

COMMUNITYWORKS FACT SHEET



CommunityWorks is an initiative started by the Grand Victoria Foundation and designed to partner with community foundations across the state of Illinois, like Oak Park-River Forest Community Foundation, that are committed to improving the overall quality of life in their local communities. The initiative focuses on community foundations that convene the community, leverage local resources, and provide strategic grant making to achieve community-based solutions.

PROCESS: In its initial phase of CommunityWorks the Community Foundation held several at-large community forums that provided input on potential grant opportunities that would support Grand Victoria's targeted areas of workforce development, land use and childcare within the local community.

2003: FIRST COMMUNITYWORKS GRANT AWARDED

- A successful CommunityWorks campaign raising over \$250,000 locally secured an additional \$250,000 in a matching gift from Grand Victoria to create a permanent CommunityWorks Endowment Fund.
- Through the CommunityWorks endowment, the Community Foundation has been able to award grants to organizations such as Parenthesis, Family Services, Holmes PTO, and Hephzibah.

In early 2008, following the successful first phase of CommunityWorks and the creation of the Community Foundation's new strategic direction, the Foundation convened community members to serve on a CommunityWorks Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee identified community aspirations that focus on systems versus silos, outcomes versus activities and accountability versus monitoring. By taking a systemic approach, the Advisory Committee was able to expand CommunityWorks as an effort that addresses the targeted areas, but within a context that specifically responds to the unique aspirations of Oak Park and River Forest.

COMMUNITY VISION:

Because the Advisory Committee initially identified more than 88 aspirations, members categorized individual ideas into common themes that ultimately emerged as a common vision. The vision not only reflected the 88 aspirations, but a vision that Advisory members felt would be embraced by the larger community. In July, 2008 the Advisory Committee agreed upon a common vision:

Oak Park- River Forest is as a sustainable community that ensures the success of all youth and builds an environmentally healthy community.

This vision both informed and shaped a subsequent grant request later submitted to Grand Victoria for what is known as CommunityWorks Phase III.

2008 NEW COMMUNITYWORKS GRANT AWARDED

Recognizing the prior work and the community's vision for the future, the Oak Park-River Forest Community Foundation received a favorable review of the application submitted in July 2008. Grand Victoria Foundation thus awarded:

- \$1 million to the existing CommunityWorks endowment that will now increase the number of local strategic grant awards to achieve measurable outcomes towards a vision of a sustainable Oak Park-River Forest community.

- \$1 million to the Community Foundation's operational endowment to support the Foundation's commitment to foster philanthropy, serve as a strategic grant maker, and provide leadership towards the attainment of common community visions.
- The Oak Park and River Forest Community Foundation is now eligible to receive a challenge grant up to \$2 million in matching funds from the Grand Victoria Foundation by raising \$2 million locally over the next 3-years.

The success of the matching campaign provides the opportunity for the Community Foundation and its many partners to bring to the community up to **\$6 million** to support the achievement of the Oak Park-River Forest community vision, now and in the future.

NEXT STEPS:

- Expand level of community awareness and engagement around *CommunityWorks*
- Raise \$2 million in funds to achieve the maximum match
- Identify work groups for implementation of goals and objectives
- Issue grants in 2009, 2010 and 2011 that support identified goals.

The number of dollars available for local grants will depend on the size of the *CommunityWorks* endowment. The sooner we build the endowment utilizing our matching opportunity, the sooner we in Oak Park and River Forest achieve a sustainable community.

COMMUNITYWORKS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Tom Barwin, Village Manager, Village of Oak Park
 Dr. Donna Carroll, President, Dominican University
 Dr. Constance Collins, Superintendent, District 97
 Gary Cuneen, Executive Director, Seven Generations Ahead
 Lisa DeVivo, Executive Director, Mental Health Board
 Steve Gutierrez, Village Manager, Village of River Forest
 Dr. Thomas Hagerman, Superintendent, District 90
 Mike Kelly, President/Chairman, Park National Bank
 Sophia Lloyd, Executive Director, OPRF Community Foundation
 Boyd McDowell, Board President, OPRF Community Foundation
 Dr. Shirley Morgenthaler, Distinguished Professor, Concordia University
 Frank Paris, Immediate Past President, Village of River Forest
 Jan Pate, Vice President of Operations and Development, YMCA
 Ed Petrick, Community Resident
 David Pope, President, Village of Oak Park
 Bobbie Raymond Larson, Community Resident
 Diana Rosenbrock, Collaboration on Early Childhood Education
 Mary Jo Schuler, Co-Founder, Good Heart Work Smart Foundation
 Nancy Waichler, Board Member, OPRF Community Foundation
 Dr. Attila Weninger, Superintendent, District 200
 John Williams, Director, Youth Services for Oak Park Township