



Bikes for Belmont Cragin

Northwest Center hosted our 6th annual Bikes for Belmont Cragin bike ride on May 13 alongside 125 community members. The annual bike ride signifies NWC's continuous efforts towards zero traffic accidents in Belmont Cragin and promotes safe transportation. This year, the 5 mile bike ride was dedicated to Ruben Olivares, a community leader and NWC Health Equity Program Manager who tragically lost his life to gun violence earlier this year.

The bike ride began and ended at New Life Church, with a stop at Blackhawk Park for a tree planting ceremony to honor Olivares.

"Bikes 4 Belmont Cragin was not only a phenomenal success, but memorable event as well. We concluded the bike-ride by holding a tree ceremony in memory of Ruben Olivares," Alderman Cardona said. "Thank you to all who came out to support our community and this event. Let's keep working together to bring unity to Belmont Cragin and the 31st Ward."

Bikes for Belmont Cragin was designed to identify how to create a safer community and has since transformed into an annual event that connects residents.

"This was my third year attending Bikes for Belmont Cragin and it keeps getting better," community member David Velez said. "I loved seeing so many residents show up and most importantly, build power together."

The event also consisted of free bike tune ups, snacks, sandwiches and pastries from Olivares family bakery, La Canasta Bakery, and a bike giveaway.



A letter from the Executive Director

James Rudyk
Executive Director

Dear Northwest Center Community,

With deep gratitude, I am writing to share that I am planning to leave my position as Executive Director at Northwest Center by the end of this year and will support the organization through a transition to new leadership in the coming months. For the past eleven plus years, working as part of the Northwest Center team has been the joy and privilege of my life. Moving to Chicago and starting at the Northwest Center in 2012 at the age of 24 helped define who I am today as I "grew up" professionally as part of the NWC and Belmont Cragin community. I am beyond proud of my time at the organization and am honored to stand by all the amazing work that NWC has collectively accomplished together over the years. From helping build a new school home for Belmont Cragin Elementary School to address overcrowding, to re-purposing 9.6 million dollars in public funds through the Northwest Home Equity Assurance Program, to getting over 13 miles of bike lanes and 11 Divvy Stations in the community, to getting a new crosswalk for our older adults, our work has made a tangible and lasting impact in the Belmont Cragin community.

When I started at NWC in May 2012, I told myself I would give it three years. Three soon became five, which then became seven, and in 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic happened. The pandemic presented some of the greatest leadership and work challenges of my life. I am proud of NWC's ability to pivot our work and vaccinate over 20,000 Belmont Cragin residents receiving national attention for our work from the NYTimes, USA Today, and receiving funding from both Oprah and Rihanna.

Despite the numerous accolades and accomplishments, I also told myself that I would know when my time at NWC was coming to an end and that I would step back when I felt it was time for someone else to lead the organization. For many reasons, some personal and some professional, I now believe that 2023 is that time. The organization is in a strong financial position with several multi-year grants, and our CDC office/second floor expansion is underway with an additional \$1.3 million dollar City of Chicago grant to help cover the cost. The organization is also finishing up its next five-year strategic plan in June 2023 to guide the work and the incoming Executive Director. As I conclude my time at NWC, my goal is to continue leading the organization through continuing to build NWC and Belmont Cragin's power, as well as supporting the internal NWC team through 2023. I am beyond grateful for this life changing opportunity.

With love,

James Rudyk

Diabetes Prevention Event

Northwest Center hosted an event on April 29 designed to educate the community on how to prevent diabetes and incorporate healthier food choices in to every day life.

"At the event, we educated residents by showcasing healthy food options and how the restaurant community of Belmont Cragin is here to support their health goals by having at least one diabetes-friendly dish that the restaurants can offer," Community Health Worker Vincent Aponte said. "The other angle was to highlight fitness as part of the prevention process. At the event, we included a local fitness instructor who was able to show residents of all age groups how to properly workout. The ultimate goal was to bring exposure and educate through healthy eating and being active to reverse the status of pre-diabetes or help maintain health for those already with the illness."



We're under construction!

Northwest Center's office is officially closed for construction and are operating from Belmont Cragin locations until further notice. For days and times, call us at [773-283-3888](tel:773-283-3888) or email info@nwshc.org

Services available at
Kelvyn Park Senior Center
2715 N Cicero Ave
Chicago, IL 60639

First-Time Homebuying
Foreclosure Prevention
Financial Counseling
Older Adult Programs

Services available at
Parent University
3030 N Mobile Chicago
Behind the school in module door #14

Community Organizing
Digital Literacy
Health Equity
LIHEAP & Benefits Enrollment
Parent Mentor Program
Youth Programs

COMING SOON!



Upcoming Events

For more information on events, visit our website at www.northwestcenterchicago.org/events



Salud mental en la infancia
Parent University*
Junio 15 en Español
12 pm



Puedes confiar en ello
Parent University*
28 de Junio en Español
9:30 am a 11 am



Learn More About Identity Fraud
Parent University*
Wednesday, June 14
11 am



Resume Writing
Parent University*
Bilingual
Tuesday, June 27
12:30 pm