The year 1995 marked the beginning of the Steans Family Foundation’s mission in the community of North Lawndale. That’s when the family, Harrison and Lois – along with daughters Heather, Jennifer and Robin – resolved to focus their resources in the neighborhood. Their faith in North Lawndale and its residents was rooted in the promise already exhibited in the neighborhood infrastructure – promise characterized by strong leadership and bonded by a sense of unity.

It’s with great pride that the Foundation family and staff, working hand-in-hand with North Lawndale leadership and citizens—can hand in a 12-year progress report that lists significant achievements in the seven key areas of revitalization to which our joint efforts have been devoted:

- Health & Human Services
- Family & Community Asset-Building
- Employment & Training
- Education & Youth Development
- Housing
- Economic Development
- Leadership & Capacity Building

In the pages that follow, you’ll learn about the breadth of these vital and dynamic efforts, as well as about the pathways to future programs, both short and long-term.

12 years of community progress
Since the inception of the Steans Family Foundation’s work in North Lawndale, we have partnered with community leaders, organizations, and residents in addressing the variety of issues impeding community progress. Mindful of the complex challenges in bringing about systemic change in an under-resourced neighborhood, we’ve been guided in our philanthropy by several important tenets:

- Committing to long-term objectives, demonstrated through more than 10 years of investment focused solely on North Lawndale.
- Linking with neighborhood talent and expertise, demonstrated through consistent support of organizations whose leaders are making a difference in dealing with important community issues.
- Enlisting broad community participation, demonstrated through grassroots grant-making in support of resident-led initiatives aimed at strengthening the community.
- Connecting additional resources, demonstrated through leveraging our resources in ways that attract other investment in the community.
- Maintaining a personalized approach, demonstrated through personal involvement by family members and staff in helping to solve community problems.

While we take these approaches, the success of our investment ultimately rests on the work of exemplary community stakeholders who are committed to seeing North Lawndale progress. And the results are evident! The first-hand accounts and stories in this report illustrate the achievements of just some of the many dedicated community advocates who work tirelessly to make a difference. We are pleased to support their efforts in revitalizing the community of North Lawndale.

Sincerely,

Harrison I. Steans
President and CEO

Reginald Jones
Executive Director

For more information about the Steans Family Foundation, its community partnerships and programs, please visit our web site at www.steansfamilyfoundation.org
The Steans Family Foundation firmly believes that the ability of families to access decent, affordable housing is crucially tied to the community’s health and strength. The expense of securing and maintaining decent housing to rent or own is an enormous challenge. In North Lawndale, *Breaking Ground* has been working to tackle this challenge for more than ten years, and has realized great success in developing quality homes at affordable prices. The following description hones in on the organization’s activities and achievements.

**Breaking Ground**

*Breaking Ground* began its work in North Lawndale in 1992 by rehabbing abandoned buildings, while at the same time hiring and training neighborhood high school students to help in the construction. Today, the work of providing safe, quality affordable housing continues full force through projects such as the John Egan Development, and through the ongoing training of community residents. Currently, 14 North Lawndale residents are employed on construction sites as carpenters, tile layers, landscaping specialists and supervisors.

**Building Blocks of the Future**

*Breaking Ground* began its work in North Lawndale in 1992 by rehabbing abandoned buildings, while at the same time hiring and training neighborhood high school students to help in the construction. Today, the work of providing safe, quality affordable housing continues full force through projects such as the John Egan Development, and through the ongoing training of community residents. Currently, 14 North Lawndale residents are employed on construction sites as carpenters, tile layers, landscaping specialists and supervisors.
The foundation of Breaking Ground has been built on three principal goals:

**Affordability:** To bring homes within the economic reach of large numbers, Breaking Ground has utilized a layered subsidies program for existing community residents through the State of Illinois, Federal Home Loan Bank of Chicago and the New Homes for Chicago programs reaching families well below the Chicago Area Median Income.

**Quality:** To provide high quality, spacious living areas that are energy efficient to help control housing expense for North Lawndale families.

**Job Creation:** As a licensed general contractor, Breaking Ground creates and oversees job training and placement for community residents under the auspices of it’s affiliate, APL Teaching Factory. And to insure job-performance excellence, only graduates of the rigorously demanding classes are considered for on-site jobs.

Currently, Breaking Ground is in negotiations with the City of Chicago to obtain lots for multi-unit developments earmarked for housing rental and homeless populations.

*By Jeff Dennis, Executive Director, Breaking Ground*

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**Bringing Hope… and Passing It On**

“Breaking Ground has brought me hope. Now I am passing it on to others. I tell everyone about Breaking Ground’s affordable housing program, and they think it’s too good to be true. But I can testify to that it is true. I am always inviting people to come and see my Breaking Ground home for themselves.”

~ Katina Embry, former student of APL Teaching Factory and Breaking Ground homebuyer
Existing schools and new school starts are working tirelessly to increase student achievement in the community. The Steans Family Foundation education grant-making program looks to encourage innovation, to buttress good leadership, and to support strong educational options for the North Lawndale community. L.E.A.R.N. Charter School is just one example of the exciting developments in the North Lawndale educational landscape.

A Brief History of L.E.A.R.N.

In 1981, L.E.A.R.N. Charter School (Lawndale Community School) was founded as a private institution by three women who were dissatisfied with the quality of education in North Lawndale. Although each parent paid tuition, it was highly subsidized by donations.

The school began with 11 students in two rooms, and grew by leaps and bounds until, in 2000, enrollment had reached 100 students, with a waiting list of nearly 500. Today, our enrollment boasts 363 scholars from grades pre-K to 8.

L.E.A.R.N. is, first and foremost, a community-minded school that firmly believes children learn and thrive best in environments conducive to meeting their individual needs. The notion of building trusting and lasting relationships lies at the heart of what L.E.A.R.N. does, and what we consider to be the necessary precursor to sustainable academic achievement. In order for children to reach their highest potential, the environment must be rich in opportunities to explore and experiment, to wonder and hypothesize, to develop character – all within the context of supportive and responsive adult relationships. Nurturing productive, well-rounded and well-grounded students remains the focus of L.E.A.R.N. Charter School.

Our students apply and are accepted to such excellent high schools as Lane Tech, Gordon Tech, St. Ignatius, Francis Parker, Miss Porter’s

“L.E.A.R.N. is respectful and the teachers are nice and it is a cool place to read, write, and learn.”

~ Deja Rocquemore, 3rd grade student
Darius’s Story

At the beginning of third grade, Darius transferred from a private suburban school. His Cs, Ds and Fs were the result of test papers that were an indecipherable maze of random answers. He was disruptive, couldn’t focus or complete his homework. Yet his teacher was sure the clue was in those test papers. After hours spent poring over them, she realized that Darius had never learned linear organization. She then began to sit next to him in class while the teacher’s aide showed him — step by step — how to sequence his work. Within a few months, his test scores had rocketed up over 30%, his grades are As and Bs, and now every Friday the class is treated to Darius doing his exuberant “I’m the greatest!” dance.

His mother’s reaction? “It’s wonderful not to be afraid when the phone rings!”

School, Mooseheart School, Noble Street Charter and others. To help increase our acceptance numbers, L.E.A.R.N.’s Student Success Coach works with middle school scholars to help them and their parents complete applications, apply for scholarships, and practice for interviews.

If L.E.A.R.N. is successful in achieving its mission, students will have rich academic and professional careers. They will return to North Lawndale as adults to give back to the community through home and business ownership, community activism, or volunteerism.

By Courtney Francis,
Principal, L.E.A.R.N. Charter School

For more information about the L.E.A.R.N. Charter School, please visit their web site at www.learncharter.org
When founded in 1999, NLEN became the only North Lawndale agency whose core business was employment — largely as an employment intermediary to address the job needs of the community’s low-income residents. Since that time, the organization continued to expand its approach beyond traditional pre-employment training and job placement.

The U-Turn Permitted Program is one such example of that expansion. Soon after inception, it became apparent that the community unemployment problem couldn’t be alleviated unless the special employment needs of formerly incarcerated individuals were addressed. In 2001, 57% of the adult North Lawndale population was involved in the criminal justice system — sentenced, serving time, on parole or on probation. In light of these staggering numbers, NLEN launched U-Turn Permitted, an initiative that provides four weeks of intensive, cognitive-based re-entry and pre-employment training.

One graduate, now an independent painting contractor in his third year of college explains, “What I got was better than a job; I got a change in the way I think.” With NLEN’s participation in the Mayor’s Policy Caucus, the organization was able to arrange a collection-services contract between the City Department of Revenue and Collectors Training Institute (CTI), a North Lawndale-based collection agency, stipulating that all jobs be placed through NLEN. The result? Hundreds of millions of dollars for CTI and 50 to 75 potential new jobs for former offenders. What’s more, NLEN provides employment and employment services to 1200 men and women each year.

The Sweet Beginnings Program is yet another expansion that’s worked wonders. Because some of the people served need transitional employment in order to gain a work history (as well as basic job

The Network: Working to Increase the Community’s Net Worth

North Lawndale Employment Network (NLEN)

The Steans Family Foundation recognizes that without a tireless dedication to opening opportunities for individuals to achieve self-sufficiency, personal and community development would be missing its very cornerstone. NLEN’s mission is to improve North Lawndale residents’ earning potential and quality of life—through innovative employment initiatives. NLEN was established in 1999 after a five-year community planning process facilitated by the Steans Family Foundation as well as several other community stakeholders.
skills before they can secure a market job), Sweet Beginnings was formed to serve as a first employer to those individuals with significant barriers to employment which may include, job seekers who have limited traditional work experience, may have low literacy and math skills, difficult felony convictions and mental health challenges, etc. Today, Sweet Beginnings is an NLEN-owned company that continues to evolve as a successful business engaged in the production of Beeline premium honey and honey-based personal-care products. Sweet Beginnings now has the capacity to hire up to 100 former offenders each year. Workers gain critical work experience and skills that lead to jobs in manufacturing, warehousing, shipping and receiving, customer service, and sales. Most importantly, the program’s relevance is based on what one employee had to say about it: “You can learn things you can take with you. You can use it as a stepping stone.”

As the role of NLEN continues, we plan even more innovative forms of expansion in order to create rewarding employment opportunities for North Lawndale residents.

By Brenda Palms-Barber, Executive Director, NLEN

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“You can depend on NLEN to match employee’s skills with our needs. NLEN will send you qualified individuals.”

~ Dana Williams
CTI Manager

For more information about the North Lawndale Employment Network, please visit their web site at www.nlen.org
The Carole Robertson Center’s Adult Learning Institute offers North Lawndale residents the resources they need to improve their lives. The Steans Family Foundation believes that strengthening families strengthens communities and this is being achieved in the Center’s work.

THE CENTER OF OUR PURPOSE

In today’s competitive employment marketplace, it’s imperative that adults advance their education and expand their personal skills. Realizing that many North Lawndale residents needed a strong tailwind to speed them to their personal and career destinations, in 2001 the Center opened the Adult Learning Institute. Since then, the program has been dedicated to serving individuals trapped in low-wage jobs or mired in unemployment by lifting low literacy skills, boosting language skills and helping them earn high-school diplomas.
**John’s Story**

John had worked at the same company for a number of years. It was a large company with good benefits, and his family benefited from a consistent paycheck. Each year, however, life gets more expensive. John’s family grew. His salary, however, did not, and because he lacked a high school diploma, his boss told him there was no possibility for advancement. A longtime resident of North Lawndale, John learned about the CRCL’s Adult Learning Institute from a friend. He soon enrolled in nightly GED classes that were held free-of-charge in his neighborhood. Professional instructors and well-trained tutors supported him through the strenuous process of mastering a high school education years after leaving school. With on-site practice tests to boost his confidence and lots of support from the CRCL staff, John passed his GED exam and subsequently received a much-deserved promotion to assistant manager.

*By Cerathel Burnett, Director of Adult Learning, CRCL*

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“For more information about the Carole Robertson Center for Learning, please visit their website at www.crcl.net”

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“*My experience in the Adult Learning Institute is challenging but worth it, every minute of every day I am there.*”

— Mary Ramirez, Adult Learning Institute participant
It was in 1996, during a pizza party attended by Michael Trout and his wife Karen and a dozen junior-high students that the idea for YMEN was born. And it was the kids who ignited the innovative ideas of the program. In the ensuing 10 years, YMEN’s programs have nourished the intellectual, social and economic lives of so many of the community’s young men, not to mention the inspiring development of their leadership abilities and skill sets. Just a few examples:

- Norman, who graduated last year from Rutgers University and was recently hired as YMEN’s first Program Director.
- Percy, who returned to North Lawndale after graduating with a degree in business from the University of Illinois and is now advancing in his career at Verizon Wireless Corporation.
Quincey, who graduated in 2006 from Wheaton College and has moved back to the community to work with the Lawndale Christian Health Center as an AIDS outreach worker.

Willie, the first African-American male to graduate from Olivet Nazarene University in the field of elementary education and today teaches in a North Lawndale school.

Xavier, now a member of our Board of Directors, is graduating from DePaul University in business and teaches YMEN’s weekly entrepreneurship class.

YMEN has grown dramatically, with focus on activities that include:
- Mentoring
- College Scholarships
- Domestic and Oversea Trips
- Entrepreneurship Training

Most importantly, YMEN has helped an impressive number of young leaders who understand that North Lawndale is a community of opportunity and that they themselves have the power to make this a neighborhood of hope and love.

By Michael Trout, Executive Director, YMEN

For more information about YMEN, please visit their web site at www.ymenchicago.com

“Before YMEN, I was running with the wrong group of guys. Many of my old friends have dropped out of school and some have been locked up. But I am now an honor student headed to Tuskegee University! This past Spring, YMEN took me to Uganda Africa and my life will never be the same again.”

~ Donnell Johnson
The Steans Family Foundation believes that the strength of any community resides in its residents. This is why the Foundation’s Neighborhood Grants Program – through annual funding – brings North Lawndale residents together in a wide spectrum of grassroots initiatives, each working toward the unifying goals of neighborhood progress, enhancement and harmony.

Every year, various community organizations are recipients of grants (up to $2,500 each) that not only use neighborhood resources and help develop grassroots leadership, but foster a spirit of cooperation among organizations and individuals as well. Prominent examples of such activities include community gardens, “Back-to-School Bashes,” senior-citizen services, after-school programs, block parties and sports teams.

“**Our work in North Lawndale involves creating a culture of wellness at home, in our workplaces, in our institutions, and in our community. The Youth Health Ambassador Program has workshops that train teens to have a positive impact on the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of their peers by being role models and teachers of healthy living.”**

~ Shemuel B. Israel, DC, Center for Health Promotion and Enhancement (Healthy Living Cooking Class)

“**We want to inspire and encourage students to do their best, be the best, dream big, excel and be over-achievers.”**

~ Minister Sharon Penn-Robinson, Earth Angels Ministry of Helps (Back to School Festival)

“I host the North Lawndale Olympics so one day, maybe the children can compete in the World Olympics.”

~ Reverend Vivian Lewis, Triumph Church School of Wisdom (North Lawndale Olympics)
2006 Grants by Programs Area

A. Economic Development $ 40,000  
B. Education and Youth Development 981,797  
C. Employment and Training 917,418  
D. Family and Community Asset Building 112,502  
E. Health and Human Services 439,205  
F. Housing 478,665  
G. Leadership and Capacity Building 174,853  
H. Quality of Life 81,633  
I. Staff Small Grants, Non-Lawndale, Trustee Matching Grants 175,706

Total* $ 3,401,779

*Includes $169,317 in distributions of funds from other foundations.

Statement of Financial Position**

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<th>December 31, 2006</th>
<th>December 31, 2005</th>
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<td><strong>Assets</strong></td>
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<td>Cash</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total assets</td>
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<td>25,374,461</td>
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</table>

| **Liabilities and Net Assets** |                   |                   |
| Current Liabilities       | 19,885            | 113,561           |
| Unrestricted net assets   | 30,001,122        | 25,260,900        |
| Total liabilities and net assets | 30,021,007 | 25,374,461 |

Program Grants

|                      |                   |                   |
| steans Family Foundation | 3,232,462      | 2,535,541         |
| Distribution of funds  | 169,317           | 276,202           |
| from other foundations |                   |                   |
| **Total**             | $ 3,401,779      | $ 2,811,743       |

**Unaudited, cash basis.
trustees / staff

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Harrison I. Steans  
President and CEO
Gregory Darnieder  
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James P. Kastenholz  
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Heather A. Steans  
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Robin M. Steans

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
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Wendy Harvell  
Suzanne Smith

PROGRAM OFFICERS
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Mariame Kaba  
Angela Pace-Moody  
Maurice Williams

THE STEANS FAMILY FOUNDATION

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