



northwestern  
settlement

OPENING DOORS TO BETTER FUTURES

# University Urban Laboratory

# University Settlement Model



In 1884 Toynbee Hall, the first university-affiliated institution of what would become a world wide Settlement Movement, was established by Samuel and Henrietta Barnett. The house was named for Oxford historian, Arnold Toynbee.

The Settlement concept:

- construct a large home in the middle of a challenged community
- recruit faculty and students to live and work there in partnership with neighbors and staff.

Ultimate Settlement House goals:

- disrupt generational poverty
- secure social justice for all
- create knowledge that could be used to propel positive change for people in all urban communities.

# History in the Making - Northwestern University Settlement

## *More Than A Century Of Impact*

Founded in 1891, Northwestern Settlement was established by President Henry and Emma Rodgers of Northwestern University. Students and Faculty settled on the northwest side of Chicago, living and working at the Settlement House in order to provide the resources necessary to empower community residents to change their own lives and the community in which they lived. They combined research with direct involvement of neighbors; creating knowledge and then applying it to propel positive change. The ultimate goal being to disrupt generational poverty and improve the human condition.

Today, although the scope and methods of service have changed, the Settlement continues to provide transformational opportunities for families to disrupt generational poverty.



NORTHWESTERN LAW SCHOOL STUDENTS OPERATING  
LEGAL AID CLINIC AT THE SETTLEMENT IN THE 1920's



FRESHMAN URBAN PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS  
VOLUNTEER AT THE SETTLEMENT IN 2016

# An Urban Laboratory For The 21<sup>st</sup> Century

We propose to develop collaborations with universities through the creation of an Urban Laboratory housed within Northwestern Settlement. Similar to University Centers across the country that focus on Wrongful Convictions, Incubators, and Civic Engagement, an Urban Laboratory would provide a broad cross discipline array of a University's community base to engage on some of society's most challenging issues.

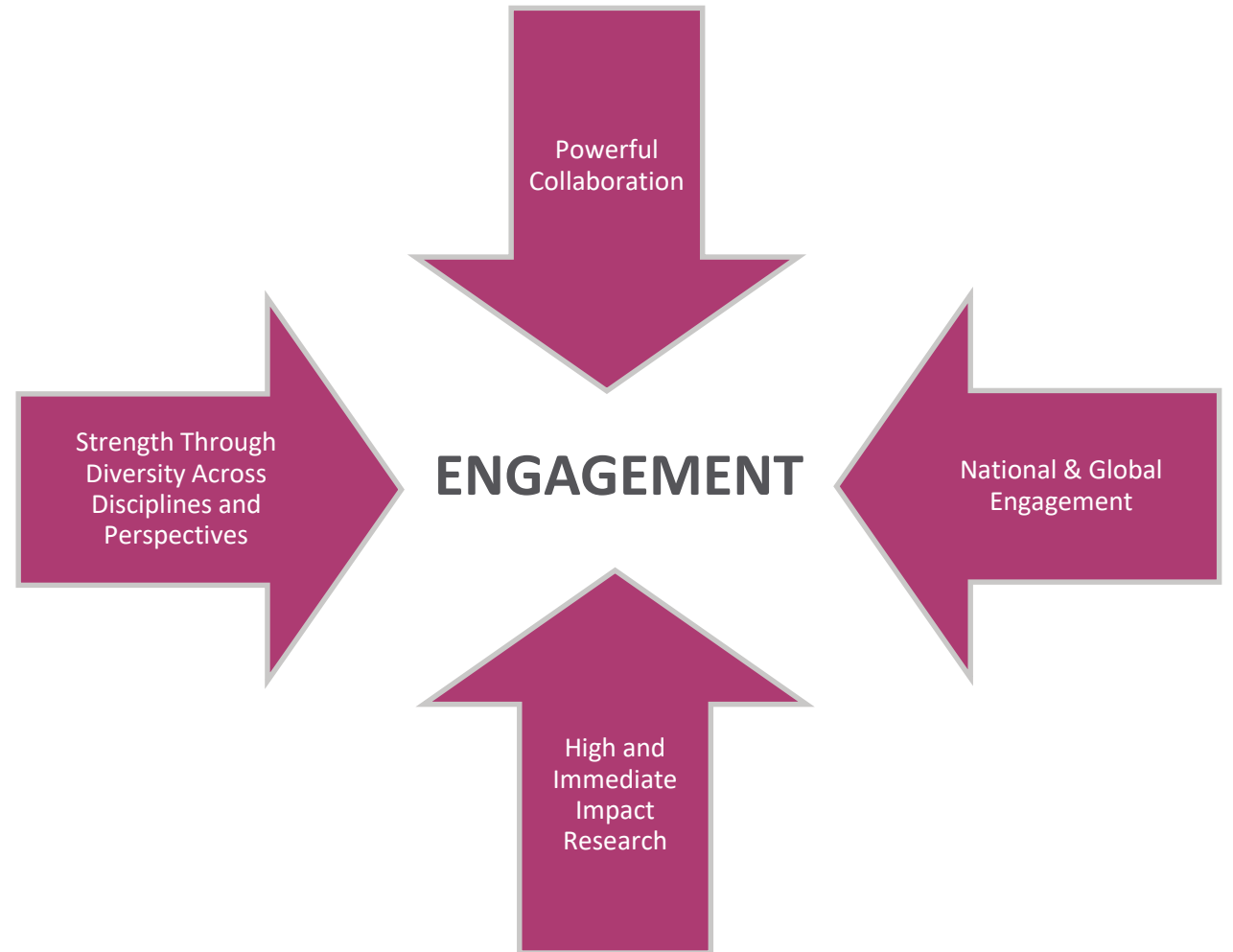
- By co-locating with the Settlement, University faculty and students (and perhaps even engagement of interested trustees) would gain **direct access** to families struggling with generational poverty and ability to participate in all existing program areas. Abandon silo based research, planning and learning.
- Engage neighbors and Northwestern Settlement staff who have vested interests in partnering to **create broad based approaches** for community development and transformational opportunities for families
- Research and create knowledge that can also have **immediate impact**, as well as be propelled out to broader community for positive change in fields of practice.

A **win for families and children** who benefit from the research and interactions; a **win for faculty and students** who can create lasting change through their work; and a **win for the university** by building reputation of applying their resources to broader community benefit.

# A New Urban Laboratory Embedded In Community

Since 1891, hundreds of student and faculty members have been engaged as “neighbors”, working together with community members to address community problems on multiple levels.

We propose to use this approach once again to deal with the significant challenges faced by families and urban communities today.





# Imagine the possibilities:

- Developing a successful focal point to lead generational change for families and transformational opportunities for challenged urban communities
- A spark that ignites across traditional lines of self interest empowering neighbors to rebuild communities and see their children inspired and reaching potential



# Potential Areas Of Impact

Create a focal point to work in collaboration with Northwestern Settlement neighbors and staff to conduct research and inform practice with potential immediate impact around areas such as:

- Early Childhood Education
- Reform of Public Education
- Family and Children's Physical and Mental Health
- Issues Related to Speech, Language and Learning
- Crisis Intervention
- Civic Engagement
- Communication and Community Building Within Diverse Groups
- Social Justice
- And Others

Over 2000 neighbors come through the Settlement Doors on a daily basis to participate in programs such as:

- Early Childhood Education- ages 2-5
- Theater for Young Audiences
- Charter elementary school- grades K-8
- AmeriCorps Project Yes! - volunteer/member development
- Children's Addiction Prevention and Mentoring Camp
- Residential Outdoor Education Program
- Summer Residential Children's Camp
- Emergency Food Pantry & Support Services
- Family Mental Health Clinic

# All programs at the Settlement are fully integrated to facilitate multiple touch points and maximum impact

## FOOD PANTRY AND FAMILY SERVICES

provides food, clothing and household essentials to families in Early Childhood, House In The Wood, Rowe Elementary, and After School.

**Family CARES Center** focuses on support of children and families in their emotional, mental wellbeing. A site-based mental wellness center that partners with children and families whose potential is at risk to create, hope, opportunity, academic success, and bright futures.

**AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM** focuses on support of scholars' academic success and prevention of "summer slide," as well as development of nutrition and social skills.

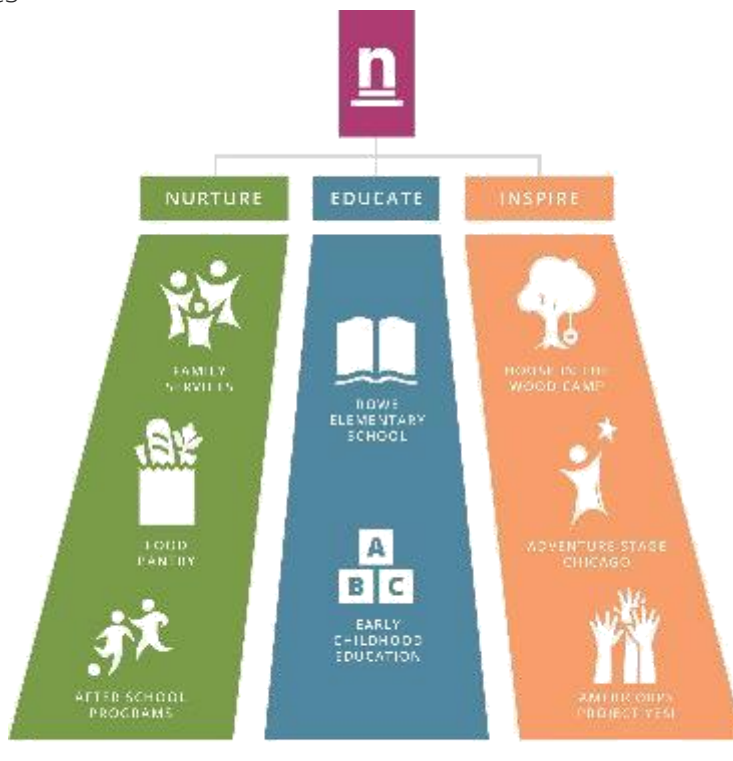
**EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM** matriculates children to Rowe. Preschool teachers share professional development and curriculum planning time with Kindergarten and first grade teachers.

**ROWE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL** scholars spend one week doing math and science at House In The Wood. Middle school scholars do community service throughout the Settlement. Parent Academy programming involves parents from all programs.

**ADVENTURE STAGE CHICAGO** brings the Neighborhood Bridges program into Rowe classrooms the entire year, focusing on literacy skills and storytelling; they support parent-child storytelling and play in Parent Academy. Trailblazers is a growing program in Rowe Middle School's after school program. Theater story circles in all programs help families and youth share needs, impacting program innovation.

**AMERICORPS PROJECT YES!** deploys members in all program areas and sponsors community-wide volunteer efforts to engage program participants, while promoting self development.

**HOUSE IN THE WOOD** hosts groups from all programs during the school year, and an Adventure Stage Chicago arts camp in summer. Camp staff bring live animal displays to Rowe classrooms throughout the year. Staff use camp as retreat location.

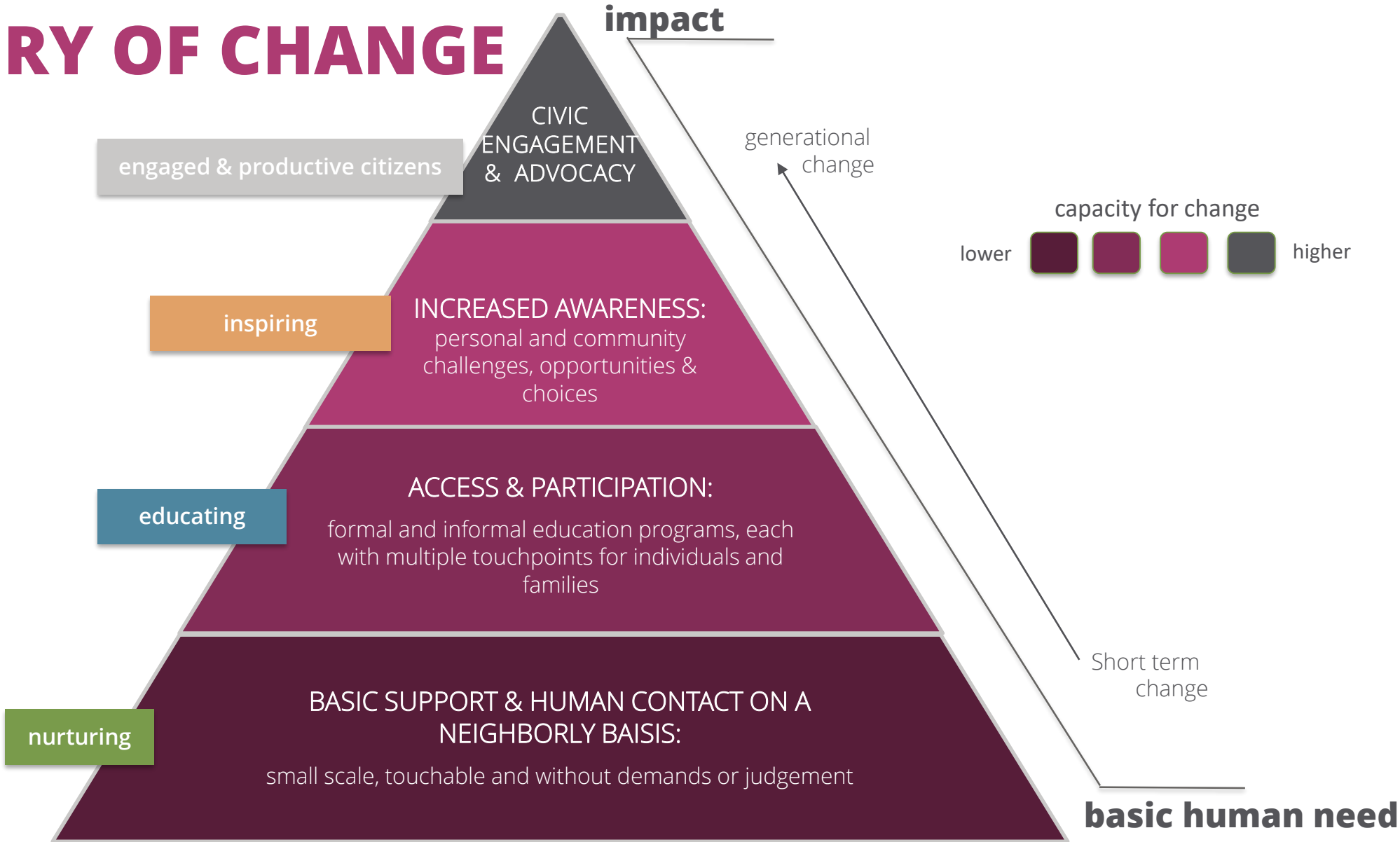


**OVER 2,000 NEIGHBORS PASS THROUGH OUR DOORS EVERY DAY**

**1,000 OF THESE NEIGHBORS ARE ROWE STUDENTS THAT RECEIVE ATTENTION FROM ALL PROGRAMS**



# OUR THEORY OF CHANGE



Opening Doors of Opportunity  
Combating generational poverty one family at a time.

# Building a matrix of support



- Partner University could act as a neutral facilitator/partner, and forge solutions across different interest groups and engage with authentic voices of community
- Neighbors and staff could utilize learning to implement solutions for their families and community.
- Research could create and propel knowledge.
- Police, social services, and other city agencies would benefit from the feedback and be engaged in this partnership that could change practice and affect system changes.

The Northwestern Settlement Urban Laboratory would positively impact Chicago both economically and socially; not only study communities, but be a leader in the creation of new opportunities and direct transformation of communities together with children and families who live and work there.

# University Settlement Model Rediscovered: Now Is The Time

There is growing recognition across the human welfare systems that models of delivery need to change and become more site based within communities . This movement has commenced, however, there is no leadership to champion or lead the necessary changes. Reigniting The University Settlement Model has the potential to create The leadership.

## Imagine:

- A community embedded “think tank”, “research center” and “action center”.
- An opportunity to collaborate with the Settlement, other agencies, religious institution and government.
- Developing, testing, and implementing real solutions to challenges not only faced by families and community around the Settlement but across the country.



An Urban Laboratory is not a new concept; however, most focus on academic research and do not directly engage neighbors in the process beyond being subjects to interview. We propose a **direct involvement, collaborative and action** based approach in the same manner Northwestern acted in 1891 to study and solve problems for children, families and communities.

# Current Initiatives

- Settlement Early Childhood Education Program partners with Northwestern University – School of Communication – *funded by Northwestern University*
- Project GLOW (**G**rowing up with **L**anguage **O**pportunities and **W**onder) - A community based participatory research through our Settlement's Early Childhood Education program.
  - OBJECTIVES:
    - to **develop knowledge** on how we optimally support language development and school readiness in young children from low income households who are dual-language learners.
    - **Engage the community** as active participants in the research
    - Propel knowledge for immediate impact through the use of **best practices** for educators in our Early Childhood Program and K-2 elementary school and **supporting parents and families** to build on strengths
- **Adventure Stage Chicago collaborates with DePaul University Professor** – *funded by the Mellon Foundation*
  - Carlos Murillo is the playwright-in residence at ASC documenting his experience as a way to share his knowledge, models, challenges and impacts with the ASC and Settlement community.
  - He is leading exploration of how creation of original theater productions can give voice and raise up importance of challenges being experienced by community residents.

**Join us and reinvent the Settlement House model for a new generation.**