

Woodlawn Center South •



“FROM THE DIRECTOR” continued from front

POAH and its partners and neighbors have accomplished much in each of these areas. Almost 300 units of new mixed-income housing have been completed and 17 apartment buildings have been purchased and rehabbed. Two new schools are under construction nearby and retail shops are in the pipeline.

However, this is only the beginning. The \$30.5 million HUD Choice Neighborhoods Initiative grant that the Woodlawn team received in 2011 is being invested in housing, the community’s schools, public safety, infrastructure, job training, services for residents and more.

Working in partnership with the City, developers of commercial and residential properties, and the community, we hope to introduce exciting new concepts that will accelerate and expand the Woodlawn revitalization activity. Look out for and we’ll keep you abreast of the latest developments – for this renewal is only possible with the efforts and involvement of all.

- Bill Eager, Vice President,
POAH Chicago



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FROM THE GROVE

A NEWSLETTER for
Woodlawn Residents
WINTER 2013 •

From the Director •

While much of what we write about in this newsletter details what POAH and our partners are doing to revitalize Woodlawn, we would be remiss if we didn’t share the thinking behind all the redevelopment activity.



It’s been four years since POAH, at the request of tenants, neighbors, the City and HUD, was brought in to undertake the transformation of Grove Parc into a new mixed-income development that would turn what had been perceived to be a community liability into a community asset. What we’ve learned over this time has allowed us to expand our thinking to create a strategy that meets the challenges and embraces opportunities.

The strategy that guides our work is a marriage of common sense and complexity. On the development side, we are building new mixed-income housing to replace outdated all- low-income housing. Beyond that we have been able to access resources to acquire and renovate vacant and distressed buildings into attractive, well-managed mixed-income properties throughout the community. Finally, we have developed broad support that will help us secure educational, recreational, retail, transportation and other resources to create a healthy and thriving community to supplement the housing.

Each element of this strategy is critical to success. Replacing dilapidated housing is essential to the streetscape and public safety of the neighborhood and is creating a welcoming corridor for motorists and pedestrians on Cottage Grove. Transforming troubled buildings reduces the community’s stock of foreclosed and vacant properties and creates the ‘eyes on the street’ that adds to community safety. Enhancing educational, recreational and economic resources helps secure a sustainable future for Woodlawn and its residents. Together they forge a powerful platform for a strong community.

See “FROM THE DIRECTOR” on back >>>

Construction Continues for Multi-Year Plan to Replace Grove Parc Apartments •



Construction of Woodlawn Center North, a new 33-unit mixed income building on the east side of Cottage Grove between 61st and 62nd Street, is well under way.

The new mixed-income rental building will include one-, two-, and three-bedroom apartments. Some ground floor units will have an individual backyard accessible from the apartment itself, offering privacy and security for families as well as ample outdoor space.

Scheduled for occupancy in mid-2013, Woodlawn Center North also will offer a 1,100 sq. foot community room as a residential gathering space, a playground that will provide safe play space for children and a convenient in-building laundry facility.

See “CONSTRUCTION CONTINUES” inside >>>

Woodlawn Public Safety Alliance Continues to Organize and Pray to Stop the Violence ●

The problems that have spurred an increase in homicides in Woodlawn and other Chicago neighborhoods have been developing for years. The Woodlawn Public Safety Alliance (WPSA) is attempting to put an end to this violence and has been marching through the streets of Woodlawn appealing to the community to rally together to not only end the violence, but to work together to build strong, vibrant neighborhood.



As a part of a response strategy to call attention to the escalation of youth violence that has claimed the lives of many youths in the Woodlawn community, WPSA has led a number of prayer vigils and marches to empower residents with the resources and tools necessary to become problem

solvers and peacemakers in the community.

“Woodlawn Public Safety Alliance has effectively established an expectation in the community around their immediate response plan,” said Felicia Dawson, Director of Community Engagement. “There have been strategy sessions with police, gang experts and community residents to better understand the conflicts in the neighborhood and come up with approaches to address these conflicts.”

Residents and supporters are welcome to attend and join WPSA. For more information call 773.256.6848.

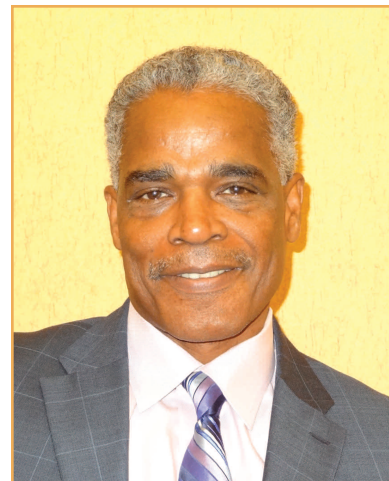
Welcome Back to Woodlawn Wesley Walker ●

Wesley Walker, a long-time Chicago-area resident and community development leader, has returned to the Woodlawn community after spending the past six years in Minneapolis, working on quality of life issues for residents there.

Walker was recently named executive director of the Network of Woodlawn (NOW) and will lead the effort to help Woodlawn realize its potential as one of the city’s most desirable neighborhoods.

“To become a community of choice will require a full range of social and recreational amenities, safe streets, quality education for people of all ages and an even stronger sense that Woodlawn is a tightly knit community where residents know each other and work together,” said Walker. “By strengthening the networks of organizations – from block clubs to business groups, and through joint planning and work, we are confident that Woodlawn can regain the vibrancy that has distinguished it over the years.”

Walker’s vision for Woodlawn’s redevelopment is based on the Quality of Life Plan, developed through the New Communities



Program of Woodlawn (NOW’s predecessor) in 2005 in consultation with many community members. The Plan outlines a variety of strategies for the neighborhood, including improved school performance, a renewed retail environment, expanded youth programming and stronger links to the regional job market.

NOW is assisting the Woodlawn Public Safety Alliance to institute community safety strategies and the Woodlawn Children’s Promise Community to launch initiatives to remove barriers from learning for all Woodlawn youths. However, Walker is quick to point out that the ultimate goal of NOW is to develop and implement community initiatives that promote positive growth and comprehensive community development.

“The purpose is to foster collaborative efforts across many new programs, neighborhood boundaries and systems in order to fundamentally transform the area while positioning Woodlawn as a community of choice,” said Walker.

Hyde Park Career Academy Is Becoming an IB School ●

Many parents believe that access to quality education is a critical factor in making decisions about where to live. Woodlawn just strengthened its competitive advantage in this regard with the planned transformation of Hyde Park Career Academy into an International Baccalaureate (IB) high school.

Part of the Woodlawn Children’s Promise Community’s (WCPC) comprehensive plan for improving Woodlawn schools, Hyde Park Career Academy is scheduled to open in the 2013-14 school year as one of only a few “wall-to-wall” IB high schools in Chicago and will be devoted exclusively to a program tailor-made to prepare students for college. With a specialized curriculum and targeted supportive programs, the school is projected to ensure that IB diploma students will be 40% more likely to be prepared to attend a four year-college, 50% more likely to get into a selective college and 90% more likely to stay in college for at least two years, according to University of Chicago researchers.

“Expanding this one-of-a-kind program to every student in Hyde Park High School will create an environment that encourages success and helps prepare students for college,” said Dr. Byron T. Brazier, chairman of the

WCPC board. “Children in this community will be given an expanded opportunity to achieve academic excellence.” Admission at the Hyde Park Career Academy will be open to all children in Woodlawn.

Through WCPC, a comprehensive initiative for improving the quality of children’s lives in the Woodlawn neighborhood, partner schools in Woodlawn are being supported with quality after-school programs, parent leadership training, teacher and principal professional development and summer enrichment activities. This work will ensure that Woodlawn students are prepared for educational rigor and long-term college and career success.



Photo courtesy of LR Media Group



Modeled on the Harlem Children’s Zone in New York, WCPC aims to change the odds for Woodlawn’s children by focusing on four central areas: the quality of instruction and leadership in schools, strong early childhood support for children and parents, expanded opportunities for growth and learning outside

of school and expanded and realigned social and health supports for youth and families.

For more info on Woodlawn Children’s Promise Community call 773.535.6876 or email info@woodlawnpromise.org.

“CONSTRUCTION CONTINUES” continued from front

Together, Woodlawn Center North and Woodlawn Center South have already begun to change the look and feel of Cottage Grove. The attractive buildings welcome those who travel this corridor. Next up? A 65-unit senior housing complex that will include a community resource center and offices for POAH’s property management team.

Beyond Cottage Grove, leasing is under way at the former Westwood Apartments, 102 mixed-income units along 62nd street in west Woodlawn, and POAH is completing the rehabilitation of the 117-unit Renaissance Apartments in east Woodlawn.

All told, POAH will have more than 400 mixed-income units built and leased or under development in Woodlawn accompanied by ground floor retail venues and recreational facilities by the end of 2013.