

COMMUNITY RENEWAL SOCIETY

We are the ones*

WE HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR

2019-2020 ANNUAL REPORT



“Try to think bigger than you ever have or had courage enough to do:
that blackness is not where whiteness wanders off to die;
but that it is like the dark matter between stars and
galaxies in the Universe that ultimately holds it all together.

- Alice Walker, “Here It Is”

*Attributed to the Hopi Tribe.

Executive Director's STATEMENT OF REFLECTION

THE COURAGE TO BE

We are witnesses to a critical juncture in time where we must choose courage. This is not an option, for we are citizens of a Kairos moment summoning us to rise to the occasion. We must rise, if not for ourselves, we must do so for the ancestors who resiliently fought for a freedom we, a distant generation, inherited. We must – for the unborn who will look back with the lyrical hope of a gospel hymn and ask, “How we got over?”

Did we choose the expedient path of comfort or the inconvenience of truth? We must rise for the galaxies in the Universe so that love will not need a passport or visa to abide ubiquitously. Walls shall serve as a canvass for the artist to etch manifestos of agape love, not borders separating families. We must find the courage to construct new norms of power used to serve in solidarity and love. We must be the dreams, prayers and the hope we behold, today. Otherwise, we risk missing the opportunities that beseech us right now to be bigger, bolder and braver.

Community Renewal Society has dared to be the courageous ones before, 137 years ago. What an ambitious vision to be a conveyor of love, social justice, faith and inclusion. We hail such a beautiful legacy. We are its trustees with a fiduciary duty to build upon legacy and hope through our actions in solidarity with directly impacted persons in the prison industrial complex, queer and gay communities, youth and young adults, women, global movements and local advocacy for policies and legislation like Fair Tax, A Just Housing and police accountability.

Together, we can eradicate racism and poverty. United, we create a boundless beautiful Beloved Community. Our 137th Annual Membership Assembly courageously declared in the Hopi tradition, “We are the ones we have been waiting for.” We are it. We are the ones. This is our courageous hope.

With Prayerful Courage to Be,

A handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to read "Walter", with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Rev. Dr. Waltrina N. Middleton, Executive Director



On October 5, 2019, Community Renewal Society held the 137th Annual Membership Assembly at St. Agatha Catholic Church. We officially introduced our new Executive Director, Rev. Dr. Waltrina N. Middleton who gave the keynote address and also presented the call to action during the benediction. Our board members pledged their commitment to CRS by reciting the Litany for Board Service and member congregations affirmed the 2019-20 Platform for Renewal. Recent victories in Fair Tax, Just Housing and Housing as a Human Right were celebrated. Outstanding advocates and partner organizations were honored and grantees for the Don S. Benedict Fund were announced.

2019 DON S. BENEDICT AWARDEES

- St. Agatha Catholic Church
- The Shuri Project
- Danville Restoring our Communities
- Chicago Alternative to Incarceration Collaborative (ATI)
- Nehemiah Trinity Rising
- Youth Empowerment Skills Program (YES)

JOHN PURDY, SR. MEMORIAL LEADERSHIP AWARD:

Bishop Sally Dyck & the Northeastern Conference of the United Methodist Church.

CITY ON THE HILL AWARD:

Old Saint Patrick's Catholic Church

ESTEEMED PARTNER AWARD:

Chicago Police Consent Decree Community Coalition; American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois; Communities United; Equip for Equality; Next Steps, NFP; Organizing Neighborhoods for Equality; Northside

LEGISLATIVE LIGHTHOUSE AWARD:

Representative Curtis Tarver



Trainings

Twenty-one community members attended our award-winning Three Day Community Organizing Training. Presented in a highly interactive setting, the training taught participants key organizing principles, how their values impact those principles and how to build the skills and understanding to become effective public leaders and organizers for change. Participants received certification of completion at the end of the training.

We provided Confronting Pharaoh training to 39 leaders from our member congregations. In addition to gaining basic congregational organizing skills, participants develop a biblical understanding of why we take part in justice ministries. Participants learn to build relationships and power with the goal of starting new justice ministries within their own congregations.

MLK

Rev. Dr. Carmin Frederick-James from Covenant United Church of Christ and Rev. Dr. Reginald W. Williams Jr. from First Baptist Church of University Park served as keynote speakers for our annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Faith in Action Assembly “We Are the Ones”. Commissioner Alma E. Anaya spoke about the importance of the United States Census and attendees participated in an intergenerational community forum.

Judicial Forums

The election of local judges is one of the most significant ways voters can affect the administration of justice in their communities. Ten Cook County Sub Circuit judicial candidates spoke at CRS’ Judicial Forums held in February and also streamed on Facebook Live. Attendees learned about the judicial process and the impact of their votes.

IN MEMORY OF OUR FORMER BOARD MEMBERS WHO PASSED AWAY THIS YEAR.

Dr. Sammie Dortch, Ed.D.

“Dr. Dortch was an inspiration, a positive light and a mentor to many – including a spiritual and professional confidante to members of the CRS Board of Directors.”

– Rev. Dr. Waltrina N. Middleton, CRS Executive Director

Rev. Dr. Walstone Francis

“Rev. Francis was a wonderful servant who had great passion for justice and a better life for the marginalized. It was a pleasure to serve along with him on the CRS Board.”

– Rev. Cy Fields, CRS Board Member and Pastor, New Landmark Missionary Baptist Church.

Platform Updates

Increasing Police Accountability – CRS staff and volunteers worked to implement the five-year **Chicago Police Consent Decree** that provides court-enforceable accountability measures for the Chicago Police Department. Implementation included setting up opportunities for court watching as well as recruiting and assisting victims and witnesses of police brutality to provide testimonies before the Chicago City Council. Our work continues with the Grassroots Alliance for Police Accountability (GAPA) to establish civilian oversight of the Chicago Police Department.

Restoring Opportunities and Justice Reform – Working with directly impacted men, women and youth, CRS staff and volunteers worked to advance justice reform and restorative measures at the city, county and state levels. At the state level, CRS introduced sentencing reform legislation to end excessive punishment for violent crimes. On January 1, **Housing as a Human Right** (SB1780 HFA 3/PA 101-0565) went into effect! As part of the Restoring Rights and Opportunities Coalition of Illinois (RROCI), CRS advocated for this law, which makes housing discrimination against people with arrest, expunged/sealed and juvenile records illegal.

Community Development (Housing and Jobs) – On November 21, rules for Cook County passed to support the implementation of the **Just Housing Amendment**. This new amendment protects housing applicants with records from discrimination and ensures that more than one million residents of Cook County will be protected against housing discrimination. Working with the Just Housing Initiative, CRS staff and volunteers provided education for property owners and residents.

Just Economy for Safe Communities – CRS staff and volunteers joined the Coalition to End Money Bond for a Lobby Day in Springfield held prior to the COVID-19 shutdown. Communities across Illinois rallied to reduce pretrial incarceration and the use of cash bond. Volunteers working on this platform provided education around the Fair Tax Amendment, which will be voted on during the November 2020 election.



COVID-19 RESPONSE

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, CRS staff quickly shifted to a remote work environment and began hosting virtual meetings and trainings to ensure safe social distancing. The annual Day of Faith at the Capitol was cancelled and policy staff shifted to online meetings. CRS increased the use of social media to encourage members to connect directly with their representatives around issues of importance to them.

In the interest of public health, CRS joined a Solidarity Caravan calling for the release of individuals in prison, especially those near the end of their sentence or awaiting trial. More than 300 people demonstrated from their cars at the Juvenile Temporary Detention Center, ICE Headquarters in the Loop and Cook County Jail. They demanded safe social distancing practices as well as hygiene equipment and supplies to prevent the spread of COVID-19 within the facilities. Together with the Solidarity Building Initiative of McCormick Seminary, CRS helped raise funds for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for inmates of the Cook County Jail.

To educate and inform members, CRS hosted a series of virtual town halls to address the disproportionate impact that the pandemic has had on Black and Brown communities with a particular emphasis on the impact on personal health and finances. CRS also engaged speakers from around the world to share how the pandemic affected the global community.



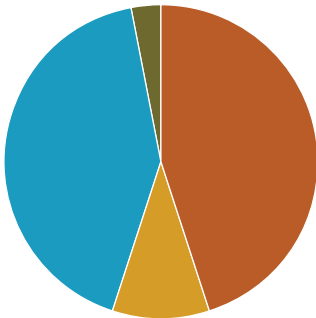
Racial Healing RESPONSE

CRS Organizing and Policy staff hosted two community clean-up events in neighborhoods hard hit by the uprising following the murder of George Floyd. The public was invited to participate in racial healing circles hosted in partnership with Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation of Chicago. During this tumultuous time, a virtual event was held to provide space for community prayer and protest. A Time of Prayers and Protest featured twelve clergy members from various faith traditions offering prayers of lament and hope.

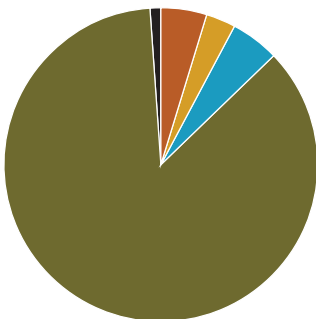
Joining again with Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation Chicago, CRS offered Juneteenth Liberation Libation: A Call for Racial Healing & Solidarity.

Recognizing the value of all life and the rights of the LGBTQIA+ community, CRS promoted PRIDE month events, distributed educational resources and supported a fundraiser for Brave Space Alliance food pantry.

Financials*



■ PROGRAMS	\$946,258
■ FUNDRAISING	\$234,123
■ ADMINISTRATIVE	\$885,318
■ ENDOWMENT PROGRAMS	\$55,000
TOTAL EXPENSE	\$2,120,699



■ INDIVIDUAL	\$103,896
■ CHURCH-NON-PROFIT-OTHER	\$60,487
■ FOUNDATIONS	\$113,330
■ INVESTMENT DISTRIBUTIONS	\$1,912,410
■ OTHER	\$14,222
TOTAL REVENUE	\$2,204,345

*Financials reflect Community Renewal Society revenue and expenses only.

COMMUNITY RENEWAL SOCIETY – 2019-2020 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Rev. Scott Aaseng
Arthur Bishop
Wil Boone
Daryle Brown
Rev. Jason Coulter
Rev. Dr. Walstone Francis (1953-2020)
Rev. Cy Fields
Rev. Ronald Howell
Beth Johnson
Lejia “Jia” Johnson
Rev. Jesse Knox, III
Rev. Richard Mosley, Jr.
Nancy Mullarkey
Rev. Dr. Terrill N. Murff
Rev. Samuel Paul, Jr.
Joice A. Pharris
Rev. Dr. Vertie Powers

Rev. Benjamin Reynolds
Dr. Christophe Ringer
April Senter
Carrie Thomas

COALITION AND PARTNER LIST

Coalition for Police Contracts
Accountability (CPCA)
Coalition to End Money Bond
Grassroots Alliance for Police
Accountability (GAPA)
Just Housing Initiative
Responsible Budget Coalition
Restoring Rights and Opportunities
Coalition of Illinois (RROCI)

FOUNDATION PARTNERS
Catholic Campaign for Human
Development
Chicago Community Bond Fund

Chicago Community Foundation
Chicago Community Trust
Chicago Reader*
Conant Family Foundation*
The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation*
Facebook*
Field Foundation of Illinois**
Ford Foundation*
Foundation to Promote Open Society*
Fund for Investigative Journalism*
Institute for Nonprofit News*
Joyce Foundation*
John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur
Foundation*
Robert R. McCormick Foundation**
NewsMatch*
SEIU Healthcare Illinois, Indiana,
Missouri, Kansas
Wieboldt Foundation
Woods Fund of Chicago

Thank you to our member congregations and the individuals who support our work. We could not accomplish what we do without your financial support.

To support the work of Community Renewal Society, visit www.communityrenewalsociety.org/donate.
Become a CRS sustainer by donating monthly and consider including CRS in your estate plan.

* Funded The Chicago Reporter ** Funded both The Chicago Reporter and Community Renewal Society

Staff List

EXECUTIVE

Rev. Dr. Waltrina N. Middleton,
Executive Director

ADMINISTRATION

Beth Babbitt Borst
Franshun Davis-Harris
Cassandra McClendon
Bria Taylor
Jawania Williams

POLICY AND ORGANIZING

J. Yaacov Delaney
Terria Givens (Interim Director)
Lindsey Hammond
Mina Patel (Interim Organizer)
Rev. Saeed Richardson
Jesse Rojo
Rev. Damon Smith

Rishona Taylor
Sarah Yousef
Claire Bacon (intern)
Alex Hall (intern)
Brittany Hayes (intern)

DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

Terria Givens (Interim Director)
Rev. Christopher Griffin
Catherine Hegarty
Adamma Ihemeson
Charles Jefferson
Kristine Scott
Meghan Strell

HUMAN RESOURCES – INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Jessica Hollie

Rev. Ebony Only
Jim Trapp

THE CHICAGO REPORTER

Fernando Diaz
Alexia Diamond (intern/temporary
staff)
David Eads
Matt Kiefer
LaRisa Lynch
Lisa Lynch
Josh McGhee
Asraa Mustufa
Olivia Obineme
Rita Oceguela (intern/staff)
Jason Asenso (intern)
Adam Mahoney (intern)
Danielle Tello-Garzon (intern)