

Partnership Update

news and information from The Partnership for New Communities

New initiatives to “help people support themselves” for life Leaders gather to announce Opportunity Chicago, expand resident job opportunities

Opportunity Chicago, an employment program launched in February, promises to “help people support themselves – not just for a year or two, but for life,” predicts to Mayor Richard M. Daley. Daley announced the program at a press conference with Chicago Housing Authority CEO Terry Peterson and a number of civic leaders, including Partnership Advisory Committee Co-Chair Jonathan Fanton, President of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

Opportunity Chicago features career-focused job preparation and placement activities aiming to reduce barriers to employment for 5,000 public-housing residents over the next five years. Many will utilize the program’s services to obtain employment so that they qualify to live in new Plan for Transformation communities.

(continued on page 2)

Cabrera of Cabrera Capital to join Partnership Advisory Committee



The Partnership is pleased to welcome Martin Cabrera, Jr., President of Cabrera Capital Markets, Inc. (CCM), to the Advisory Committee.

Cabrera’s Chicago-based investment banking and institutional brokerage firm has underwritten over \$55 billion of municipal bond transactions and maintains a broad spectrum of clients. CCM holds a seat on the Chicago Stock Exchange and is a leader in institutional brokerage for public and corporate pension funds.

Cabrera serves on the Regional Board of Directors for the Bond Market Association. He was also appointed to serve on Governor Blagojevich’s and Attorney General Madigan’s Corporate Corruption Committees. In 2004, he was named one of the 100 Most Influential Hispanics by Hispanic Business Magazine.

His civic involvement includes service on the boards of the New America Alliance, as co-chair of the Pension Fund Initiative; The League of United Latin American Citizens of Midway Council; Northern Illinois University Alumni Association; Illinois Council on Economic Education; and the Chicago Scholarship Foundation. He is also a volunteer for the Mid Town Boys Center, the Chicago Public Schools “Principal for a Day” program, St. Pancratius Church, the Salvation Army, and the Boy Scouts of America.

Retail representatives eye Chicago’s underserved markets

First-ever Chicago Grocer Expo offers opportunities, incentives to grocers, others

City officials welcomed over 50 retail representatives to the City’s first ever Grocer Expo at the Hyatt Regency on February 14.

Co-sponsored by The Partnership, the event sought to make representatives aware of retail opportunities throughout the city, especially those with no major-player grocers and few retail options.

(At right) Expo attendees spoke with City staff members about specific development sites around Chicago. (See story on page 2)



Initiative Improves access to family self-sufficiency (from page 1)

"When we began the Plan for Transformation, we pledged to transform not only buildings, but also lives, giving people the opportunity to build better futures for themselves and their families," Daley explained. "A major part of that commitment was to provide job training to those who need it. Already, more than 6,000 residents have found good jobs through these efforts. But we want to do better." The Mayor also cited The Partnership's \$1.4 million support of projects that have improved CHA residents' access to economic and job opportunities.

The Partnership is also contributing to the Opportunity Chicago effort through a major Workforce Development Initiative that will expand employment and educational opportunities for public-housing residents through a collaborative strategy involving the Chicago Housing Authority, the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development, The Partnership, and others.

In January, The Partnership convened a group of strategic advisers, including experts and leaders in the workforce development field, who will meet regularly to guide the Initiative, which uses strategic collaboration among government agencies, workforce development experts and providers to expand programming that will help public-housing residents obtain long-term, family-sustaining employment.

The Partnership recently received a \$500,000 investment in the Initiative from the Searle Funds at the Chicago Community Trust. "We are proud to pledge our support of this Initiative and are confident in its ability to expand employment opportunities that more families can access to achieve self-sufficiency," said Terry Mazany, CEO of the Chicago Community Trust.

The Partnership looks forward to sharing more information about the Workforce Development Initiative as progress continues over the coming months.

Partnership-funded research attracts grocer interest (from page 1)

"People of every income and every community need a grocery store," Mayor Daley told Expo attendees. "When Chicagoans travel outside of the city to shop for groceries and other needs, it hurts our community revitalization efforts. We need businesses that can service our communities."

Efforts to attract these businesses, city officials say, will include the use of tax incentives and job-training assistance, among others.

The need for outreach to grocers and retailers became clear with the late-2005 release of Metro Chicago Information Center's *Chain Reaction* research, which concluded that a commercial desert spans Chicago's South Side, leaving many communities without access to grocery stores and other retail options, but also offering attractive market opportunities to retailers.

One finding of MCIC's research suggests that mixed-income communities will help bring retailers to these neighborhoods, as the study found that communities with higher incomes have greater access to grocers and retailers.

The *Chain Reaction* research also generated dialogue among local public officials, policy makers, developers, retailers, and community stakeholders about the need for access to affordable, healthy food in low-income and minority communities.

One outcome of this dialogue was a call from the City Council for the formation of the Chicago Grocery Access Task Force, a group of private-sector, research, planning and community experts.

The group has recommended several courses of action to the City, including identifying a range of quality grocery stores that differ in size, scale, design, and target market; developing a strategy for better land-use planning to attract grocery stores to low-access areas and elsewhere; and developing stronger market analyses for underserved communities.

The group also requested The Partnership's continued involvement in building awareness about economic revitalization opportunities in transforming communities.

As a follow up to the Chain Reaction research, MCIC has recently released **Chain Reaction Scores** by Chicago community area. **To see how your community compares, visit:**
<http://info.mcfol.org/www/Datainfo/hottopics/communitydevelopment/CHAINREACTIONfollowup.asp>

Rockwell Leadership Network successfully connects residents to work

Near West Side program enlists Leadership Fellows to work with job-seekers

Over the course of the first phase of the Rockwell Leadership Network's Job Seekers program, 64 Leadership Greater Chicago (LGC) Fellows and their associates contributed an estimate 590 volunteer hours, providing direct service through the Job Seekers network and serving as planning committee members.

A number of prospective residents of the West End mixed-income community are currently pursuing career or educational goals thanks to the program, the first phase of which concluded in December.

Nearly 60 community residents participated in at least one workshop offered by the Rockwell Job Seekers Network, which provided participants with activities like workplace tours; mock interviews; instruction on interviewing, resume writing, managing time, and other topics; basic computer literacy skills; mentoring; and job placement through the Marcy-Newberry Association and the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL).

Of these participants, 9 are currently employed, 7 are in school, and 3 are actively seeking employment through CAEL and Marcy-Newberry connections. Fifteen of these 19 successful participants are members of families who are eligible to apply for residency in the West End mixed-income community. In order to move in, West End's residents will need to meet certain criteria, including 30 hours of employment/education per week, good credit, and a clean criminal background.

In addition, approximately 90 fellows and associates attended educational programs including two sessions on workforce development and a Fall 2005 economic development tour, from which there emerged interest in two commercial opportunities in the West End community.

Rockwell Leadership Network is a Partnership-supported project developed by Leadership Greater Chicago and Marcy-Newberry Association to help families meet the criteria to move in to the new West End Community. For more on Leadership Greater Chicago, visit www.lgcchicago.org. For more on Marcy-Newberry Association, visit www.marcy-newberry.org.

No one size fits all for job seekers in West End community

Rockwell Leadership Network's Job Seekers Network prepared resident job-seekers for work through personal activities like a trip to Bottomless Closet where participants like Cruleatha Hampton, shown here, could choose pieces of professional attire to keep and wear for club activities and interviews.



The Rockwell Leadership Network organized activities designed to connect Cruleatha and other community residents to different career and educational paths. The Job Seekers Network also gave participants tools for improved success in their searches for employment and educational opportunities.

Corridor clean-up improves lives, landscapes in Quad Communities



Cleanslate Chicago interns (shown above with a truck that features The Partnership's support of the program) will contribute to beautification efforts around the Cottage Grove Avenue corridor in the Quad Communities through activities like cleaning sidewalks and vacant lots (as shown below).



Quad Community Development Corporation's campaign to upgrade the Cottage Grove commercial district kicked off with a rallying cry from an energetic group of Cleanslate Chicago interns who will contribute to neighborhood beautification efforts through activities like cleaning sidewalks and vacant lots in the area.

The Cleanslate program, announced February 15 at Cottage Grove and 47th Avenues, will address some of the concerns residents, business owners and prospective retailers have raised about the cleanliness and attractiveness of the Cottage Grove corridor.

"We would like existing and prospective business owners to feel a sense of ownership and connection to the community, and we hope that cleaning and enhancing Cottage Grove Avenue and other commercial streets will attract more residents to patronize local businesses," says Bernita Johnson Gabriel, director of QCDC's New Communities Program.

In addition to ensuring a cleaner commercial district, the program will also ensure 16-20 new jobs over the course of a year for Quad Communities residents. Cleanslate recruits at-risk individuals from the community who are looking to achieve real, lasting success through training, job placement and critical supportive services. All Cleanslate interns will be initially deployed in the Quad Communities for at least two months before they are ultimately placed in family-sustaining jobs with benefits and career tracks in a wide variety of industries.

"The synergy of this community partnership is exactly what The Partnership is all about," explains Partnership Executive Director Maria Hibbs. "This project combines QCDC's efforts to improve the economic viability of this community through beautification activities with efforts to improve the lives of the Cleanslate interns who will use their work on this project as a springboard for personal development." Many of the Cleanslate interns were connected to jobs with the project through the Center for Working Families at the Abraham Lincoln Centre, which also receives Partnership support.

The Cleanslate program is part of QCDC's Partnership-funded Cottage Grove Commercial Revitalization Initiative, which seeks to improve the community's retail shopping, entertainment, and office environment. Other projects associated with the Initiative include beautifying the corridor with art installations created by local young artists and marketing vacant land to experienced developers for commercial, mixed-use development.

For more information on QCDC, visit them online at www.qcdc.org.

CHA program to highlight private-sector support of Plan

"A Better Place", the 30-minute cable access television program produced by the Chicago Housing Authority, will showcase the MacArthur Foundation's role as an important partner in the Plan for Transformation. The program will specifically focus on MacArthur's support of the service connector program, as managed by The Community Builders, at Oakwood Shores.

The program, which airs every evening through March 14, at 9:00 p.m. on Chicago's channel 49, tells the stories of public-housing residents as they transition to new mixed-income communities.

The program will also feature an interview with Partnership Advisory Committee Co-chair and MacArthur President Jonathan Fanton. The MacArthur Foundation is one of The Partnership's valued investors and partners in transformation.

New Center for Working Families opens in Mid-South community

The new Partnership-funded Center for Working Families at the Abraham Lincoln Centre celebrated its grand opening on March 2 at the center's Mid-South Side location, 3858 S. Cottage Grove.

The reception gave sponsors and partners an opportunity to tour the facility and learn about the services and resources available to North Kenwood, Oakland, Douglas, and Grand Boulevard community residents.

Partnership Executive Director Maria Hibbs spoke to the gathering about the important role that the CWF plays in ensuring a balanced and thriving community. "Preparing residents for work and helping them to secure good, long-term employment is fundamental to our continuing effort to strengthen families, neighborhoods and our city," she explained.

CWF's on the Mid-South and Near West Sides are made possible by a Partnership grant to the Local Initiatives Support Corporation. The Centers offer an integrated set of services designed to increase families' incomes and reduce "money draining" behavior while they gain work experience and acquire the skills necessary to compete for higher-wage jobs.

For more information, visit www.labelink.org.

The Partnership for New Communities

Civic Leadership for Chicago's Neighborhoods

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The Partnership for New Communities is a funders collaborative bringing together business, civic and philanthropic leaders to solicit funds and invest them in strategic economic development, community-building and employment-related initiatives to bring about large-scale improvements to the neighborhoods most affected by public-housing transformation in Chicago.

The Partnership Update is published regularly by The Partnership for New Communities to provide information on a variety of topics, including status reports on the CHA's Plan for Transformation, updates on The Partnership's activities and projects, highlights of relevant research findings and copies of recent news coverage.

The Partnership for New Communities
312.616.6680 *phone*
111 East Wacker Drive, Suite 1400
Chicago, IL 60601

www.thepartnershipfornewcommunities.org