



## Clarke Square Quality of Life Update

In 2009, people who live and work in **Clarke Square** developed a Quality of Life Plan to reflect their visions and to serve as a strategic plan for improving the social, economic, and physical conditions in their community. Journey House, Inc. served as the lead agency until 2012, when the resident-led Clarke Square Neighborhood Initiative Council was formed. Journey House continues as an important partner working to achieve the Plan's goals and priorities.

### **Social Connections**

- Hosted Listening Cafes that involved more than 250 Clarke Square residents in updating the neighborhood's Quality of Life Plan.
- Recruited 500+ volunteers to carry out community cleanups and conduct local events, in the process building trust, fostering neighborliness, and promoting public safety.

### **Neighborhood Beautification**

- Secured funding to improve the appearance of blighted properties and prevent vandalism.
- Arranged a "Welcome to Clarke Square" mural on National Avenue, using art to market local retailers along a commercial corridor.
- Designed and installed 30 banners and five gateway markers throughout Clarke Square, thus promoting a distinctive community identity to residents and visitors alike.

### **Public Safety**

- Organized neighbors to prioritize public safety goals, which include new lighting and addressing graffiti and home and car break-ins.
- Partnered with Safe & Sound, several faith-based organizations, and 25 neighborhood ambassadors to help residents address nuisance properties, violence, and other safety concerns.

### **Community-School Partnership**

- Established an award-winning public-private partnership that raised \$6 million for the Journey House Center for Family Learning and Youth Athletics at Longfellow School.
- Designed and built a 34,000 square foot facility connected to the school, complete with a gymnasium, theater-in-the-round, technology labs, "smart" classrooms, and community spaces visited by 1,500 people every day.
- Started performing and visual arts programs that attracted 200+ young people in its first summer of operation.

## **Youth, Parks and Recreation**

- Partnered with the Green Bay Packers and Milwaukee County Parks to construct the Journey House Packer Stadium at Mitchell Park, complete with an NFL logo on the football field.
- Established the field as the new home for the 400+ boys and girls who annually participate in Journey House's football, cheerleading, and character education programs.
- Made the practice field available to high school lacrosse and football teams.
- Sponsored the "Clarke Square is Moving" event each year, educating hundreds of residents about health, wellness, and the benefits of active living.

## **Lifelong Learning**

- Enrolled more than 300 adults in Basic Skills and GED classes, and more than 400 in English as a Second Language classes, in a single year.
- Partnered with Milwaukee Area Technical College and Mount Mary University to conduct classes in Clarke Square.
- Supported more than 30 service learners, interns, and graduate fellows from colleges and universities each semester.

## **Employment and Job Training**

- A designated LISC Financial Opportunity Center, the Urban Careers Institute offers employment search, job placement, and financial literacy services to area residents. The program has helped 103 residents get full-time jobs and returned \$331,000 in tax refunds to the local economy.
- Collaborated with Menomonee Valley Partners to develop relationships with human resources personnel and host job fairs at Valley businesses such as Cargill, Potawatomi, and Palermo's.

## **Housing**

- Worked through Habitat for Humanity to make \$153,000 in repairs to 21 homes.
- Built an Energy Star-rated home and trained young people in the construction trades through Milwaukee Christian Center's YouthBuild program.
- Organized several home foreclosure prevention events and sponsored weatherization fairs for nearly 100 people, at which they received weatherization kits and learned how to reduce energy costs.

## **Economic Development**

- Worked with Business Improvement District #38 to develop and market retailers along Cesar Chavez Drive and, through LISC, secured funding to assist area businesses and entrepreneurs.
- Partnered with the Multicultural Entrepreneurial Institute to provide business planning and training to 20 aspiring small business operators, with the three best plans awarded startup grants of \$3,000.

**For more information or to get involved, contact  
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