



celebrating 25 years



Inside:

Creating Community--How affordable housing preservation and tenant leadership efforts are expanding opportunities for self-sufficiency.



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◆
HOW's mission is to provide permanent solutions to the problems of homelessness and poverty for women and children in Chicago-and to advance the goal of ending homelessness nationwide.

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Housing Opportunities for Women (HOW) is a not-for-profit and relies on community support to carry out our work to help women and their children.

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HOW JOURNAL Issue 3, Fall 2008

EDITORS Kim Christensen, Jen Patterson

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Britt Shawver

PHOTOGRAPHY Jen Patterson, Mary Dory

HOW is pleased to publish the HOW Journal, now our primary news publication. Look for the HOW Journal throughout the year!

Privacy Policy: HOW respects our donors' and friends' confidentiality. We never release or share our mailing list.

HOW Journal is printed on recycled paper using soy-based inks.

Together, We Make a Difference!



As our 25th Anniversary year comes to a close, we pause to reflect on all that we have accomplished, and all that is yet to come.

This year, we served nearly 900 individuals through our programs and services, ensuring that even more women and children than last year accessed safe, affordable housing and individualized support services.

We acquired and are in the process of rehabbing our third building--which will become home to 25 families. The building will feature an accessible unit, a community art project, and a support services office when complete in January, 2009.

And soon, thanks to the generous support of The Eleanor Foundation, we will launch a community-based career services center. The center will feature comprehensive vocational training and career placement services, individual development accounts, and more.

As we look beyond our silver anniversary year, we know that our work is as important as ever, and so is your partnership. Thank you for working with us to make a difference, and here's to another 25 fantastic years!

Warm wishes,

Britt Shawver
Executive Director

Cover: HOW has expanded its efforts to include a wide range of child and youth programs. Partners from Teen Wealth provided mentorship activities for boys, while the Girls Empowerment Module (GEM) just launched its 10th session. All programs are designed to break the cycle of homelessness and poverty by supporting educational and career goals.

HOW Newsworthy!

Taproot Foundation Service Grant Launches HOW's Website Forward

Volunteers from the Taproot Foundation offered their marketing and web-development expertise, allowing HOW to relaunch an advanced website. The new site features an updated look, expansive program information, the 25th Anniversary HOW video, and new graphics.

The site redevelopment, which began last spring, took volunteers and staff more than 350 hours to complete. And thanks to the generous \$35,000 service grant, HOW's new site is now live.

Special thanks to the entire Taproot team! Volunteers: Traci Hailpern (Account Director), Chris Johnson (Project Manager), Kevin Jackson (Marketing Manager), Sara Schapmann (Copywriter/Editor), Megan Noone (Web Designer), and Art Ortiz (Web Developer/Designer). HOW Staff: Geri Palmer (Web Developer), Britt Shawver (Executive Sponsor), Jen Patterson (Project Coordinator), Carey Smith (Copywriter), Tom Wetzell, Kim Christensen, and Andrea Dakin (Discovery Team).

HOW Board Member Runs 40 miles, raises \$40,000

HOW Board Member Extraordinaire and Fitness Champion Sylvie Légère went above and beyond to celebrate her 40th birthday. She ran 40 miles and raised more than \$40,000 to support HOW's mission!

Beginning at 5 a.m. on Sunday, September 21st, her route included multiple loops in the Evanston, Wilmette and North Shore Communities, and she was joined by friends and family along the way. The event culminated with a post-run and house-warming party at Tom and Cece Ricketts home, where guests were treated to a barbeque, crepes, and martinis.

"Sylvie's support and accomplishment are absolutely phenomenal," said Britt Shawver, HOW's Executive Director. "What a generous and amazing way to celebrate her birthday! We are honored and grateful to have her partnership!"

Want to host an event of your own to support HOW's mission? Contact Kim Christensen, Donor Relations Manager at 773-465-5770 x253.

Peer Chef Program Cooks Up Change, Healthy Lifestyles



Peer Chef Graduates Viola Carter (L) and Mindy Johnson (R) celebrate with Instructor and Chef Gary Walker.

Bob Wysocki, the program coordinator, argues that the Peer Chef program is empowering women to "take control of their kitchens and their health".

Viola Carter, a member of the graduating class, explained how learning to cook for herself gave her the tools to both save money and lead a healthier lifestyle. Learning how to slice up an entire chicken was a favorite experience: "It was

The second graduating class of the HOW Peer Chef program recently took a bow, celebrating their culinary accomplishments by preparing a delicious dinner for participants and staff. The five week program is designed to teach HOW clients how to establish healthy eating habits on a fixed food budget. By learning basic cooking skills and smart shopping tips,

not what I expected ... I thought it was going to move!" Before Viola enrolled in Peer Chef, she would purchase a chicken and then pay a fee for the store butcher to divide it into parts. Now, Viola says, "I don't need a butcher to cut it up, so it's much cheaper." The Peer Chef Program also taught Viola how to prepare the chicken in a healthy way – for example, by baking it with cornflakes rather than frying it.

Peer Chef graduates took the stage to teach their favorite healthy cooking tips on Saturday, September 20th during HOW Fit, a community wellness festival. The festival was attended by residents from throughout the Rogers Park community, and allowed Peer Chefs to both celebrate and share their new-found expertise.

Viola came away from Peer Chef resolving to shop differently in the future, reflecting a central tenet of the program: "to effect change in some small way, one client at a time". Having mastered the skills to take charge of their own health, Wysocki hopes that the graduates of Peer Chef will now "filter knowledge to children and grandchildren" as well as their peers, creating a generational legacy of health.



Let the rehab begin!

In June, 2008, HOW completed the acquisition of 1614-1622 West Jonquil Terrace. Thanks to support from the CRASH Foundation, Northern Trust Bank, Marlene and John Joe Ricketts, Laura Ricketts, and financing from MB Financial and the Illinois Housing Development Authority, HOW is redeveloping the building which will become home to 25 families.

“Safe, affordable housing is the cornerstone of any community,” said Tami Martin, HOW’s Housing Director. “This building is located directly across the street from Gale Academy, down the street from our first seven unit development, and just one block from the office. It is critical that we ensure the safety, and affordability of the building for years to come.”

In fact, HOW’s ownership of the building preserves its affordability for a minimum of 30 years--a vital accomplishment as Rogers Park continues to lose affordable rental housing to condo conversions.

“We are really striving for balanced development in Rogers Park,” said Tom Wetzel, HOW’s Chief Operations Officer. “In order to have a strong and vibrant community, we need to have affordable and market rate housing. We need to attract new business and promote job creation. And we need to ensure that all residents have their needs met. That is our goal.”

Rehab of 1614-22 Jonquil began in August, and is expected to be complete by the end of 2008. Lease-up will begin in November as individual apartments become available, and HOW expects full occupancy by the end of the year.

Wetzel explained, “We are thrilled that we will be able to provide a safe, affordable and comfortable place to call home for those who need it most. This work is as important as ever, and we are grateful for everyone’s generous support.”

1614-1622 West Jonquil Terrace Redevelopment

25 unit building
Tuck pointing and masonry repair
New roof
Creation of accessible unit
Window replacement
Stair repair
Interior painting
Light unit rehab

Safe
Affordable

HOME

for 25 families with 30+ children

Painting a Community | by Mary Dory, Summer Links Intern

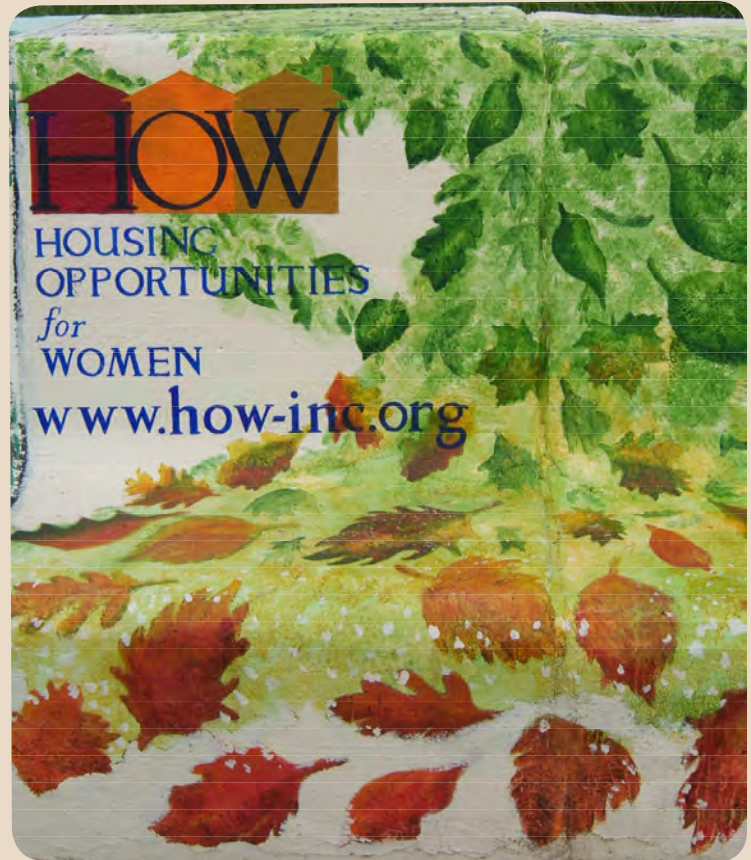
In June 2008, the HOW Tenant Council participated in the annual Artists of the Wall Festival, painting a portion of the Pratt Beach retaining wall under the theme “Winds of Change”. Molly Dula-Weber, HOW Housing Specialist, coordinates the Tenant Council and cheerfully pointed out that while the Council’s project failed to win a prize, it did accomplish the goal of encouraging greater client interaction with the local community.

For Dula-Weber, it is “critical that clients get involved in the community, because not all of them stay in our programs.” By participating in events in Rogers Park, clients become both personally invested in the neighborhood and embraced by those who live within it. Such community engagement makes the transition out of HOW programs much easier, creating an additional cushion of support structures and social opportunities.

Participating in the Festival provided another critical outlet for HOW clients—namely, a non-traditional voice. Dula-Weber notes that “HOW clients come from places that literally shut them up” via domestic violence, difficult life histories, or any number of other obstacles. Creating artwork as a group demonstrates to clients that their words and ideas have a tangible impact, encouraging clients to speak up – literally and figuratively – in the future.

In the end, the Council’s entry may not have won any prizes based on artistic merit (although Dula-Weber is quick to note that the HOW mural was one of the best). However, the community engagement and therapeutic nature of the project makes it a winner for the clients and HOW. “If we keep doing it, we’ll see some really cool things,” says Dula-Weber.

Chief architects of the Tenant Council’s project were HOW clients Maura Zimmerman, Linda Sharpe, Landa Redmond, Vernetta Rogers, and Tanya Green.



*"Seasons Dissolve Into
the Next...
So do the Winds
of Change
Whisper the Needs of
the Community."*

Perspectives | Wellness Festival Celebrates Health, Community

by Mary Dory, Summer Links Intern



Mary Dory, University of Chicago Senior, interned with HOW during the summer months, assisting with numerous projects, including HOW Fit!

On September 20th, HOW organized its first ever community wellness fair, HOW-FIT. The fair brought necessary, free services to members of our community in a fun, festival-like atmosphere, combining entertainment with a wealth of vital health information and screenings.

There's no question that Rogers Park is in need of a healthcare intervention. The

2006-2007 Rogers Park Community Health Assessment, conducted by community partners, revealed unsettling statistics regarding neighborhood health. For instance, while the rate of Chicago women receiving no prenatal care declined from 1993 – 2003, Rogers Park experienced an 81% *increase*. Additionally, the community experiences death rates for heart disease, diabetes, cancer, and chronic liver disease that are bracketed in the top third of all Chicago community areas. Children in Rogers Park are also at abnormally high risk for hospitalization for childhood asthma.

Recognizing that immediate health issues reflect an array of underlying causes, HOW-FIT adopted a holistic approach with an emphasis on awareness and prevention. Attendees could receive free blood pressure screenings, rapid HIV/AIDS tests, and take in a short play by HealthWorks Theater regarding childhood obesity. In addition to free information concerning medical issues such as cancer, epilepsy, and heart disease, attendees were also showered with information regarding other topics affecting overall health – such as financial literacy, early childhood education, and domestic violence. HOW-led community health programs such as Peer Chef and LifeSmart were also prominently featured.

The day wasn't merely an endless influx of data, however. Participants enjoyed activities such as a moonwalk and obstacle course as well as an impressive performance by the Jesse White Tumblers. By happy coincidence, fair-goers were also able to enjoy the sights and sounds of a World Music Festival which happened to be going on in the park as well.

HOW's attitude toward health mirrors our attitude toward housing – namely, to examine all of the issues that both affect and are affected by the problem at hand. An inhaler, for example, cannot present a long-term

solution for a child's asthma if the home environment is riddled with mold and insects. Consequently, our goal with HOW-FIT was to present a comprehensive array of information that addressed as many potential barriers, and avenues, to healthy living as possible. Staff and fair-goers alike enjoyed a wonderful and informative day, and we look forward to repeating the experience next year.



Members of the Jesse White Tumblers wowed Wellness Fest goers with their high-flying talent!

Thanks to our generous HOW Fit Partners!

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25
years

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at Adler Planetarium

Thanks to our generous partners, HOW Very Stellar was
HOW's most successful annual gala event yet!



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Zanies Comedy Nite Club

Honorary Chair: Mary Dillon, EVP-Global Chief Marketing Officer, McDonald's Corporation

Event Chair: Sylvie Légère, PMP Consultant, HOW Board of Directors

Host: Zoraida Sambolin, Co-Anchor, NBC5 News Today

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Harvest of *Hope*

an annual meeting
10.29.08

Join Housing Opportunities for Women on Wednesday, October 29th to celebrate our successes and learn more about our life-saving work.

Featured Speaker: Senator Heather Steans

Time: 5:30--8 p.m.

Location: Loyola University, Lake Shore Campus, Crown Center Lobby

**Event is free of charge including dinner, drinks, and on-site childcare*

To RSVP, or for more information, contact Kim Christensen: 773-465-5770 x253, kchristensen@how-inc.org



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