

## Finding a New Home in Chicago

### Family finds community and a chance to rebuild their lives

For the Clarks\*, the holiday season is a time of family, faith, community, and just a touch of chaos. With four gifted children spread out across three schools, the kids' demanding academic and extracurricular activities quickly fill the family's calendar. Sporting events, art performances, and celebrations make for an exhausting holiday season, but in spite of the hustle and bustle an overwhelming sense of gratitude and appreciation is ever apparent.

Tina had no idea what the holidays would look like for her young family after they immigrated to the United States to escape an abusive relationship in their home country. Upon their arrival, Tina and the children moved in with her brother, and his small one-bedroom apartment became impossibly crowded. This all changed in the spring of 2013 when the Clark family received an apartment with HOW. **For Tina and her children, their new home was so much more than a place to sleep, it was a safety and comfort they had never experienced before.** Free from the fear of abuse and having to constantly move, a HOW apartment gave Tina a chance to heal, and the kids a joyful, safe childhood they otherwise would not have known.

Today, the Clark family is thriving. The children have been enrolled in HOW's Afterschool Youth Program for six years and continue to participate in the academic coaching sessions, extracurricular activities, and summer camp each year. The oldest of the Clark children attends a Level One high school and is already thinking about what college to attend; the second starts high school next year and is a gifted artist; the third, known for her enthusiastic



*Tina and her Case Manager Ruby Konopka*

attitude, is performing 2-3 years above grade level, and the youngest is also a strong student and a talented athlete. Tina works full-time, is active at church, and lives out her passions of cooking and singing daily.

**"I appreciate HOW so much. They have been there with me and my children from the beginning. They helped us with everything and I don't know where we would be without them."**

With another year of peace and stability coming to a close, the Clarks are looking forward to enjoying the season, attending HOW's annual holiday party, and ringing in the New Year together as a family. By providing stable, safe housing and support services to families like the Clarks, HOW also gives hope, a sense of community, and healing to clients.

**Donors like you made Tina and her family's happy-ending possible. Please donate to HOW today to help hundreds of other HOW families and individuals thrive.**

*\*The Clark family's names have been changed to protect their privacy.*

# Housing Advocacy Ensures Stability

## *New program targets those at risk of homelessness*

In the fall of 2016, HOW began a new partnership with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) creating a dedicated Housing Advocate role. The project aimed to help families identified as "housing unstable" and youth emancipating from DCFS care to find and secure stable housing.

**"Some of our clients who work with our Housing Advocacy team enter the relationship with feelings of distrust because of previous trauma and involvement they've had with the child welfare system,"** shares Kimberlee Ross, HOW's Director of Programs, **"But after a while our team wins them over with their resiliency and desire to help, and they become trusted people in our clients' lives."**

Because of the program's initial success in its first year, the project was expanded and now includes three full-time Housing Advocates, an additional Housing Coordinator position, and serves a wider group of DCFS involved families. In addition to helping individuals locate and secure stable housing, HOW's Housing Advocates work in collaboration with DCFS caseworkers on goals related to employment, education, parenting, health care, and more. In 2018, HOW served 341 DCFS households which represented 25% of all clients served and accounted for the majority of new clients that year.

Kimberlee also notes, **"Our Housing Advocates have educated themselves on tenants' rights and tenant law, and know how to quickly locate and secure available housing. With their skills and knowledge, they are often a direct link to housing for clients and that's really impactful."**

## HOW's Exciting New Partnership

### *Innovative development model is a win-win*



Under the banner of innovation, HOW is happy to announce the launch of a public private partnership to preserve and maintain housing stock for low income renters – targeting preservation of naturally occurring affordable housing, also known as N.O.A.H.

HOW, in partnership with a private developer, North Wells Capital, is working jointly to invest in the preservation of affordable housing in the gentrifying neighborhood of Jackson Park Highlands in Chicago. HOW's tenants will occupy a portion of the building along with other renters, and HOW will also receive

fees to provide an added layer of support services for their tenants. This collaborative development model accomplishes two things. First, through a reinvestment in legacy housing stock, the initiative preserves affordable housing. Second, it maintains a blended and diverse community in a gentrifying neighborhood.

**"We are excited to participate in the development of models that help leverage both public and private investment for the neighborhood, and for our tenants."**says Britt Shawver, HOW's CEO.

# Our Values

## *Defining our ethos as an organization*

Since its beginning in 1983, HOW has adapted its programs and services while remaining true to its founding goals by looking forward, expanding housing offerings, developing new client-centered programming, and seeking out innovative partnerships that amplify impact. **Over the past thirty-six years many things have changed, but the passion of our staff, commitment to our clients, and guiding principles have remained steadfast.** After years of growth, HOW has articulated these values as an organization and is pleased to share them with you.

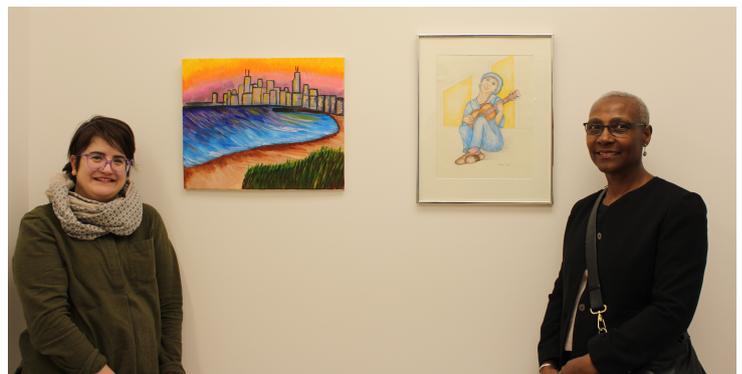


- **Justice** - We promote and create opportunities for social and economic change that ensure equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- **Compassion** - We advocate for the self-determination of everyone and practice empathy, humility, and non-judgment.
- **Integrity** - We acknowledge the unique experience of each person and demonstrate respect, trust, fairness, and transparency.
- **Collaboration** - We recognize the importance of working together to expand capacity, increase sustainability, and achieve shared goals for our communities.
- **Innovation** - We test theories, explore new approaches, and build creative solutions in response to complex issues.

## Home is Where the HeART is

### Local artists donate pieces to decorate HOW's newest building

This fall HOW welcomes residents to its new affordable housing development in Evanston. In an effort to help build a sense of community, the building has shared spaces on each floor where clients can socialize and take advantage of building amenities. In order to create a more welcoming atmosphere, HOW launched an art contest where local artists from Evanston and Chicago submitted pieces to be considered for display in the building. All submissions were presented to a panel of judges with top prizes awarded to Virginia O. Roeder and Sarah Kaiser-Amaral. HOW is delighted to have fifteen pieces now decorating the walls of the building. On November 12th, the artists, along with their family and friends, gathered for a special reception at the new building where they participated in a gallery walk of the art and the winners of the contest were announced. **Thank you to all those who submitted pieces and helped to create a beautiful, inviting environment for HOW clients in their new home!**



*Elizabeth Menon and Hazel Dixon with their submissions which both received honorable mentions*

On November 12th, the artists, along with their family and friends, gathered for a special reception at the new building where they participated in a gallery walk of the art and the winners of the contest were announced. **Thank you to all those who submitted pieces and helped to create a beautiful, inviting environment for HOW clients in their new home!**