

ONWARD

Update

Winter 2016

Board of Directors

John Harrington
President

Mark Stenftenagel
Vice-President

John Mercardo
Treasurer

Carolyn Baker Connolly
Secretary

Tom Campbell

Eric Clamp

Jon Clopton

Carrie L. Distler

Frank J. Favia Jr.

Daniel Greiwe

Trisha Hutchison

Judy Schiffman

Andrea Van Gelder

David Villalobos

Mario F. García
Executive Director

The Community Resource and Education Center is Open!

After nearly six months of renovations and planning, Onward Neighborhood House is excited to announce that our Community Resource and Education Center is open for business.

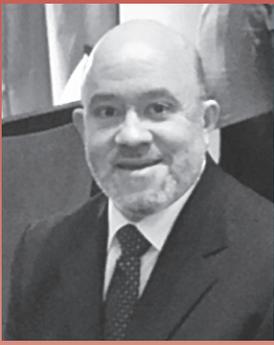
The new Center, located just steps from our main building on Diversey Avenue, houses two classrooms, each seating 20, a business incubator space and an internet café, as well as administrative offices. The Center is designed to be mobile, providing laptops for all students, tables that can be moved and adjusted, and movable walls between classrooms to provide flexibility. From the Center, Onward House is providing ESL classes, computer classes, citizenship classes, job readiness training, GED classes and business workshops.

We've done the research – we know that adults in Belmont Cragin are yearning for opportunities to advance in their careers, start a business, and build a better life for their families. While the statistics abound, perhaps there is no better way to illustrate the need for more resources than a mother standing in the window, taking a photo of the “coming soon” sign on our door. Hand-in-hand with her daughter, this mother shared her excitement and expressed her gratitude to Onward House



for bringing such a beautiful new center so close to her home. Residents in Belmont Cragin deserve a state-of-the-art facility in their neighborhood – we are so proud to be able to provide this resource.

Learning new skills can be truly transformative for our adult learners. As the only free, open access computer lab in Belmont Cragin, for example, adults at our center have the opportunity to acquire computer skills to compete in today's job market. Courses include beginner-level to advanced technology with a focus on topics like Microsoft Office, job search tools, scanners, access to educational websites, website design and introduction to hardware.



News from the Executive Director

Dear friends,

Change is occurring at Onward Neighborhood House, and we have so many accomplishments of which to be proud. Our Community Resource and Education Center is officially open and

it is an understatement to say that adult education services are needed in Belmont Cragin. We have also enjoyed a tremendous outpouring of support at the Annual Gala, Golf Outing and Walk-A-Thon. Thank you to all that have attended and supported us throughout the year.

I continue to be energized by the amazing work at Onward House, but it is with a heavy heart that I also must share the loss of Prentice (Hank) Marshall, Jr. a vital member of our Onward House family. Hank was a loyal supporter for over 20 years, standing as Board of Directors President, leading with grace and dignity and approaching any challenges with strength and determination. He made many friends here and always loved spending time with our Onward House families. We will forever miss his dedicated and loving spirit.

Hank and I had a standing lunch every month to discuss various business topics and catch up on family, politics and sports. Unbeknownst at the time, at our last lunch together Hank mentioned continuing an active role with Onward House but having another member take the role of President. I supported Hank on this decision and as we talked further, he felt one of our current Board Members, John Harrington, would be a good fit as the next President. Upon hearing this after Hank's passing, John graciously accepted the nomination and was unanimously supported by the Board. John has been on the Board of Directors since 2011, serving as a key advisor as Onward House transitioned from West Town to Belmont Cragin. He is currently the Senior Vice President, Litigation, Regulatory & Human Resources, at Inteliquent. We are very excited to have John as our President for the upcoming year, and we hope you will join us in congratulating him.

In partnership with our Board of Directors, we have decided to honor Hank's memory by naming our Community Resource and Education Center after Prentice and Kim Marshall, Jr. Hank was instrumental in the transition of Onward House from West Town to Belmont Cragin, always mindful of maintaining Onward House as a strong, vibrant, community resource for this and future generations. We have chosen to name the Center after Hank and his wife to continue to honor and remember all he and his wife have done for us. There will be a celebration to showcase the new Center in the spring of 2017.

Thank you for your continued support of Onward Neighborhood House during our full transition to Belmont Cragin and our service to families and the community.

Sincerely,

Mario F. Garcia
Executive Director
Onward Neighborhood House

The Community Resource and Education Center is Open!

Continued from page 1

The number of students and community members using our services has grown exponentially; from 32 in 2008 to more than 660 today.

Neighboring St. Peter's Church and Northwest Community Church continue to provide crucial partnership in forging trust with Belmont Cragin residents and sharing information and resources.

This is an exciting time for our organization; the new building signifies an increased investment in our community, providing new opportunities that would never be possible without your support.

The Center will be named in remembrance of long-time supporter and former Board of Directors President, Prentice (Hank) Marshall, Jr.

Alumni Corner:

Rosa Escareno

Attended Onward Neighborhood House Early Childhood Education Program, 3 years

Current

occupation:

Deputy Chief Operating Officer, Office of the Mayor, City of Chicago



Quote: "As I have become an adult, [I realize that] Onward House set the tone of what my life would be. Everything starts somewhere, for me it started at Onward House."

Are you an Onward House alumni or know someone who is? We want to hear from you! Contact us at knewman@onwardhouse.org or (773) 622-7723 or visit our Facebook page. See your story featured in the Onward House Update.

Belmont Cragin Update

As an organization that has been helping immigrant families integrate into life in Chicago since the 1800's, we know that over time neighborhoods change and families go through transition. While West Town had been Onward House's home for over 120 years, Onward has been working to meet the emerging and considerable needs in a new community—Belmont Cragin.

In 2008, Onward House began relocating to Belmont Cragin in order to address the community's growing, and mostly unmet needs, offering Early Childhood Education, after school programming and a computer resource center serving more than 5,500 families every year. Now, with the opening of the new Center and expanded adult education opportunities, Onward has sold and officially closed the West Town site.

Belmont Cragin has experienced tremendous population changes: from 1990 to 2013, the population in Belmont Cragin grew 41 percent, from 56,700 to 78,900 and currently, eight in ten residents are Latino. Despite this exponential growth, the social service infrastructure has not kept pace—the majority of services for Latinos continue to be on the southwest side. Belmont Cragin has the third largest concentration of residents with limited English proficiency in the city of Chicago, and residents currently experience a higher rate of unemployment than in the city as a whole. Community wide, 34 percent of residents have less than a high school diploma, but among clients at Onward House, 80 percent have not earned a high school diploma or GED. Belmont Cragin also ranks as one of the highest communities experiencing food insecurity, at 20%.

Belmont Cragin's Quality of Life Plan, led by Northwest Side Housing Center and a task force of residents and community organizations, including Onward House, revealed that residents are "particularly interested in opportunities to find employment or move to a better career, including training, job placement, continuing education and support for entrepreneurs." There is a need for higher-paying jobs and career training opportunities that are tailored to a specific population, including recent immigrants, undocumented residents, limited English-speaking residents and re-entry citizens.

Onward House has responded: We know the needs of our community and we have formulated our programs to fill these voids. Our focus is and always will be, to provide resources and opportunities for our community to help them succeed. The future looks bright for Onward House, as the needs and wants of the community change, we will change with them. We have become fully invested in the Belmont Cragin community and hope to serve it for many years to come.

The official Quality of Life Plan can be found here: Belmontcragin.org

The new Center will house our adult education programs, finance, human resources, executive offices and development. Please use the following contact information: 5413 W. Diversey Avenue, Chicago, IL 60639, Phone (773) 622-7723, Fax (312) 773 622-8131.

Walk-A-Thon



Onward House community members and families enjoying the Annual 5k Walk-A-Thon



Special thank you to Commissioner Luis Arroyo, Jr.'s staff for their participation and the Chicago Police Department who helped guide our walkers

Golf Outing



Guests at the Annual Golf Outing in September at Ruffled Feathers Golf Club



Thank you to our golfers and sponsors! Special thanks to Inteliquent, Transparent Container and the Board of Directors who enabled us to reach such great heights



5413 W. Diversey Avenue
Chicago, IL 60639

Onward House Partners with Industry Leaders

Onward Neighborhood House takes pride in engaging and collaborating with institutions that bring a high level of expertise to our programs. This year, Onward House has cultivated a number of new and expanding partnerships that have helped bring our service delivery to the next level.

The Erikson Institute of Chicago selected Onward House to participate in a pilot study on sustainable excellence in mathematics in the Head Start Program. Erikson is the standard for quality in early childhood education, a catalyst for discovery and change, bringing the newest scientific knowledge and theories of children's development and learning into its classrooms and to the community. Over the course of six months, Onward's Education Coordinator and teachers attended learning labs and coaching sessions coordinated by Erikson. Erikson provided classroom lessons, math-related books and strategies for encouraging parents and caregivers in learning math in the classroom. We continue to work with our parents to promote lessons and homework to encourage the better understanding of math concepts.

Onward House was also very excited to host Loyola University of Chicago graduate students for the second year. Students spent three weeks at Onward House, observing our classrooms and experiencing our lesson plans. The kids loved having the extra teachers in the classrooms to provide additional support and attention.

Destiny Hooper, a first year graduate student seeking a master's degree

in secondary education, described her time at Onward House as, "a transformative experience." She had never seen teachers demonstrate the attention to and patience with students like our teachers at Onward House: "Each day, she shared, Onward House teachers gave students a voice, brought them together and created a well-rounded learning experience."

Chris Libert, another first year graduate student seeking a master's degree in secondary education, described Onward House as "diverse, welcoming, warm and empowering." When Chris arrived at Onward House, he spoke very little Spanish; he thought this might create a barrier to interact with the kids. As he spent more time in the classroom, he found he could turn playtime into learning, breaking down the language barrier. He also applauded Onward House as an organization: "Onward House is culturally accountable, giving parents opportunities that can in turn help make a difference in the child's life."

Finally, to support Onward House's adult education programming, we're proud to partner with Wright College, part of the City Colleges of Chicago, to bring multi-level ESL and GED courses to the neighborhood. Wright provides the instructors, lesson plans and assessment, while Onward House provides program coordination, the classroom space and recruits and registers students.

These partnerships are critical to our success, and to our ability to provide the high quality services our community deserves.

Save The Dates:

The Annual Gala

Saturday, February 25, 2017

City Winery, Chicago

It's a can't-miss evening of music and entertainment!

2nd Annual 5K Walk-A-Thon

Saturday, May 6, 2017

Belmont Cragin

Join the Auxiliary Board Today!

We are always looking for young professionals to help drive Onward House's mission. The Auxiliary Board is a service and fundraising group that offers individuals the opportunity to be more engaged in Chicago neighborhoods through philanthropy. As a member of the Auxiliary Board, network with like-minded professionals while serving as an instrumental part of one of Chicago's most historic, innovative nonprofits. Email Knewman@onwardhouse.org for information.