



CHICAGO COMMONS

2008 ANNUAL REPORT

Pathways to Fulfill Hopes and Dreams



**Chicago
CommonsSM**
Building Well-Being.



MEASURING OUR MISSION

Pathways to Fulfill Hopes and Dreams

OUR MISSION

The mission of Chicago Commons is to partner with individuals, families and communities to overcome poverty, discrimination and isolation.

OUR VISION

Chicago Commons will maintain the values of the historical Settlement House Movement by engaging in dialogue with community residents and responding to the communities we serve. Our success will be measured by how well residents achieve the goals they articulate for themselves, their family and their community. We help residents develop shared resources and advocate for social change so that they may prosper through economic development.



OUR VALUES

- We respect and collaborate with people of diverse cultural and economic backgrounds.
- We facilitate learning, empowering people to advocate for themselves, their families and their communities.
- We build upon community assets to increase the skills of its residents.

OUR PROCESS FOR SETTLING INTO NEIGHBORHOODS

- We look, listen and learn
- We create, build and operate programs
- We evaluate and refine our programs
- We expand and replicate our successes



A Message from Chicago Commons

For 114 years, Chicago Commons has helped Chicagoans develop strong neighborhoods and build successful lives. As some neighborhoods have improved, Chicago Commons has shifted its resources to other neighborhoods facing the greatest challenges. Commons' impact is proven. As we look back over the decades, we have watched neighborhoods change and thrive; neighborhoods like Old Town—around our former Olivet Center—and West Town—around our former Emerson House site.

Today, we are turning our energies to neighborhoods facing the greatest economic struggles and increase in violence—neighborhoods such as West Humboldt Park and Back of the Yards. While it may again be a decade or more until the long-term impact is clear, we are already seeing many positive changes and step-by-step improvements in these neighborhoods. We know that we are achieving our mission as we see children entering kindergarten ready to learn; parents becoming engaged in parent councils; teenagers touring and applying to colleges; and adults learning English, gaining their GED or maintaining their homes in old age.

This year, our annual report contains several stories of individuals who have succeeded, as well as related measures of our performance. It shows how individual progress connects to organizational and neighborhood progress. We continue to help lead the human services sector by communicating results and aiming for focused impact. We do this not only to inform and assure funders and supporters, but also to accelerate quality improvements. The more quickly we can recognize our impact and successful strategies as an organization, the sooner we can replicate best practices and learn from mistakes or challenges.

We encourage you to drop us a note or give us your feedback about how we are doing in your eyes. You can email us at info@chicagocommons.org. As always, you are also welcome to come take a tour of Chicago Commons sites in the neighborhoods.

Warmest Regards,

Elizabeth Altman
Board Chair

Dan Valliere
Executive Director



MEASURING OUR MISSION

Pathways Through Our Programs

Chicago Commons' mission and values are deeply embedded in the design of our four core programs (Child Development, Common Ground for Youth, Adult Education and Senior Care), our neighborhood partnerships and our delivery of services. We measure our success not only through our performance against yearly program objectives, but most importantly, through the eyes and voices of the people and neighborhoods we serve. How are we helping residents achieve the goals they articulate for themselves, their family and their community? How are we helping create the pathways they need to fulfill their hopes and dreams?

CHICAGO COMMONS' CHILD DEVELOPMENT

PROGRAM GOAL: Children become active learners, and parents share their voices and engage in their children's education.

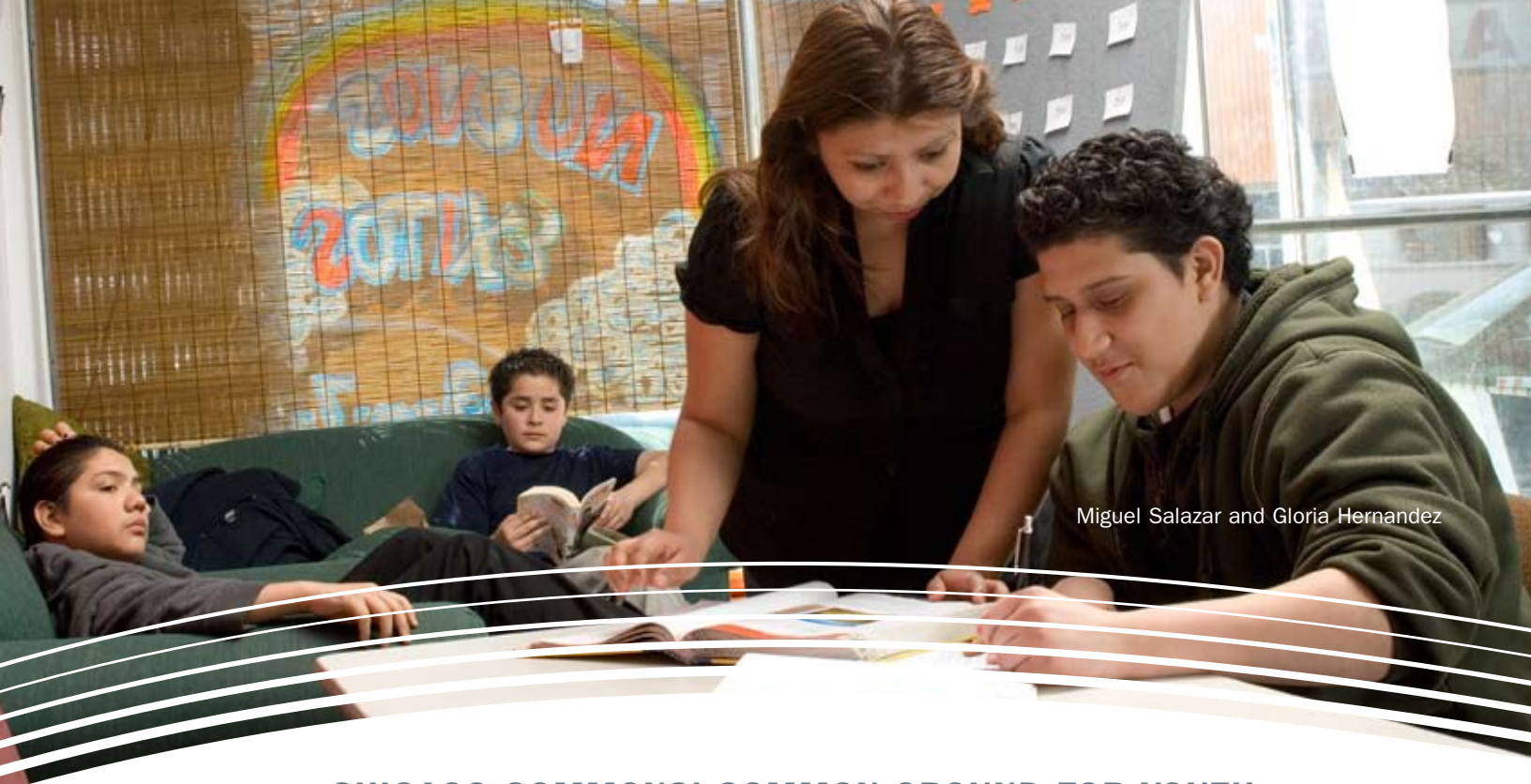
ANGELA ALCALA'S PERSONAL GOAL: To find a structure and a sense of belonging for her and her son Enrique.

ANGELA ALCALA: "I'm not only a single parent. Like many, I have little extended family in the area. Chicago Commons' Paulo Friere Family Center provides that for me and my son. That's what helps the most. Enrique belongs. It really helps him. His self-esteem has shot through the air, and you can see it."

JANICE WOODS, PROGRAM DIRECTOR: "Chicago Commons recognizes the unique perspectives that parents bring to our child development centers. We foster opportunities for their voices to be heard and respected as we encourage them to pursue their personal goals, and the goals that they have for their children."

PROGRAM OUTCOME: 100% of five-year olds successfully started kindergarten. 93% of these children could identify at least ten alphabet letters, understand number concepts and identify shapes.

MORE THAN 250 parents attended the fall and spring parent forums. Our twice yearly teacher conferences have an 80% parent participation rate.



Miguel Salazar and Gloria Hernandez

CHICAGO COMMONS' COMMON GROUND FOR YOUTH

PROGRAM GOAL: Youth develop a passion for learning and a strong sense of their identity, talents and social responsibility.

MIGUEL SALAZAR'S PERSONAL GOAL: Change D's and F's into C's or better.

MIGUEL SALAZAR: "No one has ever paid attention to me like the attention I get at Chicago Commons' Nuevos Exitos program. My father and mother did not know how to help me in school. I thought I was stupid. I thought being in the gang was cool, but now I want to be different."

EDUARDO ANGUIANO, PROGRAM DIRECTOR: "Miguel Salazar comes from a single-parent home. His father is deceased. This school year, Miguel received C's on his first semester report card, a major accomplishment for him and progress he can build on next year. He hopes his brothers will follow his lead and do better in school. He is working to improve his grades through tutoring four days a week in order to make a difference to his family; but most of all, to make a difference to himself."

PROGRAM OUTCOMES: 145 young people developed a passion for learning.

75% of students successfully completed their academic goals. **96%** were promoted to next grade level.





CHICAGO COMMONS' ADULT EDUCATION

PROGRAM GOAL: Adults overcome barriers to education and employment by acquiring essential skills, knowledge and the personal confidence needed to succeed.

MARIA ALCAUTER'S PERSONAL GOAL: Continue her college education and become a licensed domestic violence/substance abuse counselor.

MARIA ALCAUTER: "Thanks to Chicago Commons, my life has taken a 360-degree turn for the better. Since I started attending Commons ETC program, I believe more in myself. Why? Because everyone at Chicago Commons believed in me, and that motivated me to challenge myself even more. I never thought I would ever pass my GED test, and I did. Life is always going to be full of challenges, but if you believe from the heart and don't give up, everything is possible. I am living proof."

TAUHEEDAH ABDULLAH, PROGRAM MANAGER: Maria Alcauter is a survivor of 19 years of domestic violence. Maria feared for her life and was mentally and physically ill from the abuse. She was unable to care for herself or her children, and lived in a domestic violence center for four months. Then she divorced. On the advice of St. Augustine College counselors, Maria came to Chicago Commons for GED preparation. While preparing for the GED, with the assistance of Chicago Commons' staff, she also sought and obtained part-time employment. In September 2008, she passed the GED test. Now she returns as a guest speaker to share her story with other program participants in hopes of providing encouragement and inspiration.

PROGRAM OUTCOME: 63% of adult education students completed one or more education levels during the year.

In FY08, we began enrolling Internet Computer Core Certification (IC3) participants. Our first class of 23 students will finish in 2009.



CHICAGO COMMONS' COMPREHENSIVE SENIOR CARE

PROGRAM GOAL: Elderly community residents, especially those who are frail or chronically ill, are able to continue living at home as long as possible. The families of seniors also receive specialized support to help prevent premature nursing home placements and unnecessary hospitalization.

ADULT DAY SERVICES

CAREGIVER JOHN ODAM'S GOAL: My mother Diane will be loved and well-cared for during the day by dedicated and compassionate staff so that I can go to work without being concerned for her well-being.

DIANE DAVIS: "Chicago Commons gives me the motivation to get up in the morning. I don't like just staying in my house. I like to keep busy, and I enjoy the outings provided by the Center. I have friends—ones who I call my mothers, my sons and my daughters—they are family to me."

BEULAH COHEN, ADULT DAY SERVICES MANAGER: "As our population ages, the need for adult day programs steadily increases. Chicago Commons' Adult Day Care Center has changed from a social gathering place for isolated seniors, to a center that also provides careful and individualized supervision to seniors experiencing dementia and other mental and physically degenerative disabilities."

HOMECARE SERVICES

EDRIENNE BRADLEY: "After cancer surgery, I was very ill, with little family support. I couldn't care for myself. I was withdrawn, and stopped eating and was waiting to die. Then Chicago Commons sent me a home care aide who came every day to help. Now I can care for myself. Chicago Commons' Homecare Services and my home care aide are my lifeline. I never want to be disconnected from them."

DIANE FOUNTAIN, HOMECARE SERVICES MANAGER: "Chicago Commons' Homecare Services support seniors in their homes so they may prolong their quest for independence and dignity as they continue living comfortably and safely at home."

PROGRAM OUTCOMES: 1,050 senior and disabled residents received services. 95% of seniors were able to continue living in their homes throughout the year.



MEASURING OUR MISSION

Pathways Through Community Building

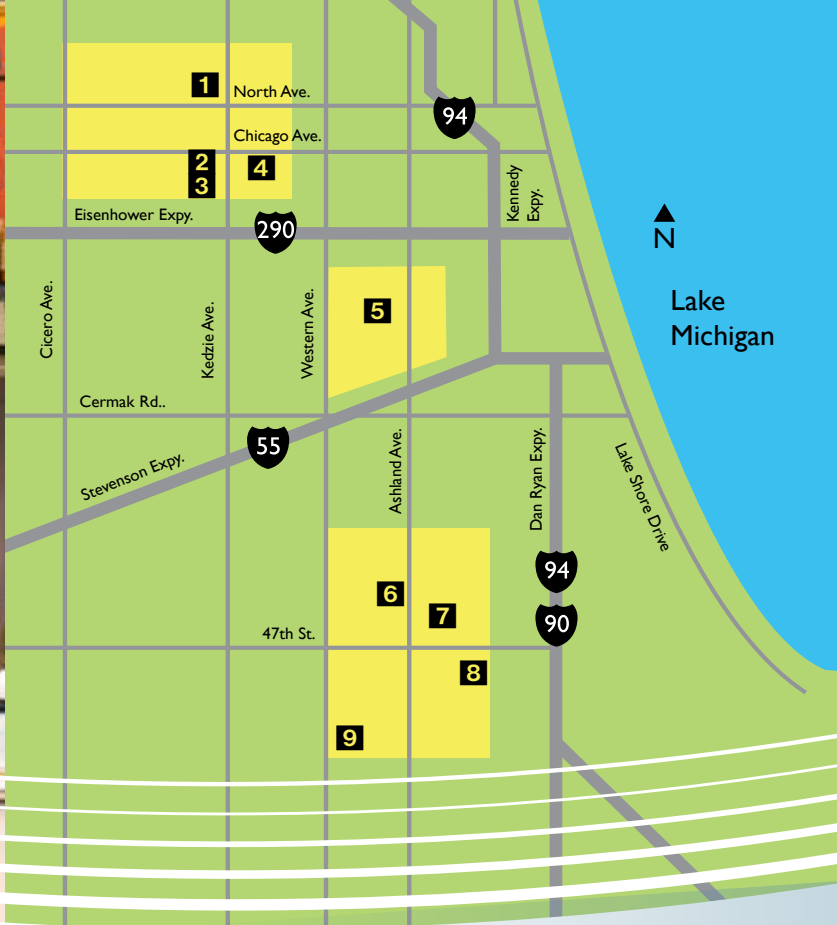
In 1894, Chicago Commons was established as a settlement house in the most isolated, disenfranchised Chicago neighborhoods. Our mission, then as now, is to strengthen these neighborhoods by helping residents build trusting relationships with each other and with institutions in the area. Chicago Commons continually looks for ways to partner with residents, schools, other social service agencies, community organizations, churches and political leaders to address quality-of-life issues in the neighborhood. The ability of communities to solve their own problems depends upon the trusted relationships that evolve, including the ones that Commons, itself, forges. We lead, support and participate in community projects to specify problems and develop proactive responses to overcome poverty, discrimination and isolation.

BUILDING EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURIAL PARTNERSHIPS (BEEP)

Chicago Commons partnered with the West Humboldt Park Development Council and other community residents to create “BEEP”. Working through a team of volunteers, BEEP provides job referral and placement services, job readiness workshops, training and scholarship opportunities, re-entry services for ex-offenders and entrepreneurial workshops and fairs. In FY08, BEEP held its first Entrepreneur Fair, where 25 local vendors displayed their goods. Workshops for the **150** attendees included Minding your Business: 10 Steps to Getting Your Business Started Today; Financing Your Small Business; Young and Business Savvy; Jumpstart Your Business; Entrepreneurship: How to Get Training; and Business Plan Writing.

EDWARD BOONE, BEEP CHAIR AND CONSORTIUM TO LOWER OBESITY IN CHICAGO’S CHILDREN (CLOCC) ORGANIZER:

“Being able to count on the support of Chicago Commons in all our activities has helped make BEEP a reality. I was working out of my car until Commons provided an office for BEEP. Their staff and clients volunteer and support BEEP efforts. The Entrepreneur Fair was a huge success, thanks to their efforts and those of the other West Humboldt Park organizations and residents.”



NEW COMMUNITIES PROJECT TASK FORCE

With a group of concerned leaders in West Humboldt Park, Chicago Commons helped organize a Crime and Safety town hall meeting, pulling together **145** residents to dialogue about the escalation of crime in West Humboldt Park, and to put assets together to begin resolution.

CHICAGO AVENUE REVITALIZATION TASK FORCE

Commons partnered with the West Humboldt Park Development Council to ensure that residents would profit and participate in the economic development of the community. Through the Community Benefits Agreement, developers work with BEEP to identify local residents for employment.

PEACE AND EDUCATION COALITION

As an active member of PEC, Chicago Commons works with other members in New City/Back of the Yards to foster relationships among local community stakeholders and create a united vision to help neighborhood children, especially those trapped in a cycle of poverty and violence.

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

Distributing emergency funds to residents within the communities we serve is an ongoing part of our community outreach efforts. In FY08 Commons received a total of 106 calls requesting emergency assistance. 69 requests came from our designated zip codes. We referred the remaining 37 callers to their appropriate resource contacts. We distributed a total of **\$9,104** in emergency assistance.

CORE COMMUNITIES SERVED

WEST HUMBOLDT PARK

1. Taylor Center for New Experiences
2. Adult Education and Training Center & Common Ground for Youth
3. Nia Family Center
4. Chicago Commons Administrative Office

LOWER WEST SIDE (PILSEN)

5. Guadalupano Family Center

NEW CITY (BACK OF THE YARDS)

6. Paulo Freire Family Center
7. Common Ground for Youth
8. Adult Day Services

9. HOMECARE SERVICES

MEASURING OUR MISSION

Pathways Through Governance and Management

BETSY ALTMAN, PRESIDENT, CHICAGO COMMONS BOARD OF DIRECTORS: “As Directors of Chicago Commons, we have a responsibility to seek out the best programs to assist our clients. We pride ourselves on looking for extraordinary opportunities and being flexible enough to respond to the changing market. This is a principle on which the agency was founded 115 years ago, and has become our battle cry in today’s demanding market.”

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Program Manager, Adult Day Services
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Program Manager, Homecare Services
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Program Director, Child Development
Cassandra Wright
Manager, Human Resources

DAN VALLIERE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CHICAGO COMMONS:

“Chicago Commons’ programs continually evolve because we focus on those that best meet the current neighborhood needs. Our mission is to respond to pressing needs, not provide any pre-determined set of services.”

MEASURING OUR MISSION

Pathways Through Good Financial Stewardship

JAMES HILL III, TREASURER, CHICAGO COMMONS BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

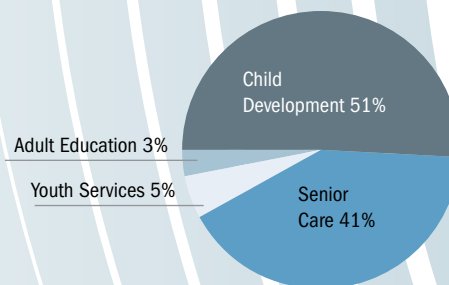
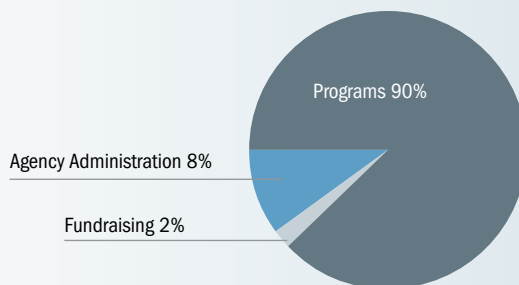
“Our clients’ hopes and dreams are being fulfilled every day through the dedicated stewardship of our board and staff as we maximize the financial resources available to Chicago Commons.”

INCOME STATEMENT SUMMARY

Revenues	
Contributions & Fundraising	1,091,006
United Way	528,332
Government Contracts	14,219,525
Other Revenues	492,042
Total	16,330,905
Expenses	
Programs	14,547,108
Administration	1,299,128
Fundraising	311,534
Total	16,157,770
Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	173,135
Other Changes in Net Assets	
Net Investment Gains	1,160
Adjustment to pension liability	(77,025)
One-time charges related to real estate transactions	(139,000)
Total change in net assets	(214,865)
BALANCE SHEET SUMMARY	
Assets	5,772,488
Liabilities	4,203,682
Net Assets (Assets minus liabilities)	1,568,806



SUMMARY OF EXPENSES CATEGORIES AND PROGRAM ALLOCATION FY08



MEASURING OUR MISSION

Pathways Through Your Investment in Commons

JAMES H. DEVRIES, CHICAGO COMMONS FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE CHAIR:

“Thank you for your generous and continued support of Chicago Commons. Through you, we continue our strong neighborhood focus and our leadership in education and social services. Please visit us to see, first-hand, how wisely Commons invests your resources, time, talent and dollars.”

Chicago Commons is grateful for all our donors who generously supported the children, families and communities we served in Fiscal Year 2008.



THE SECOND CENTURY SOCIETY

The Second Century Society recognizes donors who have established a significant commitment to Chicago Commons through a bequest or other planned giving arrangement.

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THE GRAHAM TAYLOR SOCIETY

The Graham Taylor Society recognizes donors who continue the vision of founder Graham Taylor by providing major annual support to help individuals, families and communities overcome poverty, discrimination and isolation.

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and Youth Services
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Illinois Department on Aging
Illinois Department of Human Services
Illinois State Board of Education
U.S. Department of Health and
Human Services

IN HONOR OF:

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Carol Mucha

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MEASURING OUR MISSION

How You Can Provide Pathways to Fulfill Hopes and Dreams

VOLUNTEER AT CHICAGO COMMONS

CONTACT DORIS BROWN AT BROWND@CHICAGOCOMMONS.ORG

Child Development:

Cleaning and Sanitizing Sites: April - May - September - October

(generally on Saturdays but open to weekdays)

Clean-up and Beautification of Play Lots: April - May - September - October

Seasonal and Holiday Decorating: February - April - June - November - December

Reading to Children: Year-round, hours and dates can be arranged

Field Trip Chaperones: Year-round, hours and dates can be arranged

Common Ground for Youth:

Mentors: Year-round, weekdays and some Saturdays

Tutors: September thru June, evening hours (3:00 - 6:00 P.M.)

Special Events and Trips: Saturdays daytime and weekday evenings (3:00 - 9:00 P.M.)

Adult Education:

Tutors: (reading, math, ESL classes) Year-round, weekdays, day time hours

Workshop Presenters: Year-round, times and dates can be arranged

Mentors: Year-round, times and dates can be arranged

Adult Day Care:

Cleaning and Sanitizing Site: February – June – November

(generally on Saturdays but open to weekdays)

Reading, Arts and Crafts, Music activities: Year-round, hours and dates can be arranged

Field Trip Chaperones: Year-round, weekday daytime hours

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