

WORKING CAPITAL

SPRING 2012



The Newsletter of the Chicago Program of Local Initiatives Support Corporation

NCP TURNS 10

For a decade, the New Communities Program has catalyzed groundbreaking comprehensive community development initiatives in neighborhoods across the North, South and West sides of Chicago.

Leaders past and present gathered March 5 to celebrate the 10th anniversary of NCP during the evening portion of the "Getting It Done II" conference, sponsored by LISC and the Institute for

Comprehensive Community Development. The Institute was formed in 2010 to help spread the successes of and lessons learned from NCP and LISC's Sustainable Communities approach to cities across the nation.

Julia Stasch, vice president of U.S. programs for the MacArthur Foundation, reflected on MacArthur's \$50 million investment in 16 Chicago neighborhoods through LISC. "The best thing a funder can say about an investment is that it was money well spent," she said.

LISC has raised an additional \$50 million from 59 other funders including The Atlantic Philanthropies, JPMorgan Chase, State Farm and the Chicago Community Trust, along with city, state and federal agencies, enabling the neighborhoods to leverage an additional \$593 million toward projects contained in their respective quality-of-life plans.

Cook County Board President and NCP "alum" Toni Preckwinkle, who served as board chair of lead agency Quad Communities Development Corp. during her years as 4th ward alderman, thanked all of the agency leaders present for the 10th anniversary, especially executive director Bernita Johnson-Gabriel and others from QCDC.

Former LISC Chicago Executive Director Andrew Mooney, who has served for the past 15 months as commissioner of Chicago's Department of Housing & Economic Development, received a warm welcome "home" to LISC and led the NCP agency leaders in a rousing round of "Happy Birthday" to the 10-year-old program.



Commissioner Andrew Mooney (left), Chicago Department of Housing and Economic Development and Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle (right) joined to congratulate NCP on 10 years of success.

"Notes From the Field"

Representatives of each of the 14 quality-of-life planning groups were on hand to give "Notes from the Field" on what their coalitions of agencies, residents and businesses have been able to accomplish during the past 10 years.

Among those leaders was Mike Tomas, executive director of the newly formed Garfield Park Community Council in East Garfield Park, who talked about the 30 partners that have leveraged \$8 million in new investment to put in place 40 projects, such as a walking club, community gardens, new housing and a chamber of commerce.

Keith Muhammad, NCP organizer with Bickerdike Redevelopment Corp., proudly recounted how, even during the recession, his agency had built the 57-unit La Estancia and the \$27 million, 94-unit, LEED-Gold-certified Rosa Parks Apartments.

In Little Village, Enlace Chicago NCP Director Jaime de Leon said, more than 5,000 families enjoy street basketball and soccer, urban gardening, and multiple art festivals in underused public spaces previously ceded to gangs due to fear of violence.

The Resurrection Project in Pilsen plans to open a multi-university dormitory on 18th Street, building on other educational initiatives that have included an extended-day middle school program with an on-site health center, said Ulises Zatarain, NCP director.

In South Chicago, the construction of 130 affordable green homes, nine community gardens and an annual green summit have enabled Claretian Associates and its partners to reshape the historic Steel Town into Green Town, said Jackie Samuel, NCP director.

Joanna Trotter, board member with QCDC, talked about the revitalization of Quad Communities' commercial districts. For example, in 2012 construction will begin on two mixed-use developments along Cottage Grove Avenue, one at 43rd Street and one at 47th Street, she said.

More than 400 youth in West Haven have become engaged in sports, entrepreneurship and technology through the Youth Zone, which provides year-round activities to build life skills and develop leaders, says Oji Eggleston, youth program director at Near West Side Community Development Corp.

The health center, after-school programs and tutoring at Perspectives Calumet Middle School have improved student outcomes in math and science, while a partnership with Illinois State University has brought more teachers into the classrooms of Auburn Gresham, according to Monique Dockery, principal of Westcott Elementary School.

Chicago Lawn has also focused on education, according to Mayra Sarabi, parent mentor coordinator at Eberhart Elementary School. They've trained more than 100 parent mentors, supported 24 classroom leaders of the future through the "Grow Your Own Teacher" program, and provided after-school programming to 240 students.

Residents of Englewood have a one-stop shop for employment, financial and credit-improvement services in the newly opened 63rd Street Corridor Center for Working Families, a partnership of Kennedy-King College and Metropolitan Family Services, says Lori Littleton, program supervisor for the latter.

Lissette Castaneda, co-chair of the housing and land-use committee for Logan Square Neighborhood Association, touted her community's grassroots organizing that led to the conversion of a 240,000-square-foot vacant factory building into a hub of green businesses, called the Green Exchange, that supports 1,000 jobs.

The Woodlawn Park development has added nearly 1,000 housing units and 95,000 square feet of transit-oriented retail in that community, said Arvin Strange, program director at the Network of Woodlawn.

In North Lawndale, they're honoring the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. by building 45 units of affordable housing and six retail spaces, according to Katherine Brookins, resident of the Dr. King Legacy Apartments.

And in Washington Park, they've built three community gardens and will begin a new urban farm in 2012, says David Welch, master gardener for Metro Community Outreach. Plus, they're offering a lecture series called, "What's all the fuss about food?"

These projects and many more were recounted in a slide show of hundreds of images from across the city and across the years that the several hundred attendees watched while enjoying food and libations, and listening to Auburn Gresham regulars Johnny Drummer and the Starliters grind out the blues.

[Watch a video of NCP's first 10 years.](#)