

Neighborhood Story

Building a Stronger Brighton Park



Brighton Park, a working-class neighborhood on Chicago's southwest side, is home to residents working together to build a brighter future. Once an industrial center, **Brighton Park was hit hard by factory closures in the 1970s, causing many residents to move elsewhere.** The population rebounded in the last few decades as the community welcomed an influx of Latinx immigrants.

“It’s almost musical sometimes when you pick up the phone and call this person and that person, and it all works.”



Veronica Smith,
Director of Clinical Services,
Brighton Park
Neighborhood Council

Despite Brighton Park's growth, the community has faced great challenges and a lack of outside investment. To address these inequities, residents, local leaders, schools and nonprofits formed the Brighton Park Neighborhood Network with support from United Way of Metro Chicago.

The Network, led by the Brighton Park Neighborhood Council (BPNC), works across sectors to uplift households and the entire neighborhood for generations to come. Because of its work, students and their caregivers can enroll in after-school programs, parents are trained to work in classrooms, families have resources they need to become financially stable and more.

“You can't do it by yourself. We all bring a certain set of skills,” said Veronica Smith, Director of Clinical Services for BPNC, of the Network's collaborative spirit. “You have certain resources and I have certain resources, so when I connect to you, I'm all of a sudden connected to something else.”

“It's almost musical sometimes when you pick up the phone and call this person and that person, and it all works,” she added. ■

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