



CHICAGO HOUSE | 1985-2010

## DEAR FRIENDS,

*On the occasion of our 25th Anniversary, we thought it made sense to reflect back on the history of Chicago House and the AIDS epidemic. While we are proud of the work we have done over the last 25 years, it is the unfortunate truth that the battle against HIV/AIDS continues. In this report, we look back at the many twists and turns the AIDS epidemic has taken and how Chicago House has responded to best meet the needs of our clients on a day-to-day basis. In preparing this anniversary piece, we were struck by the fact that without the inspiration of our clients and the dedicated work of our staff, volunteers, donors and friends, we would not have this story to share. We remain grateful to all who believe in our mission and have helped us along the way.*

*We urge you to go to our Web site, [www.chicagohouse.org](http://www.chicagohouse.org) to get an up-to-date detailed description of our current programs. We hope that this look back can serve to remind us of why our work is so crucial and why we continue to say that we were "There at the beginning. Here until the cure."*

*Our best and continued hope,*



The Reverend Stan J. Sloan  
Chief Executive Officer



Michael Tolentino  
Chair, Board of Trustees

## THE EARLY YEARS

### 1980 – 1985

For many of us old enough to remember, the early 1980s had an almost surreal feel to them. A sense of fear, disbelief, and uncertainty ruled the day. We moved quickly from wondering “what was this strange gay disease?” to having the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) adopt the term Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) in 1982, and the French identify HIV in 1983. By 1985, a lot had already happened; the First International Conference on AIDS was held in Atlanta, Rock Hudson died, and Larry Kramer’s play, *The Normal Heart* opened in New York. It was in that year that the American Foundation for AIDS Research (AmFar) was founded in Los Angeles and, here in Chicago, nearly 100 community activists met at the Baton to address the dire need for housing for Chicagoans living with AIDS.

With that as the backdrop, on September 9, 1985, Chicago House was incorporated in the State of Illinois as a not-for-profit organization with the goal of providing housing for persons with AIDS. †

## BUILDING TO MEET THE NEED

### 1986 – 1990

By the second half of the 1980s, it became all too apparent that we were faced with what would likely be a long and devastating battle. Education programs and efforts to address the nation’s fears emerged. In 1986, the U.S. Surgeon General, C. Everett Koop, published the government’s first major report on AIDS which called for condom use and sex education and urged parents and schools to talk about AIDS with children. Programs to prevent infection slowly emerged such as an informal needle exchange program in Boston. Frustrated by the perceived indifference of the government (President Ronald Reagan didn’t utter the word AIDS until 1985), groups formed to demand action; perhaps most notably ACT UP, founded by Larry Kramer in 1987. During this time frame, compassion often collided with fear. Bowing to the fear, and also adding to the stigma of HIV infection, the U.S. banned HIV-positive immigrants and travelers. At the same time, in a more humane response, the FDA shortened its drug-approval process and in 1987, AZT, the first HIV drug was approved.

During this period Chicago House emerged as an organization committed to providing a compassionate response to a fearful disease. For us, this was a period of building our infrastructure as we established various facilities to meet the growing and ever-evolving needs of our clients. As our name



implies, our focus was on housing. In February 1986, Chicago House opened the doors to its first residence, a renovated twenty-room mansion that was leased in Uptown. The site accommodated eight individuals in private bedrooms with shared cooking, dining, bathing, and living areas. In January 1987, a second residence was opened, this one a two-flat in Lakeview with capacity for six residents. As the waiting list continued to grow, still more was needed. In 1987, Chicago House bought and opened a six-flat on the Northwest side to house fifteen residents. Then, in 1988, it was recognized that some residents were in need of 24-hour care and the first floor of the Lakeview residence was adapted for this purpose enabling clients to stay at Chicago House instead of going to the hospital. As demand continued to increase, Chicago House opened a seven bedroom single-family house in 1989 in Edgewater to house the 24-Hour Care Program which had outgrown the Lakeview facility. Throughout these years, we worked to expand and reconfigure our facilities to best meet the needs of our clients. ††

## THE BATTLE GOES ON 1991 – 1995

In the early 1990s, the extent and devastation of the worldwide AIDS epidemic could not be denied nor ignored. In 1991, there were over ten million people infected by HIV worldwide, and more than a million in the United States. In that year the death toll in the U.S. from AIDS related causes was 20,454. Away from the horrible numbers, the AIDS Red Ribbon Campaign became the symbol of AIDS awareness and Magic Johnson revealed he was HIV positive. As the epidemic dragged on there was a sense of "AIDS fatigue," as people had the natural reaction of not wanting to hear or talk about AIDS. But the disease remained unrelenting, and by 1995 AIDS became the leading cause of death for Americans aged 25 to 44. In 1995 alone, there were 48,371 AIDS related deaths in the United States. Without doubt, this was a dark time for anyone impacted by or concerned about AIDS. But 1995 also presented a modicum of hope as several clinical trials of new drugs begin to show some positive results.

What was Chicago House doing? We continued to expand and shift our facilities to meet the evolving housing and case management needs of our clients. But just as important, we celebrated a lot of birthdays in 1991-1995. And we mean celebrated – we had balloons, we had cakes, we sang songs. And we celebrated Thanksgivings and Christmases and all kinds of things like graduations, getting jobs, or making it back to Chicago House after all-too-frequent hospital visits. In a word, Chicago House continued



to be “home” for our residents. This is what we have always been about and what has guided us as we have reacted to the twists and turns the epidemic has thrown our way. In 1992, Chicago House formed its Family Support Program and became the first provider in the Midwest to offer housing and related services to HIV/AIDS- affected families as it partnered with The Children’s Place Association. Almost immediately after forming the Family Support Program, Chicago House began searching for funding to expand the program into its own facility. By 1994, Chicago House had received commitments from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Fred Woods Estate (a former Chicago House Board member), WXRT and numerous community supporters to help build, furnish, and operate an independent family facility. In 1995, we broke ground for the Fred Woods Home that, once completed, would house nine families in one, two, and three bedroom apartments. †

## LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS 1996 - 2000

The latter half of the 1990s ushered in new hope as medical advances came to the fore with the advent of new drug therapies. As drug advances and approvals began to dominate the news in the AIDS community, increased hope was somewhat tempered by the reality that the annual cost of drug therapy could easily exceed \$20,000 per person. Nonetheless, the concept of HIV infection as a death sentence began to slip away. Magic Johnson, who had told the world he had HIV in 1991, returned to the basketball court in 1996. In 2000, the annual AIDS death toll in the United States dropped to 17,741 after it had peaked in 1995 at over 48,000. Many people with HIV/AIDS found themselves getting better and were confronted with the reality that they now faced rebuilding their lives while living with HIV rather than preparing to die.

This new reality quite naturally prompted changes at Chicago House. In 1996 we had undertaken a renovation and expansion project at our 24-Hour Care Program in Edgewater to add two bedrooms and expand capacity from 7 to 9 individuals. Soon thereafter, in a major milestone for Chicago House, in 1997, we opened our family residence, the Fred Woods Home on the North side of the city. We received applications from 53 families for the nine apartments. Clearly the need for housing for HIV/AIDS-affected families far outstripped supply. In response, Chicago House also opened a three flat in Uptown for its family program. The beginning of Chicago House’s Independent Living Program was marked in late 1997 when we purchased a 24-unit building with studio apartments that would



be ready for residents in late 1998. This new program recognized the need for housing for those who were prepared for a more independent living environment. While the advent of new treatments led to the increased demand for Family Support, Supportive Living and Independent Living Programs, they had the opposite effect on our 24-Hour Care Program. Consequently in early 1999, as we found ourselves experiencing empty beds in our hospice facility, we made the difficult decision to close it down. During the 11 years it had been in operation, it had provided essential and compassionate care to over 400 people. ††

## NO REST FOR THE WEARY

### 2001 - 2005

The beginning of the new millennium brought some conflicting trends around HIV/AIDS. Not surprisingly, there was some burnout as the disease had been in the forefront for over twenty years. While there was clearly progress and good news on the medical front, there still wasn't a cure nor was there an effective vaccine on the horizon. HIV/AIDS became less of a "hot" charity to support and federal funding for social services declined in the face of war costs and soaring federal deficits. While still devastating to the gay community, by 2001 nearly half of all those infected by HIV worldwide were women.

During this period, Chicago House continued to work to provide its clients with a safe and dignified home. As more people were now living with HIV infection, increasing emphasis was placed on helping clients develop skills to rebuild their lives and live as independently as possible. In 2004, Chicago House was awarded a \$2.5 million five-year grant from the CDC and became the lead agency in its Prevention With Positives Initiative, which helps our HIV positive clients reach out and protect their peers and partners from possible infection. Tutoring and mentoring programs were also developed for use in the Family Support Program. ††

## CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS


### 2006 - Today

It has become increasingly clear that HIV/AIDS is hitting minority populations particularly hard. New statistics show that African Americans and Hispanics account for more than two-thirds of the new HIV infections in the United States. The link to homelessness has become indisputable as homeless people are 16 times more likely to become HIV impacted. More



and more, HIV infection in the United States is perceived as a chronic disease that is horribly expensive, but manageable for most of those with access to treatment. Proper medical adherence is receiving greater attention as being a critical component of effective treatment. As HIV is now thought of as a manageable condition, funding for HIV services has come under greater pressure. Funding under the Ryan White CARE Act is now specifically targeted for medical services and away from food delivery, legal assistance, etc. Other federal HIV/AIDS funding such as HOPWA (Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS) is similarly coming under more pressure. The challenges to HIV/AIDS funding has come about despite the fact that in 2008 the CDC released statistics showing HIV/AIDS infections are 40% higher than previously reported.

In addition to its housing focus, the changing nature of the AIDS epidemic has prompted Chicago House to respond by placing greater emphasis on prevention and proper medical adherence to promote better health. We are also concentrating our strategic efforts to help minority communities disproportionately impacted by HIV/AIDS. We have consistently recognized the link between homelessness and the risk of HIV infection. While we continue to respond with our housing mission, we are also focusing our efforts on helping our clients acquire the necessary skills to remain healthy and enjoy more independent lives. Through training, career counseling, mentorship and internships we are helping individuals achieve greater self-sufficiency and productivity, ultimately leading to successful employment. In 2006, Chicago House began its Scattered Site Housing Program with a \$1.2 million grant through federal HOPWA funding. This grant allowed us to offer eighteen scattered housing units that connect housing with employment training. In 2008, we completed an addition to the Fred Woods House that added six more family apartments to the nine already there. As part of our employment initiative we opened Sweet Miss Giving's Bakery ([www.sweetmissgivings.com](http://www.sweetmissgivings.com)) to provide employment training opportunities for those impacted by HIV/AIDS. Finally, in 2009 Chicago House hosted its Inaugural Speaker Series event featuring former President Bill Clinton to increase revenue and exposure for Chicago House.

Where we go from here remains to be seen. We all hope and wait for better medical treatments, an effective vaccine, or even a cure. Until then, the final chapter in the history of the AIDS epidemic cannot be written. As we look back over the last 25 years, we hope this provides a snapshot of how we have responded here at Chicago House. There at the beginning. Here until the cure. 



*The mission of Chicago House and Social Service Agency is to provide housing and supportive services to HIV-affected and HIV-at risk families and individuals, who may also be impacted by poverty, homelessness, substance abuse, and mental illness. All Chicago House services are provided without discrimination and are explicitly designed to guide people towards wholeness and self-sufficiency.*

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Chief Executive Officer

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**Michael Herman**  
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**Chicago House**  
1925 N. Clybourn,  
Suite 401  
Chicago, IL 60614-4946

For further information about  
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[www.chicagohouse.org](http://www.chicagohouse.org)

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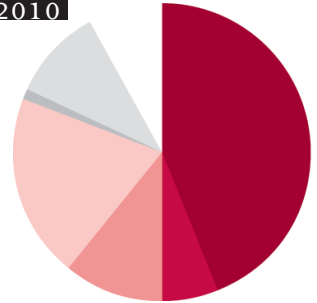
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## FINANCIALS

Our strong financial position served us well in fiscal 2010 as we faced an extremely difficult economic environment. Coming on the heels of a very strong financial year in fiscal 2009, Chicago House experienced its first operating deficit in many years as the economic downturn proved particularly challenging for the not-for-profit sector. Total Support and Revenue declined in fiscal 2010 from fiscal 2009 by more than 27% as Government Grants dropped by over 35% and individual gifts fell by almost 31%. The drop in Government Grants was due in large part to a one time capital grant received in FY 2009 and unexpected cuts to our state funding. The drop in individual giving was largely expected as we had received a large one-time bequest in fiscal 2009. We analyzed expenses and made cuts where appropriate while at the same time expanding services to those clients in greater need during this difficult economy. In the short term, we are looking to reduce our expenses to meet declining revenues. Please know that we always recognize and appreciate all that our donors do for us – even as their own financial situations are affected.

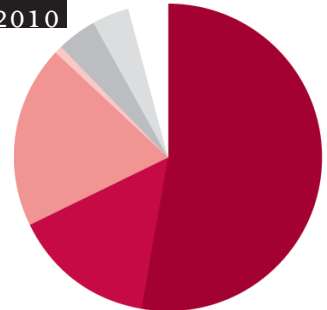
EXPENSES	2010	%	2009	%
Housing Programs	\$2,339,991	44%	\$2,248,463	46%
Community Case Management	\$293,734	6%	\$285,549	6%
Prevention Programs	\$580,540	11%	\$605,373	12%
Employment Programs	\$1,060,196	20%	\$693,751	14%
Other Program Services	\$78,100	1%	\$66,726	1%
Fundraising	\$535,559	10%	\$585,185	12%
Management and General	\$447,195	8%	\$461,074	9%
Total	\$5,335,315	100%	\$4,946,121	100%

2010



SUPPORT & REVENUE	2010	%	2009	%
Government Grants	\$2,662,422	53%	\$4,109,709	59%
Foundations/Corporations	\$748,480	15%	\$753,492	11%
Individuals	\$946,652	19%	\$1,368,869	20%
United Way	\$53,848	1%	\$68,000	1%
Special Events	\$198,080	4%	\$351,189	5%
Client Fees	\$195,081	4%	\$166,924	2%
Other	\$222,189	4%	\$101,804	2%
Total	\$5,026,752	100%	\$6,919,987	100%

2010



SUMMARY FINANCIAL POSITION	2010	2009
Change in Net Assets	-\$308,563	\$1,973,866
Net Assets, Beginning of the Year	\$8,419,961	\$6,446,095
Net Assets, End of the Year	\$8,111,398	\$8,419,961