

## **The ONE Update June 2004**

### ***30 Years of Power!***

Over 1,000 community members from Uptown, Edgewater, and Rogers Park gathered to celebrate thirty years of power as part of the Organization of the NorthEast on May 24th. The ONE Annual Convention was held at St. Andrew's Greek Orthodox Church and allowed community members to voice their concerns as well as their hopes for the future of the neighborhood. Aldermen Eugene Schuler and Joe Moore attended to listen and participate. The convention opened with a welcome in all the languages of our communities and a special presentation by the youth of the Sunlight African Center. A new ONE Board of Directors was elected, and a platform for the year was passed. Peter Holstein of Holstein Development Corporation received an award for Inclusive Community Process based on his work with the community in the Wilson Yards planning process.

Strategy teams presented issues facing the community, including skyrocketing property taxes and the effects on affordable housing, refugee and immigrant rights, access to jobs, and the campaign to help ex-offenders re-enter the community. Two women testified to their experiences in Springfield lobbying for Drivers' Licenses for undocumented immigrants. Dr. Gary Slutkin announced the launch of CeaseFire in Rogers Park, and youth leaders Danielle Carol and Sharmaine Hill addressed the need for more youth services in Rogers Park. Finally, community members voted on important new issues and decided that access to affordable healthcare is the most pressing new needs for ONE to address. The 2004 convention ended with a call to action by highly motivated ONE members!

What are the most important new problems in our community? At the Annual Convention, 81 ONE members voted for ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE HEALTHCARE, 41 voted for POLICE RELATIONS, ESPECIALLY WITH YOUTH OF COLOR, and 8 voted for EXTENDED BUS SERVICE. If you would like to work on any of these issues, please contact Sarah Jane.
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### ***Active Spring Puts Jobs Strategy Team on Verge of Statewide Victory***

The ONE Jobs Strategy Team has been on the go throughout the Spring, fighting to create dignified work options for the communities of NorthEast Chicago. Community leaders and institutions have identified the need for local hire initiatives and employment barriers faced by the formerly incarcerated as the major work issues facing our communities. The Jobs Team has been educating community members and state politicians on the importance of policies that help ex-offenders find dignified work. Members have presented a skit that addresses these issues to congregations. The Team has met with local politicians and traveled to Springfield on a regular basis to advocate for positive change. In April, Tom Foley, an ONE Jobs Team leader testified to the Senate Judiciary Committee on the need for a record sealing policy.

At the ONE convention, the team championed policies that will seal low-level felony records. Joseph Gill said the policies "will allow for people with low-level drug possession and prostitution felonies to appeal to have their records sealed so they can have a second chance at finding gainful employment, and make a productive contribution to our community." The legislation members worked for is awaiting Senate approval.

During the Convention the Jobs Team presented their vision for a just community to politicians and the assembled crowd. Maurice Granton said, "I want a community where I am allowed to be

productive citizen and not be judged by my past." Shelly Friede of the Salvation Army spoke for transitional jobs, and Joyce Johnson from REST spoke for a community where homeless people have a chance to work themselves out of their situation. Johnny King, co-chair of the Jobs Strategy Team, said, "despite having paid my debt to society, I faced continuing prejudice that worked to keep me down; to typecast me as a criminal with no chance to get out. Together with others in the same situation, we researched this problem and documented the unfair impact of certain state policies on ex-offenders like myself; particularly African American men in our community." King secured commitments from Aldermen Moore and Schulner to meet and explore how the city can be accountable to addressing these issues.

If you want more information, are concerned about a jobs issue, or are interested in having the ex-offender skit performed at your congregation call Cory at ONE 773-769-3232.

### ***Immigrant Rights***

The Immigrant Rights Strategy Team is making powerful strides in advancing immigrant rights. Members of the team made several trips to Springfield in March, speaking with officials regarding issues pressing to the immigrant and refugee community. Over 50 members, including students from Senn High School as well as members of the Cambodian Association and Vietnamese Association met with State Senator Carol Ronen about a policy that would give temporary income to refugee seniors recently impacted by federal legislation that terminates their SSI benefits if they have not attained citizenship within 7 years of arriving in the United States. These federal cuts left many senior refugees in the community without any source of income and homeless. Members of Chinese Mutual Aid, the Bosnian-Herzegovina Association, the Vietnamese Association, and Cambodian Association held a public forum with Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky to support work being done on the federal level and share personal stories of the devastation the federal cuts were having on their communities. "Our people come here expecting to live a good life and recover from their trauma. None of them ever imagine to be victimized again by the new country they call home," said Denise Lam of Chinese Mutual Aid.

The team is now targeting mobilization of immigrant power for the November election and kicked off its voter registration campaign at the convention. "We are a strong community and we are going to fight for our rights and respect," said Evelyn Madrid of Centro Romero. Members of the team have committed to register 1500 new voters and mobilize 3000 people to vote in the November elections, demonstrating that immigrants are active civic participants and that immigrant issues are community priorities.

### ***Homeless Issues***

The Committee on Homeless Issues is working with block clubs near shelters and drop-in centers to sponsor block level forums on homeless issues over the summer. Shelters and drop-in centers who are ONE members are eager to have dialogues with their neighbors in a non-CAPS setting. The forums will increase understanding of the city-sponsored plan to end homelessness, and provide an opportunity for neighbors to collaborate with providers, the city, and homeless people who find shelter in the neighborhood, on local solutions. The next meeting of the Committee on Homeless Issues is June 29th in the morning. Contact Kit Slack if you are interested.

### ***ONE in the Top 1 Percent!!!***

Last year, ONE competed with 764 other organizations across the country for the right to participate in a three-year Kellogg Foundation study called *Pathways to Collaboration*. ONE was

one of seven organizations chosen to participate in this project which is being administered by the Center for the Advancement of Collaborative Strategies in Health. No surprise that ONE stood out as a community organization with much practice in leadership development and community collaboration! The purpose of this grant is to uncover the basics of successful community collaboration so that others may learn, to dig deep into the process and historical development of organizations which achieve real victories.

The first year of the project will focus on the 30 year history of ONE. Through one-on-one interviews, small group discussions, and a review of ONE documents, we will bring together the material to write ONE's history.

In March 2004, Mark Fick, Iris Scurlock, Kathy Ahler, Stewart Sheinfeld, and Sarah Jane Knoy traveled to Washington D.C. to meet with representatives from the other six organizations chosen and to attend meetings with the advisers and administrators of the grant. There is another meeting scheduled in Austin, TX where the groups will convene again and see the work of PODER up close.

In April, the Action Council discussed the WorkPlan for the project and gave essential feedback. Interviewers, meeting facilitators, and document review people from ONE have already begun work on this exciting project. Chel Thach and Maureen Dolan traveled to New York City to receive training from the Center for the Advancement of Collaborative Strategies in Health and reported back at the ONE Pathways to Collaborations meeting in June. Stay tuned for periodic updates.

### ***Education***

If you didn't come to the Annual Convention, you missed a powerful and big community event! More than 50 parents and children from different schools presented their recent accomplishments. The Local School Council campaign mobilized more than 500 people to vote! 4,000 flyers were distributed! 70 parents and community people went door to door to talk with neighbors! Seven parents and three community members won the Local School Council elections! Throughout the campaign we identified many issues, including school safety, communication between parents and teachers, and the need for more after schools programs. Upcoming activities include the Leadership Training in Spanish, which begins on June 29, the Education team meeting on July 28 at 6PM at ONE, and the Local School Council training during fall. If you have energy, want to improve our children's education, or dream of being a leader, hurry up and call Astrid E. Suarez, Community Organizer in Education at the ONE office at 769-3232.

### ***Tenants Taking Control***

If the landlord of 920 West Lakeside decided not to renew his Section 8 contract when it expires, over 300 families would lose their housing. Now those tenants, along with thousands of other tenants throughout Illinois, have a new tool to help them save their housing. State lawmakers, following the lead of Representative Julie Hamos and Senator Iris Martinez, passed a policy that will give tenants the opportunity to purchase their building if the landlord decides to "opt out" of their affordability contract. This policy gives tenants some control over their housing; they are not simply depending on the good will of their landlord. Carmen Marine was the first example of a tenant purchased Section 8 building in the nation, and most recently the over 500 tenants of 4550 North Clarendon pulled together resources to purchase their building. Tenant leaders from 920 West Lakeside and the Pines of Edgewater spent the Winter and Spring working with tenant leaders at Jane Addams Senior Caucus and Senator Martinez on a strategy to win a policy that

would preserve these buildings. In March, several ONE members joined thousands of other Chicago residents in Springfield to demand assistance in preserving their housing. In the end, preservation of Section 8 housing was supported by all of our local state legislators, including Senators Ronen, Cullerton, and Silverstein, and Representatives Hamos, McKeon, Osterman, and Fritchey. "It's reassuring to know that we're not longer at the mercy of the landlord when our contract expires in 5 years. Now we just have to get ourselves organized enough to buy our building when the time comes – it'll be great for our tenants to have control over our housing," said an excited Annie Pugh from 920 West Lakeside.

### ***Rogers Park Youth Unleash Unified, No-Nonsense Voice on Community Issues***

By our special correspondent

A bold new band of youth leaders is swinging into action on key community issues. Danielle Carol, 20, and Sharmaine Hill, 17, set the ball rolling at the ONE annual convention, where they spoke out on youth concerns and then asked Alderman Joe Moore for commitments. Sharmaine, a member of Howard Area Community Center, told her personal story to audience of a thousand people. "I represent hundreds of youth like me," she said. Danielle, 20, of United Church of Rogers Park, spoke on the need to create resources for youth of color and low-income youth, "because all youth deserve to achieve their full potential." She then asked Alderman Moore three no-nonsense questions. He pledged his support on more youth spaces and youth programs in Rogers Park. Other youth leaders agree on the need for youth support in Roger's Park and for a change in the community's perception on youth. "Youth aren't just interested in hanging out on the street," said Adriana Lopez, 18, a youth outreach worker at Alternatives/YouthNet and a graduate of Sullivan High School. "We want to make change in our communities."

Contact Saket Soni at 769-3232 for more info.

### ***Balanced Development***

The Balanced Development Coalition has been building power for the past three years to win more affordable housing in Chicago. ONE, as a founding member of the coalition, has worked hard on this issue, meeting with Aldermen, participating in rallies and marches, and targeting large developers. That campaign should end in victory in the next few months, if we keep the pressure on. In March, Alderman Preckwinkle introduced an ordinance that would call for a 15% set aside of affordable housing in all new and rehabbed housing developments in Chicago. Although this proposal calls for less than the 25% set aside that we had been fighting for, it currently has the support of 24 aldermen, including Aldermen Mell, Stone, and Tunney, who had not supported the previous proposal. In addition to Stone, local Aldermen Shiller, Moore and Schuller continue to support this policy. The Mayor, however, continues to fight the idea of a mandatory set aside.

ONE members have been instrumental in gaining the support of religious and union leaders for this policy. In March, nearly 20 ONE clergy members took part in a clergy press conference calling on the Mayor to act justly on the housing issue. On June 24th, leaders from several local unions, including the Chicago Federation of Labor, SEIU (service employees), HERE (hotel workers) and AFSCME (government employees) joined with the Balanced Development Coalition in support of the affordable housing set aside policy, since Chicago is rapidly becoming too expensive for their members. The alliances help build political support, and put further pressure on the Mayor to create more affordable housing in the city.

On Tuesday, August 24th, ONE and the other members of the Balanced Development Coalition will be taking the fight to the streets once again. That morning, we'll join with over 1,000 other

Chicago residents to visit one special Chicagoan's new home, followed by a rally at the State of Illinois building. For information on times and buses from the community, please call ONE at 773-769-3232.

### ***Upcoming Retreat for Key Leaders***

Were you inspired at the Annual Convention? Are you interested in getting more involved in ONE? Join ONE for the Key Leaders and Board Retreat on Friday, July 16th at 1 PM until Saturday, July 17th at 3 PM. We will spend our time at the Cabrini Retreat Center evaluating the past year, participating in a leadership training, and visioning and strategizing for the upcoming year. The retreat will also be a fun opportunity to get to know other ONE leaders, board members, and staff. To sign up, please talk to an organizer or call the ONE office at 773-769-3232.

### ***ONE's Upcoming Events***

ENTRENAMIENTO de LIDERAZGO en ESPAÑOL

29 de Junio 6PM

Immanuel Lutheran Church

1599 W Elmdale

Llame Astrid o Jamiko a 769 32 32 por información.

June 29 - Call Kit at 769-3232

COMMITTEE on HOMELESS ISSUES

July 10, 2:00 PM - Loyola Park

IMMIGRANT RIGHTS STRATEGY TEAM

Call Jamiko at 769-3232 for details

July 28, 6:00 PM - ONE

EDUCATION TEAM MEETING

Call Astrid at 769-3232 for more info.

Friday, July 16, 1 PM – Saturday, July 17th, 3PM.

ONE KEY LEADERS AND BOARD RETREAT

Evaluate the past year and the Convention, plan future Strategy Teams, and more. Call the ONE office for more info.

August 24

BALANCED DEVELOPMENT ACTION

Contact Jennifer Ritter for details on times and buses.

WANTED: Experienced leaders who are interested in mentoring new leaders, and new mentors who would like to be mentored by experienced leaders. Share skills and organizational memory while building a relationship! Call the office for details.