

# Oak Park Regional Housing Center

2013 Annual Report





THE  
*Oak Park Regional*  
HOUSING  
CENTER

## Oak Park Regional Housing Center

The Housing Center provides direct services in Oak Park and surrounding communities in Chicago and western Cook County that encourage diversity and integration in the housing market.

The Housing Center also plays a lead role in advocacy efforts on housing and civil rights from the local to the federal level.

### Our Mission

To achieve meaningful and lasting racial diversity in Oak Park and the region.

## Letter from Our Leadership

### Why We Strive

**Oak Park has a reputation as a diverse community, and it is well earned.** This village is far more integrated than similar suburbs in our region, and our level of integration continues to increase. This diversity has proven to be one of Oak Park's strengths, bringing a breadth and depth of viewpoints and experience to our daily lives.

The Housing Center had its most successful year yet in terms of moves to Oak Park that improve or sustain diversity. We also began programs to work with elementary school- and high school-aged Oak Parkers, and continued our strong partnerships with regional organizations that share our goals and ideals.

**It would be nice to look at these accomplishments and be able to say that we're done.** But the truth is that we must continue to fight for integration—Oak Park is still unique in the region and in the nation, and statistics show that without active integration and diversity efforts, communities easily slip back into patterns that separate and segregate us. Our struggle is against apathy, and the idea that these issues are only part of our past and not our present.

In this report, you'll read about our accomplishments this year as well as our plans for next year and beyond. To continue this important work, we need your support, so please consider a gift to the Housing Center. Your donation will go beyond its impact on our budget: You will also help us reach our goal of 520 Friends of the Housing Center and demonstrate the strong support for our mission and accomplishments in the communities we serve.

Sincerely,



Rob Breymaier  
Executive Director



Tom Gallagher  
Board President

## Our Impact on Oak Park

Every day, the Housing Center staff helps new Oak Parkers find rentals that not only meet their day-to-day living needs but also assist the Housing Center's mission of sustaining or improving the diversity of our village. In that regard, 2013 was our best year yet.

**In 2013, we assisted more than 1,000 clients who found a place to live in Oak Park, 66 more than the year before. More than 75% of those were “affirmative moves”—moves that sustain or improve building integration.**

The Housing Center is also reaching out to young Oak Parkers, with programs designed for children and teens. We provided financial literacy training for 330 children in the Hephzibah after-school programs in District 97 elementary schools. The children learned about smart money management through attention-grabbing skits, Q&As, and materials to bring home to their families.

Another example of our outreach efforts include partnering with local high school students. We facilitated the Young Integration Leaders Alliance at Oak Park River Forest High School, in which students are trained and encouraged to begin dialogues about racial inequities with their peers and local leaders.

## Sharing Our Strategies Regionally

Because we know that a diverse neighborhood is a stronger neighborhood, we at the Housing Center share our successful integration and housing strategies with nearby municipalities that support integration. These efforts include:

- Collaborating with Forest Park leadership to improve property management and ensure that diversity values are being upheld.
- Providing technical assistance to non-profits in Berwyn that are working to revitalize their housing market.
- Championing efforts by Cook County to promote fair housing compliance in suburban communities.
- Supporting Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) and the Chicago Area Fair Housing Alliance (CAFHA) in their assessments of regional equity.

### West Cook Homeownership Center

#### Promoting Homeownership and Revitalizing Communities in Western Cook County

Another way we share our strategies is by building strong partnerships through our West Cook Homeownership Center and other organizations in the area. Our 2013 achievements in the region include the following:

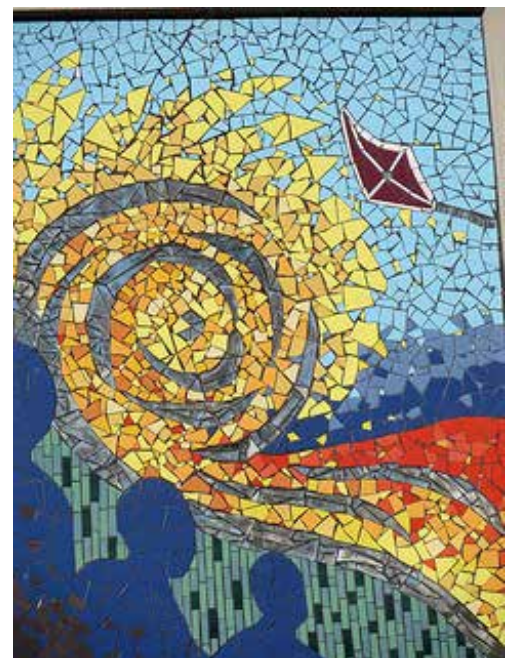
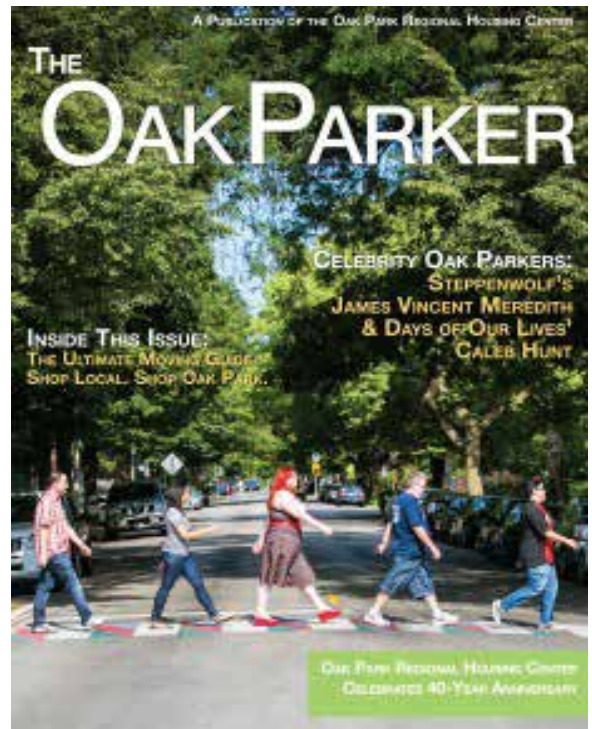
- At the West Cook Homeownership Center, we served **337** households looking to become homeowners. **51** of our clients closed on a home.
- We helped sell **18** homes for the West Cook County Housing Collaborative (a municipal collaboration between Bellwood, Berwyn, Forest Park, Maywood, and Oak Park).
- We helped sell **5** homes in Cicero for the Cook County Neighborhood Stabilization Program.





## Celebrating Oak Park Life with **The Oak Parker**

We continue to highlight the vibrant life and culture of Oak Park in *The Oak Parker* print magazine and at [TheOakParker.com](http://TheOakParker.com). Through weekly articles posted to the website and quarterly editions of the magazine, we promote the wonderful and unique aspects about living in Oak Park. These include articles on community and cultural events, local personalities, health and fitness, restaurants, spirituality, home décor, and independent Oak Park-area businesses, as well as interviews with well-known Oak Parkers such as NPR's Peter Sagal and best-selling author Rachel Louise Snyder. *The Oak Parker* and [TheOakParker.com](http://TheOakParker.com) are created for, by, and about the current and future people who make this village great.



## What We're Planning

With your support, we are building on these successes in 2014, and developing new programs and events that reinforce our mission and celebrate the diversity of Oak Park. These include:

1. **Austin Ascending**, a new initiative funded by the Austin Works program, that will provide incentives to small landlords in Chicago's Austin neighborhood to help improve the rental market in that area and promote integration.
2. **Special Events**, such as a benefit concert with The Sons of the Silent Age in July and sponsored bike rides such as the Wright Ride in August, provide the Housing Center the opportunity to become more involved within active community events.
3. **Living room chats and public forums** to build on our efforts to engage the community and school systems.

These meetings will focus on pragmatic solutions, not just theories. We want to hear about successful strategies. We want to talk about how we live out the values of diversity and integration in Oak Park.

For instance:

- What is missing in the Oak Park diversity strategy?
- How can we achieve educational equity? What has worked in other school districts? How can we implement those in Oak Park?
- How we can integrate our social networks? We are a diverse community, but how can we create opportunities for people of different racial and ethnic groups to interact with each other?
- How can we ensure that everyone has a voice, and feels that they have a stake in the community?

Follow the Housing Center on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) to be the first to know about these and other 2014 events.

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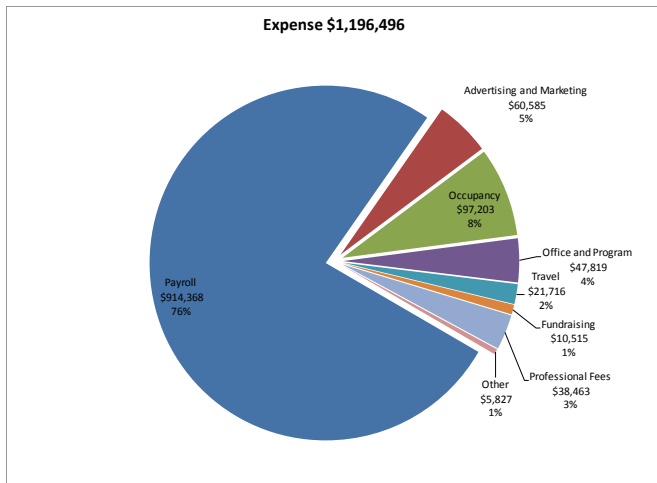
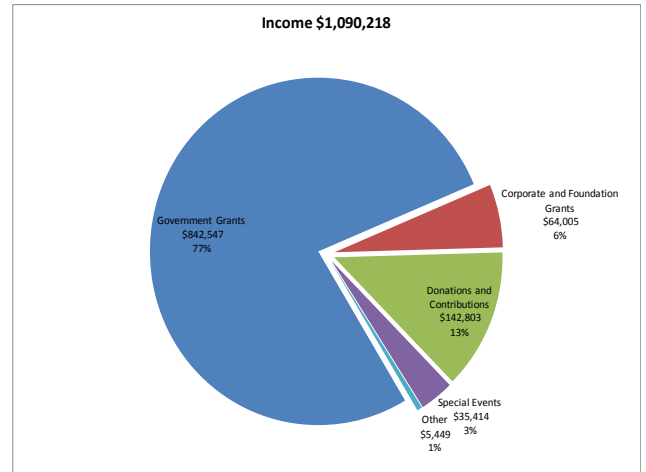


## Revenues and Expenses

Fiscal Year Ended December 31, 2013

### Income

Government Grant	\$842,547
Corporate & Foundation Grants	64,005
Donations & Contributions	142,803
Special Events	35,414
Other	5,449
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,090,218</b>



### Expense

Payroll	\$914,368
Occupancy	97,203
Advertising and Marketing	60,585
Office & Program	47,819
Professional Fees	38,463
Travel	21,716
Fundraising	10,515
Other Expenses	5,827
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,196,496</b>

## Supporters

### Foundation & Corporate Grants

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Chicago Community Trust  
Community Bank of Oak Park & River Forest  
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# Oak Park Regional Housing Center

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General Information: [www.oprhc.org](http://www.oprhc.org)

Rental Info: [www.liveinoakpark.org](http://www.liveinoakpark.org)

Homeownership Info: [www.westcookhomewonership.org](http://www.westcookhomewonership.org)

