BRIGHTON PARK

Looking back

The construction of the Michigan & Illinois Canal which functioned as Chicago’s sanitary and shipping channel drew many early settlers to the area forming the village of Brighton Park in 1851 and was annexed by the City of Chicago in 1889. The neighborhood attracted industry, manufacturing and a large Eastern European population. Over the past twenty years, Brighton Park has experienced dramatic changes in both its ethnic and socio-economic make-up. The Polish, Irish, Lithuanian and German residents that once defined the neighborhood have been replaced with Latinos, many of whom are recent immigrants. Some factories have remained, while others have been replaced with new housing and strip malls. The neighborhood faces the usual urban challenges such as crime, high unemployment and insufficient education facilities.

Lead Agency

Brighton Park Neighborhood Council

Common Agenda

Brighton Park Working Together for Healthy Families, Strong Schools, and a Safe and Thriving Community.

Bold Goal

Increase the graduation rate at Kelly High School to 90%

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<th>NETWORK FUND</th>
<th>COMMUNITY FUND</th>
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Brighton Park is a neighborhood located approximately seven miles from the Loop on Chicago’s southwest side. Brighton Park was identified a high need community but there were no social service intermediaries and funding was lacking. However, the Brighton Park Neighborhood Council (BPNC) was an active organization that was focused on community schools and providing quality afterschool programs to students. BPNC was drawn to the idea of collectively working with other community organizations to offer broader support to families and students allowing students to thrive and graduate from high school.
After adopting a charter and creating an infrastructure to support the work of the coalition, the Brighton Park network has seen parents and residents taking an active role in their neighborhood by convening large groups of people to address neighborhood issues. The Network is focused on making their community safe for all residents, which has increased school attendance and academic progress, resulting in a 16% increase in the high school graduation rate.

**Bold Goal Progress**
Graduation rate at Kelly High School is 79.2%, for school year 2017 up from 67.9% in 2013

Other Brighton Park Neighborhood Network highlights include:

- Parent Mentor program is established and CPS standardized testing shows that classrooms with a parent mentor demonstrate a +3 point differential in test results and improved academic achievements.
- New student mentor program, Leaders of Tomorrow, has been rolled out and they are seeing a 43% reduction in low/mid-level infractions and 25% reduction in suspensions for students participating in the program.
- Five full time counselors are now imbedded in six neighborhood schools providing a mix of services.
- Brighton Park schools have become sanctuary schools for families concerned about deportation; the school has hosted 65 immigration workshops engaging 2,278 community members and stakeholders.
- Expanded mental health services include the hiring of a Domestic Violence Counselor, Community-Based Family Therapist, and School-Based Counselor.
- Hosted 8th annual youth summit with 450 participants from eight Brighton Park schools; community health fair for nearly 400 residents; convened a cross-community peace summit advocating for more violence prevention programs.