



**CREATE OPPORTUNITIES.  
REBUILD LIVES.**

1607 W. Howard Street, Third Floor  
Chicago, IL 60626

773.465.5770  
www.how-inc.org

*HOW empowers individuals  
and families to break the cycle  
of poverty and homelessness.*



**Up To Date**

Spring 2021

### Sontcera's Story

Resilience and Persistence Leads to Success

### More Than a Shot

HOW's Vaccination Journey - Listening, Learning, and Educating

### 5K Plus

Supporting HOW Has Never Been More Fun

### We All Need A Little Help From Our Friends

Making a Difference Your Way

# HOW Up To Date

Spring 2021

## Sontcera's Story

### *Resilience and Persistence Leads to Success*

Despite setbacks and challenges, **Sontcera (son-sir-ray) is focused on making things better for herself and the world around her.** After struggling with homelessness, health issues, and an arrest record, she was connected to HOW's permanent supportive housing and enthusiastically jumped into the programs offered. She also came to HOW with decades of service as a community advocate as a founding member of the Cabrini Green Legal Aid (CGLA) Leadership Council and an active participant in the Restoring Rights and Opportunities Coalition of Illinois (RROCI).

In March **Sontcera joined the Governor, Mayor, and members of the Illinois Black Caucus at a press conference where she spoke about the importance of the Public Housing Access Bill and the Employee Background Fairness Act.** Sontcera knows first-hand how difficult it is to find a job or secure housing while having a criminal record. Even though her arrests were decades ago, included charges for activities that are now legal, and she has since received a Certificate of Good Conduct from the state, her record still follows her.



*Sontcera speaking at the press conference*

Sontcera's health has also required her to advocate for herself. In 2003 she received a diagnosis of sarcoidosis, an inflammatory condition that affects organs in the body. Her severe headaches made it feel as if "the world was spinning," and she was eventually forced to focus her time on addressing her disease. By exploring treatments, changing her diet, and adding herbal remedies to pair with the drug therapy, she's not only managed her condition—today she is in full remission.

**This past year she took advantage of HOW's virtual programming which helped her gain access to a therapist, increase her financial literacy, and refresh her employment skills.** "My terrific Case Manager, Olivia, always calls and lets me know what HOW is offering," she shares. During the pandemic, Sontcera also attended HOW's 5-day Employment Readiness workshop. While she already had many existing proficiencies, including a certification in computer technology, she honed new skills to perfect her online interviewing techniques and even build out her LinkedIn profile.

**She is eager to pursue a career combining social justice, grassroots organizing, and policy making, hoping to focus on implementation and using data to measure outcomes in targeted communities.** "Sontcera has such a caring and compassionate heart and it has been a true joy to get to know her over the past few years," gushes Olivia, "Her passion and dedication to social justice and advocacy shines through in every conversation and inspires me to continue in my own work." Indeed, Sontcera's desire to create change is as contagious as is her vision for the future. She is determined to educate, advocate, and connect people and knows, "that's how we can really get things done!"



## More Than a Shot

### *HOW's Vaccination Journey - Listening, Learning, and Educating*

Structural inequity and the compounding effects of systemic racism have caused communities of color to experience poorer overall health outcomes than white Americans. This trend held true throughout the pandemic with Black and Brown Americans experiencing higher rates of infection and death. With vaccines now available, many in the hardest hit communities cannot navigate vaccination websites, lack trust in the healthcare system, or have little to no accurate information about the vaccine.



HOW serves a variety of individuals, the vast majority of whom are people of color, many with health conditions making them at higher risk of COVID. As a result, **HOW has launched a campaign to inform and assist clients with their vaccination efforts to keep themselves and their communities safe.** Initially Case Managers focused their efforts on education and connecting clients who prequalified for the vaccine due to age or preexisting health conditions. Currently HOW is focused on expanding outreach, working to encourage all clients to connect with their medical

provider, identifying qualified local vaccination sites, and sharing the experiences of HOW staff who have received the vaccine. HOW's Health Team answers more specialized questions, assists with scheduling appointments, and arranges transportation to and from sites as an added layer of support.

Hesitation amongst clients is a common hurdle, many express reluctance and fear about the vaccine for personal and religious reasons. HOW's value of integrity guides staff during these culturally sensitive conversations, as they listen and learn about the experience of each client and demonstrate respect while still providing the best information and guidance available.

## 5K Plus

### *Supporting HOW Has Never Been More Fun*

We are thrilled to announce the HOW 5K Plus is back again in 2021. Last year HOW saw people come together from across the county (and even the globe) to support the agency by participating, raising funds, and involving their networks in this fun-filled event. This year we expect to engage even more supporters on Sunday, **June 6, 2021** and encourage you to join us. **This do-it-yourself style event enables anyone to get involved, no matter your location, availability, or activity** - whether you run, walk, bike or dance!

Through a new online platform, individuals and groups can easily create custom fundraising pages for the event. Our goal is to raise \$100,000 and we are counting on supporters like you to help us achieve it. All participants will receive a "swag bag", can earn a t-shirt, and will have the opportunity to join HOW's network of support. Best of all, the funds generated by the 5K Plus will ensure that individuals and families can secure the housing, resources, and support they deserve.



Sign-up now at:  
[www.how-inc.org/5kplus](http://www.how-inc.org/5kplus)

## We All Need A Little Help From Our Friends

### *Making a Difference Your Way*

Just as HOW enables clients to choose programming and identify resources tailored to their goals and interests, **the agency's three giving societies make it easy for donors to support HOW in whatever way works best for them.** Special briefings, events, and opportunities are available for donors in each of these categories and HOW also recognizes them in its publications.

HOW's **Major Donor Society** is comprised of dedicated supporters who donate over \$1,000 to HOW each year. These critical gifts ensure the stability, continuity, and efficacy of HOW's work. Major donors can make general gifts or target their giving to a specific purpose, like helping the agency secure and maintain its housing stock or to fuel innovative new programming.

**Legacy donors** are forward-thinkers who make a charitable gift commitment to HOW to be fulfilled at a later date. Legacy donors make gifts through wills and bequests, life insurance policies, retirement plan assets, and charitable trusts. There are many ways to make a planned gift; consulting with your tax advisor can help you select the best option.

**Monthly Donors** are a group of engaged supporters who provide reliable funds to sustain families and individuals as they rebuild their lives after housing instability or homelessness. Monthly donations create a stream of predictable income allowing HOW to be responsive when creating new programming. After making an initial pledge of any amount, donors can "set it and forget it," as their donation will be automatically processed each month.



## Looking Back

### *The Year Defined in Data*

**At HOW, we work with clients to clarify, pursue, and achieve their specific goals.** For some, these goals are built around employment, and for others it's stabilizing their health or helping their children adapt and thrive in a new school. And while every client is wonderfully unique, their collective efforts, paired with HOW's programming and resources, can also be displayed through data. In the face of 2020's immense challenges we recognize that numbers only tell a part of the story and applaud our clients' and staff's remarkable resiliency.

#### A Brief Snapshot of 2020:

- **602** households served made up of **1,210** people, including **497** children.
- **7,175** outreach and referral contacts made.
- **383** clients engaged with HOW employment or education activities.
- **100+** families connected with WiFi and devices to participate in e-learning.

