

Racial Equity Rapid Response

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build healthy, vibrant neighborhoods; and to improve neighborhood health by addressing inequality in healthcare, education, economic vitality and the physical environment using a cross-sector, place-based strategy. Partners include healthcare providers, education providers, the faith community, business, government and others working together to coordinate investments and share outcomes.” Through the organization’s Root Learning Map experience, community members identified assets and opportunities that currently exist on the West Side to craft a vision for a healthier future.

SOUTH SHORE WORKS

South Shore Works is a collaboratory that engages existing South Shore organizations and initiatives in the revitalization of the South Shore community through mission-centered actions organized around specific objectives and timeframes. Its mission is “to restore the South Shore community to its former greatness, as a safe, diverse, mixed-income community with vibrant commercial corridors, stable housing, excellent schools, and stimulating cultural and recreational opportunities.” Its structure is based on working groups and support groups led by a leadership council that is composed of the conveners of each group and the heads of its member organizations

“The motto of South Shore Works is ‘Working Together For A Change!’ We are excited to expand that approach through our collective work with the City and fellow community organizations to combat COVID 19,” said Dr. Carol Adams. “It is our expectation that the strategies that emerge from this process address the structural and systemic policies that have sustained and perpetuated a litany of inequities and social ills. The various agencies of the city of Chicago, in general, and Mayor Lightfoot, in particular, are to be commended for giving the community its rightful seat at the table.

The core member organizations that makeup South Shore Works (SSW) are the South Shore Chamber of Commerce, ABJ Arts, Real Men Charities, Black United Fund of Illinois, the Quarry Event Center, Lawrence Hall, Lost Boyz, and Acclivus Community Services. Recently, SSW merged with The Planning Coalition and the official name became the South Shore Works

Planning and Preservation Council. The rallying call is “South Shore Working Together For A Change!”

AUSTIN COMING TOGETHER

Austin Coming Together (ACT) is a member-based 501(c)3 organization with a primary goal to increase the collective impact of our members in improving education and economic development outcomes for the Austin community. Through its network ACT focuses on impacting access and availability of quality early learning opportunities and living wage careers, improving public safety, and stabilizing the housing market in Austin. As lead partner of United Way of Metro Chicago’s Austin Neighborhood Network and the LISC’s Quality of Life Plan for Austin, ACT is committed to creating a thriving community for all Austin residents.

The most impressive aspect of the Racial Equity Rapid Response initiative is that it is truly a partnership formed to significantly impact the city’s most vulnerable communities.

“As a lifelong Austin resident, I have experienced and endured many of the challenges my community has faced prior to COVID-19. For decades, public and private disinvestment fueled by systemic racism in this city and throughout our country has intensified the number of pre-existing health conditions that plague the black community, thus making us more susceptible to the dangers of this new threat,” said Darnell Shields, Executive Director. “Our city and society must do right by the black community. Only large-scale investment in our people and the places we reside, anchored by equitable policy change will begin to change these conditions.”

Due to the impact of COVID-19, the organization has prioritized support to both youth and families with immediate needs related to the pandemic. These supports range from equipment and connection for digital access, education and other learning materials, food and/or cleaning supplies, to financial assistance. As a member of Mayor Lori Lightfoot’s Racial Equity Rapid Response Team, ACT leads collaborative efforts in the Austin

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