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# GROWING FORWARD

## Oaks of North Lawndale SAIC

The School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) and a host of community partners launched an amazing art and community development project called Oaks of North Lawndale with the goal of replanting the community's urban forest while promoting community development.

"Oaks of North Lawndale is an aspirational project that brings together the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, the city of Chicago and the North Lawndale community to reimagine the neighborhood as a healthy, peaceful and tree-lined place," said Paul Coffey, Vice-Provost and Dean of Community Engagement, SAIC.

The project kicked off with a community tree planting celebration hosted at Nichols Tower. The event included Mexican artist Pedro Reyes and his work *Palas por Pistolas* (Guns into Shovels). Reyes oversaw the production of his work repurposing weapon waste into shovel heads. These shovels were then used to dig the holes to plant the oak trees. The goal of the project is to plant more than 7,000 trees throughout the community.

Homan Square, campus providers and other organizations support this public art and community enrichment campaign to reinvigorate North Lawndale.







## DEAR FRIENDS,

Homan Square is growing forward. Not only are we and our campus partners moving ahead, but we are growing and expanding on the solid base of programs, facilities, supporters, and partnerships that already exist and support the Homan Square community.

As the new Executive Director of the Foundation for Homan Square, my journey started as a Homan Square homeowner. I was recruited to join the Community Advisory Council (CAC) which has recently been reinvigorated to provide community input and guidance. I eventually came to work at Homan Square and am excited about my new position and the possibilities for us to accomplish exciting things.

I feel very much aligned with this moment in Homan Square history, as old relationships are renewed and budding relationships are nurtured. Our future is firmly anchored by the deep roots established over the past 27 years, allowing us to grow forward and tackle new challenges on the Campus and in the neighborhood around us.

Many thanks to all our friends and supporters!



**Kevin Sutton**  
Executive Director  
Foundation for Homan Square

# Nichols Tower Honors

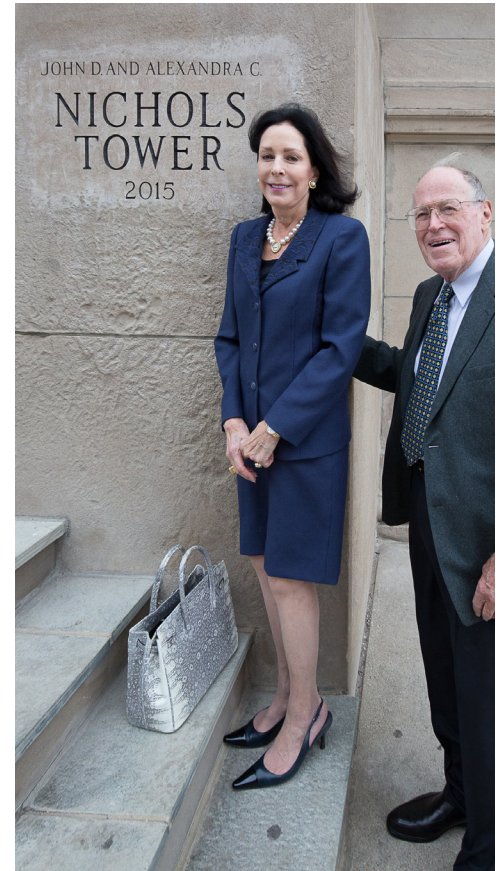


The Urban Land Institute recently awarded its prestigious Vision Award to the Nichols Tower at Homan Square. The award defines the standard for real estate development in the Chicagoland area and recognizes "creative development practices, inventive partnerships, imaginative problem solving, or visionary ideas that have contributed to the growth of vibrant communities."

The ULI awards panel was impressed with the Nichols Tower project because of its creative reuse of the building, Homan Square's dedication to providing a home for nonprofits in the City, and the demonstrated commitment to supporting the community.

John and Alexandra Nichols deserve enormous gratitude for their recent major gift that allowed for important upgrades and improvements to the Tower.

This Vision Award recognizes all those who saw the potential of the Tower. Charlie Shaw always saw the opportunities others missed. Kristin Dean, our last Executive Director, fought hard to bring this project to completion. Generous supporters like Bev Hayford, the Nichols family and countless others made those big visions possible.





## PARTNERSHIPS GROWING FORWARD:

### Community Leaders Shaping Future Growth at Homan Square

*Homan Square strives to sustain an environment that helps students and families live their best lives through quality educational, recreational, health care and family support services; while instilling the desire to dream big dreams and the skills to maximize success. The Homan Square campus includes:*

- Chicago Park District
- DRW College Prep
- Family Focus Lawndale
- Free Spirit Media
- Gardeneers - Homan Rails Farm
- Greater Westside Development Corporation
- Green Garden Café
- Holy Family School
- Lawndale Business Renaissance Association
- Lawndale Christian Health Center
- The Lunch Box
- Neighborhood Housing Services of Chicago
- North Lawndale Employment Network
- North Lawndale YMCA
- Options for Youth
- School of the Art Institute of Chicago
- Turning the Page
- YWCA Julian Grace Innovation and Technology Institute

#### NEW PARTNERSHIPS ARE INSPIRING PLANS FOR GROWTH IN AND AROUND HOMAN SQUARE.

Earlier this year a partnership with Foundation for Homan Square and IFF (a nonprofit lender and experienced real estate consultant) was established to manage facilities and work with the community on continuing redevelopment. Additionally, a newly reinvigorated Community Advisory Council (CAC) and the new Homan Square Leadership Council are in place to help shape the future of Homan Square.

Initially formed when the Community Center was constructed, the CAC advised Homan Square leaders and service providers on community needs and helped to build deeper ties to community residents. The CAC is made up of North Lawndale residents, business owners, and representatives from local aldermanic offices and nonprofits. It has been reactivated with a focus on informing future needs and how the whole of the Community Center Campus can best meet residents' wishes.

The CAC has already offered advice and set priorities for Homan Square, including a preference for updating current housing stock and creating more rental units within the next two years. In tandem with the housing efforts, the CAC has prioritized development corridors along Harrison and Roosevelt and Homan and Kedzie to further connect the Homan Square campus and the surrounding community. The potential for mixed-use development is being explored in these newly identified development corridors.

These community-based priorities will guide the Foundation and IFF in developing partnerships and seeking resources for housing and mixed-use development that will contribute to the success of the Homan Square Community Center Campus and support community development initiatives that benefit all residents.

The Homan Square Leadership Council (HSLC) is where leaders of the 16 service providers on the Homan Square Campus meet to work together. The group assembles quarterly to discuss what they are learning about emerging and unmet community needs and how they can collaborate their programs and respond. Working together, our service providers can better advance the missions of their own organizations while creating greater opportunities to partner with and serve community residents. Cooperation and collaboration mean better outcomes for everyone.

Service providers, community residents, and Homan Square management are all working together to build the brightest future for the Homan Square community and surrounding neighborhoods.





*"They've been an excellent hiring partner over the last two years. Providing many of our U-Turn Permitted graduates with their first job experience in years. We appreciate the commitment Homan Square has demonstrated in helping our graduates turn their lives around."*

## Growing Job Opportunities for Returning Citizens

For too many North Lawndale residents, getting a job is nearly impossible despite their desire to work. More than half of all North Lawndale adults have had some involvement with the criminal justice system. Each of them faces significant barriers to employment. A partnership between Homan Square and the North Lawndale Employment Network (NLEN) aims to bridge that gap.

Beginning in 2016, Homan Square began hiring graduates of the NLEN U-turn Permitted program, which provides job readiness training and financial coaching to residents returning to the community from incarceration.

"Homan Square is an important employer partner because of their location in Nichols Tower and their welcoming spirit," said Brenda Palms Barber, NLEN Executive Director. "Many employers deny access to jobs for the returning citizen population. Homan Square gives them a second chance to become connected to the labor market and reach financial stability."

Since the partnership began, 31 transitional employees have been hired. Transitional workers learn skills they need to get reacclimated to the workforce and eventually secure permanent, unsubsidized jobs. At Homan Square transitional workers are hired as front desk greeters and janitors. Several have gone on to become permanent employees.

Mark Sanders, Chief Program Officer and Director of Institutional Effectiveness at NLEN, says of the partnership, "They've been an excellent hiring partner over the last two years. Providing many of our U-Turn Permitted graduates with their first job experience in years. We appreciate the commitment Homan Square has demonstrated in helping our graduates turn their lives around."





## HOMAN RAILS FARM

*Growing  
Vegetables  
and Leaders*

The Homan Rails Farm continues to prosper and evolve. The most exciting development is our new partnership with the Gardeneers organization. Gardeneers is a nonprofit that runs school garden programs in many Chicago communities, primarily on the West and South sides. On the Homan Rails Farm, Gardeneers is providing immersive urban agricultural programs for our high school students at DRW College Prep, including cultivating business plans, learning leadership skills, and growing fresh produce for the community.

Younger students on the campus are also involved, choosing crops for their school garden, planting seeds, tending to plants, and harvesting food.

"10 years ago when I started teaching in North Lawndale, I found a community rich in collaboration, care, and innovation," said May Tsupros, Co-Executive Director of Gardeneers. "For these and many other reasons, when I co-founded Gardeneers, I knew we would put our roots down here. We are so proud to be a part of the network of changemakers serving the North Lawndale community."

*GROWING SMILES*

Lawndale Christian Health Center (LCHC) has been faithfully responding to the health and wellness needs of North Lawndale residents at the Homan Square Community Center since it opened. Because quality dental services are especially hard to access in low-income communities, LCHC is growing their practice at Homan Square to address that need.

LCHC is constructing a new dental clinic as part of their Homan Square primary care clinic. It will provide a full array of dental services to 3,000 patients per year, including more than 2,000 children. Services will include checkups and preventative services, restorative services like fillings and crowns, and even oral surgery and dentures.

"LCHC is excited to offer needed dental care and expand its footprint at Homan Square," said Bruce Miller, CEO of Lawndale Christian Health Center. "We are grateful for the community center campus and our partners there providing everything from exercise and wellness space to education and youth programs. Homan Square is a wonderful community support for our neighborhood, and one that we hope we will continue to grow with into the future."



# Honor Roll of Donors (2016-2017)



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*Thank you to  
those whose great  
generosity allows  
us to touch the  
lives of many!*

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## ESTATE Giving

Homan Square has the strength to keep Growing Forward because of the longevity of our generous supporters. Many friends have been with us since the Community Center was built and have faithfully supported restoration of the Charles H. Shaw Technology and Learning Center and the John and Alexandra Nichols Tower.

We will need your support to continue growing forward and redeveloping the North Lawndale Community. Your contributions will make a difference for many years to come. You can make an immediate impact by mailing a check or donating online at [homansquare.org](http://homansquare.org).

To leave a lasting legacy, consider the Foundation for Homan Square in your estate planning. Contact us for simple bequest language.

Contact Kevin Sutton, Executive Director, Foundation for Homan Square at 773.265.4403 or [ksutton@homansquare.org](mailto:ksutton@homansquare.org) to learn more.



## FOUNDATION FOR HOMAN SQUARE

Nichols Tower  
906 South Homan Avenue — Suite 200 • Chicago, IL 60624  
773.265.4403 phone • [www.homansquare.org](http://www.homansquare.org)