



Howard Area Community Center
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Helping Hands

Summer 2016 Newsletter

Your support made all of this possible.

thank you!

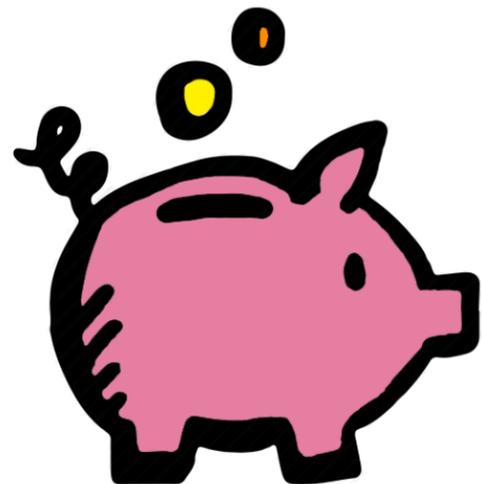


State Budget Crisis – Not Over Yet!

The Illinois Budget crisis hit HACC hard.

Adult Education programming was reduced, teens lost some of their Fall after school activities, 14 staff were laid off, 80 parents and 100 children are left without support, and HIV/AIDS and women's health programs were cut.

You can help students, parents, and youth find stability by donating online today:
howardarea.org/donate



Want to meet your HACC family?
Come to the Book Review & Luncheon on September 9th! More information inside.

***Did you get 2? Give one to someone who cares.**
Thanks for your patience while we clean up our database!

You changed how many lives this summer?



- 6** youth hired as Summer Camp Assistant Interns and as staff for one of our partnership sites Revive Consignment.
- 25** adults placed in employment this summer, given a second chance, and put on a healthy path for success to support themselves and their families.
- 57** teenagers from around the country volunteered at HACC, transforming the backyard of the Youth Center into a thriving garden as one of their many projects!

92 children and adults received free dental cleanings and services, helping them keep a healthy and pain-free mouth.

1,397 families fed at the Food Pantry.

2,570 community members educated about HIV/AIDS and encouraged to seek help if they or their loved ones are suffering.

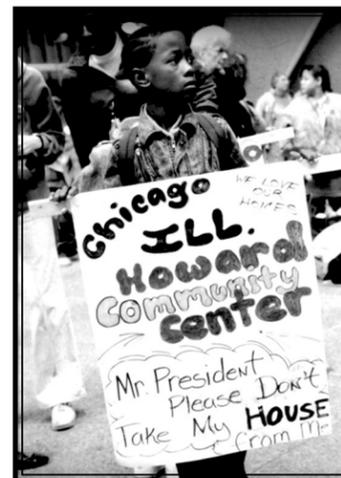


50 Years

Serving Rogers Park

Thanks to you– HACC's committed staff, volunteers, and donors– the HACC family is celebrating 50 years! Get ready to party! We will share stories of devoted community service, successes, and challenges the community still faces.

You can share your stories, too! Email Beth Ulion at bulion@howardarea.org your favorite memory today. Maybe you'll become Facebook famous ☺



Renew your support at the **Book Review and Luncheon!**

Friday, September 9th | 11:30 a.m. – 2 p.m. | Evanston Golf Club, 4401 Dempster Street, Skokie, IL

Book dramatist Barbara Rinella will portray a nuanced portrait of Nancy Reagan in her one-woman show.

Tickets are \$55.00. Buy your ticket by filling out the HACC donation form at www.howardarea.org/donate, noting that you are RSVPing for the event. Call Donna Lagacy for more details at 773.262.6622 x.223!

Rogers Park girls find solace at summer camp

When Girls Sports Club is in full swing, it's no sweat building self-worth.



"I feel like summer camp is different because in school we have to work and get no breaks and here we get to play, have fun, meet people, and be outside. So it's just a great opportunity."

That's Eniola, after playing basketball and stretching and meditating in yoga class. She's 13 years old and wears her tightly coiled hair in two buns perched on the top of her head. During the school year, she attends Joyce Kilmer Elementary School in Rogers Park.

She speaks about Girls Sports Club, HACC's summer camp activity devoted to physical wellness and teamwork, like a retreat.

She said it's an opportunity to "reinvent herself"— a phrase reminiscent of women's magazines, but rings true for girls who feel punished and overwhelmed during the school year. Last year, Eniola got into a fight at school. She said, if you "make one bad choice it takes forever to move on with teachers and students." But camp is different. "They [counselors] actually give us respect at camp and then we give them respect. It feels nice!"

These experiences are common. After yoga, Eniola sits in a circle with a few of her new camp friends. Her friend Jocelyn, 12, said that when she makes mistakes in school, people make her feel ashamed. Another girl, Meray, 11, said with sadness that she has a teacher who seems to only punish the Black children in class, though they make the same mistakes as the white students. An alarming 2016 study about class suspensions from kindergarten through high school, by the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights showed that black children are 3.8 times more likely than white students to be suspended.

There are 20 girls, ages 9 through 13 in her group, and a countless number of high fives. They play games like basketball and volleyball, and build muscle and focus through no-contact boxing and yoga. Above all, Girls Sports Club activities improve self-esteem and social skill development.

"I want summer camp to be a place where everyone feels safe. Safe to say how they feel, safe to ask questions, safe to be themselves," said Kathryn Wong, who runs Girls Sports Club.

One of the youngest girls has difficulty staying focused and playing with the group. She said she can't really talk to her parents about her feelings.

"Ok, so to make friends you have to treat people how you want to be treated. How do you want to be treated?" Kathryn pulled her aside and asked.

"With respect, but the other kids think I'm bad," the camper said. Kathryn replied that she doesn't think that she is bad, and that she just wants her to be the best version of herself that she can be. She asks the camper to "Tell me you're awesome. Say 'I'm awesome!'"

"I'm awesome," the girl whispered. Kathryn made her say it again until she shouted "I'm awesome!"

And that precious feeling of importance and belonging, that's how every kid in Girls Sports Club walks away from camp at the end of a hot summer day.



Thanks to your generosity HACC offers 80 youth a free summer camp right in their neighborhood!



"You put a smile on our faces!"

Immigrant and refugee families took a field trip to the Chicago Botanic Garden to bond, learn, and play.

Angelica Andrade, a GED class student, came with the HACC Family Literacy program to the Garden with her two children, Manuel, 3, and Cristina, 8. They enjoyed every minute of it— from searching for dragonflies and lily pads to picnicking by the fountains. Yesenia Vargas, the Family Literacy Coordinator, said that summer field trips broaden horizons and keep families engaged in the program, which offers parenting classes and childcare during ESL and GED courses.

Field trips are often financially out of reach for immigrant and refugee families, so "they are very grateful when these opportunities come up," she said. Angelica emigrated to the U.S. from Mexico and is striving for her GED with the goal of becoming an early childhood educator. Formerly, she worked as a cake decorator but had to leave due to disability. Now, her family of four is surviving on her husband's wages as a carpenter— about \$38,000 a year.

Read more on our website at www.howardarea.org to hear about Angelica's children and their journey and see photos from the trip. You make these unique opportunities possible!

Richard Thompson broke the cycle of incarceration to be a better father

Today, Richard Thompson has a job and a place to live, and gets to spend time playing with his 12-year-old son in Willye B. White Park on Howard Street. But for over a decade, he had some very dark times in and out of prison suffering from a heroin addiction. He burglarized houses and sold drugs to survive. At the time, it seemed like the only way to get through life. His mother was addicted to drugs neglected him.

"I was bright. I finished school. But I didn't want to be in that house, so I went outside [to the streets]," he said. After years through the revolving door of incarceration his responsibilities suddenly changed. He was told he had a son in foster care— Tyrick. The drive to protect his son re-energized him to pursue a better life. He would get clean for his son. After being released from Sheridan Correctional Center in March, he worked with Lindsey Wade at the HACC Employment Resource Center to apply to jobs, network, and make a resume. "I've got a lot of people in my corner...so I'm trying to utilize all of the resources I have. I didn't do that at first," Richard said.

Come July, Richard beat the odds. After applying to countless jobs, he was offered a position as a janitor at Ravenswood Studio, Inc., a company that builds sets for plays and museum exhibits.

Now, he is completing court-mandated classes on drug addiction and parenting with the hopes of gaining custody of Tyrick. Richard wants to save enough money to rent an apartment in Rogers Park. "We made it so he didn't have to suffer to get a job like he would have in the past," Lindsey said, noting that it's difficult for people with a criminal record and a history of trauma. "People are always reachable."

Read more about how far Richard has come at www.howardarea.org! Thanks to your support the Employment Resource Center helps 700 people a year get back on their feet.

