

CCSI Supports Our Neighborhoods – Highlighting Charles House Neighbors in Action (CHNA)

Earlier this year, CCSI was pleased to support [Charles House Neighbors in Action \(CHNA\)](#) with a \$25K grant to further their work in strengthening Rochester's JOSANA neighborhood. CCSI's Jay Street location is located on the edge of this neighborhood, which also includes Enrico Fermi School #17, a partner in CCSI's Community Schools work. We are excited to share this update from Scott Benjamin, President & CEO, Charles Settlement House, who provides fiduciary and administrative support to CHNA.

What is Charles House Neighbors in Action (CHNA)?

- CHNA began about 9 years ago as a roundtable for discussion of neighborhood issues. It brought together residents and other stakeholders from northwest Rochester and became recognized as the neighborhood voice. Although members today are not exclusive to JOSANA, that neighborhood is the primary focus of the group.
- A guiding principle of CHNA has been that we build on assets already in the neighborhood and we can't expect government to solve problems without involvement of residents and stakeholders.
- The City of Rochester commissioned an outside firm to develop the JOSANA Neighborhood Master Plan; CHNA and Charles Settlement House led the efforts to get widespread participation in the project, which resulted in a comprehensive Plan that has been lauded for its ideas and comprehensive nature and it has truly guided the growth and improvements in the neighborhood during the past 6 years.

How is CHNA working to enhance the vitality of the JOSANA neighborhood and improve the quality of life?

- Phase II of Stadium Estates affordable housing broke ground in December 2017 (46 new single-family homes to be completed by early 2019), following completion of Phase I in spring of 2016.
- Support and advocacy for continuation of Habitat for Humanity construction, now over 50 homes in JOSANA and adjacent neighborhoods.
- Collaboration with Healthi Kids initiative for a walkability study and marked walking trail(s) within the neighborhood.
- Using its influence to keep various levels of government accountable to the neighborhood (e.g. police-school-neighborhood relationships, infrastructure improvements - road paving, sewer work, brownfield remediation, etc.)

How does the work of CHNA support the Community School work at School #17?

- Authentic resident and neighborhood stakeholder voice is essential to a successful community school model; the linchpin to long-term success will be a culture change at the school. This requires regular and ongoing input from the neighborhood at a grass-roots level. CHNA is the primary vehicle for this important input.
- School #17 participation in CHNA also means the school is aware of the issues impacting the neighborhood; it keeps the school from being in a silo, separated from the neighborhood

How is funding from CCSI helping to enhance those efforts?

- Triangle Block Club annual picnic for about 500 people
- 10 residents attended event to hear national speaker about the importance of place-based interventions.
- Security deposit assistance for family living in JOSANA with siblings at School #17.
- CHNA relationship leveraged for neighborhood business owner to provide donation to purchase culturally-appropriate Thanksgiving food for Hispanic families at School #17.
- CHNA working with School #17 and other stakeholders to use funds designated for expanded outreach efforts in 2018.

As CHNA continues its work, the CCSI funds, along with the partnerships established will help meet priorities of the Community and School – with a focus on continued progress on the major recommendations of the JOSANA Master Plan to create a stronger neighborhood and collaboration with School #17 as it continues its transition to a community school model and meets its goals for improvement.

Triangle Block Club Annual Picnic

