"My name is Jocelyn. As a child, I attended Onward House when it was located at 600 N Leavitt. I’ve had family members who have worked for the agency and I currently have my two-year-old son attending Onward House. It has truly been a positive experience. Onward House has helped us in so many ways. They provide childcare for low-income families, they have support services that help with pretty much everything. They have even helped us find a therapist for my daughter. Onward House has played a crucial role in my son’s development. The improvements that I’ve noticed in my child’s vocabulary and speech are significant. His social skills have also improved. The teachers, learning environment, and security are top-notch. Safety is a priority at Onward House, and that makes me comfortable leaving my child at school.

I’ve been impressed with the level of communication from the teachers and staff which makes this whole experience that much better. Onward House has given us the opportunity to have our children in a great learning environment. For that, I’ll forever be grateful!"  - Jocelyn, Parent

"My family and I give thanks to Onward House. Also to our teacher Carmen, Santia, as well as the supervisor. Thank you for your help.

A month and a half ago we moved from Arizona, we arrived with a relative, my aunt, she helped us. She gave us a small room, we five slept in it, she also helped us financially and food for a month. Thank God we found an apartment where we had no furniture, no bed, no dining room. Thanks to you we were able to get help, we are very happy and happy we already have a place to sleep and eat, my children are super happy to get things. We thank you for helping families in need."  (Translated)
Friends,

Thank you. Because of you, your support, connections, volunteerism, and donations, Onward House remains a resilient organization that continues to grow.

In my last newsletter, I outlined our plans to expand in the area of health. I am proud to say that we have made progress toward that goal. In August we worked with our new partner CommunityHealth to host a well-attended health fair that provided vaccinations and many health resources to community members.

We are continuing to strengthen our support for children with special needs. We recently hired Dr. Kimberly Thier as our Director of Special Education, with a goal to build a program that streamlines Special Education services for parents and teachers and ensures that children are provided support in a timely manner.

The Special Education initiative is one of many expansions coming to Onward House in the next few years. We are beginning to undergo a strategic plan that will lay a roadmap for the next 3 - 5 years. One thing we know is that we are running out of space! The expansion of our Early Childhood Education program, Immigrant and Refugee Welcoming Center, CommunityHealth clinic, and food pantry have pushed Onward House to use every square inch of our facilities to capacity.

We look forward to the exciting challenges that come with growth and hope that you will continue to support the Onward House staff as we expand. We invite you to come by for a tour, volunteer at our food pantry, make connections, and support our fundraising and awareness initiatives.

Thank you for your support,

Mario F. García  
Executive Director  
(773) 622-3215  |  mfgarcia@onwardhouse.org

Host a fundraiser for Onward House

Celebrate the power of your community coming together to support Onward House! In light of the tentative nature of in-person events, we are asking our supporters to go big for us and host online or in-person gatherings to raise funds and awareness for our programs. Please contact Nikki Way (nway@onwardhouse.org, or 773-622-3215) to let us know your plans so we can thank you for your support.

Types of fundraisers:
- Facebook Fundraiser (not live)
- Virtual Gathering
- Gathering at Onward House or your home
- Your own creative idea or platform!
1. **How did you choose to be a support worker at Onward House?**

I started working as a home visitor after college for 3 years. After 3 years I did a teen program with the state but decided my passion was working in Head Start. I applied to ONH as a family support worker to continue my passion for Head Start. My goal was to continue to serve families in need and advocate for a free program for the community.

2. **How are your clients navigating the pandemic?**

Families are slowly adjusting to returning back to work and enrolling their children in Head Start. Most of their needs are job resources such as resume building and job fairs. Overall, their needs are providing their children a more “normal” routine again but with health protocols.

3. **What is something you’d like to do in the next year?**

I hope to increase family engagement activities for our families especially male involvement. My position will continue to grow by learning from others’ interests, customs, and cultures. Currently, I am in the process of looking for Latino Organizations to join so that I may network with others in Chicago. I hope this allows me to have further opportunities to bring back to Onward House.

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**Food Pantry: Focus on Health**

Our food pantry and basic needs support offerings have grown tremendously in the past few months, thanks to the help of many people and organizations.

Through a grant from Blue Cross Blue Shield, we worked with a health consultant to provide a 4-week nutrition class that ended with a visit to Aldi and a cookbook with recipes from The Greater Chicago Food Depository.

Additionally, we thank The Logan Foundation and Gordon Foods for donating fresh produce to our food pantry!

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**3 Questions with our new Family & Support Services Coordinator**

Rosemary Solis was recently promoted from Family Support Worker to Family & Support Service Coordinator, where she is responsible for Parent Engagement and the Home-Based Program and supervises the Family Support Workers and Home Based Visitors.

1. **How did you choose to be a support worker at Onward House?** I started working as a home visitor after college for 3 years. After 3 years I did a teen program with the state but decided my passion was working in Head Start. I applied to ONH as a family support worker to continue my passion for Head Start. My goal was to continue to serve families in need and advocate for a free program for the community.

2. **How are your clients navigating the pandemic?** What are their needs? Families are slowly adjusting to returning back to work and enrolling their children in Head Start. Most of their needs are job resources such as resume building and job fairs. Overall, their needs are providing their children a more “normal” routine again but with health protocols.

3. **What is something you’d like to do in the next year?** I hope to increase family engagement activities for our families especially male involvement. My position will continue to grow by learning from others’ interests, customs, and cultures. Currently, I am in the process of looking for Latino Organizations to join so that I may network with others in Chicago. I hope this allows me to have further opportunities to bring back to Onward House.
Get Involved with Onward House

HOW YOUR DONATION CAN HELP

$1,000  
Quality supplies for a whole year for one classroom, including items that parents can take home to extend the learning experience.

$800  
Provides one month of subsidized affordable low-risk space for business owners at The Bounce retail accelerator.

$500  
One year of supplies for computer classes. Including: Laptop repairs, paper, printing.

$400  
Supports one week of food pantry administration including ordering, deliveries, volunteer coordination, and distribution.

$260  
Ten packages of diapers to hand out at the food pantry, our most requested non-food item.

$150  
One hour of nurse service, including observations in classrooms and health training for teachers and parents.

$100  
One hour of mental health consulting or speech therapy.

$50  
One hour of support for small businesses with computer, website/marketing, licensing questions.

With 8 youth classrooms, and over 16 adult education classes, a food pantry, and retail accelerator, we impact 5,500 individuals, 950 families annually.

FOOD PANTRY & BASIC NEEDS SUPPORT

Supply drives are the easiest way to support Onward House from anywhere. We are always seeking the following items to distribute to families:
- Diapers (especially sizes 3 - 5)
- School Supplies - crayons, paper, art and crafts
- Toiletries - shampoo, deodorant, lotion
- Food Pantry - shelf-stable items
- Toys (ages 0 - 12)

Volunteer Opportunity! We're seeking volunteers to help assemble bags of food at 10:00 a.m. on Thursdays.

DONATE A VAN

Do you have a loved, spacious vehicle that you no longer use? Are your kids at school and now you can finally trade in the van for the speedy car of your dreams? Donate your van to Onward House!

Please reach out to us if you have a vehicle and would like to make a tax-deductible donation to Onward House.

Join the Auxiliary Board

Onward House is recruiting for our Auxiliary Board, a non-policy-making, committee comprised of dedicated volunteers for the purpose of supporting the mission of Onward Neighborhood House through service and events.

We’re hosting an Onward House cleanup day on Saturday, December 11th! Those interested in joining the Auxiliary Board are invited to attend. Submit applications at bit.ly/jointheab or contact Nikki Way at nway@onwardhouse.org.

Onward Neighborhood House is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, ExcelleRate Illinois, has earned the 2021 Gold Seal of Transparency from Charity Navigator!