

Neighborhood Story

South Chicago Heals Together



South Chicago is known to many, but its greatest attributes—its resilience and history of service—are too often overlooked. Located 10 miles south of downtown Chicago, South Chicago is situated along the shores of Lake Michigan at the mouth of the Calumet River. The neighborhood sits at the intersection of rail, water and road infrastructure that once built this city.

It's also home to residents, nonprofits and community leaders who are dedicated to overcoming a long history of disinvestment, violence and segregation to build a better future for their neighbors. These stakeholders make up the South Chicago Neighborhood Network.

Network partners work closely to create a trauma-informed community that meets the needs of youth, seniors and families. They're able to do so with support from United Way of Metro Chicago.

"Our Neighborhood Network wants to make sure people can identify trauma and find ways to heal from it," said Tevonne Ellis, the Network's coordinator. "It's important for us to connect and understand how trauma shows up in our lives."

Through the Network, residents can participate in peace circles and trauma-informed trainings to help their neighbors cope with crises, as well as to grief groups and counseling programs that help them begin to heal after a traumatic event.

To break cycles of violence, the Network's partners also create opportunities for youth and young adults to get involved in their community. They learn to be leaders, host events and build parks, while setting a positive example for the next generation.

"My hope for South Chicago is that one day, instead of being on the news as a bad place, it will be on the news as a redeemed place. It can come back from the worst. It can be a place of hope again," said David Stinson, a young man who participates in its programs. ■

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Tevonne Ellis,
Neighborhood
Network Coordinator

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