



# ROGERS PARK COMMUNITY COUNCIL

July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2007

Rogers Park Community Council is proud to present its annual report for the year beginning July 1, 2006 and ending June 30, 2007.

## Housing Action

## Victim Advocacy & Support

## Youth Career Development Center

## Youth Intervention

## Senior Initiatives

## Community Awareness & Pride

The year was filled with momentous occasions, both happy and sad. The Community Council reached its 55<sup>th</sup> birthday this year, still growing and taking on new challenges. RPCC's executive director Cary Steinbuck, after guiding and directing this institution for 21 years, decided to launch herself into a new adventure - she was named the Executive Director of the City of Chicago Low Income Housing Trust Fund as of May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2007. Her time here was one of unprecedented growth, building new partnerships and expanding existing ones, and she leaves behind her a history of leadership and commitment that can never be surpassed.

Rogers Park Community Development Corporation, our subsidiary and partner, celebrates its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year.

Rogers Park Community Council was organized in 1952 to improve the quality of life in our neighborhood. For 55 years, we have worked to maintain and improve the great qualities of our special neighborhood. Our history is based on success and assuring that neighbors have a voice in community life. Our programs guarantee that Rogers Park remains a community of choice.

On behalf of the Rogers Park Community Council, I want to thank all of the people who made this year a success for our community and for our organization.

Sincerely,

Roy T. Witherow  
President

# HOUSING ACTION PROGRAM

**Maintaining and improving the quality of housing in Rogers Park to insure that safe and affordable homes are available.**

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**During the year of July 1 2006 through June 30, 2007, Housing Action Program . . .**

**Targeted 33 buildings with problems of deterioration and unsafe housing (32% increase).**

**Advocated in housing court or administrative hearings on 23 housing cases.**

**Through these activities, 8 buildings met community standards and Chicago Building Codes – 518 units were improved providing safe housing to 1295 individuals.**

**Provided individual technical assistance to 32 owners/managers.**

**Presented 11 workshops on building management, tenant organizing and landlord/tenant issues.**

of deterioration and or management.

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**HISTORY.** Established in 1967, RPCC's housing conservation program was the first of its kind in the City of Chicago. Through community activism and intervention, problem buildings are seen as clients and specific plans are developed to improve the buildings. Plans range from providing technical assistance to a new owner who doesn't understand the long range consequences of delayed maintenance, to referring a deteriorated and poorly managed building to the city's Troubled Buildings Initiative or to the Drug & Gang House Enforcement Section of the City of Chicago's Law Department

**BACKGROUND.** Housing Action Program receives 5 to 7 calls a day for assistance with housing problems. Many times the complaints are about an unhealthy living environment -- including broken doors, lack of heat or water and cracking plaster. Other times the calls are in regard to management problems including criminal and drug activity in or around a building. Solutions to housing problems are developed with tenant, landlord and community input. Advocacy services include intervention with management -- many times initiating city inspections and advocating with Chicago Building Department and Housing Court.

Rogers Park's housing stock is 70 to 75% rental -- much was built in the 1920's. Without constant attention, buildings deteriorate; unsafe and hazardous housing results; and eventually, abandonment and displacement will occur. Sales of properties result in substantially higher rents -- thereby increasing displacement. Sixty percent of Rogers Park's housing stock is composed of one-bedroom and 1-room studio apartments. With an average of 2.5 persons living in each unit, housing is crowded. Safety in our housing is essential for the families who live here. Unsafe buildings are targeted because of serious problems

## **Targeted Buildings and Management.**

One of the bigger issues the Housing Action Program has dealt with in this past year is an increasing number of condominium sales to investors, which creates a pool of tenants who, although they share a common building, are now paying rent to, and requesting repairs and maintenance from, individual owners. In many cases, these owners have failed to form condo associations, and are not even in touch with one another, so when problems occur that affect the whole property, there isn't one "go to" person who can be expected to respond, as there would be with a landlord or maintenance person. These maintenance problems occur often, as the condo sales are often made with little or no upgrade or rehab of the building. This appears likely to be an increasingly common phenomenon, and with condo sales being impacted by the slow market, we are expecting that it will

continue to cause problems for tenants. We are also starting to see foreclosures in many of these properties, which is likely a result of sub-prime loans. If the foreclosures go through, tenants will be kicked out of their apartments, as the usual practice in Chancery Court at the completion of a foreclosure is to give the foreclosing institution or lender an order of possession which is immediately enforceable. The pictures below show conditions in just one of the many buildings we have identified that are in this situation.



**Tenant and Resident Advocacy.** Many of the calls we receive on an average day require answers to basic tenants right questions, referrals for legal assistance, information about low-cost housing or other one-time responses. Other calls, however, are more complicated and require intervention with landlords, neighbors, other tenants and city representatives. One of the more common calls regards utility services that have been posted for shut-off. Officials cannot legally intervene until the service is actually suspended; tenants who contact us about postings are usually surprised and dismayed to discover that the courts can't act right away. We do, however, contact the management and/or owners and try to encourage them to arrange payment plans to ensure that the service is not disconnected. When that isn't successful, we will work with tenants to pool their rent and pay the bill themselves, a legal step allowed under the Chicago Residential Landlord-Tenant Ordinance (RLTO). As a last resort, we can arrange for tenants to meet with attorneys who will file a lawsuit seeking a receiver as soon as the service is actually disconnected.

We also work with individual tenants, or groups of tenants from a single building, who have maintenance issues that aren't being resolved. Frequently a letter from RPCC is enough to make a landlord respond. When that does not result in violations being corrected, tenants are encouraged to make use of the RLTO provisions that allow them to make the repair themselves and deduct the cost from their rent or withhold a portion of their rent until the landlord makes the repair. In almost every case, this results in solutions that are good for the tenants and also encourage landlords to pay attention to these requests in the future before they become major issues.

RPCC has also joined with other housing advocacy organizations in the Rogers Park Ad Hoc Rental Committee, which has sent a goal of educating tenants about their rights and responsibilities, through workshops and informational flyers. Future plans of this collaborative effort include an in-depth survey of community tenants to begin to create a database of actual tenant experiences with rental costs, maintenance concerns and overcrowding.

This year, we have also begun a new program providing resources and support for new condominium owners in the neighborhood. Through our series of workshops, starting last March, we brought in speakers to provide thoughtful and experienced advice on issues ranging from how to elect a board, what new owners should expect from a developer at turnover, how to set rules and regulations, and what a condo board can do to enforce and collect assessments and fines for violations of the by-laws and rules.

# VICTIM ADVOCACY SUPPORT PROGRAM

*Reducing the impact of violence by providing support, advocacy and education to survivors of violent crime.*

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**1,268 individuals were referred to VASP by the Chicago Police Department.**

**VASP was successful in making contact with 756 survivors of violent crimes and provided crisis counseling and follow-up services (60%).**

**5,328 hours of crisis intervention counseling and court advocacy services were provided.**

**232 Orders of Protection through court advocacy were obtained**

**Locks and/or doors were replaced in 10 homes within 24-hours of a domestic violence incident utilizing the 24<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> District CAPS lock repair programs.**

**BACKGROUND.** The Victim Advocacy Support Program (VASP) began in 1985 as a community-based resource for survivors of all violent crimes. VASP provides crisis intervention counseling, criminal justice advocacy, assistance with filing applications for crime victim compensation, transportation to court proceedings, and referrals to long-term, follow-up services.

**CRIMINAL JUSTICE ADVOCACY.** In 1993, VASP developed "Intervention, Information, and Advocacy," a collaborative program to better serve survivors of domestic violence. In partnership with the Chicago Police Department - 24<sup>th</sup> District, Between Friends, and the Council for Jewish Elderly (CJE) Victim/Witness Program, domestic violence victims who have needed police intervention now receive follow-up services. Our programs work collaboratively -- not competitively.

By police order, every time the police are called to a domestic incident a referral card is completed. VASP advocates pick up the referral cards each business day, making contact with the survivor and offering services. Our program provides the individual with information on his or her rights and the opportunity to utilize the criminal justice system to stop future incidents of violence. In 2002, VASP was invited by the Chicago Police Department's 20<sup>th</sup> District (Edgewater / Uptown) to expand its services.

**BUILDING SAFE BLOCKS.** In partnership with the Chicago Police Department's 24<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> District community policing advisory committees (CAPS), a new program was established to assist survivors of violent crime. The Domestic Violence Lock Repair Program provides the funds necessary to hire a contractor to replace locks and doors. The project is funded through CAPS with a grant received from the Allstate Foundation.

SORINA\* says that to understand the story of how she became a survivor of domestic violence, you have to hear her story from where it began, with family—or, in her case, the lack thereof. "If you don't have good family from childhood, you end up like me," she says.

Born in Romania, she remembers her home being a place where what was said was never what really was. Emotions were buried, problems unresolved, difficult topics glossed over. "If you've got a problem, you don't talk about it—you just keep it to yourself," she says.

Throughout her childhood, Sorina had a lot to keep to herself. She was tormented by other students for not speaking English well, and later, for maturing early. Then, she remembers, "The abuse went to a place that I thought was safe—home."

Her cousin used to babysit her. While he was watching her, he would watch pornographic movies. Then he

started acting out these sexual acts on her. "I would try to run away from him, but he would catch me. I don't know if I should blame alcohol, 'cause he was always drunk." A long pause. "It was horrible."

Sorina couldn't tell her parents what was happening to her, since when it came to abuse in her family, silence was the only acceptable coping mechanism. She would go to school and lie to her teachers about her injuries, saying she had fallen down the stairs, afraid that telling the truth would only lead to more abuse. But one day, she couldn't take the pain anymore—the day before, her cousin had burned her with cigarette ashes. She told the teacher, and the teacher told her to go home, everything will be okay. Sorina told her mom that she might be pregnant because her cousin had raped her. Not only did her mother not believe her, but she gave this cousin money so he could flee the country.

“I just kept going, kept going, kept going.” Then, after a while, she says she went crazy—but not from the abuse itself, but rather from its eventual absence. “I was so used to the abuse and the hate, that when it stopped, I went nuts, ‘cause I thought, ‘Nobody has hurt me, nobody has touched me. Are they planning something? Or have I gone to heaven? Have I died?’”

Sorina turned to drugs and self-mutilation to get away from it all. She says she didn’t have money for pot, so she would crush medicines and snort the powder. She also started cutting her arms. Eventually she became suicidal. She was admitted to a hospital, and says she learned how to relax, and that it’s okay to cry. But she couldn’t clear her mind of the horrific experiences of her childhood, and couldn’t prevent the pattern of recurring abuse that followed.

As she got older, Sorina had a hard time dating. “I was known as looking for bad boys, I guess, but to me they were not bad boys. That’s what I was used to: The abuse. The hate. The drugs.”

Sorina met Raymond during her senior year of high school. “In the beginning he was sweet,” Sorina says. After seeing him for a while, she saw the real him. “He’s like woo this and woo that, but once you’re alone, all he cares about is what’s between your legs. And he is very controlling.”

By then she’d had enough bad relationships, she says, that she knew the signs, and they were all there. “But did I get out? No. I thought, you’re supposed to stay by your man, accept all the girls he’s having sex with, all the affairs, the name calling.” Then one of her friends came to her, saying Raymond had tried to have sex with her. “I’m like, ‘I’ve heard it all, there’s nothing new you can tell me.’”

Finally, she confronted him about one of his girls, even though she was afraid that he might hurt her. “He didn’t touch me,” she says. Instead, he had the girl beat her up. “Did I walk away? No, ‘cause he kept saying, ‘I’m so sorry, she’s not my girl, you is.’”

Soon after, Sorina got very sick and went to the hospital. She was told that she had gonorrhea and other STD’s, and that she was also a couple months pregnant. “He’s like, ‘What do you want me to do about it? You want to move in or something?’”

But she was skeptical about living with him. Whenever she would go to his house, their friend Joey would be waiting outside. “When I’d go to go in, he’d say ‘Let’s take a little walk.’ Then I’d say, ‘Lemme guess—he’s with another woman and doesn’t want me to see?’ And he’d say yes.”

She admits that up until that point, she had been in denial about the pregnancy, about what it would mean for their relationship. She decided she wanted an abortion. When she told him, she says, he told her, ‘I’ll show you what a real abortion is.’ Then he raped her.

She got the abortion. Soon after, she got pregnant again. This time Raymond argued that the baby couldn’t be his, and accused her of having sex with Joey, saying he was the father. Then he threatened to blow up her house. “I was too scared to go to police station and tell them this guy threatened me,” she says.

Sorina was too scared to talk to the police, and she knew she couldn’t talk to her family. But she decided it was time to talk to somebody, and she started going to counseling. “It has helped me in becoming a woman, to learn that you have the right to make a decision, you have the right to choose your friends.”

One choice she made was to give Raymond another chance. He said he had changed his life and wanted to see her. “I said, ‘okay, cool.’ Then it started again, him having sex with other girls, saying I’m talking about him behind his back.”

On June 14 he threatened her again—only this time, she went to the police. Soon after, Sorina received a phone call from Cristina Nieto, a court advocate with the Victim Advocacy Support Program at the Rogers Park Community Council. After talking with Nieto, Sorina decided she would go to court with her and get a civil order of protection. It wasn’t long before Raymond violated the order, an offense that landed him in jail until their court date.

Sorina was nervous about going to court, but was reassured to have Nieto there to support her. “I didn’t know he had a history of domestic violence until court,” Sorina says. “He has five baby mamas, and if I actually carried his baby, I would have been the sixth.”

Nervous about her next court date, Sorina asks Nieto if he’ll have his girlfriends at court with him again. Nieto says he can if he wants to, anyone can come. Sorina recalls, “I used to come when he had court with other womens, but then I said not anymore.”

In fact, there isn’t a lot Sorina is willing to put up with anymore. She says. “I’m not letting anyone put me down again. I protect myself, and I would protect another woman with my whole body, for them not to have to go through what I had to go through, and what I survived.”

*\*All names changed in the interest of privacy.*

# SENIOR INITIATIVES PROGRAM

*Supporting a senior's choice to live independently and remain in Rogers Park.*

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**Provided comprehensive services to Rogers Park seniors, including 383 referrals to agencies and organizations for additional services.**

**Repaired 22 homes of seniors by installing safety equipment and making minor repairs.**

**Offered a small computer lab and training program to seniors providing 185 instances of computer access.**

**Assisted seniors to complete 82 applications for services and benefits.**

**Provided 84 miscellaneous service including mediation, research and letter writing.**

**Prepared six notices of senior programs and services community-wide.**

**Sponsored 2 workshops with Chicago Department on Aging to explain Medicare Part D.**

**Organized 3 social gatherings for seniors including an intergenerational event with Howard Area Community Center**

**BACKGROUND.** In 1992, Rogers Park Community Council (RPCC) initiated a home-repair program for seniors. Home Repairs for Accessible and Independent Living (H-RAIL) is a City of Chicago sponsored program open to homeowners and apartment dwellers. RPCC utilized its success with housing advocacy to reach out to seniors in the community and provide resources that would allow them to remain in their homes.

Our subsidiary, Rogers Park Community Development Corporation, became a partner in the redevelopment of a 57-unit residential building at 1528 W. Morse Avenue which provides affordable rental housing for individuals aged 55-plus. In September 2001, RPCC located our offices to the ground-level storefront. As part of the partnership, RPCC pledged to bring supportive services to the residents of the building and to the at-large community — and the Senior Initiatives Program (SIP) was born!

In March of 2001, RPCC supported the opening of a wellness center in the 1528 Morse Seniors Building, staffed by the Council for Jewish Elderly. RPCC provided office space and telephone service to the outpost, as well as a small start-up stipend through a grant from the Chicago Department on Aging. Furthermore, RPCC developed an outreach program connecting those seniors to area services.

A database of local senior residents was developed. Through regular mailings and phone calls, seniors are advised of available services, programs and upcoming events. The database has grown to over 1,200 households and was used in 2002 to conduct a survey of 150 senior households. The survey enabled SIP to gather data about specific needs (employment, housing, in-home services, etc.) and develop a profile of the senior community, while providing excellent outreach opportunities.

**COMMUNITY BASED INITIATIVES.** RPCC has a long history of partnering with community agencies to assist our history. During the past year, we continued to collaborate with Council for Jewish Elderly (CJE) and Rogers Park Constituent Service Office to distribute 9-1-1 Cell Phones to seniors. To date in 2006, 46 phones have been distributed to at-risk seniors. RPCC also partners with CJE and other agencies/organizations to distribute information about crime, home and prescription drug safety.

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**SENIOR HOME REPAIRS.** Home Repairs Aiding Independent Living (H-RAIL) repaired 22 homes and apartments benefiting 38 seniors by assessing their needs and making meaningful modifications — including the installation of safety equipment such as grab bars, handrails, smoke detectors and fire extinguishers. Sixty four percent of the repairs were

made in homes of low-income households. Participants ranged in age from 62-89 years old -- the average age of individuals assisted in this program is 72. One hundred percent of the clients were happy with the work done!

**“COLLEEN”** is developmentally disabled but nevertheless bright and energetic, with a penchant for romantic poetry. This 66-year-old was laid off from her longtime job in autumn of 2005 and has been researching employment opportunities on RPCC computers ever since. An afternoon at RPCC’s Senior Technology Resource Center begins for Colleen with some quick updating of her most recent poetic works, followed by email reading and sending, then time inside the job sections of two newspaper websites and assorted employment sites.

“Learning how to use the computer has opened up all kinds of doors,” notes Colleen. “Before I understood how to use email and such, I thought there wasn’t anything in it for me. Boy, was I wrong!” Colleen’s

very favorite website is humdingerzine.com, the very first online publication to accept her work for cyber-print. Through this colorful “e-zine,” Carol accesses writing tips, information about writing contests and of course, the electronic pages of the magazine itself.

At RPCC, Colleen receives ongoing instruction that enables her to continually widen the scope of her knowledge. As of late, Colleen has been busy researching more on-line literary magazines like Humdinger.

Under SIP’s advisement, Colleen recently applied for and began to receive her monthly Social Security pension. She looks forward to supplementing that income with part-time wages.

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Sixty-year-old **“SHARON”** is another SIP client looking for employment, but with untreated moderate to serious mental illness, Sharon’s prospects are few. While SIP staff has been unable to convince Sharon to seek treatment for her illness, Sharon maintains regular contact with SIP for assistance with daily affairs and the search for employment. She uses RPCC office equipment (fax, copier, computer) several times a week. SIP is also able to contact potential employers on Sharon’s behalf, alerting them to her status as a SIP client and answering ads that seem like a particularly good fit considering Sharon’s condition. The benefit inherent in Sharon’s relationship with SIP is not quite tangent but significant nonetheless. If she wasn’t able to connect with staff at RPCC and use the office equipment in her job hunt, Sharon would likely have no place else to go.

**“EDWARD”** is an eccentric 73-year-old ex con who doesn’t like asking people for help. Cut off from the rest of the world, he goes about his daily business by himself, rarely socializing with other residents of his building (1528 W. Morse).

Although his Social Security income provides barely enough to pay for rent, food and utilities, Edward was under the impression that he didn’t qualify for programs like Food Stamps and Medicaid.

SIP assured him to the contrary, but Edward remained doubtful for several months before he finally allowed SIP to file an application on his behalf for IDHS food stamps, Medicaid and cash assistance. Edward qualified for Medicaid and food stamps; the state now also pays his Medicare premium. Edward is an example of someone who has learned to open up at least enough to accept help.

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**“ELSIE”** is a lively, genteel 82-year-old with real Southern charm. A recipient of Section 8 rental assistance, Elsie is looking for a new apartment as her building is set to convert to condos in the next several months. Last fall, Elsie happened to stop in at RPCC out of curiosity; she has been a SIP client ever since. Fortunately, Elsie was already plugged into benefits (food stamps, Medicaid, etc.) before she came around. However, SIP has been able to provide her with useful information on local resources and rental opportunities. As Elsie currently has no phone service, she drops by RPCC frequently to make important calls.

Additionally, RPCC supplied Elsie with an emergency cell phone. Our 9-1-1 cell phone program is a joint effort between Council for Jewish Elderly and the Rogers Park Constituent Service Office (1409 W. Morse). Fully refurbished phones (with extra batteries) are provided free of charge by Ocala, Florida-based RMS Communications. Each phone comes with charger and extra battery. So far in 2006, 42 phones (with printed instructions) have been distributed to at-risk seniors; 9 phones have been given to needy individuals of other ages.

# Rogers Park Community Council

## YOUTH PROGRAMMING

*Supporting youth development by creating educational, recreational and social growth opportunities for youth.*

**Club 137 is an after school program supporting youth development. 96 teens participated in after school education, recreation and social growth activities.**

**60 youth participated in summer jobs funded through After School Matters, the Rogers Park Builders Group and local businesses.**

**100% of summer workers received job and financial literacy training as a result of our new Youth Career Development Program.**

The youth program has expanded over the past year and as a result has created more opportunities for youth to become self sustaining adults. There are two main components of the youth program: Youth Intervention Program and most recently the Youth Career Development Center.

### **Youth Intervention Program:**

Youth Intervention Program (YIP) was established in 1988 to support youth development by creating educational, recreational and social growth opportunities for youth.

After more than five years working with a partner elementary school, Youth Intervention moved to Sullivan High School in the fall of 2004. Sullivan is Rogers Park's only public high school with more than 1200 students calling it their academic home. The success of Sullivan is an important part of Rogers Park's success.

In January 2006, Polk Bros Foundation provided funding to support the hiring of a full-time youth advocate. In April 2006, YIP was awarded a Venture Grant from the United Way of Metropolitan Chicago and was able to expand our Community Service program. The additional resources have been valuable in expanding program delivery to the students of Sullivan High School. YIP was able to recruit and supervise volunteers from Northwestern and interns from Loyola University to work with young people.

YIP works with students, teachers and parents to reach out to those at risk of dropping out. Individual intake and goal planning is completed with each student. YIP assisted 120 youth through after school programs and intervention services. 83% of YIP youth come from low-income families; 52% come from female-headed families.

**Club 137** is the after school program at Sullivan. Named by the students, it was the original room where most YIP activities occurred. Now residing in multiple rooms in Sullivan High School, youth can receive services such as: daily home work assistance, recreational programs, short-term intervention counseling and youth leadership development activities. By year end, it was identified that freshmen and sophomores are at greatest risk of dropping out. YIP organizes activities for students to help improve study skills, creates a support system and the self-esteem necessary to succeed in school. Our goal is to provide freshman and sophomores with special attention during the transition into high school; while ensuring juniors and senior are prepared to make a successful transition out of high school to pursue higher education.

While Club 137 offers a time after school to develop life skills a primary focus of Club 137 is ensuring that youth receive the educational support they need to achieve their service plans. Assistance in completion of homework assignments is a daily activity. By providing them with volunteer tutors from Northwestern and Loyola Universities youth not only receive assistance daily in subjects such as calculus and Spanish but a mentor whom provide the youth insight into a world beyond high school.

**Community Service:** YIP members organize community service projects to meet high school requirements for graduation. Chicago Public School system requires that each student completes 40 Service learning hours over the course of their four years. YIP has partnered with various community and social agencies to help this youth fulfill this requirement.

GoodNews Community Kitchen located on Howard and Paulina serves hot nutritious meals to families, seniors, youth and adults daily. Once a month Club 137 participants assist in the serving of meals, while getting to know their neighbors. Group discussions are held both before and after each trip to help youth and adults express their thoughts and feelings on poverty, homelessness and the causes and possible solutions.

This past June, seven Club 137 members along with three staff members took a trip to New Orleans to help in the rebuilding efforts. Youth raised money via fundraisers, candy sells and generous donations to help pay for expenses during their stay. For many of the youth, this was their first time outside of the Chicago-land area, so were exposed to different culture, way of living and people. They brought back with them a better sense of appreciation for life and a more determined attitude regarding how to change the world they live in to make it better for future generations.



**Tasheena is a senior at Sullivan High School with goals of attending Columbia College to pursue modern dance. In addition to the fact that she “loves being on T.V”, working on Can-TV has helped her cope with the loss of her cousin who was killed as a result of senseless violence. “I want to do this (Can T.V) to help other youth out because I’ve personally lost someone because of gang fighting.” She says discussing violence in an open manner is beneficial because it makes youth “think about their actions” while allowing them to realize that they have other options, and are not alone**

**Can TV:** In association with the Illinois Center of Violence Prevention, youth produced a monthly show regarding violence in their community on Can-TV. It is their responsibility to decide on the topic, do the research, and create a script for the show. Youth are trained to operate the camera equipment and switch duties every month to understand the in’s and out’s of creating a television show.

**SUMMER JOBS.** RPCC's Youth Intervention Program used the desire for summer jobs as part of the design of out of school programming. With the help of local organizations, fundraisers and private donations two types of employment opportunities were created.

Camp IMPACT is our newly developed summer internship transitional program geared for youth who may be too young to receive a job, but have the will and desire to work and are preparing for their first year of high school. Receiving a weekly stipend thanks to the generous donations of local business, fundraisers and private donors, youth were responsible for community beautification, writing articles for the RP2000 and developing you led/ organized workshops discussing a variety of topics that affected them in their community. They worked one on one with mentors and staff dealing with issues that they are currently facing as a result of starting high school. Majority of the youth will be attending Sullivan High School, where because of the summer program, can easily seek support and guidance from staff at Club 137.

Theatre for a Change, in association with After School Matters was a program for youth ages 14-18 that had a strong desire to learn more about acting, directing, and writing. Youth were instructed by local professional actors on how to create a realistic work that shows focus, commitment and respect to the craft. Youth devised their own piece entitled "In my shoes" which highlighted interviews from the community. Dealing with a variety of topics, youth by the end of program were able to create an honest piece depicting real people and how their life is affected both negatively and positively by dwelling in Rogers Park.

## **Youth Career Development Center (YCDC)**

The Rogers Park Community Council Youth Program has added a great new venture in 2007 aimed at satisfying the youth employment gap in Chicago. Awarded the grant in 2007, The Youth Career Development Center is a city-funded program that aims to provide neighborhood youth with different facets of the youth employment process: job-readiness training, job-hunting assistance and providing case management after being placed.

In 2002, the *University of Tennessee Center of Literacy Studies* conducted a study where it surveyed over 300,000 employers asking them what they were looking for in entry level employees. Using this study, the City of Chicago created the backbone of this new program initiative. Six different locations throughout the city were awarded the YCDC grant; including well-known agencies such as the Martin Luther King YMCA and Association House on the West side, Central States SER and St Sabina on the South side and RPCC and Albany Park Community Center on the North side.

## **Training**

Region 1 YCDC first goal is to provide an in-depth, hands-on approach to learning. Many of the lessons involve role playing to get the youth excited and involved in the class. Mock interviews and mental math equations are some of many applied skill activities YCDC incorporates in the training. At the end of each training, a special guest is asked to come to a graduation session where they will interview the youth. The idea is to have them interview with a fresh face and really get used to interviewing with strangers. Students, so far, have done an exceptional job at presenting themselves to an unknown interviewer.

By the end of the year 2007, Region 1 YCDC was able to train a total of 250 students and place 100. During this same time, Region 1 YCDC did satellite trainings with partner non-profit agencies and summer programs; some of these include:

American Indian Center,  
Ethiopian Community Association of Chicago,  
Hamdard Health Center,  
Zam's Hope Community Center,  
Maryville Parenting Center

## **Placement**

The second goal of YCDC is to help place students in entry-level jobs based on relationships youth employment specialist have created with businesses and business owners.. The job developer provides assistance to the youth with the job hunt and is then able to provide job leads based on outreach and relationships. The overall goal is to provide them with lifelong learning skills, which will help them in the future.

Most of the youth are placed in after-school part time employment and/or internships that suit their interests and long-term goals. This summer 37 of YCDC-trained youth were placed in jobs with the Chicago Transit Authority for a seasonal summer position; some were invited to stay to work fulltime after the end of their contract. Other companies that have partnered with YCDC in hiring our trained youth include: Diamond Management and Technology Consultants, Village North Theatre and After-School Matters.

## **What's next?**

The youth program this summer is looking forward to its second instillation of Camp Impact. Hoping to enroll 30 "tweens" during this 8 week long internship, we are currently seeking partnerships from local businesses and organizations to help with the success of the program.

Long term goals include building stronger relationships with employers in the community. If youth see that their community is taking a stake in their learning, long term success can be achieved.

# COMMUNITY AWARENESS & PRIDE PROGRAM

*Increasing knowledge and participation by community residents in neighborhood issues to improve the quality of life in Rogers Park.*

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Rogers Park Community Liaison reached 180 citizens and connected them to State, County and City programs during first four months of new initiative.

RPCC served as the fiscal agent to small organizations that were able to provide alternative health care to women with cancer, the Young Women's Action Team, and the Artists of the Wall Festival.

RPCC celebrated community with Citizen of the Year and Spirit of Rogers Park Awards.

Rogers Park 2000 was distributed to more than 10,000 households each quarter.

Community Awareness and Pride Program (CAPP) is the organizing arm of the Rogers Park Community Council. We work with neighbors and community organizations to identify community problems, develop improvement strategies, and initiate actions that make Rogers Park a great place to live, work and raise a family.

**SUPPORT NEIGHBORHOOD INITIATIVES.** As one of Rogers Park's largest community-based organizations, Rogers Park Community Council serves as a partner and resource for many local initiatives . . .

**ROGERS PARK COMMUNITY LIAISON.** In partnership with Senator Carol Ronen, Representative Harry Osterman and Commissioner Larry Suffredin, Rogers Park Community Council supported the development of a community liaison initiative. Outreach is made to the community – particularly those individuals who are newly-arrived immigrants. As Rogers Park is one of our nation's most diverse communities, we are partnering with community organizations to reach out to residents to connect them to state, city and county services. The liaison has been particularly helpful with the Rogers Park YES initiative, as it was found that more than 33% of the students at our local high school are newly arrived immigrants. Additionally, the liaison worked with RPCC youth programs to recruit volunteers to work with students.

**HEARTWOOD CENTER FOR MIND BODY SPIRIT.** RPCC became a partner in Heartwood's effort to provide alternative holistic care to low-income women living with cancer. RPCC served as fiscal agent for a grant from the Illinois Department of Public Health and with outreach efforts to Rogers Park women. Fifty-five treatments for bodywork, acupuncture and psychotherapy were provided.

**YOUNG WOMEN'S ACTION TEAM.** RPCC is pleased to be able to serve as the fiscal agent for this youth-led, adult supported social change project working to address the issue of violence against women. As part of their work, teen leaders have researched and presented information for their campaign R-E-S-P-E-C-T, a community response to street harassment. Working in partnership with local elected officials, law enforcement and business leaders, the group successfully advocated for better lighting on two main streets and conducted an educational and marketing campaign to raise awareness about the issue of street harassment in Rogers Park. YWAT launched Teen Dating Violence Awareness Week (October 17-23<sup>rd</sup> 2005) which was recognized with a proclamation from Mayor Richard M. Daley. YWAT received recognition at the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Cook County Unsung Heroines Awards Ceremony on March 2, 2006. (They were nominated by Cook County Commissioner, Larry Suffredin.)



More than 700 people attended three community meetings on property tax appeals.

**COMMUNITY ISSUES.** Rogers Park home owners received shocking news when they opened notices from the Cook County Assessor's Office that their 2006 appraisals were approximately 50 to 125% higher than last year. RPCC co-sponsored three informational meetings with Cook County Commissioner Larry Suffredin, Alderman Joe Moore (49<sup>th</sup> Ward) and Alderman Bernard Stone (50<sup>th</sup> Ward) on how to appeal property taxes. The meetings were attended by more than 700 people.

### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENTS

RPCC assessed two sets of developments and provided support. Chicago Greystone Realty sought support for their application to build a total of 12 accessible units in four multi-unit buildings.

However, the support was contingent upon the owner agreeing to a restrictive covenant on each piece of property. The restrictive covenant will grant a 10% set aside for affordable housing in each building should the building be converted to condominiums. The program would need to meet the requirements of the Chicago Department of Housing for affordable housing -- an example is the City of Chicago CPAN program.

RPCC supported Loyola University in their application under the Lakefront Protection Ordinance to develop Loyola Commons. This privately funded \$25 million project will provide improved technology and educational resources for the students of Loyola University. The design is low-rise and utilizes the latest in "green" construction. The physical structure compliments the lake with a glass façade that is almost transparent. Loyola agreed to expand the lakefront pathway to 30 feet – allowing greater access through the campus.

**GALE COMMUNITY PARK.** Nothing good ever comes easily – and the Gale Community Field House is going to be really good. Problems with land transfers, zoning changes, increases in steel costs, as well as changes in construction entities stalled this project for more than five years. RPCC worked collaboratively with Family Matters, Gale Community Leadership Council, Howard Area Community Center and Alderman Joe Moore (49<sup>th</sup> Ward) to develop a full-size community center to the north of Howard area. The goal: bring a 15,000 square foot recreation center to a community in need of additional recreational programming. Senator Carol Ronen and Representative Julie Hamos asked the RPCC to serve as the fiscal agent for a \$700,000 "Illinois First Grant" to be used towards the \$5.2 million dollar construction project. This relationship put the community at the negotiating table. Today, bulldozers are clearing the land and the foundation is being poured! Community partners continue to work together to assure that there will be recreational opportunities for our residents.



Land is being prepared for new Gale School Park Community Field House!

**FACILITATE COMMUNITY INFORMATION.** Rogers Park Community Council celebrated the 10 year anniversary of *Rogers Park 2000* in June, 2006! Quarterly, RPCC prepares and distributes this free community newspaper to 10,000 households. (In December we deliver to every household and business in Rogers Park -- 35,000 copies!) RP2000 is designed to discuss neighborhood issues as well as promote the Community Council, Rogers Park and other community organizations. During the year, 31 volunteers contributed to writing; 55 businesses advertised; and four issues were distributed free at 45 businesses throughout the community!

# MANAGEMENT AND FINANCES

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS.** Rogers Park Community Council is governed by a 27-member board of directors composed of individuals who live and/or work in our neighborhood and who are concerned about the future of our community.

**CONTINUITY.** RPCC's Executive Director Cary Steinbuck celebrated 21 years with the organization, before accepting a position as Executive Director with the City of Chicago Low Income Housing Trust Fund. Two long time staff people, Katy Hogan and Mary Jane Haggerty, have shared the Executive Director position as the board searches for a new ED.

**COST EFFECTIVE.** Eighty-six percent of revenues are directed to community initiatives and program costs. Fourteen percent of revenues are directed to administrative expenses.

**LOCAL SUPPORT.** Rogers Park Community Council is supported through its membership, including local fundraisers and advertising/donations for Rogers Park 2000. During Fiscal Year 2007, Rogers Park Community Council received grants from:

## CORPORATE, FOUNDATION AND UNITED WAY OF METROPOLITAN CHICAGO

- United Way of Metro Chicago
- After School Matters
- Alternatives
- Comcast
- Devon Bank
- LaSalle Bank
- Loyola University
- Polk Brothers
- Rogers Park CDC
- S&C Electric Company
- Walgreen's Foundation
- Washington Mutual

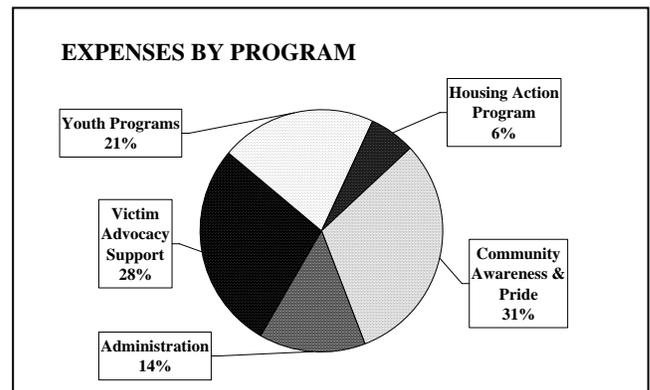
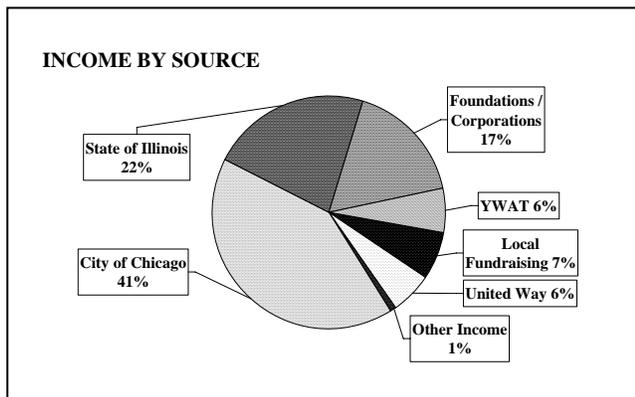
## GOVERNMENT GRANTS

### State of Illinois

- Illinois Attorney General – Violent Crime Victim Assistance Program
- Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority Victims of Violent Crime
- Illinois Department of Human Services
- Illinois Department of Public Health
- Illinois Violence Prevention Authority

### City of Chicago

- Department of Human Services
- Department of Housing
- Department on Aging
- Department of Youth & Children



# ROGERS PARK COMMUNITY COUNCIL

## Board of Directors

July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2007

### OFFICERS

Roy T. Witherow  
President

Cesar Izquierdo  
1<sup>st</sup> Vice President

Jennifer Clark  
2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President

Beth-Charlotte Kovacs  
3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President

Lorraine Dostal  
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Beth-Charlotte Kovacs

Bill Markle

Richard Moran

Amy Scutt

Joyce Shanahan

Norman White

Erick Williams

Patricia Williams

Robert Winston

### STAFF

Cary Steinbuck, Executive Director

Mary Jane Haggerty/Katy Hogan, Interim Co-Directors

Carol Butler -- Bookkeeper

#### Senior Initiative Program

Cathie Bazzon, Associate Director

#### Victim Advocacy Support Program

Amanda Bruscano/Jennifer Caruso, Director

Yvette Ayala, Gloria Lopez, Cristina Nieto

#### Housing Action Program

Mary Jane Haggerty, Director

Carol Goldman, H-Rail Consultant

#### Youth Intervention Program

Norman Polk, Director

LaNisa Frederick

#### Rogers Park Youth Career Development Center

Caitlin Patterson, Coordinator

Shiren Rattigan-Ouni, Victor Valle, Employment Specialists

#### Rogers Park Community Liaison

Katy Hogan