential danger is lurking, Kerr said that several residents and gang members from the neighborhood show up to eat and socialize. It is one such intervention activity that attempts to gather a community while conveying awareness of gang violence.

In many communities, CeaseFire motivates church leaders into getting involved and to open up unused church facilities, such as gyms, for community activities.

"We're trying to get churches involved with communities on other days besides just Sunday," Kerr said.

Another approach is to distribute brochures and fliers and to canvass neighborhoods with posters, decals, and billboards that promote anti-violence. One of the posters reads, "Don't Shoot! 4 to 15 years just for shooting a gun. Is it really worth it?"

SEE CEASEFIRE, PAGE 34



CEASEFIRE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 33

But perhaps the most effective form of intervention is the relationships created among the gang members and CeaseFire-hired community outreach workers, who can relate to youth culture, and have lived in the neighborhoods that they are helping. Often, outreach workers are former members of neighborhood gangs or ex-cons. They must be able to build trust and rapport with the highest-risk individuals, so that they can successfully offer positive alternatives to prevent those gang members from engaging in further violence, Kerr said.

"Outreach workers are really passionate about their jobs," Kerr said. "They had been part of tearing down a community. Now they want to rebuild it."

Chip Robinson, 39, of Chicago's West Side, used to be an original gangster, or "OG," in one of the West Side's gangs. "I had to be aggressive because I was small," Robinson said, referring to his physical stature. "And I took this aggression out to the streets."

Robinson said that as a member of a gang, he always felt invincible. After being involved in shootouts, he would come home and realize that bullets punctured his clothes, but fortunately he was unharmed. However, after a family member was shot and killed, Robinson eventually decided to leave the gang.

He joined CeaseFire in 2002 as an outreach worker for the West Side, where he now seeks out familiar high-risk gang members and

provides them with alternatives and support.

"I can go places that law enforcement can't go," Robinson said. "The gang knows that I'm trying to help them."

Robinson further indicated how appearance and patience are very important in getting gang members to relate to him and to open up.

"They're attracted to us [outreach workers] because we dress casual; I dress just like them," he said.

Organization of the Northeast (ONE), a community development agency in Rogers Park, also works with CeaseFire. Sarah Jane Knoy, executive director of ONE, said that she has noticed a positive change in Rogers Park, even though CeaseFire workers just began reaching out to troubled youths a year and a half ago.

"I've noticed that when I'm walking with an outreach worker, young people know who they are," Knoy said. "The outreach workers act as role models and give them hope."

The youths used to hang out on street corners before CeaseFire came to Rogers Park. According to Knoy, many of them are now engaging in community activities, and going to school or work, thanks to the outreach workers.

Robinson said that he sometimes feels he might fail in getting through to some high-risk gang members, but he always ends up sticking with them.

"Once you find out what touches them, that's their weak point," Robinson said. "That's what'll get them to come home."

by Kevin Doheny

Catholic schools in jeopardy; public schools flourish

Competition between public and Catholic schools continues through the start of a new school year, even though there may seem to be none. Public school enrollment is up to nearly three times that of Catholic schools in the Chicago area.

According to the Archdiocese of Chicago website, there is a 16-1 ratio between teachers and students, compared to a 19.6-1 ratio at public schools. So why are parents not opting for the more personal, one-on-one teaching that Catholic schools offer?

"Tuition is the number one thing," said Debbie Wrzesinski, 50, a kindergarten teacher's aide at St. Juliana's School on the

Northwest Side of Chicago.

With Catholic high school tuition averaging \$7,800 annually, many parents do not want to part with that kind of money.

"Many parents are turned off by the fact that they have to pay so much for what they could get at a public school," Wrzesinski said.

However, statistics show that Catholic schools in Chicago have a 96 percent attendance rate as opposed to the 86 percent figure at public schools. But even with numbers such as these, is there a way for Catholic schools to lure people into their system?

"So many parents have had issues with Catholic schools over time and have pulled

by Angie Trudeau

Injustice, aisle four



My stomach gurgles; my alarm did not go off and I was not able to eat breakfast. My professor is lecturing, but all I can think about is that deli-sliced turkey and tomato sandwich sitting in my refrigerator. My body is used to three nutritious meals a day. If my cupboards are bare, I simply jump in my car and head to our local Dominick's.

Same day, south side of Chicago. Frank's stomach gurgles; empty cupboards are his excuse, and he only has a government-subsidized lunch to satisfy his hunger for the rest of the day. The gurgling resonates over his teacher's voice. He finds a quarter in his pocket which means that he can stop at the store on his way home to buy a Nutter Butter bar.

This juxtaposition startles me. My temporary hunger is due to a faulty alarm whereas Frank suffers from consequences of his socio-economic position. Opportunities for good nutrition are not realistically available for all people.

Fresh food options in Chicago range from local mom-and-pop stores to chain stores like Dominick's or Jewel-Osco. The former mainly sells foods that will keep on a shelf or could be stored in a freezer which severely restricts access to nutritious food options. The larger stores, on the other hand, have the luxury of providing greater variety of options for those interested in a balanced diet.

A balance of these stores across the city would allow the everyone to access resources; however, this is not the case. South of 35th Street and east of Damen Avenue, where neighborhoods routinely report median incomes of less than \$20,000, the scarcity of reliable chain stores is staggering.

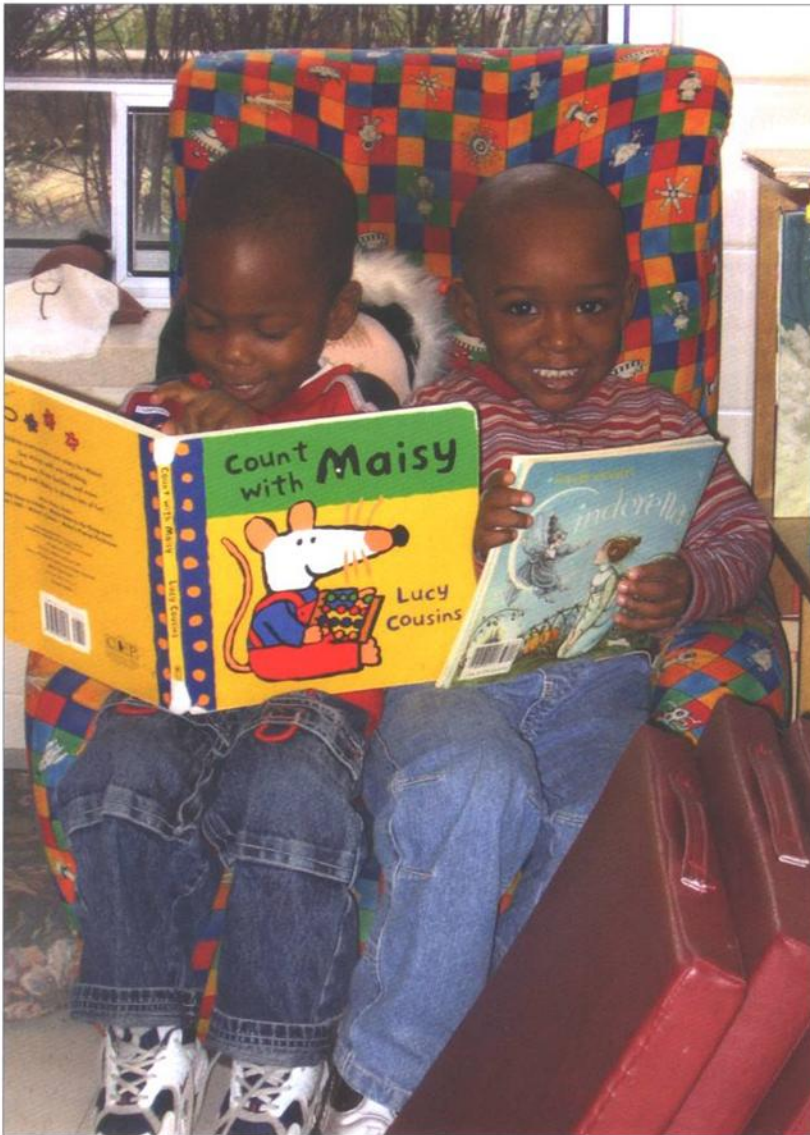
Fresh fruits and vegetables aren't a short bus ride or walk away, and so after a hard day of work, macaroni and cheese from the corner store seems more convenient. This perpetual routine in an area concentrated with low-income households drastically affects nutrition and subsequently education.

An overworked single mother clutches her toddler's hand while carrying a bag of carrots, cereal and a pack of diapers. She may have saved money and upgraded quality and nutrition by going to the Dominick's in the next neighborhood, but as her child screams and she drops seven quarters into the bus fares slot, the macaroni and cheese and the pack of overpriced diapers seems more appealing.

by Becky Parkinson

The House that helps

Chicago's Marillac House has been helping the misfortunate for more than 90 years



Two of the nearly 350 children served by Marillac's Day Care Center take some time to read.

It is lunchtime at Marillac House, an organization on Chicago's West Side, and staff members crowd around a small counter in the building's lobby. As the crowd dies down, the young children standing behind the counter are revealed, so are the smiles on their faces. Each has sold a candy bar or two to the older staff.

The children are a part of the Hope Jr. Program at Marillac House, which tries to help kids learn important lessons in life; this one is the lesson of business sales. Every day, the kids set up their snack counter and try their best to remember what change to give from a twenty.

Marillac House strives to offer opportunities that can change lives, from the unborn child all the way to the senior citizen. The Daughters of Charity, a Catholic order of nuns, started the organization that has been serving Chicago's West Side for more than 90 years.

Marillac has five main programs that address different issues and ages.

"Our programs have empowered many individuals through education, mentoring, compassion and encouragement," said Catherine Mary Norris, D.C., CEO of Marillac House.

Project Hope is a program available to those pregnant and parenting women who do not have family support, starting as young as 12 years old. This includes prenatal and parenting classes, home visits before and after birth and doula birthing services.

Doula is Greek for birthing attendant. At Marillac House, a doula provides mentoring and education for teen mothers in the program. A doula is there to instruct the prenatal and parenting classes provided under Project Hope, as well as visiting the women at home and accompanying them on doctor visits. During the actual birth the doula is present in the delivery room.

"Mother the mother so she can mother the child," said Loretha Weisinger who has been a

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HOUSE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 35

doula at Marillac House for nine years.

The doula program is receiving increased attention thanks to the recent PBS documentary "A Doula Story." The documentary offers a glimpse of Weisinger supplying the women with advice and comfort.

Since the program began in 1995, more than 400 pregnant teens have been cared for. The program believes that help should be provided not only before birth, but also after.

Marillac House also offers a daycare facility that enables teen mothers to return to school after they give birth. The daycare welcomes children as young as 15 months up to the eighth grade, and remains open as late as 6 p.m. The daycare serves up to 422 children and focuses on education and development.

"We've seen a change and see their kids coming through daycare and be successful," said Brian Shields, assistant director of development. "It has

to start with the family."

Social Services, the third program, addresses needs of both children and parents by providing the community members with individual and group therapy, educational opportunities to enhance parenting skills, as well as help with financial management.

The fourth program, Hope Jr. is an after-school and out-of-school program that consists of sports and recreational activities as well as mentoring.

"Hope Jr. provides kids with a positive influence at a young age, so they have the support to make good choices," Shields said.

Marillac's final program is Family Services, which includes the organization's food pantry that was recently named "Pantry of the Year" by Greater

Chicago Food Depository. Family Services also provides clothing, furniture, counseling, adult education and visits to the elderly.

Between 800-1,100 people come to Marillac's doors looking for help with paying their energy bills, finding an apartment and furniture, and some

are looking for counseling. Family Services is there to supply the community with these needs.

"We do what we can, and we may refer them to others that can be of more help," Shields said.

Marillac brings food to homebound senior citizens and organizes field trips or speakers that are aimed at senior citizens.

"Marillac really takes the time out to make them feel important, and let them know that they have someone to call on," Shields said. Family Services also provides adult education classes to help train adults for their GED, or to help individuals to advance in their workplace.

Marillac House serves more than 110,000 Chicagoans and continues to strive to break the cycle of poverty.

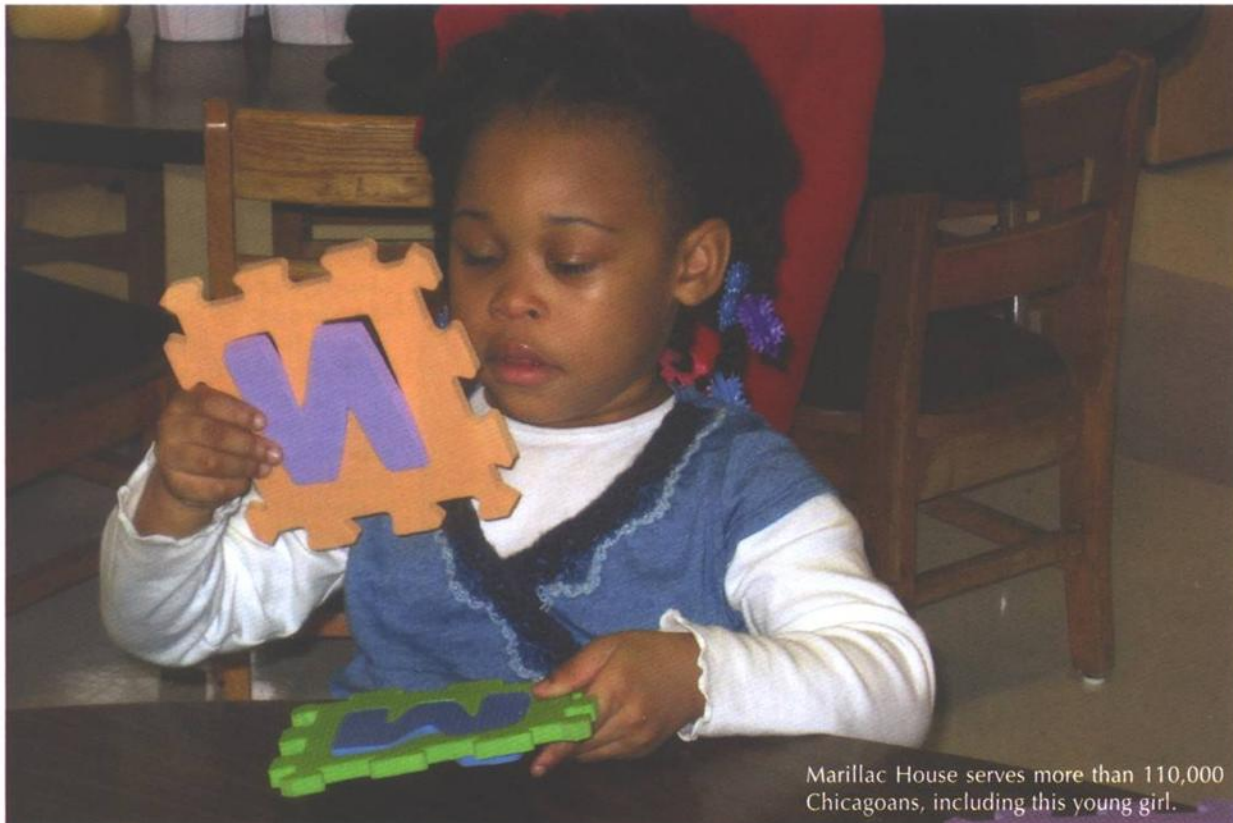
"It has been remarkable to see if we don't have the funds we will find a way to push forward and support these needs; see these people preserve. It really is remarkable," said Shields.

Maureen Hallagan, Director of Programs has worked with Marillac House for 19 years. Hallagan said she believes the strongest effort made by Marillac House is "the contact we are making with the people and community."

"We are trying to give resources to develop strength and help others to feel empowered," Hallagan said. "I see us continuing to be strong for families."

**"We've seen a change
and see their kids
coming through daycare
and be successful,"**

**— Brian Shields, assistant
director of development**



Marillac House serves more than 110,000 Chicagoans, including this young girl.

by Amy Lueck

Proposed budget cuts threaten literacy programming

Misael Esquivel, a 20-year-old undocumented Mexican immigrant, lives with his brother's family of seven in their two-bedroom apartment on the North side of Clark Street in Rogers Park. He gets up every Tuesday and Thursday and travels down Clark Street to his 8:30 a.m. English-language classes at Truman College before going to work at a restaurant in the afternoons.

"If you want to stay here, you have to learn something," Esquivel said.

Back up on the North Side, Pawel Kawula, a 26-year-old Polish immigrant, lives with his brother in their father's house. He works construction all day, but when he gets off work every Tuesday and Thursday, he hurries his dinner in order to get to his English-language classes in the evenings.

"I need to learn English so I can live," Kawula said. "I don't want someone talking for me, coming with me to the bank or to the court. That's not life."

Whether they live on the North Side or the South Side, work labor or hospitality, are documented or otherwise, many of Chicago's motivated immigrants are taking advantage of the opportunity to learn English at the city's

various language centers.

"Learning English helps people to feel like a true part of their community, their workplace, even the U.S.," said Ann Darnton, assistant dean of the Adult Education Program at Truman College. "They are learning about the culture, developing support systems, and finding that, even as adults, they can learn and improve their lives."

Chicago has developed programs across the city and suburbs to help immigrants adapt to life in this country through a shared language. About 20 percent of the population of Chicago

is foreign-born, compared to 12 percent on the state and national level, so the need in the city is higher.

Truman College, one of Chicago's seven city colleges, boasts the largest adult education

program in the state. The school's program controls 14 different sites across the city serving nearly 20,000 students each year, 85 percent of which are ESL students.

"What really impresses me is that these free government-sponsored programs are offered with no questions asked [about students' legal status]."

— Jackie Heckman,
director of Loyola
University's Literacy Center

"There are well over 100 countries and 50-some languages represented here," Darnton said of Truman's adult education program. "We are very diverse."

"What really impresses me is that these free government-sponsored programs are offered with no questions asked [about students' legal status]," said Jackie

Heckman, director of the Loyola University Literacy Center, of Truman's program.

But proposed state budget cuts nationwide could have a damaging effect on these valuable programs. Since many of the ESL programs at city and state colleges are free to learners, they depend almost solely on state funding to keep them running.

Truman College is facing a 15 percent budget cut from state grants this coming year. While administrators are not yet sure what programs would be affected, "adult education is already not getting enough funding as it is," Darnton said.

Between fiscal year 2002 and fiscal year 2004, total state funding for higher education operations and grants declined \$239.2 million, or almost 9 percent, according to a report by the Illinois Department of Higher Education. Recent trends and projected outlooks from this report look much the same.

The Board of Higher Education expressed a specific concern in the report for the state's ability to accommodate the number and diversity of higher education students expected in 2006.

According to Darnton, adult education

Learning the Language

10.8% of immigrants take ESL classes

64.5% of immigrants do not enroll in ESL classes

15.5% do not take ESL classes but are interested in doing so

information courtesy of the National Household Education Survey

SEE BUDGET, PAGE 38

by Andrew Adelmann

Reflecting on social justice



The closest I have come to any sense of injustice, discrimination, or any other conflicting force that makes great personal narratives belonging in magazines like "Reader's Digest," is that as told to me by others.

I am a boy. I am white. I am Catholic. And I am so far removed from any of my ethnic backgrounds that I cannot consider myself plighted. I have none of the background that enables writers to craft a piece like this and have it be inspiring or breathtaking.

The biggest disadvantage I have reached in life is ironically the writer's block that I face in writing anything that does not involve flipping the pyramid of journalism over. I can write hard news stories. I cannot write this.

In a magazine that has been created to chronicle various issues of social justice and tolerance throughout the city of Chicago, I find myself writing a piece that is completely opposite of most stories surrounding this very page.

While tolerance is certainly the topic, these words are not about race or religion, the things that should be tolerated, they are about love, something that should not be just *tolerated*.

The one thing I do have in common with writers of all different kinds is that I am human and all humans are capable of love. Yet, we are also capable of taking this for granted.

Look up the word "tolerate" anywhere and it probably defines it along the lines of "putting up with something."

Is love something we should just put up with though? While it is certainly the foundation for something like social justice, justice will never be achieved unless love is first realized in each of our lives. I have seen my own mother settle. I have seen a best friend turn his back on true happiness. I have seen people just tolerate the "loves" in their lives. How can we strive for justice when we cannot be fair to ourselves?

In my 21 years I have come to know nothing better than the feelings of adoration for something or someone. The first step to toleration is to not tolerate just anything. And while I have not been disadvantaged by anyone, perhaps I have been disadvantaging myself.

BUDGET, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 37

programs that serve these diverse populations are already held to very rigorous standards that other state-funded programs are not. It is easier for them to lose the little funding they have if they do not show certain progress and growth.

"It's about accountability," Darnton said, "which is good. It is good to be accountable for the outcomes of your programming, but the standards are so rigorous they are very hard to meet."

Darnton said the hoops that programs are made to jump through are not uncommon in government's treatment of immigration issues. The immigrants themselves are jumping through similar hoops as the government claims not to want them here and is benefiting from their labor all the while, said Darnton.

Our economy has come to rely on the labor of immigrants, said Darnton. Immigrants make up 40 percent of Chicago's workers in accommodations and food service and 48 percent of the city's manufacturing workers according to the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee

Rights. The Adult Education funding for ESL programs nationwide is even supplied by the U.S. Department of Labor, through the Workforce Investment Act of 1998.

The value of educating and training our community and labor force is obvious to many. With 20,000 Adult Education students, the demand for this programming is clearly there as well. Whether they are here legally or illegally, temporarily or permanently, literally thousands of immigrants are participating in these programs. Knowing the language allows them to settle in and make a life here instead of just living.

"People need language skills," Heckman said. "Yes, they can get along without them, but they are so limited."

Heckman shared a story about a literacy student of hers who had been a journalism professor in Sarajevo, Bosnia before moving to this country. He began to study English and, when he had learned enough to be able to frame the words, he said how he felt about his ability to communicate here: "My soul is living again."

by Andrew Baltazar

Low-income renters discover finding space no easy task

An elderly woman sits within the walls of her Ontario Place apartment, comforted by the idea that she is part of an enduring and tightly knit community. But after living there for 15 years, she and many of her neighbors and community members are being asked to leave.

Earlier this year, a condominium developer bought the low-income units at Ontario Place, a high-rise apartment complex at 10 E. Ontario Street, which has housed many elderly Russian immigrants for almost two decades. After the developer turns the apartments into condos, they won't be able to afford rent at Ontario Place, even with the assistance of government vouchers.

Throughout Chicago, real estate companies are increasingly buying out housing units only to convert them into expensive condos, forcing low-income renters like those at Ontario Place to move out.

According to Habitat for Humanity, the

number of low-income housing available in the United States dropped by 1.8 million homes, or 13 percent, between 1997 and 2001. Currently, there are only 76 homes for every 100 low-income renters.

"We need to balance development with the needs of the poor and elderly," said Lori Clark, director of the Jane Addams Senior Caucus, one of many housing rights groups springing up in Chicago.

Recently, the Ontario Place residents, with the aid of Clark and Jane Addams Senior Caucus, convinced the condominium developer to extend their current housing contract for two more years.

However, many residents of low-income housing units aren't as fortunate and must immediately succumb to the onslaught of urban development.

"This [trend] will continue to increase in the future and is something that we should all be watching and be aware of," Clark said.

by Kevin Doheny

Growing in tolerance



I'm excited to live in a city promoting tolerance of various cultures and lifestyles. It's encouraging to know that such a huge city is making efforts to become more accepting. In my reporting experiences for Mosaic, I came to find out more about how much growing influence the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender (GLBT) community has had in the city.

Not only has the public become more aware of the GLBT community, but Mayor Richard Daley has become supportive of gay issues. Daley was recently honored with an award from the Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund for his efforts in promoting a more diverse atmosphere. He's helped pass anti-discrimination laws, get the vision for Center on Halsted up and running, and even created a gay and lesbian hall of fame.

It's encouraging to know that leaders with such authority are recognizing the importance that diversity brings to people in the community. It makes me feel like something productive is being done in the city and it's getting people with one-track minds to reconsider what differences in other people have to offer.

This is exciting for me since it is greatly promoting tolerance throughout the city. It's frustrating when I see people discriminated against because they don't fit the "norm" or what people are used to. Of course this is not only dealing with GLBT issues but cultural and ethnical differences, as well. Wouldn't it be boring to have everybody acting the same or believing in the same things?

I don't think I have an intolerant bone in my body and couldn't even imagine living without knowing people who are different than myself. They bring so much more to my life and I learn so much from them.

Don't think of others as "different" or "not like me," but rather what can I do to see where they're coming from and how can I learn from them. We all need to celebrate our differences and encourage everyone to be themselves and not what society expects them to be. One of my favorite quotes is by Oscar Wilde and seems to sum up diversity in a nutshell: "Be yourself. Everyone else is already taken."

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by Mollie K Dixon

White privilege

A gray type of discrimination

While riding on a train in Italy, James Siegert, 22, and Andrew "Donnie" Quo, 22, bought children's fare tickets because they were cheaper and conductors rarely check the type of ticket.

The two young men were seated on the train side by side and expected the conductor to just glance at the tickets. Instead, the conductor checked the tickets and realized that the two young men obviously were not children.

"However, after closely looking at each ticket and our passports, he let me go, while my Asian friend had to pay the difference [between the adult and children's fare] as well as a fine," said Siegert, a sales assistant at Smith Barney in Chicago.

Siegert recognized the privilege that he was granted because of his skin color after reading various quotes by author Peggy McIntosh in her article, "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack," on www.whiteprivilege.com. McIntosh began studying white privilege after looking into male privilege and the advantages that males have over women in the workplace.

"White privilege [is] an invisible package of unearned assets which I can count on cashing in on each day, but about which I was 'meant' to remain oblivious. White privilege is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools, and blank checks," McIntosh writes.

Many people in society talk about racism and prejudice and want to do something about the evils that they perpetuate. Most white people are oblivious to the fact that they hold a type of "privilege" over non-whites in society. This type of privilege is called white privilege. White privilege can be defined as "the pattern of social benefits accruing to members of the socially privileged and oppressing group, at the expense of members of the socially disprivileged and oppressed group," according to Wikipedia.

Many whites experience privilege in their daily lives. However, because society grooms

SEE PRIVILEGE, PAGE 41



them to be unaware of the privilege they are granted, they hardly notice it.

Although many whites in society don't acknowledge that they have privilege over others, they do recognize that many minorities are underprivileged.

"One day I was buying gas in Utah and a Latino man was in front of me in line. He was informed he could not pay for his gas with a check. The man was frustrated because he had no other source of payment and there were no signs indicating the gas station did not take checks. I went to pay for my gas and asked the clerk why they didn't take checks since I was also not aware of this. The man, a white male, laughed and told me 'you know we actually do and it is okay if you pay with a check but I just knew that spic was giving me a check that would bounce,'" said Jonathan Ravarino, 31, a practicing social work counselor in Salt Lake City, Utah and a professor at the University of Utah.

"I asked him for the number for his supervisor or manager to communicate how he was engaging in outright discrimination at his gas station," Ravarino said. "I have stopped buying gas from the whole chain."

Ravarino was upset by the discrimination that took place at the gas station and realized his own white privilege in this situation. The clerk would allow him to write a check, but not the Latino man, just because of his ethnicity.

White privilege is perpetuated by the media and the institutions that support it. According to an article by Kendall Clark, My



White Problem and Ours, the media does not expose white privilege nor does it even acknowledge that it exists.

"There are specific media outlets like Free Speech TV that sometimes address these issues [white privilege], but the media as a whole is blind to this concept and it serves them nicely. Look at news programs, television shows, and movies. The majority of the leading actors and actresses are white. The roles that are played by minorities are often stereotypical. For every one movie with Will Smith as a black action hero, there are forty movies with a white action hero," said Melissa FitzGerald, 31, a study coordinator for the Utah Genetics Reference Project in Salt Lake City.

"The day will come when people will force the media to be more responsible. The major issues of race in the media revolve around its use of elite white males as experts, its connection of African Americans with poverty, crimes, and welfare, and its failure to give access to all groups in this society," said Dr. Judith Wittner, Professor of Sociology at Loyola University in Chicago.

Ravarino suggests ways of speaking out and educating others about white privilege in classes that he teaches in Utah.

"Speak up when white privilege is present," he said. "Acknowledge that you have privileges. Critically look for how you perpetuate and accept white privilege today."

These suggestions will help us become better acquainted with the topic of white privilege and be better prepared to take it on along with the fight against racism and discrimination.

"The day will come when people will force the media to be more responsible. The major issues of race in the media revolve around its use of elite white males as experts, its connection of African Americans with poverty, crimes, and welfare, and its failure to give access to all groups in this society," said Dr. Judith Wittner, Professor of Sociology at Loyola University in Chicago.



Some argue that stores such as department stores give certain privileges to whites.

by Andrew Baltazar

Persecuted for praying



There's nothing like rooting for a favorite team with thousands of other excited fans inside the stadium itself. That's what one group of law-abiding American friends did last September. Only, they were detained by security officers and state troopers for praying. They were allowed to return to their seats under close supervision by guards.

Although it was denied by sports and stadium officials, these Arab-American football fans were clearly victims of racial profiling. Middle Eastern profiling has been occurring in the United States since 9/11, especially in major cities like Chicago and New York where Arab populations are high. Time after time in the news, we hear stories about terrorist fears sparked by a dark-toned man with a longish beard, a woman whose face is covered by a hijab headscarf, or even by individuals speaking in Arabic.

The forefathers of America founded the country upon the idea of human equality. But with every disaster, either natural or manmade, that creates a chink in America's mighty armor, we are offered a glimpse into the stark reality of racial oppression and stereotyping. September 11 and the introduction of the Patriot Act demonstrated America's susceptibility to profiling.

The aftermath of Hurricane Katrina further illustrated the prevalence of profiling. Many believe that the beating of Robert Davis, an African American, by white cops in New Orleans was racially motivated. Blacks were also portrayed by the media as looters and deviants, when whites employed similar behavior.

However, racial profiling concerns all American institutions and citizens. When we lack sufficient knowledge about a culture or ethnicity, stereotypes and confusion begin to develop. Intensive cultural education needs to be implemented in both elementary and secondary schools in the United States. If American children are educated, for instance, about what it really means to be a Muslim rather than left to imbibe negative racial stereotypes from television and the media, maybe America's next generation of adult citizens will be the first to truly uphold the forefathers' idea of equality.

Education and etiquette

Going hand in hand

Devethia Greenebaum, 45, considers herself a parent who wants her children to have every opportunity to learn. So when she heard about the Excel Etiquette Co., she was very excited to enroll her 13-year-old daughter, Rachel, in some classes.

Rachel, an 8th grader at St. Mary's School in Park Forest, has been participating in summer classes with Excel for the past three years.

"I was mad at my mom at first for putting me into them," Rachel said.

But now Rachel is happy to gush about her positive experience with Excel, which she says has improved her manners and changed her whole attitude. Rachel has learned about table and dining etiquette, and expanded her knowledge of art and culture.

"I think it's good to know about manners because you never know who you're going to run into. Once you learn it, it sticks with you," Rachel said.

"I would encourage any parent to enroll their children in classes like these," said

Devethia Greenebaum.

These are the kinds of testimonials Nathan Wright hoped for when he began the Excel Etiquette Co. a decade ago. Now he is hoping to bring these experiences to children attending public schools in some of Chicago's socially and economically disadvantaged areas.

Wright has founded The Etiquette Foundation of Illinois, a non-profit organization with a mission, "To educate children in the social graces," in hopes of bringing more equality and opportunity to society.

Wright, 61, executive director of the fledgling Etiquette Foundation, said he has seen the decline of social behavior in his time. He also believes that this directly correlates to the decline in the quality of the public school system and the high number of drop outs.

"Our public schools are failing. Much of that has to do with children not having proper behavior and etiquette," Wright said. "We

believe that if we can train more children, we can improve the environment in the schools and children would have a better chance of being educated."

While the Etiquette Foundation is still waiting on funding, it already has its eye on the prize – three public schools in economically disadvantaged areas. The foundation's curriculum includes classes on everything from diction to table and dining etiquette.

"How to walk, how to be polite, how to be courteous, these are all the basic things that make for a good child," Wright said.

Wright also believes that etiquette is just as important a subject as mathematics or science, but is usually overlooked.

"Your social graces are just as important because no matter what you do, if you don't know how to behave that's going to be a handicap," he said.

Peter Buckley, 45, a member of the foundation's board of directors, got involved because he was also concerned with the general decline of today's youth.

"I've seen a coarsening of society which has been troubling to me... I saw the foundation as an opportunity to have a return to some civility and civil discourse," Buckley said. He hopes that the foundation can be a "tipping point" back in the right direction.

While the foundation is still in the process of funding, both Wright and Buckley seem confident in its mission.

"I'm a proponent that maybe with some small changes we can help some inner city kids and tip for better civility in our society as a whole," Buckley said.

Wright calls the foundation an "innovative and dynamic" program, one that will in a sense, level the playing field.

"If you have good social skills, that could get your foot in the door," he said. "We want to raise children's notions of who they are and what they can do.... and let them know that they can make a contribution to this society."



photo by Mary Ondrusek

Students educated in "the social graces" may fare better in school.



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Make-A-Wish Foundation: **Part of the cure**

Oliver "Ollie" Tibbles knew that his time was running out, and so he knew he had to make his wish happen quickly. At the age of five, he was already battling a deadly brain tumor and was used to difficulties. And his wish was indeed a difficult one, because Ollie wanted to be a train.

While this wish sounds impossible at first thought, the people at Chicago's Make-A-Wish foundation went right to work.

"Why they want the wish granted is just as important as the wish itself," said Adam Selwyn, the assistant development director at the Chicago office.

Ollie's wish was realized in receiving a special ride on the Metra train while more than 400 people cheered for him as they watched on the platform. As far as many were concerned, Ollie's wish had been granted.

But the story doesn't end there. Unfortunately, Ollie's disease was too serious to be cured and he passed away. On May 21, 2005, Make-A-Wish held its annual Wishball fundraiser, and Ollie's mother, Deb Tibbles, was asked to be the keynote speaker.

The event, which was held at Union Station, was to mark the last step in granting Ollie's wish. That night, Metra workers unveiled their latest project, and the first of its kind. A new train, engine #401, was officially named Oliver "Ollie" Tibbles.

That was the night that Ollie became a train, just like he wanted.

While this story may seem unique, Chicago's Make-A-Wish office is used to touching stories such as Ollie's. In fact, it is what they make their life's work doing.

"People are here because they want to help the families and grant wishes," Selwyn said. And that is exactly what they do.

Their employees are dedicated to what they do and they stand by the work that Make-A-Wish achieves.

Chicago's branch of Make-A-Wish, a national program that helps children with "life threatening" medical conditions realize their wishes, is one of the most successful branches

in the country.

Statistics show that Make-A-Wish of Chicago boasts the second largest number of wishes granted of any of the foundation's chapters. Since the branch's opening in 1985, it has helped to grant more than 6,200 wishes for children.

The Chicago office is also branch of Make-A-Wish that raises the most money each year for its program. And no one knows about fundraising like Selwyn does, because that is what he is chiefly responsible for in his job. His main clients are big corporate organizations such as the General Motors Co.

Curtis Pascarella, CEO of Philips Chevrolet, stressed the importance of giving to the Make-A-Wish foundation.

"As president of Phillips Chevrolet, I have

been in the fortunate position to be able to bring hope, strength and joy to children through the magic of a wish come true," Pascarella said.

Of the Make-A-Wish foundation specifically, Pascarella said, "We know that

Make-A-Wish is the largest and most reputable of all wish-granting organizations, with nearly 80 percent of every dollar going directly to granting wishes. It truly is a mission filled with hope and joy."

GM, its dealerships and partners have been very active in fundraising for the Make-A-Wish program. In one year alone, the company has helped to raise over one million dollars for the foundation.

However, big company fundraising is not

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The Make-A-Wish Foundation helped Ollie Tibbles realize his dream: To be a train. The five-year-old was battling a deadly brain tumor.

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by Angie Trudeau

Design for Dignity

Supporting the Spirit with Aesthetics

Drab carpet, inadequate answering services, a dreary cramped atmosphere, lack of privacy and most certainly dignity are a few common threads in the nonprofit agency realm. Correcting this problem is often a dead end.

Four years ago, Southwest Women Working Together (SWWT), an organization providing domestic violence counseling and job training to empower women, found this description to be a reality.

"The environment was not supportive to our mission" said Shelley Hughley, executive director of SWWT.

Now in a new larger building, SWWT has adequate space, a professional atmosphere, and a new emblem signifying its mission. The child-friendly wait area with bright orange carpet and a vibrant mural, emanates the spirit of the organization by welcoming clients to the healing space.

Thanks to Designs for Dignity, founded as Supporting the Spirit Foundation in 2001, SWWT was able to make this space better in nurturing a dignified and comfortable space for healing.

"It's drop dead gorgeous," Hughley said. "No one walks out without complimenting our space."

"The need is extraordinary and the solution is so simple," said Susan Fredman, founder of Designs for Dignity and Chicago interior designer. The networking expertise of this organization is able to connect organizations with resources that would otherwise not be available to them.

"Not only do excess materials stay out of landfill, but those who wouldn't have an opportunity, otherwise, are able to have nice furnishings," Sobocki said. Fabric scraps, unopened paint cans, overstocked or slightly used furniture are a few of the tax-deductible items donated by companies in the design industry.

When Southwest Women Working

Together more than tripled its office space to 17,000 square feet, its grant from the Illinois Facility Fund left little room for adequate furnishings or additional architectural features. The renovated space suggests otherwise.

Aside from the carpet, lighting, and a set of stackable metal chairs, all of the interior

elements were donated from companies in the design industry and refurbished with donated scrap materials. "[Designs for Dignity] would take 25- to 30-year-old products and make them look new," Hughley said.

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Designs for Dignity founder Susan Fredman, an interior designer, says the need for her program is "extraordinary."

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Designs for Dignity surveys and interviews staff members and participants in order to assess the needs and desires of an organization.

"It's fun because they are also able to see that it is possible to make something work out of practically nothing," Sobecki said.

By coordinating architectural services and providing materials, Designs for Dignity was able to help make the SWWT space supportive of the organization's mission complete with a library, computer lab, two job readiness spaces, and an enclosed garden for counseling.

Another goal of Designs for Dignity is to help organizations develop branding through a recognizable color palette or an image. Designs for Dignity commissioned a mural featuring five women of diverse ethnic backgrounds to represent the mission and

organization of SWWT.

Each year a design board of 18 designers and directors determine which projects they will assist. Organizations like SWWT go through an application process, and about 4-5 projects are selected. Aside from this, much of the focus is on improving the facilities of programs associated with Designs for Dignity's umbrella organization, Heartland Alliance.

**"It's drop dead gorgeous....
No one walks out without
complimenting our space."**

**— Shelley Hughley,
executive director of Southwest
Women Working Together**

Designs for Dignity recently furnished 57 studios, the main lobby and community room for Leland Apartments, an affordable housing site for Heartland Alliance located at 1207 W. Leland Avenue.

Located in the loop on 208 S. LaSalle St., Designs for Dignity and its one staff member take up a 20 by 20 foot room.

"We're working on a plan for our office right now," said Sobecki while looking at the drab gray wall complemented with a worn gray carpet. "It really needs some work."

DESIGN, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 44

the only thing that Make-A-Wish is familiar with.

"Our fundraising is as varied as the people who come to us," said Selwyn, as he told stories ranging from children raising \$7 at a lemonade stand to a high school student who, with the help of Selwyn, raised more than \$25,000 for the Make-A-Wish foundation.

"His best friend was a Wish kid," Selwyn said with a smile.

But there are challenges to the job. "We're not literally curing, like the Cancer Association," said Selwyn. "We want people to get the message that we are part of the cure, and not just a break from illness."

People often have the misconception that all those "Wish kids" will die of a terminal disease. "That's absolutely not true," Selwyn said, as he explained that those children served by Make-A-Wish suffered from a "life threatening" disease, but not necessarily one that they could not recover from.

"Actually, we had an intern here 10 years ago who was once a Wish kid," Selwyn said. And this in itself is proof of the power that wishes can have.

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by Whitney Woodward

The changing face of **Cabrini-Green**

On a blustery fall afternoon, 24-year-old Sheena Davis is leaving her apartment in a Cabrini-Green high rise. She's off to Seward Park, located only two blocks away from her present home at 1161 N. Larrabee Ave., to play with her 3-year-old son Marcus.

As a child growing up in the public housing development on the Near North Side, Davis saw and experienced the things that most Chicagoans only read about.

"Every morning, my momma would say a prayer when I left for school because she thought I'd get shot on my way there or on my way back," Davis said. "Nobody would walk through this part of town because it was scary."

But today, Davis is comfortable enough to head to the park with dusk fast approaching.

The near-north Cabrini-Green community of today bears little resemblance to the

perilous public housing community that rocked the headlines of Chicago newspapers during the 70s and 80s.

The area is growing: Mortgage applications for properties surrounding the Cabrini-Green area are among the highest in the city, according to Home Mortgage Disclosure Act [HMDA] data. Cab drivers are no longer

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terrified to drop off and pick up clients in the area. And, a new police station at the corner of Larrabee Avenue and Division Street offers an increased force presence.

"Ten years ago, I wouldn't be going anywhere after dark," Davis said. But the gunshots that used to wake Davis in the middle of the night are virtually nonexistent today.

The area's turnaround began around the same time the Chicago Housing Authority announced its grand plan to redevelop the city's long-troubled public housing. In 1999, the CHA announced its "Plan for Transformation" – a 10-year plan to rehab, redesign and restructure public housing in the city – which called for the demolition of CHA high rise structures, such as Cabrini-Green.

The \$1.5 billion plan calls for residents to leave the long-troubled high rises and move into mixed-income development communities – often close to their former public housing developments. Approximately 4,000 families have been relocated thus far, according to Kim Johnson, the CHA's assistant press secretary.

To date, the CHA has demolished five of the 23 Cabrini-Green High rises. The CHA will tear down another by the end of the year, Johnson said. At its height, the Cabrini-Green developments were home to 15,000 residents. Today, that figure hovers around 4,700 people – just a third of its previous enrollment.

Davis and her son are two of only a handful of people still living in the soon-to-be-demolished Cabrini-Green public housing high rise.

Their building is slated for demolition in six weeks.

Davis has three options to choose from in regard to her living situation: She may relocate to a temporary CHA property and return to a mixed income development built in the same neighborhood, take federal housing vouchers to rent apartments in the private sector or leave public housing altogether.

Johnson said that most residents have chosen to be temporarily relocated.

Once the new mixed-income developments are constructed, tenants can apply to return to the area.

The mixed-income communities are comprised roughly of one-third public housing residents, one-third market-rate homes and condos and one-third affordable-rate homes, Johnson said.

There are already eight such developments in the Cabrini-area alone.

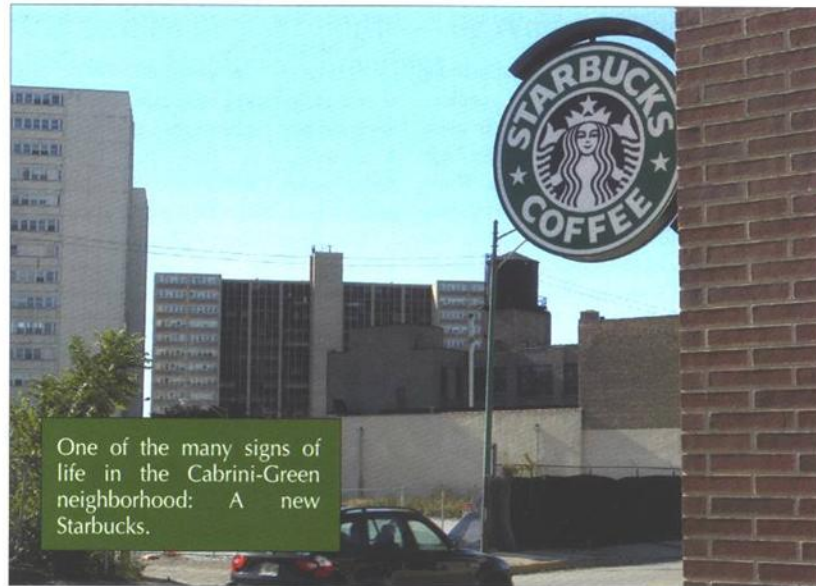
But, as CHA tenants move into mixed-income developments, they are faced with new requirements and experiences. Public housing residents returning to the new developments must pass development guidelines – such as work requirements, background checks and, in some cases, drug tests.

As a service connector working with the CHA, Veena Keny, 26, has worked with hundreds of former high-rise residents. Many, she says, are happy to leave the "projects" but they are faced with new experiences that they are ill-equipped to handle.

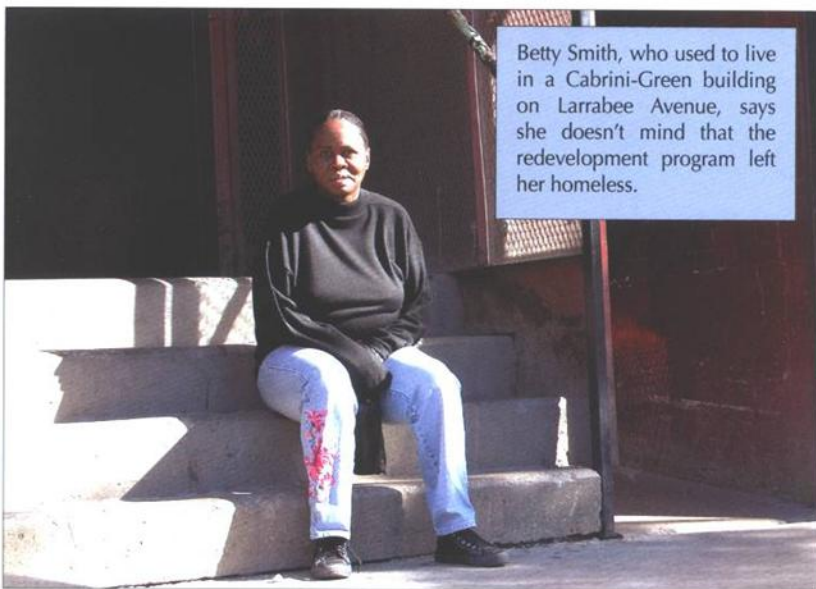
"I walk them through the basics – things that most everyone knows by the time they're 18 – like how to clean an apartment or why you have to pay utility bills," Keny said. "In the CHA buildings, the residents didn't have to pay electric bills, so they'd leave their lights on all night and all day. Now ... they have to learn not to leave their lights on all day, because that costs money."

Keny lives on the 2600 block of W. Lexington Ave., just south of Rockwell Gardens, another public housing development. She lives just a few doors down

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One of the many signs of life in the Cabrini-Green neighborhood: A new Starbucks.



Betty Smith, who used to live in a Cabrini-Green building on Larrabee Avenue, says she doesn't mind that the redevelopment program left her homeless.

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from some of the people she assists.

The requirements have left some people, like 54-year-old Betty Smith, homeless. Smith, who goes by the street name “Betty Boop,” admits because she is an alcoholic, she could not meet the employment or volunteer requirements of most of the new public housing.

Although she is homeless now, Smith thinks the CHA’s plan is good.

“This ground here, where this [Cabrini] building is built on...it’s good ground. You could throw a seed down on it and it would grow,” Smith said. “But for so many years we’ve just been abusing it and trashing it. Now it’s time to go.”

The new Cabrini mixed-income developments are comprised of cookie-cutter, red brick houses. The scene is quite different from the 15-story Cabrini-high rises that dominate the area’s skyline. While Cabrini buildings have boarded windows, broken glass and trash strewn across the ground, the new mixed-income developments have well-tended lawns and amenities like air conditioning.

These new developments have sparked a

significant amount of residential interest in the area.

In 2000, there were only two approved home mortgages. Just three years later in 2003, there were 180 approved mortgages, according to HMDA data.

National developer Dan McLean, CEO of MCL Companies is responsible for many of the new neighborhoods surrounding Cabrini-Green, including Old Town Village East. Bill Figel, a spokesperson for MCL, said that the condominiums in these complexes sold out quickly. In fact, some are being resold upwards of \$500,000.

Robyn Bower, 36, works in real estate. She followed the changing Cabrini atmosphere before buying her condo on the 1000 block of N. Kingsbury St.

“There are still problems. People from over there [pointing to a Cabrini building] are always wandering through, just hanging out... it can be kind of intimidating,” Bower said. “But, buying a home here is an investment and, so far, it looks like a pretty good one.”

But, Figel believes Chicagoans are more willing to move into neighborhoods like those MCL has developed because the area is no-longer ridden with crime.

About eight years ago, the Chicago Police

Department built a station at the corner of Larrabee Avenue and Division Street, the CHA’s Johnson said. The facility’s location ensures that there is a constant flow of patrol officers at an intersection that is home to four Cabrini buildings.

But, 14-year-old Shawna Williamson doesn’t think the police station has helped much.

“I never see the cops doing anything except driving around,” Williamson said. “People might go and hide when they come around, but as soon as they leave people are back to selling dope.”

To make up for this shortcoming, the city has installed five “blue light” cameras. Police monitor the footage for drug deals and gang activity. In July, Mayor Richard J. Daley announced plans to install an additional 19 cameras with acoustic sensors. The new cameras can detect gunshots and call police.

As the high rises and crime goes down, new businesses have moved in. Across from Seward Park is what some would argue is the sign of a thriving neighborhood: a Starbucks coffee shop.

“I would never want to drive to the area around Cabrini because I was always afraid,” 47-year old Jameson Singh, a cab driver, said. “Today, I’m not so scared like before.”



Rows and rows of condominiums and town homes line the streets facing the remaining Cabrini-Green housing complexes.



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