



More classic Divvy stations coming to Belmont Cragin!

On the morning of October 5, NWC Transportation Ambassadors visited City Hall to meet with the Committee for Pedestrian and Traffic Safety.

Romina Castillo, Director of Outreach and Engagement for the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT), testified about the impact and model that our community can be for other communities regarding engaging and working with CDOT. Ambassadors at the council meeting also shared results from the recently finalized [Bikes for Belmont Cragin Evaluation](#), a report on the community's plan for how biking, bike lanes, and mobility should look in the community. The report also shared how Divvy ridership in Belmont Cragin has changed based on the of impact Northwest Center.

During the trip to City Hall, Northwest Center met with Alderperson Daniel La Spata and Alderperson Ruth Cruz about specific community organizing campaigns that are important to the residents of Belmont Cragin.

Later that afternoon, Transportation Organizer Jeremy Cuebas spoke at a press conference and ribbon cutting ceremony to welcome more classic Divvy bike stations to Belmont Cragin.

"Belmont Cragin residents specifically are young people that now have more options when it comes to micro-mobility and getting around in their community and the city of Chicago," Cuebas said. "Divvy for Everyone is a great resource for low-income families to enjoy cost-effectively riding a Divvy bike."

Unlike their e-bikes, Divvy's classic bikes allow residents who are part of the [Divvy for Everyone \(D4E\)](#) membership to ride 45 minutes a day for free. Northwest Center is continuing its work to bring more classic Divvy stations to Belmont Cragin. By the end of 2024, we estimate our community will have 6-8 classic stations for families and residents to utilize.

What it means to be a Parent Mentor YouTube video

Parent Engagement Institute (PEI) recently released their first ever promotional video about what it means to be a Parent Mentor. PEI shares how a parent can support students and teachers in the classroom, the professional opportunities that the Parent Mentor Program provides, and showcases the core elements that make up the program. Northwest Center Parent Mentor Coordinators, Angelica Zamarripa, Jaime Ponce, Erika Rodriguez, and Maricela Mercado are featured in the video and are representatives of the organization.

[View the video now on the Parent Engagement Institute YouTube channel.](#)



Power in the Public Narrative, a series by DFSS

Northwest Center Older Adult Program Manager Alejandra Elox and Dr. Judy Kent, of National Louis University, presented on “Power in the Public Narrative”, a series by the City of Chicago Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS). The presentation focused on how Common Ground has helped older adults connect and heal through intergenerational connections. The president and executive director of the series, Jhmira Alexander, first learned of Common Ground from attending the C3 Conference last October, where Northwest Center hosted a poster presentation.



[The complete Power in the Public Narrative webinar series is now on YouTube!](#) You can also [click here](#) to access Chicago's Department of Planning and Development e-blast with more information.

Work Permits for All!

On October 12, our Northwest Center community leaders gathered together to show their power and demand work permits and parole for all, alongside Immigrant leaders, elected officials, and members of the immigrant community. Work Permits for All calls on the Biden Administration to use existing law to expand work permits through parole to all immigrants, including the undocumented. Visit the [campaign website](#) or contact [us](#) to learn more about how to support in D.C. this November.





Employee Spotlight

An interview with current Executive Director James Rudyk as he reflects on his role at Northwest Center and hopes for the future of the organization

James Rudyk
Executive Director

What initially drew you to Northwest Center?

When I moved from Cleveland, Ohio, I was looking for a job and was really drawn to Northwest Center's work, combining community organizing and advocacy for system policy change. I liked that NWC's model isn't just about programs but also focuses on developing community residents as leaders and really listening to the community.

Reflecting on your position when you first joined the center, how has your role evolved from then to now?

As the organization has grown over the years, I have taken on much more responsibility. Our core work has stayed the same, but we have expanded our work through additional government grants, hired more staff, and begun new programs. Because of our reputation, our work was also able to make it to a more state and national level, allowing us to work on a larger scale and see our impact firsthand.

What was it like working through the growth of NWC during the past decade?

I have less direct interactions with the community, but I work with NWC's internal staff leadership team and empower our directors to lead their respective buckets of work. Through this leadership development and working with a smaller subset within the organization, I can still be involved with community organizing, my original passion. I have loved being a part of the work and participating in our organizing campaigns. There is so much that needs to be done: increased staff management, long-term visioning, strategic planning, and the administrative side of the work, but I stayed involved in community organizing because it's what I have previously done, and I have seen it help grow the power of the organization and the community.

What are some of your favorite memories from NWC?

That's a big question, and of course, I have so many memories I can share. In terms of work, a favorite memory of mine is witnessing Belmont Cragin Elementary School open in 2015; how beautiful and powerful it was for the community to have a local neighborhood public school with so many resources. Also, seeing NWC bring youth work to the organization and create a youth-led transportation campaign for Divvy stations and bike lanes in Belmont Cragin. For memories at the center, I remember a day we had an impromptu peanut butter taste test. The former Deputy Director Reverend Elaine Bellis brought in a couple of types of peanut butter, and we had them numbered for everyone to try and guess the flavors and decide what their favorite was. For those who are interested to know, Skippy Extra Crunchy won the contest.

How has your experience at NWC influenced the trajectory you plan to pursue?

I never thought in 2012, when I moved to Chicago, that I would be here for almost 12 years. My next step is to take a break, not work full-time for the next few months, and reflect on what's next. I want a role that still centers and impacts the community.

What aspirations do you hold for the future of the center and the community?

To continue to do the amazing work that the organization has done since 2003, to keep fulfilling its mission, continuing work on the 2023-2028 strategic plan, and continuing to build community leaders. I think the organization is really in a great place to continue doing the work we were built on.

Do you have any parting words?

I want to thank everyone for everything. I'm really grateful for this opportunity; it changed my life. I will never forget the time I spent here.

We're hiring!

Are you a big-picture thinker who is willing to take risks and innovate based on the needs of the community, racial equity, and funding priorities?

The Director of Development is a collaborative team-player that works to create and meet annual development and fundraising goals at Northwest Center.

DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT
[Click here to learn more and apply.](#)

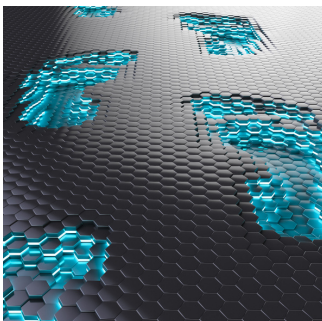


Join our team!
WE'RE HIRING:
Development Director



Upcoming Events

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



Digital Footprint Parent University*

October 24
11 am & 5 pm



Como hablar con mi hijo Parent University*

En Español
10 am
30 de octubre



Let's Paint Parent University*

October 30 at 11 am
November 29 at 10 am



City Civics Day Epiphany Center for the Arts, 201 S. Ashland Ave.

November 4
9:30 am - 4:30 am

*Parent University is located at 3030 N. Mobile Ave. Chicago, IL 60639