
Opportunity Neighborhood 2021 Annual Report

COURTESY CONTINUES TO ADAPT TO ADDRESS CHANGING COMMUNITY NEEDS

In 2000, Opportunity Neighborhood came together with a handful of other community organizations in the north metro to address the high amount of crime happening at a 364-unit affordable housing complex in New Brighton. Collaborating together with ideas and resources, the group created a six-component program called the Resident Services Program. Components were as follows: early childhood education, out of-school time/youth intervention, Courtesy, information and referral, community events and special initiatives. All six of these components contributed to an increase in safety, but it was Courtesy that was the most impactful. If residents did not feel safe at the complex, they did not leave their apartments. This made it difficult to engage them in the other components of the Resident Services Program. We quickly learned that safety comes first!

The purpose of Courtesy was to have trained community oriented staff patrol the affordable housing property in the evenings and weekends when the rental office was closed. Residents could call the Courtesy phone to report nuisances (loud music, unsupervised children, suspicious person, etc...) thus alleviating the need to call the police. Courtesy staff were respectful and did not take an authoritarian approach, but instead built relationships with residents through dialogue and service.



Residents began to trust Courtesy staff and see them not as someone who is going to “bust them” for doing something that violates their lease, but instead someone who educates them on the property’s rules in an effort to create a safe and stable community. The success of Courtesy was rooted in how staff maintained a community minded approach while interacting with residents, as well as strong relationships with police departments, specifically police officers who were the affordable housing liaisons for their city. It became clear when rental properties had consistent daily Courtesy at their complex, crimes was reduced by 70-80%.

Over the last 22 years, the success of Courtesy can be seen in the reduction of crime calls and the increase in resident satisfaction. As more data demonstrated the effectiveness of Courtesy, more properties began contacting Opportunity Neighborhood about Courtesy at their complex.

As the number of Courtesy rental properties increased, we quickly learned an important fact. When Courtesy was used alone, without the other five-components, the reduction of crime was not as significant. However, properties interested in hiring Courtesy did not have the resources to support the other five-components.

Today when rental complexes inquire about bringing Courtesy to their property, the Courtesy management tours the property and reviews police call data. This results in one of the three following conclusions:

1. Crime is out of control and the rental complex needs to hire off duty police officers and/or armed security guards to reduce crime before Courtesy could be effective.
2. Crime is a serious problem at the complex and a combination of off duty police officers and/or armed security guards and Courtesy alternating days and times should be used to reduce crime.
3. Crime is affecting the quality of life for residents and Courtesy could be effective in decreasing crime calls and improving quality of life.

Today the Twin Cities looks a lot different from when Courtesy was developed. Crime in the metro, including gun related crimes, have exponentially increased. The murder of George Floyd and the subsequent riots and police mistrust resulting in a reduction of law enforcement resources has both made it difficult to develop effective long-term relationships with police, residents and the community. The negative effects of the pandemic, including, lack of mobility, has resulted in more people staying home in their rental units increasing the number of people who are at the complexes throughout the day. The political and cultural climate has created more divisiveness among people making situations more volatile. All of these things have changed Courtesy's ability to reduce crime in rental communities. We are now at a point of re-evaluating the program by gathering community input to make necessary changes. That is what good social service programming is all about. Adapting to the needs of the community to make the most positive impact and that is just what we will do!

WHAT WE ARE ALL ABOUT...

Our Mission

To support people and strengthen neighborhoods within affordable housing communities through cooperative partnerships.

Our Goals

- Increase community safety
- Increase housing stability
- Increase opportunities for family success

Strategy

To develop a service-enriched environment that addresses residents' fundamental needs and builds community.

Values

- All people live in a safe environment.
- All people have access to food, shelter, clothing and health care.
- All people have their education, employment, recreation and transportation needs met.
- All people are connected to their community, feel a sense a belonging and ownership.

2021 Significant Accomplishments

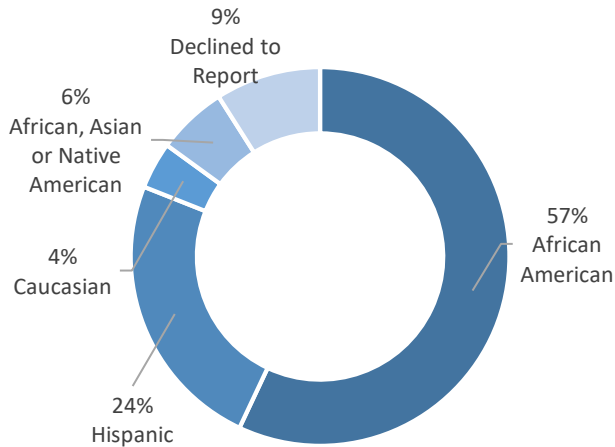
- Created a hybrid out-of-school time program for resident youth living at Ames Lake Neighborhood on St. Paul's Eastside during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 89% of youth participating in the literacy program during Ames Lake Summer Camp increased or maintained their reading fluency.
- Assisted over 300 households during the COVID-19 pandemic avoid eviction and possible homelessness through the State of Minnesota's COVID-19 Housing Assistance Program
- The agency continued to be financially stable during pandemic and social unrest due to the flexibility and understanding of partners and funders, as well as and new funding opportunities.
- The Courtesy Program grew to 11 rental complexes providing over 13,000 hours of courtesy services.

RESIDENT SERVICES COMPONENTS

RESIDENT SERVICES COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION	2021 ACCOMPLISHMENT
Out-Of-School Time Programs/Youth Intervention	Free year-round out-of-school time activities for youth in K-8th grade.	42 K-8th grade youth served through 145 out-of-school time activities.
Early Childhood Education	Early childhood family education classes	66 early childhood education classes serving 43 children from 28 unique families.
Safety Initiatives	Courtesy staff patrols the property building relationships and addressing nuisances.	<p>15,295 hours of Courtesy services provided at 14 affordable housing communities.</p> <p>At Ames Lake Neighborhood, there were 239 crime calls or .67 per unit. Compared to 619 crime calls or 1.74 per unit when Courtesy began.</p> <p>At Garden View Apartments, there were 91 crime calls or .25 per unit. Compared to 537 or 1.48 per unit when Courtesy began.</p>
Community Events	Free weekly events promoting social connectedness and building community.	34 community-building events.
Information & Referral	Residents can call, email or drop in at the Resident Services office to obtain information about community resources.	102 referrals made to community organizations.
Special Initiatives	Programs or services created to meet a specific community need or short-term enrichment program provided through a community partnership.	<p>Ames Lake Literacy Program</p> <p>Due to COVID-19 social distancing requirements, National Night Out was not held in 2021.</p>

SERVICE POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS

Resident Ethnicities



9,153

Number of residents served

2,615

Number of apartments served

63%

Percentage of households earning an annual income of \$30,000 or less

SERVICE LOCATIONS

Ames Lake Neighborhood

Central Park West

Eastside Apartments

Foundry Apartments

Garden View Apartments

Hyde Park

Loden Apartments

Lake Street Dwelling

Mill City Quarter

Revel Apartments

Stone Arch Apartments

Talus Apartments

Willow Creek Apartments

The Walkway Apartments

STAFF & BOARD MEMEBERS

Administration

Perry Lofquist, Executive Director
Kris Ziegler, Development Officer

Service Coordinators

Chantrea Chamrong
Anna Harding

Youth Workers

Somatra Doth
Rheatrai Doth
Hailey Hollenbeck
Owen Sayre
Pang Thao
Nevaeh Moore

COVID-19 Housing Assistance Program

Cadee Beltz
Jana Maltby
Heidi Magnuson
Jennifer Swick

Courtesy Staff

Abdul Al-Minthin
Michael Alada
Nick Davis
Travis Ernst
Savanna Grusel
Nick Guzman
Kirkland Johnson
Tonia Johnson
Ryan Kruse
Joseph Lee
Martin Maltby
Omar McCray
Benny Montgomery
Ryan Nelson
Redji Nimon
Philip Nketia
Danny Ramos
Christien Thomas
Jake Winsor
Kyle Yotter

Board

Tom Schirber, Chair
Keith Bluford, Treasurer
Sue Willman, Secretary
Bradley Krebsbach
Karl Spilseth

SUPPORTERS & PARTNERS

Individuals

Anonymous
Dave & Joan Allen
Keith Bluford
Connor Bolduc
John & Patti Burnett
Tyler Cobb
Julie Dobrocky

Merrill Fischbein
Dan Flicek
Kristin Fritz
Raghu Gandhgje
Trevor Harty
Tom Schriber
Steven Searing

Christine Sheetz
Karl Spilseth
John Streling
Terry Troy
Sue Willman
Gilbert Yi
Gashia Vue

Businesses, Corporations, Foundations & Service Contracts

Dollar General Literacy Foundation
Joseph A. & Lillian C. Duke Foundation
Hardenbergh Foundation
Jerstad Family Foundation
KJ Management
Mlle Lacs Band of Ojibwe Indians

MN Dept. of Public Safety - Youth Intervention
Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation
McNeely Foundation
Smith Foundation
Warren Foundation
Lillian Wright & C. Emil Berglund Foundation

SUPPORTERS & PARTNERS (continued)

Community Partners

Access to Books for Children ACES	East Side Network Café East Side YMCA	Saint Paul Saints Sprockets
Animal Humane Society	Girl Scouts River Valleys	St. Paul Police Department – Police Activities League
Boy Scouts of America	KJ Management	St. Paul Public Libraries
Bureau of Criminal Apprehension	MN Coalition of Battered Women	St. Paul Public Library Bookmobile
Century College – Upward Bound	Minnesota Literacy Council	St. Paul Public Schools Community Education
Century College Service Learning Community Partners with Youth	New Brighton Police Department East Side Network Café	Youth Intervention Program Association Youthprise Nutrition Program
Cornerstone Montessori School East Side Arts Council	Ramsey County Public Health Real Estate Equities	

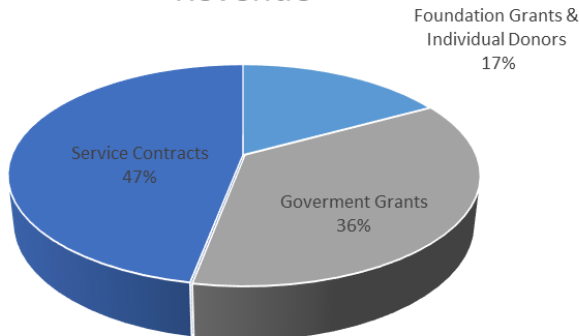
FINANCIALS

Revenue: \$747,282

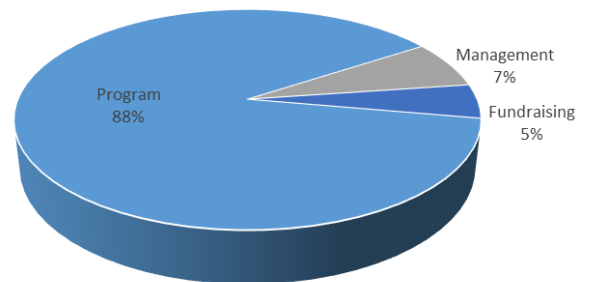
Expenses: \$718,783

Balance Sheet	Beginning of year	End of year
Cash	132,402	123,094
Pledges and grants receivable	0	0
Accounts receivable	30,778	18,085
Prepaid expenses and deferred charges	3,106	3,106
Investments – program related	38,787	38,787
Other assets	10	10
TOTAL ASSETS	205,083	183,082
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	1,047	4,533
Unrestricted net assets	204,036	178,543
Total net assets or fund balances	204,036	178,549
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	205,083	183,082

Revenue



Expenses



CONTACT INFORMATION

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