



# STRONGER TOGETHER



2018 **ANNUAL REPORT**



*Homan Square strives to sustain an environment that helps students and families live their best lives through quality educational, recreational, healthcare and family support services, while instilling the desire to dream big 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
- 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

DEAR **FRIENDS,**

*Stronger Together*

Chicago is going through challenging times. The city's place in the national spotlight is often focused on our worst moments. Despite the well-publicized problems, there are good things happening in every neighborhood. The story of Homan Square stands out as a time-tested example of how much can be accomplished in collaboration and community. We are clearly stronger together.



*Kevin Sutton*

Over the past year, we have relied on our solid foundation while creating a new infrastructure for the Foundation for Homan Square. IFF (formally Illinois Facilities Fund) has assumed management of all the properties on the campus after years of dedicated stewardship from the Shaw Company. A new board and new plans are in place and the future for Homan Square looks exceedingly bright.

Our campus partners continue to amaze with their innovative and insightful programs. Whether addressing the needs for first-time home buyer assistance or providing computer training for young people, our providers and their team members are bringing people together to reach their full potential and enrich their lives.

As we explore future community development opportunities in and around Homan Square, several truths guide our work. First, the efforts of dedicated and generous supporters from across Chicago that made Homan Square possible have stood the test of time. Homan Square is permanent and impactful. Second, we know we are stronger together and that community residents, allies, partners and supporters from near and wide can continue to build on this legacy for the betterment of North Lawndale.

Homan Square was developed from a vision of compassion and community that together we can make the world a better place than we found it. Thank you for sharing and building that vision with us.

**Kevin Sutton**

**Executive Director**, Foundation for Homan Square





## BUILDING TOGETHER: NEW PLANS, PARTNERS, AND MOMENTUM

With a new board of directors, dedicated partners, and a timely strategic plan, the Foundation for Homan Square (FHS) is on strong footing to build from our many successes. We have completed the transition of property management teams from The Shaw Company to IFF (formally Illinois Facilities Fund, now serving the Midwest from six regional offices), a well-respected community development financial institution. The Greater Homan Square Strategic Development Plan has been created to focus FHS and our community partners on a shared vision for development that contributes to an income inclusive, healthy community.



“The Shaw Company has done an amazing job for the past twenty years helping us manage our properties at Homan Square,” said Kristin Dean, Chairperson of the Foundation for Homan Square Board. “IFF will be a great and resourceful partner as we work to inspire economic development in the broader Homan Square community.”

“The remarkable, 25-year transformation of Homan Square is rooted in the vision and commitment of community leaders, the Foundation for Homan Square and Shaw Development,” said Kirby Burkholder, President of IFF’s Social Impact Accelerator. “The FHS-IFF partnership honors that incredible legacy and looks to build on it by committing IFF’s full suite of resources—our financing, real estate tools, and research capacity—to further realize the Homan Square community’s vision.”

The new strategic plan developed with the Community Advisory Council and Homan Square Leadership Council has several key goals:

- Explore opportunities for development within an expanded Homan Square footprint;
- Develop quality housing across the spectrum of affordability;
- Develop mixed-use and commercial projects that provide space for community programming and local businesses; and
- Inspire potential investment in specific projects within the larger Plan.

These goals will guide the work of IFF and FHS as they work to extend the original vision of Homan Square and meet new challenges and opportunities.



## GROWING TOGETHER: HOMAN RAILS FARM NURTURES COLLABORATIONS

Since the first seeds broke through the soil, the Homan Rails Farm has inspired collaborations for work, education, and healthy eating. The latest partnership has developed as Gardeneers becomes the new manager of Homan Rails Farm. Gardeneers is a Chicago nonprofit providing full-service, customized school garden programs. Their partnership with DRW College Prep has earned a \$40,000 grant from The Noble Network of Charter Schools that will be used to provide a farm to table food program for the North Lawndale community.

With this support, Gardeneers will develop and implement with DRW a curriculum focused on food production and entrepreneurship. Students will help harvest fruits and vegetables and provide affordable, healthy food options to the North Lawndale community through a farm stand and community workshops facilitated by Gardeneers.

"We will increase programming and use the Homan Rails Farm as an integral part of the DRW science curriculum," said May Tsupros, Co-Founder and Executive Director of Gardeneers. "This grant helps us to activate this very large farm space across the street from the school for students to grow thousands of pounds of food for the school and the community each season."

A farm stand managed by DRW students and a Gardeneers Farm Manager opened this Fall. Produce will be made available for community members for free once a week after school until the end of the Fall harvest.



## STRONGER TOGETHER: FAMILY FOCUS FOREVER

No organization has been a stronger or longer-lived partner at Homan Square than Family Focus Lawndale. Family Focus is an original partner at Homan Square and has consistently partnered with other Homan Square providers to promote the well-being of children from birth by supporting and strengthening their families in and with their community.

Family Focus offers after-school activities, doula services for expectant mothers, early childhood home visits, support workers for families involved with DCFS, and a Power of Fathers program that helps fathers develop positive parenting skills.

The Foundation for Homan Square sponsored the Family Focus year-end picnic for program participants. The Family Focus-Homan Square partnership continues to thrive. Special thanks to Bev Hayford for her generous support.





## STRONGER TOGETHER



### LEARNING TOGETHER: FREE SPIRIT MEDIA DEVELOPING DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKERS



This summer ten aspiring filmmakers from Free Spirit Media (FSM) produced documentaries with the support of journalists from the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting. Over the course of seven weeks, the teen documentarians worked with FSM staff and their assigned journalist to story map, plan, shoot and edit their seven to ten minute documentaries. Their work explored a range of issues: from gender discrimination and gun violence, to graffiti and art and culture wars.

"I am continually delighted by the bonds built between the Pulitzer journalists and the Free Spirit Media participants," says Free Spirit Media founder Jeff McCarter. "The stories this summer were powerful and relevant both locally and globally."

At the end of the program, the Foundation for Homan Square supported a documentary viewing party for the family and friends of the filmmakers, as well as their interview subjects and mentors. The evening included dinner and an awards ceremony.

### WORKING TOGETHER: YWCA EMPOWERS JOBSEEKERS

The YWCA North Lawndale's commitment to empowerment is constantly defying expectations. Recently they hosted a Career and Resource Fair to address the various needs of people seeking employment.

Employers attending the fair not only promoted job opportunities, but also provided career coaching on both getting and keeping a job. Community organizations also attended and promoted resources available for housing, after-school programs, career pathways, expungements and other solutions to common obstacles for job seekers. The whole day emphasized networking as a powerful tool for job seekers. The YWCA Julian Grace Innovation and Technology Institute is a vital asset to the community.



## CREATING TOGETHER: GALLERY NIGHTS

No community can thrive without the arts. Artists and creators play an important role in helping to define the shared life of a community and contribute broadly to economic development. To support the burgeoning North Lawndale art scene, the Foundation for Homan Square and the North Lawndale Community Coordinating Council (NLCCC) are sponsoring Gallery Nights at the Homan Square Community Center. These fun events offer a showcase for local artists and highlight the collaborative programming done by the School of the Art Institute (SAIC). The NLCCC Arts & Culture Committee, led by Sheila McNary, play a vital role in planning and hosting these inspiring events.





# 2017/2018 ANNUAL FUND

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**Foundation for Homan Square**  
3517 West Arthington Street  
Chicago, IL 60624  
773.265.4404 *phone*  
773.265.4405 *fax*  
[www.homansquare.org](http://www.homansquare.org)