NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORK STORY
HEALTHY LIFESTYLE HUB OPENS IN AUBURN GRESHAM

United Way of Metro Chicago
neighborhood network INITIATIVE

The long-awaited opening of Auburn Gresham's Healthy Lifestyle Hub, a four-story epicenter of resources serving the Far Southwest Side community, brings more than tangible services. It brings hope to a historically disinvested neighborhood.

Before its unveiling in November 2022, residents had little to no access to an immediate care center, dentistry, mental healthcare, or even a bank. Now, community members have all that and more contained in a single hub sitting on 79th Street, the neighborhood's once-bustling commercial corridor.

Each set of resources will fill a specific, present need in the Auburn Gresham community. One of the Healthy Lifestyle Hub's resident organizations, the UIC Neighborhood Center, was designed to fill several – by offering numerous academic, entrepreneurial, and healthcare programs. The UIC Neighborhood Center works in partnership with Greater Auburn Gresham Development Corporation (United Way's lead Neighborhood Network community partner) to address systemic disparities, increase Black enrollment and retention at UIC and other higher-ed institutions, and serve as a partner to catalyze economic development.

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>
> **KEITH LEWIS**
> **Senior Director of Community Collaboration,** University of Illinois Chicago

"Really, this is where UIC needs to be," said Keith Lewis, UIC's senior director of community collaboration. "You have to have major institutions make big, long-term investments and put their stake in communities that have been traditionally disinvested in."

Above all, the UIC Neighborhood Center hopes to serve as a shared community space, just like the rest of the Healthy Lifestyle Hub, where Auburn Gresham residents can learn, connect, and thrive.

"I always said to my team, we don't want this to be a ghost town," Keith said. "We want it to be like this all the time. We want this to be a bustling space."

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