

"Food Oases" continued from front

Making the link between the two sets of findings was easy. Finding solutions was not.

LISC/Chicago has pursued a comprehensive, multi-pronged approach to the challenge of urban food deserts, addressing immediate needs for a better supply of healthy eating options, while building – and documenting – enough demand for fresh food that the market will attract and grow new businesses in the communities who lack them.

In Washington Park, for example, neighbors said that while they understood that they should eat healthier, and even had some access to reasonably-priced healthy food, they weren't sure how to actually prepare the sometimes-unfamiliar foods in a healthy way. Washington Park Consortium, the NCP lead agency, worked with them to create "What's all the fuss about food?," a program offering cooking demonstrations and lectures about the importance of a well-balanced diet.

In Humboldt Park, the Greater Humboldt Park Community of Wellness is surveying a 72-block area to determine if households have preconditions for diabetes.

The new Diabetes Empowerment Center, at California and Division, includes a large kitchen that hosts cooking classes on healthy eating with the goal of helping people control diabetes through diet.

These grassroots efforts are intended to build the physical and economic infrastructure necessary for grocery stores and restaurants. The Greater Auburn-Gresham Development Corporation (GADC) is working with faculty and staff of the University of Chicago's Urban Health Initiative on a project to put healthy choices on food store shelves and to get food manufacturers to provide higher quality foods. And LISC MetroEdge is creating and refining tools that retailers can use to evaluate potential new sites, including: customer-spotting maps that show where a particular store has the greatest market share; competition and trade area maps that plot the sites of competing stores within a given radius; and demographic profiles that show total population and number of households broken down by race and ethnicity, median household and per-capita income, and grocery dollars spent per week.

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Students in the urban agriculture program at Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School in Humboldt Park.

"Digital Smarts" continued from front

Emy Tseng, program officer for the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program, said the group was particularly interested in how Chicago had used "real social networks rather than virtual networks," to recruit participants.

In Auburn Gresham, where tech organizer Jimmy Prude filled his first training class by recruiting members of local churches and working mothers whose children attend local child care centers, the neighborhood portal functions as a kind of local "Yahoo.com", allowing people within the community to connect with local residents, schools, small businesses and city colleges.

Innovative ideas are the focus of the Chicago Lawn portal where neighborhood youth have taken leadership roles in working with community members and technology experts to identify the most efficient and appropriate technologies to serve the community.

The Humboldt Park Portal aims to build a sense of community and connection among residents throughout Greater Humboldt Park. The portal is designed to give underserved residents a space where they can be both consumers and producers of information, using technology to celebrate and preserve the culture and heritage of Humboldt Park residents, and represent the community with affirming stories and images from the neighborhood.

Pilsen's portal is a colorful display of arts and culture in the area. With both English and Spanish language options, the portal has the ability to reach a myriad of audience members. The Pilsen Planning Committee created the portal as one step among many that will make the neighborhood a "Digital Excellence" community.

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GOING GREEN!

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LISC/CHICAGO WELCOMES NEW BOARD MEMBER

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SUMMER SPORTS PLANS UNDERWAY

This summer – as in years past – LISC's Neighborhood Sports Chicago will engage youth from around the city in a variety of sports programs. The activities promote good exercise and fitness, help build community strength and identity, and serve as a way to identify potential neighborhood leaders.



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The Newsletter of the Chicago Program of Local Initiatives Support Corporation

SPRING 2011



Young people go on-line at the launch party for the Humboldt Park portal (left), while City of Chicago and U.S. Dept. of Commerce officials tour a Smart Communities computer training class.

COMMUNITIES SHOW OFF THEIR DIGITAL SMARTS

Not long ago, there was no easy way to find out what events were happening around Englewood, or what schools and community organizations were in the neighborhood. Small businesses had little ability to reach out to people in the community, and those residents had to rely on word-of-mouth to find out about most local news.

That all changed with the launch of the Englewood portal – Englewoodportal.org – offering news and content created and posted by community members. As site readership grows, organizers hope it will someday be the first thing people see when they search for information about Englewood.

Neighborhood portals like Englewood's are just one aspect of Smart Communities, part of the City of Chicago's Digital Excellence Initiative,

which aims to ensure digital access for children, families, businesses and other community institutions in Auburn Gresham, Chicago Lawn, Englewood, Humboldt Park and Pilsen. It's managed by NCP lead agencies in each of those neighborhoods and administered by LISC/Chicago.

Smart Communities had a chance to show off its work when a delegation from the U.S. Department of Commerce visited Chicago this spring. The tour was part of a two-day visit hosted by the City of Chicago, which received federal grants totaling \$16 million for Smart Communities and expansion of Public Computing Centers to provide enhanced access to broadband technology, educational training, and opportunities to earn hardware and software.

See "Digital Smarts" on next page >>>

FOOD OASES BEGIN TO BLOOM

When a report was released identifying Chicago Food Deserts in 2006, portions of the city's South and West sides were devoid of any sellers of fresh produce. That same year, Sinai Urban Health Institute completed a study that showed troubling rates of obesity, diabetes and other nutrition-related health problems in Humboldt Park, North Lawndale and other neighborhoods on the South and West sides of Chicago.

See "Food Oases" on next page >>>



A chef stir fries a tasty concoction at the 61st Street Farmers' Market.

NORTH LAWNDALE'S LIVING LEGACY

The dream that Martin Luther King Jr. had 45 years ago, when he moved to North Lawndale to support open housing, became a reality in early April for hundreds of community leaders and residents who gathered to hail the **Dr. King Legacy Apartments** as a new beginning for the neighborhood.

"The dream lives on in Lawndale!" they chanted inside a big white tent set up at 16th Street and Hamlin Avenue. "We are on our way to a new Lawndale!" declared Rev. Randall W. Harris, Sr., president of the Westside Federation of Chicago. With co-emcee Kimberlie Jackson, executive director of Lawndale Christian Development Corporation (LCDC), Harris introduced and credited the many VIPs in attendance, including U.S. Senator Richard Durbin, Congressman Danny Davis and Mayor Richard M. Daley.

Memorializing Dr. King's historic 1966 summertime stay on Chicago's West Side long had been an ambition of LCDC. The N. Lawndale NCP quality-of-life plan called for development of affordable apartments on the very site of the building where Dr. King and his family lived during what was called the Chicago Freedom Campaign—an effort to call attention to slum conditions facing African-Americans throughout the urban North.

LCDC expanded the concept into a historic district that eventually will feature a King memorial and exhibit, a community center, a pocket park, new stores and improved schools. So the new \$17.7 million apartment complex, complete with 4,500 square feet of sidewalk-level retail, is only a start.

With support from State Farm Insurance Companies, LISC provided a predevelopment loan and support for a project manager and historic district task force.

Other project support came from the City of Chicago, Illinois Housing Development Authority, the Richman Group, and Citibank. The Chicago Housing Authority will lease 10 of the 45 apartments as part of its Plan for Transformation.

During construction the team of Safeway and Weis Builders created 130 jobs for minorities and women, at least 50 of them from the neighborhood. The apartments are energy-efficient as well as affordable. Most have rents within reach of families making 60 percent of the Chicago area's median income, and some units have been subsidized so as to be affordable to families making as little as 15 percent of median.

Despite the sluggish real estate market, considerable progress has been made readying several other LISC-aided projects for groundbreaking in 2011. Two of the biggest will be:

The Shops and Lofts at 47, a project that was restructured last year to dovetail with the Chicago Housing Authority's Plan for Transformation. This mixed-use complex at 47th and Cottage Grove will feature a major grocer anchoring ground-floor storefronts and, up above, 150 apartments split among market rate, subsidized and housing authority tenants. Bernita Johnson-Gabriel, executive director of Quad Communities Development Corp., predicts a 2011 start for what she promises will be a "new urban model" for revitalizing faded commercial corridors.

Planning is almost complete for **Zapata Apartments**, a joint effort of Bickerdike Redevelopment Corp. and the Logan Square Neighborhood Association. Zapata won key zoning approvals during 2011 and will break ground soon. LISC loans and grants helped secure and maintain the three now-vacant development sites around Armitage Avenue, where 60 affordable apartments will be built.

LEADERSHIP TAKES CENTER STAGE AT CNDA

The theme of the 17th annual Chicago Neighborhood Development Awards – the largest ever, attracting more than 1,500 people – was "Leadership Makes the Difference." That theme was reflected throughout the day, beginning with the pre-event forum in which the four leading mayoral contenders, including mayor-elect Rahm Emanuel, shared their perspectives on community development.

Julia Stasch, vice president for U.S. programs for the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, moderated the forum, interviewing each contender on a range of issues, including the foreclosure crisis, public safety and education.

Emanuel spoke knowledgeably about LISC and the resources and partnerships it nurtures. "I believe the city can learn from LISC rather than the other way around," he said. "LISC does it the right way – comprehensively."

Emanuel also offered his own community development agenda, prioritizing elimination of "food deserts," reducing city overhead, and a southwest extension of the CTA's Red Line.

Linking past, present and future, CNDA event chair Christopher G. Kennedy later spoke about the involvement of his parents, Robert and Ethel Kennedy, with the civil rights organizations that gave rise to many present-day community development corporations and with the original Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation. Community action and development, said Kennedy, president of Merchandise Mart

Properties, are the bedrock of democracy and progressive social change.

Although Mayor Daley was unable to attend this year's February 8 event at the UIC Forum, his deep support for community development was recognized at the ceremony with the renaming of The Friend of the Neighborhoods Award in his honor. The newly-titled Richard M. Daley Friend of the Neighborhoods Award was given to Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle by Lori Healey, LISC/Chicago's board chair and former chief of staff to Mayor Daley. "This year's winner has worked her entire life to improve underserved communities," said Healey. In her acceptance speech, Preckwinkle thanked Daley "for his commitment to all things that strengthen communities."

Andrew J. Mooney, the interim commissioner of the city's newly reorganized Department of Housing and Economic Development, stood in for Mayor Daley, offering remarks that

summed up Chicago's identity as both a global center and a city of neighborhoods. "The mayor made us believe in ourselves as a great city, a world-class city," said Mooney. "The president of China stopping here is a testament to that. He balanced what we did on the world stage with what we needed to do at home in our neighborhoods."



TOP: Moderator Julia Stasch and mayoral candidate Rahm Emanuel at CNDA's forum.

BOTTOM: Event Chair Chris Kennedy addresses more than 1,500 attendees.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF THE 2011 CHICAGO NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT AWARDS WINNERS:



The Chicago Community Trust Outstanding Community Strategy of the Year
Greater Humboldt Park Community of Wellness



The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation Award for Outstanding Non-Profit Real Estate Project
PCC Community Wellness Center for PCC Austin Family Health Center



The Polk Bros. Foundation Affordable Rental Housing Preservation Award
Heartland Housing for Hollywood House



The Outstanding For-Profit Neighborhood Real Estate Project Award
Holsten Real Estate Development Corporation for Wilson Yard



Special Recognition Award
Goodcity



The Richard M. Daley Friend of the Neighborhoods Award
Toni Preckwinkle, President, Cook County Board of Commissioners



The PrivateBank Norman Bobbins Leadership Award
Rob And Amy Castañeda, Beyond the Ball

THE RICHARD H. DRIEHAUS FOUNDATION AWARD FOR ARCHITECTURAL EXCELLENCE IN COMMUNITY DESIGN WINNERS



First Place
John Ronan Architects
Christ the King College Preparatory High School



Second Place
Booth Hansen
Chicago Park District Fieldhouses



Third Place
Hartshorne Plunkard Architecture
Teen Living Programs

GRANT & LOAN ACTIVITY

In the first Quarter of 2011, LISC committed \$2,384,414 in grants to support communities around the city, including:

\$288,000 to Perspectives Calumet Charter Middle School to support extra teachers, tutors, counselors and a social worker, as part of its Elev8 program.

\$273,975 to Jane Addams Hull House to expand, build and operate a new Center for Working Families site at Kennedy-King College and to create a new FamilyNet Center.

\$47,785 to North River Commission for the Albany Park Multi-Cultural Sculpture Park and Healing Garden.

\$15,000 to the LEED Council to support its green task force and business outreach.

\$10,000 to the Rogers Park Business Alliance to support early action projects recommended by the LISC/MetroEdge study of Western Avenue.



Dignitaries cut the ribbon for the new Dr. King Legacy Apartments in North Lawndale.