BRIGHTON PARK NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

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ANNUAL REPORT 2014 – 2015
BPNC is a community based, nonprofit organization serving a working class neighborhood on Chicago’s Southwest side. BPNC’s mission is to create a safer community, improve the learning environment at public schools, preserve affordable housing, provide a voice for youth, protect immigrants’ rights, promote gender equality, and end all forms of violence.

The Brighton Park Neighborhood Network (BPNN) works to improve the quality of life and to build a support cradle for children, youth, and families in the Brighton Park neighborhood to better career opportunities. BPNN accomplishes its goals by bringing together stakeholders to coordinate resources and programs for youth and families in four key areas: Violence Prevention and Public Safety, Education, Health, and Income/Economic Development. The BPNN meets on a monthly basis to discuss safety issues in the community, organize campaigns to increase violence prevention resources in our community, and develop new strategies to address violence and public safety in our community and Chicago as a whole. Through the BPNN, BPNC and UWMC have already identified four new corporate partners who have invested a total of $250,000 annually in the community to expand BPNC’s and other service agencies’ capacity to serve at-risk youth and their families. The goal of the BPNN is to secure $1,000,000 in annual investments from corporate partners and other sources within five years.
On behalf of the Brighton Park Neighborhood Council, I would like to thank everyone for their support in our organization. We have had many hard fought campaigns this year and thousands of community residents and leaders have risen to the occasion and shown the city that Brighton Park will fight for their rights. Our leaders have battled for public school funding, an elected representative school board, immigrant rights, violence prevention, minimum wage, fair tax, and a minimum wage increase.

BPNC is also proud to be making an impact in the lives of many youth, parents, and families. Hundreds of students are engaged by our community school programs and it is an honor that we are a part of improving their lives and putting them on a path to a higher education. In addition, hundreds of parents’ leaders are in our schools every day learning English, working on their GED, and volunteering in the classrooms to make their school thrive.

BPNC is also honored to work with our numerous institutional partners, services providers, and funders to strengthen the Brighton Park Neighborhood Network, it is through this network that we are developing and strengthening our social service infrastructure to ensure that all families have the supports that they need to be successful.

We are truly blessed to have such hard working staff, leaders, and partners that make this organization thrive year after year. Our growth over the past year has been stellar, and our goal is to continue this growth and reach as many families in Brighton Park and the Southwest side of Chicago as possible.

[Signature]

Patrick Brosnan
Executive Director
BPNC started and led an education equity campaign in the Southwest side of Chicago in the summer of 2015 in response to a Noble Street Charter proposal to build two new charters in the area. One of the proposals was for a new high school in Brighton Park less than a mile from two neighborhood high schools. BPNC held numerous public meetings and transported community members and students to attend CPS meetings in the Southwest side and downtown. The support for neighborhood schools and opposition towards the new charters was unanimous. Students in Brighton Park fought especially hard against the proposal because a new school would result in their schools fighting for money and resources that were already scarce. Furthermore, enrollment district wide had been declining for several years, so there was no need for new schools. Despite thousands of supporters, the CPS appointed board unanimously voted in favor of the charter schools in October. Despite this setback, BPNC continues to work with community schools to ensure proper funding and resources continue to be provided at local public schools and that every student has a fair education. This campaign helped grow the organization by involving hundreds of new members that wanted to fight for public education.
The Brighton Park has only one small neighborhood park, Kelly Park, which is the recreational focal point not only for the 2,500 students that attend Kelly high school, but for the 49,000 community residents. Kelly Park had received little money for improvements over the past forty years. In response to these conditions, BPNC convened a community meeting in August 2011. As a result a core group of community leaders continued to meet with the Chicago Park District and elected officials to advocate for a renovated park. In March 2012, BPNC helped form the Kelly Park Advisory Council (KPAC) to lead the efforts to renovate Kelly Park.

In collaboration with the Chicago Park District, the Brighton Park Neighborhood Council helped raise $1.8 million to construct a new multi-use soccer/football/baseball field and a new play lot at Kelly Park. Additionally, BPNC and the KPAC have co-hosted six community fundraising events in Kelly Park that have raised $16,000 for Kelly Park.

BPNC recently won an award of $75,000 from the Cubs Charities Foundation to upgrade the natural turf baseball diamond, and an award of $25,000 to resurface the two basketball courts. The community is still working to raise an additional $220,000 to install a water spray feature for children. The community sees the renovation of Kelly Park as a fundamental step in its effort to maximize the little park space that it has and to create a safe and positive environment for youth and families to exercise, relax, and have fun together. The new field and playground opened on May 15, 2015 and has been in use by thousands of children and youth.

According to a 2011 Chicago Tribune article, Brighton Park is the most park-poor neighborhood in the city of Chicago at only 10.6 acres of open space. (80% below the Chicago city standard of two acres of open space for every 1,000 people)
BPNC currently has FSCSI partnerships with five neighborhood public schools in the Brighton Park community: Burroughs Elementary, Shields Middle School, Shields Elementary (PreK-4th), Kelly High School, and Davis Elementary. BPNC works in partnership with the school administrators and teachers to provide quality afterschool programs for at risk students at each school through the FSCSI. These programs feature academic support services (remediation and skill-building) focusing on literacy and math. The program design includes the following components: 20-25 at risk students per grade meet for one-hour after school in which they convene with their grade level teachers in a comprehensive program focused on academic improvement. Additionally, these programs support all students of the school, with an emphasis on sustaining participation of at-risk students, and include: mentoring, homework help, computer instruction, science programs, mixed sports programs, school-based counseling and case management, social-emotional learning supports, mentorship, visual arts instruction, drama and musical performance. 1,100 students were served through our 21st Century grant.

BPNC also provides mental health counseling to 134 students at FSCS. These students receive classroom-based programs that teach them how to avoid high-risk situations like relationship abuse, learn about supports, and practice critical thinking and problem solving skills. Through individual, group, and family counseling sessions, students with identifiable mental health issues; work with the schools and families to coordinate therapeutic interventions, and help families deal with issues related to probation or incarceration, hospitalization, disability, or family separation.

FULL SERVICE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS (FSCS)

BPNC provides comprehensive support for students transitioning from 8th to 9th grade through a range of diverse after school programs that develop student goals, leadership, and college readiness by instilling a college culture at an early age. Each year, Paso a Paso provides Freshmen Connection at Kelly High School which is a summer transition program for incoming freshmen. In the summer of 2015, 317 incoming 9th graders participated in Freshmen Connection.

To further assist students during the school year, BPNC implemented the College Mentor program at Kelly High School in early 2014. The program employs 10 college mentors that work one on one with academically at risk students. The mentors have daily check-ins with students and provide them with mentorship and tutoring to a case load of 20-25 students each. The freshmen on track rate for the 14-15 school year was 73.4% at Kelly High School. Over 350 students were served through our Paso a Paso program in the 14-15 school year.
BPNC’s Violence Prevention Youth Summit: BPNC youth leaders organized the 5th annual “We are the Key to Change” Youth Summit on Wednesday May 26, 2015. The summit focused on violence prevention issues that face our youth today. The Youth Summit was hosted by the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) CHANCE Program. Youth were provided with a safe place to gain knowledge about issues that are affecting their lives. The Youth Summit was organized by the BPNC Youth Leadership Council (YLC) with the help of BPNC staff. The workshops focused on youth development on the following topics; substance abuse, teen pregnancy, gang violence, decision making, LGBTQ equality, eating disorders, depression, financial literacy, healthy relationships, family communication, and bullying. Over 400 seventh and eighth grade students from community schools participated in the youth summit.

SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

BPNC has a four year track record providing employment and training opportunities for youth through summer employment programs and engaging youth in community-building activities, school-based program supports, and community outreach activities. In 2015, BPNC was awarded the “One Summer Chicago” grant through the City of Chicago. Through this program, BPNC successfully employed 72 youth (ages 16-24) at various work sites throughout the community. Additionally, BPNC engaged youth participants in a series of work readiness and soft skill training. BPNC also received a grant from After School Matters to provide 10 paid summer positions to provide mentors for the Freshmen Connection program at Kelly High School.

PARENT MENTOR PROGRAM

Parent Mentors work side-by-side with teachers to provide additional support to students that face academic challenges. They actively reach out to parents of disengaged students or students with attendance issues with the goal of re-engaging the student and family in school. Parent Mentors work with students four days a week, and come together one morning a week for professional development on topics such as academic training, early childhood development, financial literacy, health awareness, and other topics the parent mentors identify. Through these workshops, parents will develop leadership skills necessary to create positive change in the school and community. The parent mentor program is a win-win for teachers, parents, students, and schools. 97% of teachers who had parent mentors reported that having the support of a parent mentor helps them improve students in reading and/or math. We currently have 40 parent mentors working in the following schools: Burroughs Elementary, Shields Elementary, Shields Middle School, Davis Elementary and Columbia Explorers Academy. This school year, our 40 parent mentors volunteered 9,129 hours in classrooms and supported 1,274 students. 51.5% of students in classrooms with a parent mentor were “On Track.” 46% of academically at-risk students working with parent mentors showed growth in Math (compared to 40% of students not working with a PM). 54% of academically at-risk students working with parent mentors showed growth in Reading (compared to 51% of students not working with a parent mentor).
The BPNC Housing team has been hard at work helping many families keep their homes. The Gasca family came in to BPNC for help because they began having to suffer financially due to illness and not being able to work. Furthermore, they were victims of a housing scam in which they were counseled by another to become delinquent on their mortgage in order for them to receive a loan modification.

The family went 12 months on their loan because they were told it was a requirement for them to be delinquent on their loan in order to receive a modification. Despite these obstacles, the housing team helped the family receive a permanent loan modification under the Making Home Affordable Program with an interest rate of 2 percent.

The BPNC housing team helps hundreds of families keep their homes each year and provides additional financial services to improve the quality of life for low income families in Brighton Park.

BPNC is a HUD-approved counseling agency that offers foreclosure prevention, pre-purchase, and post-purchase counseling. Between 2014-2015, BPNC's efforts resulted in a **48% success rate for foreclosure prevention clients**. BPNC had:

- 775 families in housing counseling
- 275 clients applied for principal forgiveness
- $3,798,359 in principal forgiveness for approved clients
- Financial Services served over 8,500 clients
In the past nine months, BPNC has developed a new school-based program serving the extremely low income, homeless or near-homeless families in the Brighton Park community. Our programmatic goals include: providing 100 families and their children case management services that connect them to all basic needs services, counseling and health care, financial planning, and workforce development. Currently, **BPNC engages 79 adults/families and 144 children in this program** at Brighton Park Elementary, Burroughs Elementary, Shields Elementary, and Shields Middle School.

With support from the Seimer Institute and United Way of Metropolitan Chicago, BPNC has implemented the Success and Sustainability Program (SSP) to address the increasing needs of homeless, near-homeless, and economically insecure families in Brighton Park. The Success and Sustainability program provides comprehensive case management services and financial coaching to help families (at risk of homelessness) find stable housing, increase financial stability, and reduce student mobility.

**LIHEAP - Gas & Light bill assistance**
- Over 4,000 families were enrolled in LIHEAP assistance in 2015
- The average LIHEAP assistance was $450-550 per family.

**TAX SITE**
- 478 families received free tax services in 2015
- The tax site generate $890,067 in refunds for families in need.

**COMMUNITY HEALTH & WELLNESS**
- Over 1,200 parents engaged in health workshops
- Nearly 700 residents were enrolled into a Marketplace or Medicaid plan
- 1,379 people were enrolled in SNAP

**IMMIGRATION SERVICES**
- BPNC staff assisted in 14 citizenship workshops for community residents
- Over 600 completed the citizenships application process

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**LETTER FROM SSP CLIENT**

I just wanted to thank you very much for the help you give me and my family. Don’t know how much thank you’s I can say. I thought I was never going to make it out of the hole I was in. I did not know how I was going to do it for my kids. Scared and upset everyday thinking how I was going to do it.

I had you in my heart. An Angel from heaven to help us. Christmas was a Christmas too. The faces my kids had was price less. I thought Christmas was going to be bad, but thanks to my Angel that you are for me. Thank you very much to everyone that helped us. God bless all.
BY THE NUMBERS

2014 - 2015

FINANCES

FY 14 based on audited data
FY 15 based on preliminary unaudited data

[Bar chart showing the finances for 2014 and 2015]
FUNDERS

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois
Woods Fund of Chicago
Wieboldt Foundation
Marquette Bank
NCLR
Speh Family Foundation
CLOCC
SEIU
Hedge Funds Care
Field Foundation
Elizabeth Morse
Polk Bros Foundation
McDougal Foundation
United Way Metropolitan Chicago
LISC
ISBE 21st Century
Teen REACH
IHDA
CPS
Choose Respect
Say it Out Loud
ICJIA
OVW
CEDA
DCEO
Mesirow Financial
Chicago Community Trust

PARTNERS

United Way of Metropolitan Chicago
Illinois State Board of Education
Illinois Department of Human Services
City Colleges of Chicago
Chicago Public Schools
Columbia College Chicago
Scientists for Tomorrow
Chicago Department of Child and Family Services
Northeastern Illinois University
Loyola University of Chicago
Heartland Human Care Services
Gads Hill Center
Center for Economic Progress
Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights
National Council of La Raza
Illinois Housing and Development Authority

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