



Illuminating Voices:

Youth Design Leadership for Community Safety

Youth Design Leadership for Community Safety Team

Chicago Mobile Makers

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Community Collaborators

The Youth Design Leadership for Community Safety pilot in West Garfield Park was informed and inspired by conversations with individuals from the following organizations:

Alliance of Local Service Organizations

The Base Chicago

Bethel New Life, Inc.

Bobby E. Wright Medical Center

Breakthrough Urban Ministries

BUILD Inc

Chicago West Community Music Center

The Community Builders

Firehouse Community Arts Center

Garfield Park Chamber of Commerce

Garfield Park Community Council

Garfield Park Rite to Wellness Collaborative

Habilitative Systems Inc

Institute for Nonviolence

Legal Prep Charter School

MAAFA Redemption Project

Melody Elementary

Nation Builders Construction Group

New Mount Pilgrim MB Church

Reborn Community Church

Rush University Medical Center

Stone Temple Missionary Baptist Church

Together Chicago

Westside Media Project

Westside NAACP

West Side United

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 01 Introduction
- 03 Background
- 05 Program
- 11 Chicago Architecture Biennial
- 15 Next Steps
- 25 The Team



Introduction

How can young people from the neighborhood inform the community design process and learn new architecture and design skills along the way?

What is the role of design and urban planning in community safety?

How can improvements to our streets, buildings and parks contribute to more peaceful and vibrant communities?

To answer these questions, Chicago Mobile Makers, Studio Gang and the Goldin Institute joined forces with the Garfield Park Rite to Wellness Collaborative to launch the Youth Design Leadership for Community Safety (YDL) project, a **hands on design program aimed at empowering youth in Garfield Park and giving them the tools to design their future environment.**

The program launched on May 5th, 2021 and will continue through installation of a signature public sculpture in Spring 2022. The cohort of Youth Design Leaders participated in community-led planning and design projects focused on creating safe space, promoting community wellbeing, and increasing access to opportunity. This experiential program helps youth establish a foundation in architecture and urban planning skills to make a real impact through design.

This program was made possible by the generous support of the Polk Bros. Foundation.

“This program has done an outstanding job providing me with a community of my peers and others like me. This community has allowed us to grow, communicate, and learn to work together.

*~ Zuri. 11th Grade
East Garfield Park Neighborhood*

Background

Authentic and meaningful community engagement is a prerequisite for design interventions to be credible and effective in reducing violence and promoting safety. YDL's strategy not only engaged a wide spectrum of community voices, but also transferred the knowledge and skills of design thinking throughout the process, and gave local youth the opportunity to learn-by-doing alongside professionals in the field.

The Youth Design Leadership for Community Safety program in Garfield Park builds on several prior and ongoing efforts to engage youth in designing and shaping a safer environment. In 2018, Studio Gang launched the pilot Youth Design Leaders program in Memphis, TN to support the design of Tom Lee Park. YDL was also informed by the Goldin Institute's cohort model that prioritizes learning-by-doing with a community of practice.

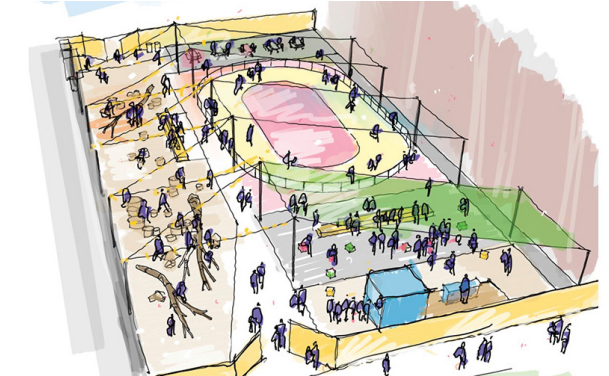
In 2021, Studio Gang and the Goldin Institute joined with the Mayor's Office of Violence Reduction (MOVR), and the Garfield Park Rite to Wellness Collaborative (GPRTWC), to develop the Neighborhood Activation pilot program. This intensive effort enlisted a wide range of outreach and engagement strategies to foreground neighborhood voices too often left out of critical conversations.

As part of the Neighborhood Activation program, the community and design partners developed a plan to transform a city owned vacant lot on Madison Street in West Garfield Park into a Community Plaza replete with a roller rink, play space, furnishings, lighting, and hub for neighborhood resources.

The resultant 3D sculpture conceptualized and designed by the YDL cohort will be installed at this new vibrant community space.



Community Plaza on Madison Transforming a vacant, City-owned lot into a Community Plaza was identified as an impactful, immediate investment in neighborhood safety in West Garfield Park. The above render was developed by Studio Gang.



Community Plaza on Madison The Phase 1 design includes a roller rink/multi-purpose court, flexible event area, nature play zone, and picnic area. Phase 2 will build on this scheme to include permanent lighting, furniture, canopies, and more. The above sketch was developed by Site Design Group.

Program

Youth Design Leadership for Community Safety (YDL) is a free 6 month program for local students between the ages of 13 and 18 that explores **designing for positive community change**. Chicago Mobile Makers led the pilot 12 sessions in collaboration with Studio Gang Architects and the Goldin Institute. This hands-on program connected to larger initiatives happening in Garfield Park and focused on creating safe space, promoting community wellbeing, and increasing access to opportunity. **Participants established a foundation to communicate, advocate, and make an impact through design.**

More than 30 young people applied for the program and 14 were admitted. Each participant received a welcome package that included a stipend, merch, and a personal iPad and digital pencil with drawing and design apps that they were able to keep for future use.

About 10 students came regularly. Each participant earned a total of \$1200 to attend the program.

The Youth Design Leadership program introduced the young participants to the fundamentals of design and explored community safety by combining hands-on educational workshops, participation in community conversations as investigators, and immersive practical experience gained by working alongside the Chicago Mobile Makers, Studio Gang and Goldin Institute teams.

The challenges and opportunities identified by the youth design leaders in this innovative program will inform how design and improvements in community spaces can uplift and support the good work that is already happening in Garfield Park and offers concrete design ideas for the City to coordinate investment at a block-by-block scale.

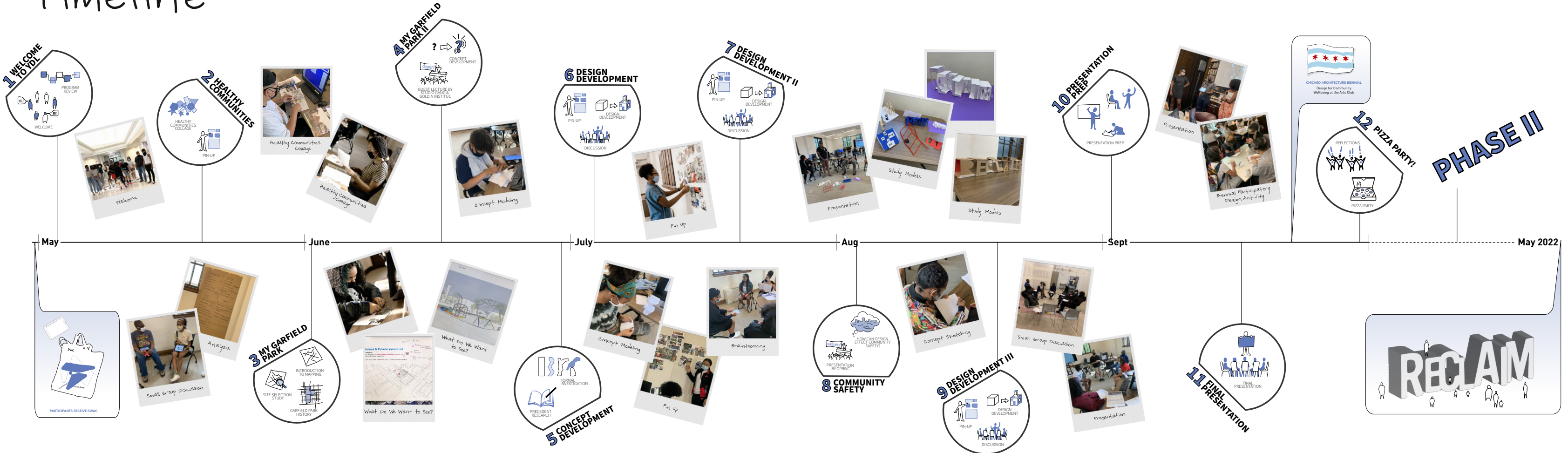
Each week, students were guided through a unique design exercise. They envisioned, designed, and drew positive alternatives for empty lots, created 'healthy community' collages, and ultimately designed a large 3D sculpture that will be fabricated and installed at 4008 W Madison—the new roller rink in West Garfield Park.

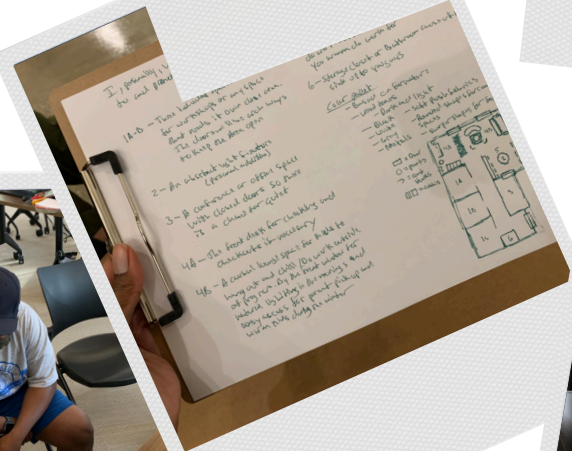
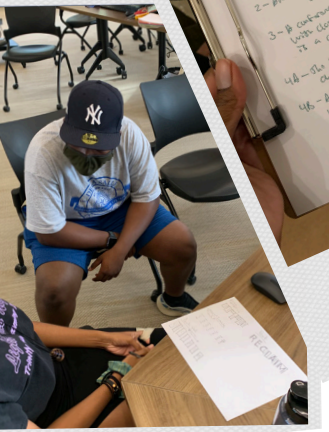
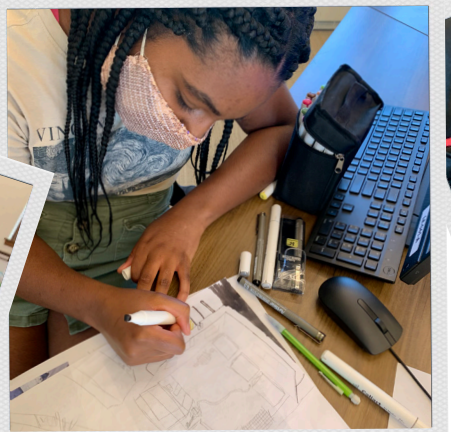
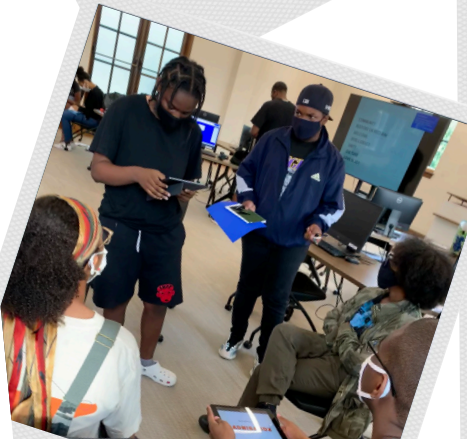
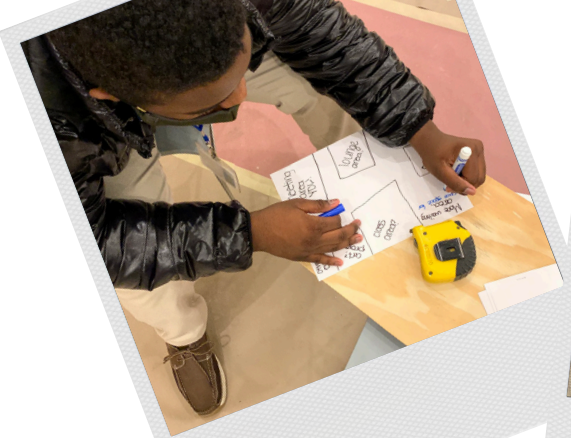
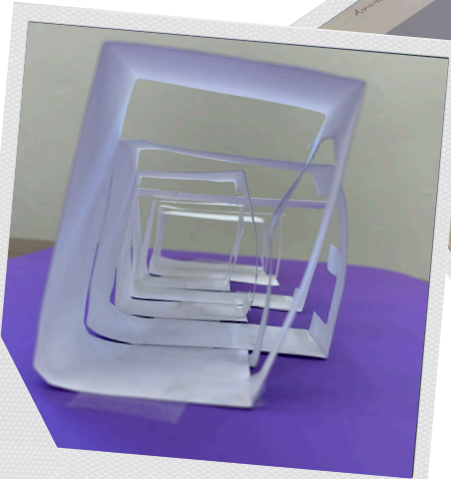
Over the 12 sessions, **the Youth Design Leaders designed a 3D public sculpture that reads “RECLAIM” to symbolize the power of activating a formerly vacant lot for a new, positive community use.** Their design is ambitious and inspiring.

**youth design leadership
for community safety**



Timeline







Paper Mock-Up of the 3D sculpture developed by the YDL participants

Chicago Architecture Biennial

Chicago's fourth Architecture Biennial, *The Available City*, explored the impacts and possibilities of vacant public spaces on cities today. The Biennial asked designers to use vacant lots as a way to "experiment in new possibilities of how to explore and activate space."¹

The theme of the Biennial tied nicely into the goals for the Youth Design Leadership Program and offered a city wide laboratory where world-class designers thought through similar questions and problems as the YDL cohort.

Like the participants in the Biennial, the students analyzed and interrogated the history and reality of underutilized lots in the city and developed their own proposals for how to reintegrate and capitalize on these open spaces. The resultant RECLAIM sculpture will be sited in one of these vacant lots, bringing it into dialogue with the other works being developed across the city.

On September 18, 2021, the YDL participants, Chicago Mobile Makers, Studio Gang, and the Goldin Institute presented their work at the **Arts Club of Chicago** as an invited partner program to the Chicago Architectural Biennial. The teams from Studio Gang and the Goldin Institute started the presentation with a short overview of the Neighborhood Activation strategy and shared how the Youth Design Leadership program was a key part in activating and transforming vacant lots in West Garfield Park.

Five Youth Design Leaders then presented the 3D sculpture and the process they used to bring their new design skills in service to the community. They shared their reflections on the program and their enthusiasm for seeing their ideas come to life with the installation of the sculpture at the 4008 West Madison Community Plaza and roller rink in West Garfield Park.

1. Quote from Biennial Artistic Director, David Brown.

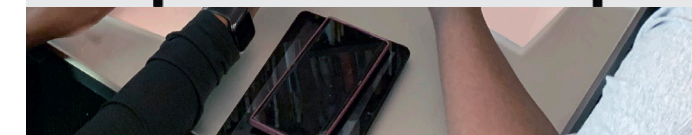
The Biennial presentation culminated with a participatory design activity where the audience was invited to envision positive transformations of vacant lots across the city.

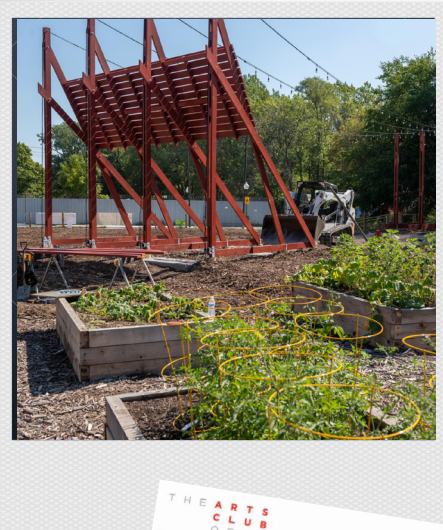


Participants in the Biennial event had the opportunity to collaborate with fellow attendees to develop their own approach to underutilized sites in Chicago.



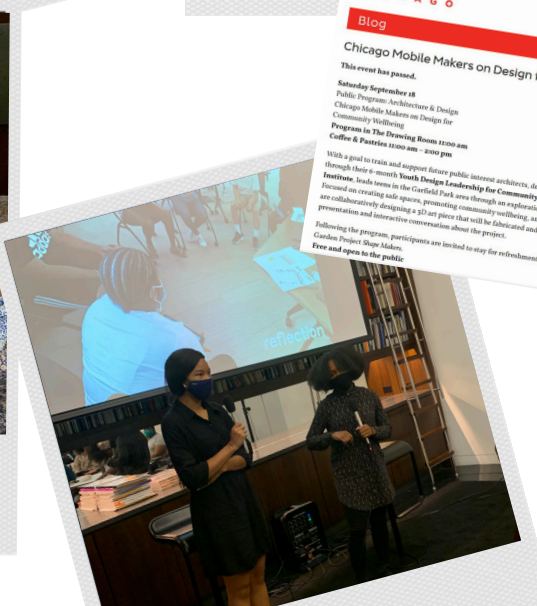
THE
AVAILABLE
CITY





DESIGN FOR COMMUNITY WELLBEING: A CONVERSATION WITH CHICAGO MOBILE MAKERS ABOUT YOUTH DESIGN LEADERSHIP FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY

2021 EDITION	ENGAGE	LEARN	NEWS	SUPPORT	ABOUT	PART
- Artistic Director - The Artistic City - Collaborative	- Youth Engagement - Student - Business - Youth	- Exhibitions - Events - Events Center	- Events - Events - Events Center	- Events - Programs	- Chicago - Chicago - Lead - Chicago	- 2021 - 2021 - 2021 - 2021



THE ARTS CLUB OF CHICAGO

Blog

ABOUT EXHIBITIONS COLLECTION MEMBERSHIP

Chicago Mobile Makers on Design for Community Wellbeing

This event has passed.

Saturday September 18
Public Program: Architecture & Design
Chicago Mobile Makers on Design for
Community Wellbeing
Program in The Drawing Room 12:00 am
Coffee & Pastries 12:00 am - 2:00 pm

With a goal to train and support future public interest architects, designers, and makers, Chicago Mobile Makers (CMM), through their 6-month **Youth Design Leadership for Community Safety (YDL)** program in collaboration with the Gardin Institute, leads teams in the Garfield Park area through an exploration of community-led planning and design projects. Involvement includes creating safe spaces, promoting community wellbeing, and increasing access to opportunity youth participants presentation and interactive conversation about the project.

Following the program, participants are invited to stay for refreshments and explore Chicago Mobile Makers' Arts Club Garden Project Make Makers.
Free and open to the public.

RECORD PERKS
Patrons Registered in BEEZ
Artist Hannah Levy with Justice Mind
Artist Tom Vostal featured in Third Coast Review

CATEGORIES
Exhibition News
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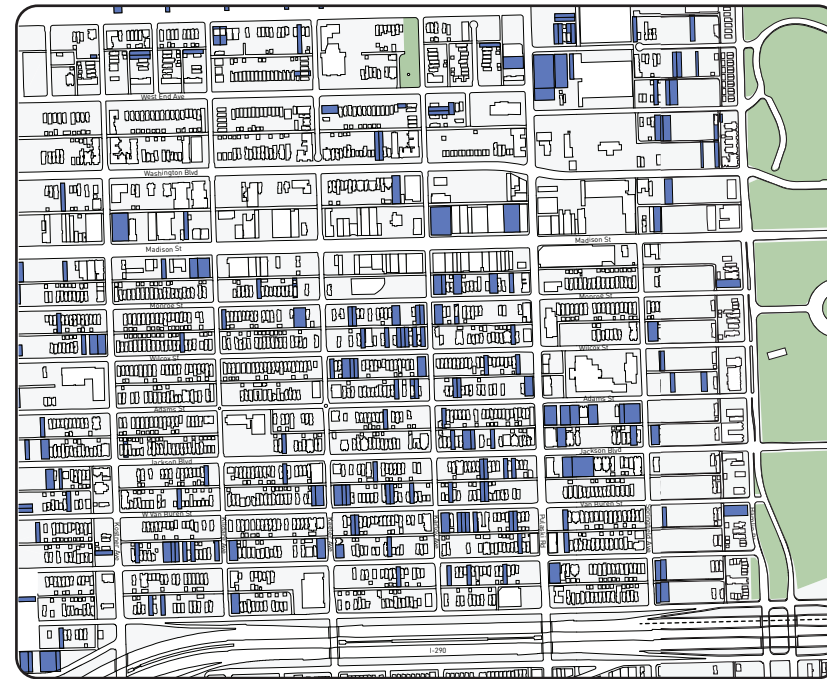
@ArtsClubChicago



Next Steps

Given the energy and dedication of the YDL participants, the program was extended another six months. Ten students will participate in Phase 2 of the pilot where they will have the opportunity to be involved in the actual fabrication of the 3D art piece. The team will meet once a month over the course of six months and will visit architecture offices and fabrication shops, track the progress of the 3D art piece build, and learn more about different types of design and design approaches to the city and environment.

The Goldin Institute, Chicago Mobile Makers, and Garfield Park Right to Wellness Collaborative are excited by the success of this pilot program and are looking forward to continuing and expanding this collaboration into the future.



■ Vacant Lots in West Garfield Park, highlighting both the problem and the immense opportunity.

The Goldin Institute, Studio Gang, Chicago Mobile Makers and Garfield Park Rite to Wellness Collaborative thank the Polk Bros. Foundation for their support in making this unique collaboration possible.

“This program impacted me and changed my way of viewing the city when walking through it...it also helped me stretch my skill and ability when designing and thinking of ways to improve my community.”

*~ Asharee, 11th Grade
Austin Neighborhood*

The Team

Chicago Mobile Makers is a nonprofit organization that offers youth design-thinking and problem-solving workshops in Chicago. We create programming that encourages youth to become advocates and change-makers in their own communities through design-focused skill-building workshops. Our mission is to engage and empower youth through making and skill-building, train and support future public interest architects, designers, and makers, and advocate for social, economic, gender, and racial diversity in the architecture and broader design fields.

Learn more at chicagomobilemakers.org

The Goldin Institute inspires, equips and connects grassroots leaders who help their communities build on their strengths and collaborate to determine their own future. Since 2002, we have supported communities in over 50 countries to achieve real and lasting progress by ensuring that those closest to the issues, especially often excluded voices with the most at stake, have leadership roles in social change movements.

Learn more at goldininstitute.org

Studio Gang is an architecture and urban design practice headquartered in Chicago with offices in New York, San Francisco, and Paris. Studio Gang works as a collective of more than 100 architects, designers, and planners, using design as a medium to connect people to each other, to their communities, and to the environment. They collaborate closely with their clients, expert consultants, and specialists from a wide range of fields to design and realize innovative projects at multiple scales: architecture, urbanism, interiors, and exhibitions.

Learn more at studiogang.com

Garfield Park Rite to Wellness Collaborative (GPRWC) is a group of residents, faith-based and health care institutions, nonprofits and other stakeholders that work and live in Garfield Park. The collaborative works together to identify, promote and implement strategies to increase health and wellness in Garfield Park.

Learn more at ritetowellness.com



GARFIELD PARK RITE TO
WELLNESS COLLABORATIVE

chicago mobile makers



MAYOR'S OFFICE OF
VIOLENCE REDUCTION