



North Chicago
Community Partners

March 2020-March 2021

A year on the frontlines

Strengthening communities through schools.





“North Chicago Community Partners is the lead organization ensuring our students are whole and healthy. Even during this COVID-19 crisis, they continued their important part and went above and beyond providing at-home educational activities for our students and lightened many burdens on our families. We are grateful for their commitment to D187 and the City of North Chicago.”

-Leon Rockingham, Honorable Mayor, City of North Chicago



North Chicago Community Partners

What we do:

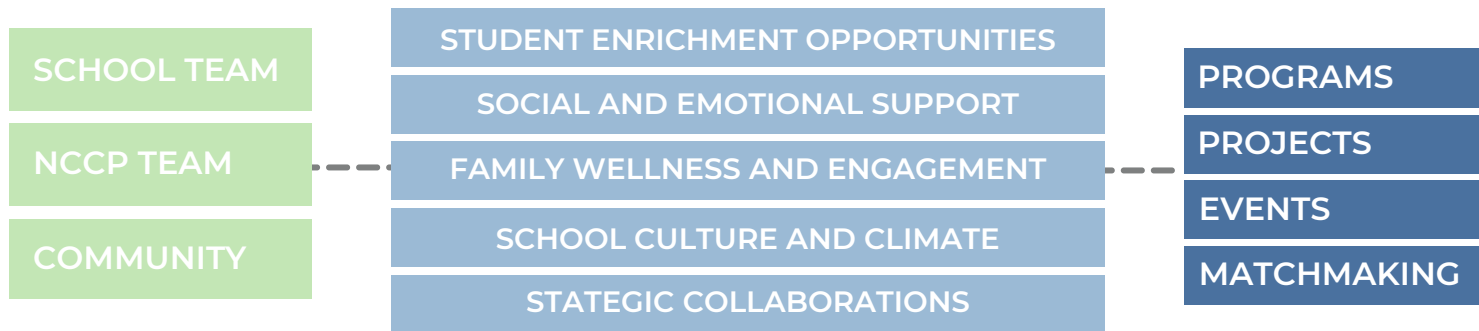
North Chicago Community Partners (NCCP) uses a holistic approach to bridge the opportunity gap and support children in North Chicago by leveraging resources from within and around the neighborhood. Since 2008, NCCP has provided an array of supports, from after school programming and family events to teacher care and annual physicals.

Why we do it:

All students deserve a chance to thrive, yet current models of education and social services do not adequately support low income students and students of color. When communities and schools work together as one to address local needs, families become empowered, school culture is encouraging, and students are better prepared to learn and grow.

Who we are:

For much of NCCP's team, this work is personal. 70% of our employees grew up in or currently reside in North Chicago, Waukegan, or Zion. We all care about alleviating educational inequity and make a conscious decision to be part of the solution.



COVID-19 arrives

5,920 community members served by food and resource distributions
496 students directly impacted by NCCP's in-school support

In March of 2020, North Chicago Community Partners (NCCP) gathered in our conference room without masks for the last time, aware of the looming pandemic, unsure of what it would bring students, families, and our team of dedicated employees. It was personal; for many staff, North Chicago is their community. When NCCP developed a plan to safely meet expanded need within 72 hours of the district closing, we were all hands on deck.

Since then, with support from engaged community partners, NCCP has provided ongoing essential care resources for 100+ families each week, created a Volunteer from Home Program that assembled 57,000+ bilingual activities to supplement learning, provided full-time in-school support for vulnerable students, held pop-up health clinics for children and teens, and helped launch hybrid learning in North Chicago's public K-5 schools.

Almost one year later, we charged forward to the next unknown territory: leading the charge for community outreach and scheduling for a pop-up COVID-19 vaccination clinic through public-private partnership. It was an extension of our focus on whole family, whole community engagement through the community school model. February through April, the clinic served about 6,000 vulnerable North Chicago and Lake County residents.

This year has been full of changes and challenges, opportunities and growth. We are so grateful for your encouragement and participation as we care for all kids in the North Chicago Community School District and promote education, health, strong relationships, and equity.

Just like fighting educational inequity, responding to a health crisis takes a holistic approach.



Essential Care

In the wake of COVID-19, many workers lost their jobs and 1 in 4 families in the Chicago metropolitan area became food insecure. Low-income workers and African American and Latino households were disproportionately impacted. To meet need, our school-based food pantry became a hub for a larger Essential Care Program with five distribution locations, each open until need was met.

Participation in our food distributions nearly tripled in the initial months of the pandemic. Between March 30th and June 30th, we provided food, hygiene items, and learning supplies to 866 families. Approximately 50% of students from North Chicago's public schools were directly served through our distribution efforts.

Meeting need is not a one size fits all endeavor, and food is not enough:

- For all families, we provided hygiene products for the body and home
- For students, we provided learning kits and new and used bilingual books
- For new mothers, we provided infant care including diapers and wipes
- For pet owners, we provided animal food, bones, and handmade toys
- For families unable to attend distributions, resources were delivered

One year later, many of our families are on the path to economic recovery due to increased employment, government assistance, and the work of our partners. We continue our commitment to provide essential care for any district family in need.



12,717

Emergency food bags

5,381

Cleaning kits

57,000

Bilingual learning activities

Helping hands

"A plethora of structural issues created the unequal economic conditions of the school district and North Chicago. NCCP's efforts have a direct effect on students. It has been wonderful to partake in that as a volunteer."

-North Chicago alum



NCCP's
caring
neighbors
from across
the region
make our
programs
strong and
resilient.

This year was the first time volunteers could not be in person with our students. It was also the first time that hundreds of individual volunteers reached out to serve with us in the span of a single month, the first time our families received a continuous menu of new enriching at-home activities, and the first time that vulnerable students enjoyed daily assorted snack packs contributed and assembled dedicated volunteers from Church of the Holy Spirit (totaling almost 100,000 snacks to date!).

When many were isolated and afraid, NCCP supporters new and old made a bold and generous decision to look outwards. With school buildings closed, volunteers spent thousands of hours working on NCCP's newest offering: at-home learning kits! They also came out of isolation to safely participate in open-space warehouse and outdoor service projects with our team. Since we could not host traditional family events, Discover Financial Services and Trustmark volunteers made hundreds of Family Carnival kits for students to enjoy at home.

Life in the "new normal" is challenging for everyone. Our volunteers find purpose and connection through serving the community. Many shared that being in our network of caring neighbors helped them get through this year. The pandemic has truly proved the power of giving back, even and especially when times are tough.

1,428

Generous volunteers

83%

First-time volunteers

8,574

Service hours

Enriched at home



If you are parenting or seeing loved ones doing so amidst the pandemic, you know how hard it is to keep children engaged. Living and working in a low-income community with a historically underfunded school district, those challenges are compounded. While many organizations double downed on virtual offerings, NCCP made an intentional decision to provide hands-on materials, many of which are reusable, that families could utilize at home and children in our school-based program could enjoy in class.

NCCP has created over 13,000 learning kits for students comprised of 200+ unique bilingual activities. Themes included STEM, art history, social and emotional wellness, family nights, and more! Developing the content of these kits was a labor of love: we knew how important it was to give students a tangible and educational way to complement online learning with fun.

COVID-19 fatigue is real. At NCCP we see that students want to take off their headphones, close their screens, and sit across from relatives or classmates. To best serve all students, we continued to create engaging student and family kits while also moving into the schools.



"My child enjoys the activities. They are interactive. She is able to do math, science, reading... and they all have creative thinking."

-District parent

13,643

Student and family engagement kits

22,364

New and gently used children's books

School, a safe place

When the world was at home,
NCCP was safely in schools.



Youth only wear their high school cap and gown one time. For North Chicago seniors, it was important to us to provide the chance to mark their transition and hard work. In May 2020, NCCP planned a safe graduation and the school opened its doors again to teachers and students. Afterwards, hallways remained empty, and for months the only activity was distributing essential resources to families twice each week on the front lawn.

September came, and school buildings were still closed. The district asked NCCP to step up and into classrooms with North Chicago's most vulnerable kids— some had unreliable access to electricity, others were new English language learners, several were homeless.

There were few models of enriching, healthy environments for kids learning in masks and headsets at an underfunded school. We built a safe and encouraging program from the ground up. Students were taught protocols; they sat in pods with NCCP staff as positive role models supporting their remote work and social and physical health throughout the day. For five months it was our team, cafeteria workers, and nurses in the schools.



100%

of families in
the program
agreed the
learning
environment
we curated
positively
impacted their
child's
academic and
social and
emotional
development.

"As a first year Health Aide during a pandemic, NCCP has been huge. Whether it was helping me with students in school or helping me get students resources they need outside of school, NCCP team members are unsung heroes."

-District health aide

Using our model as an example, the district went hybrid. NCCP welcomed teachers with open arms. The students enrolled in our fall program became natural leaders in COVID-19 safety for four times as many classmates whose families chose in-person learning. Our relationships with students and close partnership with the district continued to deepen.

Hybrid learning is challenging: teachers engaged students in their classrooms and many more behind the screen. We encouraged them and worked with them to attentively support all in-person students and provide the extra care that they needed. Our team's smiling eyes were the first and last that K-5 students saw at school. We led social-emotional skill-building at lunch, facilitated art, music, and gym class, and popped into classrooms to provide one-on-one and small group instructional support.

With schools in hybrid mode, we were able to relaunch after-school programming, extending the day with much-needed additional time to learn. Students received academic assistance as well as experienced NCCP's signature Project Innovate curriculum, sponsored by Baxter International Foundation. If you walked into the class, you would see students engaged in meaningful collaboration while they brainstormed and brought ideas to life.

Next year, NCCP will still be present from morning temperature checks through afternoon activities. Our programs will expand to help meet the needs of the thousands of students who stayed safe at home and have now lost over a year of classroom time.



"NCCP provides essential support to students, families, and staff and brings calming energy that helps make our school safe and welcoming. In this wild and intense school year, it has been reassuring to know we have incredible partners working with us."

-District teacher

Neighbors

in need



At the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, five new cases arose every two seconds. Black and brown communities were hit hardest, twice as likely to suffer symptoms worthy of hospitalization. The vaccine offered hope—but it was challenging to access, especially for those who had limited transportation, technology, or English language access.

NCCP eagerly pivoted towards actively protecting our population. In a strong public-private partnership, NCCP, AbbVie, and Affiliated Physicians came together with the Lake County Health Department and City of North Chicago to distribute COVID-19 vaccines to senior residents. We led community outreach, developed and led an easily accessible phone and online scheduling system, greeted and registered residents, and ensured a positive two-dose experience with high touch and culturally accessible support throughout the process.

Our work was so well received by patients and so appreciated by Lake County Health Department that the temporary clinic was extended to seniors, essential workers, and individuals with medical conditions from across Lake County. By the time the “two week” clinic at Greenbelt Cultural Center decided to finally close its doors over two months later, we had raised awareness among and vaccinated 6,000 neighbors.

5,915

neighbors received
COVID-19 vaccines at
Greenbelt Cultural
Center.

**In unknown
times, NCCP
dives in. This
vaccination
clinic helped
us redefine
"whole family"
support.**

This clinic was a life-changing project for the community and an exhausting and inspiring project for the NCCP Vaccination Clinic Team, those who worked behind the scenes to inform and schedule residents and those who worked at the clinic each day. The multi-month project increased our visibility within North Chicago, taught us new skills, and strengthened our relationships with city officials and agencies. We are grateful to our partners, and to the hundreds of attendees who shared their positive feedback in emails, calls, op-eds, and word of mouth.

Community outreach and scheduling: *North Chicago Community Partners*

Hosts of the clinic: *City of North Chicago, City of Waukegan*

Funding and high-level logistics: *AbbVie*

Location and maintenance: *Greenbelt Cultural Center*

Vaccine administration and data tracking: *Affiliated Physicians*

Vaccine procurement: *Lake County Health Department*

Raising awareness: *Over 15 of NCCP's partner organizations*



"When the Lake County Health Department (LCHD) requested to expand the North Chicago clinic's capacity, it was a testament to NCCP's work and our collaboration. LCHD saw the impact of our work and said "we need more of that." As your partner, we weren't surprised because that's how NCCP shows up for the community. NCCP's signature "listen-first, always-love approach" has meant so much to countless seniors."

-Claudia Carravetta, Vice President of Corporate Responsibility & Global Philanthropy, AbbVie

Powerful partnerships

Our supporters
fuel our impact.

Strong partnerships empower our ability to flexibly pivot towards equity again and again. Dedication and generosity from our collaborators and supporters fueled our ability to lead the charge for in-school support for kids, essential care materials for families, and vaccination access for our most vulnerable neighbors. Building bridges and leveraging resources is a crucial part of the community school model. Here is a sample of the partnerships that fueled and enriched our efforts this year:

AbbVie
Affiliated Physicians*
Art Impact Project
Baxter International Foundation, Project Innovate
Bernie's Book Bank
Brownie Troop 45890*
Charlotte's Garden*
Christ Church Lake Forest
Christian Heritage Academy*
The Church of the Holy Spirit*
Cintas Corporation*
City of North Chicago
City of Waukegan*
Cradles to Crayons
Cristo Rey St. Martin College Prep*
CROYA*
Deer Path Middle School
De Paul University Masters of Nursing Program
Discover Financial Services*
District 67 Association of Parents and Teachers*
Elawa Farm Foundation*

First Presbyterian Church of Lake Forest
Glenbrook North Chicago School
Grace United Methodist Church*
Greenbelt Cultural Center*
Heart of America Foundation
Keeping Families Covered*
Kiddles Sports*
Lake County Health Department*
Lake Forest Academy
Legion of Young Polish Women*
Lifeline Vascular Care*
Luke's of Lake Bluff
National Inventors Hall of Fame
North Chicago Community Unit School District 187
North Chicago Housing Authority*
North Chicago Police Department
North Chicago Think Tank*
Northern Illinois Food Bank*
Northwestern McGaw Residency Program
Rotary Club, North Chicago*
Roundout School

Rotary Club, Lake Forest-Lake Bluff
St. Demitrious Church*
St. James Lutheran Church
Target Optical
Trustmark*
ULINE*
Walgreens

**700+ students,
congregants,
and employees
served 2,000+
hours through
partner projects
this year.**

*Indicates a partnership that was built or expanded in response to the COVID-19 pandemic



"NCCP's beautiful kits are a blessing to others, not only to the recipients, but to the volunteers and partners as well. Your creativity and attention to detail have not gone unnoticed!"

-Christian Heritage Academy

"We at Grace Church are honored to be a part of the work that you do every day and are humbled when we hear the stories of families. It is not just about hygiene items, it is about people!! Thank you for all to do to guide and affirm us!"

-Grace Methodist Church



"It is an absolute privilege to partner with NCCP. The team is incredibly helpful, responsive, and professional – making our distributions all the easier. We are beyond honored to partner with such an amazing organization and distribute our harvest and kitchen items to good homes across North Chicago. We appreciate the vital work that you do and for keeping us informed of our collective impact. We hope to expand our partnership."

-Elawa Farm Foundation



Towards recovery

Students across the country *lost* a year of learning instead of gaining one in 2020-2021. In North Chicago, we are not dwelling on the “gap.” Instead, we look ahead. Now is the time to focus on recovery, mobilizing resources from within and around the community to ensure our students have access to the productive and promising futures they deserve. We will overcome learning loss together. NCCP is collaborating with the school district to develop a detailed 3-year plan for accelerating student learning and aggressively rebuilding academic, social, and emotional skills.

Soon, 1,500+ North Chicago students will return to school for the first time in 18 months. To support their recovery, our after-school program will serve twice as many students as it did pre-pandemic, we will reestablish a Saturday enrichment program, and holiday breaks will be filled with learning camps. We are committed to students, the district is committed to students, and fortunately we know that our community of volunteers and partners is ready and eager to empower and inspire.

There is a lot of work to be done, but we have a secret weapon against learning loss, social isolation, and lack of essential resources: **YOU!** Caring neighbors are the major strength of NCCP's community school model, and we are excited to engage you in activity assemblies, resource drives, revitalization projects, and at school. Children have missed your mentorship, and NCCP hopes to see you by their side soon.

For a strong year of recovery ahead, we will need:



200
weekly volunteers

\$3 MIL
in financial support

46
full-time employees

Make a difference

Thank you for being a caring neighbor.
By contributing your time, treasure, and
talents in North Chicago, you empower
students and move us towards equity.

Get involved today:



Share our story
bit.ly/nccppivots



Serve with us
bit.ly/helpnccp



Stay updated
bit.ly/nccpmedia



Fund our work
bit.ly/fundnccp



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