

# Neighborhood Story

## Reviving a Vibrant Auburn Gresham



Throughout the 19th century, European Americans arrived in the area that is now Auburn Gresham. With proximity to street cars and other public transportation options, the neighborhood grew rapidly until the Great Depression in the 1930s. Then, in the 1960s and 70s, restrictive housing laws were lifted, and African Americans in search of better housing relocated to the community. **This resulted in “white flight,” which led to years of disinvestment.**

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**Carlos Nelson**, Executive Director, Greater Auburn Gresham Development Corporation

Fast forward to 2020, and wealth and health disparities continue to create barriers for our neighbors in Auburn Gresham. Fifty-five percent of the neighborhood’s 56,000 residents are considered low-income and many struggle to meet their most basic needs.

To improve their quality of life, the Auburn Gresham Neighborhood Network formed with support from United Way of Metro Chicago. Led by the Greater Auburn Gresham Development Corporation (GAGDC), the Network unites community organizations, schools and businesses to create a healthy and safe neighborhood for generations to come.

Today, more job opportunities and health services are available to residents and literacy rates are rising in neighborhood schools. Additionally, the Network has bold plans to turn a vacant building into a multi-use health hub for residents to access much-needed resources.

“Our work to rebuild our south side community is happening and it will continue to happen,” said Carlos Nelson, GAGDC’s executive director. “These are catalytic projects that we know will begin to transform a community that is in dire need of investment.” ■

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