

Howard & Evanston Community Center



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family services

IMPACT REPORT

JULY 1, 2022 – JUNE 30, 2023



Howard & Evanston Community Center



Howard and Evanston Community Center's IMPACT REPORT

July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023

We provide the tools and resources to **m**power individuals, enabling their independence, and offering a better chance for a brighter tomorrow.

Welcome from Executive Director

This has been a big year for us! Our name changed, reflecting that we're now part of Metropolitan Family Services, but our commitment to the Greater Rogers Park Area is stronger than ever, and we are deepening our connection to Evanston. In Fiscal Year 2023 we were able to reach 8,711 people.

Activities ranged from preparing our youngest clients for kindergarten and helping our Promise Scholars succeed in college, to providing emergency supports to domestic violence survivors and teaching English to clients from 64 different countries.

Our Howard Afterschool Reading Program (HARP) continued a successful partnership with Oakton Elementary School in Evanston. HARP volunteers and instructors helped second and third graders who struggled with reading post-COVID improve and develop a love for reading.

That's not all. Our Workforce and Reentry Services helped men and women coming home from incarceration secure jobs and stay active and engaged in their community. Responding to a growing food insecurity problem in our community, the HECC Food Pantry distributed 429,000 pounds of food benefitting 1,656 families and households – a 39 percent increase from last year.

In 2024, we are forming a community board to improve our impact in Rogers Park and Evanston. We are also exploring ways to expand adult education programming to Chicago's South Side, and we are deploying a new health services navigator training program. We will continue our work to fill service gaps in South Evanston and forge new partnerships to make that happen.

With your support, the Howard & Evanston Community Center is and remains ready to serve. Our ultimate goal is to keep fulfilling our mission – helping low-income individuals and families in the Greater Rogers Park Area and Evanston stabilize their lives and develop the social skills necessary to become effective community members. Thank you for a great year!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "JK", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Jason Kaiser
Executive Director

7648 N. Paulina St.
Chicago, IL 60626
773.262.6622
www.howardevanston.org

Early Childhood Services



The **Early Childhood Education Program** at the Sheila Reynolds Berner Family Center provides a high-quality, affordable early childhood education program for children ages 0-5 years in a full-day program.

The Family Center offers year-round, full-day child care/Head Start/Early Head Start, providing the necessary tools for children to be prepared for and to succeed in a traditional full-day school program.

STORY OF IMPACT

A 2-year-old boy and his mother started with us when the boy was an infant, and he is now in one of our toddler rooms. Through observations and assessments, the teachers, in collaboration with the Family Support Worker, Disabilities Coordinator, and a supervisor, felt the child could use some extra support and recommended he be evaluated by Early Intervention. Initially, the mother didn't feel the need, but the team explained the benefits of evaluation in the hopes she would change her mind.

Meanwhile, the teachers continued to work with the child through individualized activities in the classroom and had ongoing communication with Mom. Over time, his mother agreed to move forward with an evaluation, and the child began to make progress in his development. The child has since started using more words, engaging in activities with his peers, and building social-emotional skills.

- Nancy Salvador, Director of Early Learning



THE FAMILY CENTER'S IMPACT NUMBERS

SERVED 97 CHILDREN ages 0-5 years

92% of children ages 0-3 years met or exceeded their school readiness outcomes

94% of children ages 3-5 years met or exceeded their school readiness outcomes



Youth Services

The HECC Scholars Program is a scholarship program designed to support promising first-generation college students. Annually, we award four or more college scholarships worth up to \$40,000 each (\$10,000/year x 4 years.). A HECC Career Coach follows and supports the Scholars and their cohorts as they continue their post-secondary education goals. With the support of dedicated staff at Howard & Evanston Community Center, Scholars are provided with the tools and skills to persevere and graduate from college, ready to pursue meaningful careers.

STORY OF CHANGE

Saba Sote graduated from the Chicago Public School system in 2018 and has been an active participant of the Howard & Evanston Community Center since she was 15 years old in our Youth Development Services Department. During this time, Saba has been a member of our Clubhouse Teen Arts & Technology Program (2015 - 2018), Youth Career Readiness Program (2015 - 2018), and the Howard Area Scholars Program (2018 - Present).

Saba's academic journey has taken her from Rogers Park to the University of Illinois, City Colleges of Chicago, Resurrection University, and finally to the Illinois Institute of Technology.



All this time Saba has faced challenges with family as well as the COVID-19 pandemic. Originally, her dream was to become a nurse, but after time, Saba realized that the healthcare field was too emotionally draining. She then realized her passion and began her career pursuing information technology and management at the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT).

Recently, Saba completed her bachelor's degree (B.A.C.) in Information Technology and Management while simultaneously taking classes for her master's degree (M.A.S.) in Cyber Forensics and Security. Saba's goal is to become a cybersecurity analyst. The HECC Scholars Program typically supports undergraduate degrees. A special grant from the Seabury Foundation helped us support part of Saba's master's program.

Saba has two older sisters (Safa and Sana) who were also Howard Area Clubhouse participants and Howard Area Promise Scholars. They are all first-generation college-bound.

When Saba earns her M.A.S. in Cyber Forensics and Security in 2025, they will become the first in their family to have graduate degrees, as Safa earned her MA in Computer Science from the Illinois Institute of Technology, and Sana earned her MBA from the University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign.

- Robert Conlon, Director of Youth Services

HECC SCHOLARS PROGRAM IMPACT NUMBERS

\$1.5M+ TOTAL AWARDED IN SCHOLARSHIPS since 2012 (12 Cohort Years)

54 Howard & Evanston Community Center **Promise Scholars** (total)

42 **First-Generation College-Bound Students**

27 **Active Scholars**

Human Services

The Howard & Evanston Community Center offers tools to help adults and families change their lives and gain the skills they need to flourish.

Domestic Violence Prevention and Intervention provides a safe space for survivors to receive support services from case management, court advocacy and counseling.

STORY OF POSSIBILITY

When a survivor makes the difficult decision that it is time to leave their abuser, sometimes there is nowhere to go. Sometimes, the only safe choice is to go as far away as possible in order to find safety for themselves and their children.

This was the situation with one of our clients. She lived outside of Illinois with her abuser and their children, and every time she would try to leave, he would find her, and she felt forced to return to him. She called one of her friends who lived in Chicago and had worked with our agency herself to find safety, heal and move forward, free from abuse and her abuser. Her friend recommended that she call our agency for support. We were able to work with this survivor to plan her escape to Chicago, where we arranged a hotel room for her and her five children.



During their time in the hotel, we assisted with food, clothing, personal items and gas cards for transportation. In order to keep them safe, we assisted her in filing an Emergency Order of Protection, which was granted. We are working with the family with counseling services in order to assist them in their journey to healing. While there is still a way to go for this survivor and her children to get back on their feet, we are continuing in our support with housing advocacy, employment advocacy and educational advocacy, as well as life skills. The family is on the road to recovery and healing.

- **Stacy Goodman, Domestic Violence Clinical Program Supervisor**

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES IMPACT NUMBERS

173 CLIENTS SERVED

11 outreaches that served 525 INDIVIDUALS

3,133 Hours of Direct Service Provided

1,391 Hours of Individual Counseling Provided

544 Hours of Group Counseling Provided

420 Hotline Calls Received

(110% increase over FY22)

37 Emergency Orders of Protection Granted

14 Plenary Orders of Protection Granted

109 Hours of Housing Advocacy Provided

102 Hours of Case Management Provided, serving all 173 CLIENTS

Adult Education

IMPACT STORY

In Spring 2023, we referred one of our remote students to a community family outreach program to acquire home visits for her children. The student, a recent refugee from Afghanistan and a mother of 14-month-old triplets, had not left her third floor apartment with her children for three months and had developed post-partum depression. Her teacher participated in the first home visit and helped with the enrollment papers, unsure if the student and her husband would actually go through with the home visits.

Her family embraced the family outreach program, welcomed the Early Childhood Education specialist in their home every month, went to socialization programs at the library and at their center, and have enrolled the triplets in daycare. In Fall 2023, the student reached back out to her teacher to ask to enroll in our in-person classes. Ultimately, the student is back on track and working to achieve her academic goals as well as her dream of becoming an interpreter or daycare teacher.

- Moon Parker, Adult Education Supervisor

ADULT EDUCATION IMPACT NUMBERS

369 ADULT LEARNERS SERVED

(the majority being refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants)

64 Countries Represented

45 Languages Spoken

49 Volunteer Tutors Recruited

3 Adult Learners Passed the Citizenship Test

43 Computers and Hotspots Distributed for Remote Instruction

4 Adult Learners Passed at Least One General Education Diploma (GED) Test



Our new beginner ESL class in Northtown Library's beautiful, spacious community room. We established a partnership with Chicago Public Library in West Rogers Park in Summer 2023 in response to the overwhelming number of students coming to our program for English language instruction. We are now up to 20 students from more than 10 countries who speak more than 12 languages.



A visual of the homeland nations of our students, staff and volunteers, showing our diversity.

Employment and Reentry Services

STORIES OF IMPACT

Romond Peterson enrolled in HECC's Fresh Start Job Readiness Training in April 2023 with the goal of going to driving school to get his Commercial Driver's License and becoming an over the road driver. He wants to own his own trucks and employ more young men and women who face barriers to employment. After successfully completing Fresh Start, he enrolled in Progressive Driving School on April 24, 2023. Romond successfully completed his 240-hour driving requirement in September 2023. He is currently onboarding for employment with the truck driving company Schneider.

Will Kochel sought assistance from HECC's Reentry Program. Having led a tumultuous life marked by evading warrants across multiple states, he found stability at HECC and with HECC's partner A Safe Haven in December 2022. Will engaged in HECC's Reentry Support Services, completed job readiness workshops, and pursued culinary training in collaboration with HECC's Adult Education Program where he earned industry-recognized certifications. Despite setbacks with an outstanding warrant, he remains resilient. Will is envisioning a future that is unburdened by his past by gaining employment, paying off court fees, and resolving his warrant in the state of Florida, and he has expressed optimism about building a new life.



Will Kochel (middle) with Charles Hardwick, Reentry and Workforce Services Manager (left), and Mark Ersfeld, Reentry & Workforce Services Program Coordinator (right).

EMPLOYMENT AND REENTRY SERVICES IMPACT NUMBERS

211 Fresh Start Workshop Graduates

276 PARTICIPANTS Completed Criminogenic Risk Assessments (all returning citizens)

141 PARTICIPANTS Completed Individualized Reentry Service Plans

37 People Placed in Job Training Programs

29 People (78% OF PARTICIPANTS) Completed Job Training Programs

91 PEOPLE PLACED IN EMPLOYMENT
(82 were returning citizens)

46 People Maintained Employment for 30 Days

60 People Maintained Employment for 60 Days

14 People Maintained Employment for 90 Days

200 People Did Not Recidivate in the First Year After Intake

RECIDIVISM RATE

HECC: 27.5%

Illinois: 38.5%

National: 44%

Food Assistance Program

The Howard & Evanston Community Center's Food Pantry helps address food insecurity in the **Greater Rogers Park Area and Evanston communities.**

FOOD PANTRY IMPACT NUMBERS

1,656 FAMILIES/HOUSEHOLDS SERVED

(Up from 1,193 in FY22, a **39% Increase**)

3,803 INDIVIDUALS SERVED

(Up from 3,041 in FY22, a **25% Increase**)

429,000 Pounds of Food Distributed

42,668 Pantry Visits in FY23

Responded to increased need and added service to additional areas of Evanston



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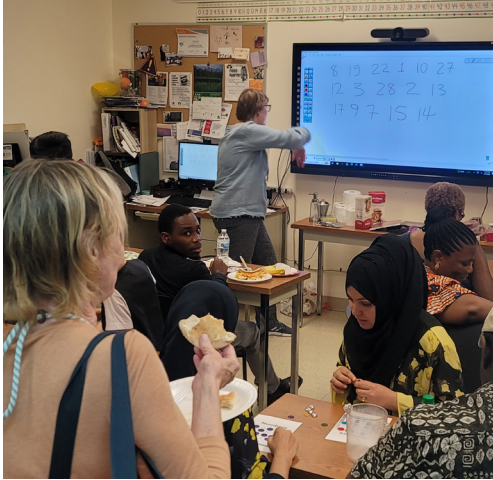
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