

# PARTNERS IN COMMUNITY FORESTRY

2024 CONFERENCE



# Growing in Concrete: Green Spaces in Marshall Square (Little Village)

PRESENTED BY:



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Founder and Chief Executive Officer  
Latinos Progresando (LP)



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Chicago Director of Community Engagement  
The Nature Conservancy Illinois (TNC)





# Latinos Progresando

*Our mission is to elevate the well-being of the Mexican community.*

## Our Services

- Immigration Legal Services
- Community Programs: Implementing Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) in local schools

## Marshall Square Resource Network

A collaborative network of over 60 partners providing solutions in community response, education, health, and peace.



Marshall Square is in the 'Front lines' of Climate Change

# Multiple Environmental Burdens



- Canopy cover percentages between **~15% and 18%** (Below the region's average of 23%).\*
- 2020 Chicago Department of Public Health Report determined MS as a community with **high vulnerability** when accounting for **air quality, health and other social factors.**\*\*
- TNC Conservation Greenprint tool identifies MS as a community facing:
  - **Poor air quality**
  - **High heat (urban heat island)**
  - **High flood risk**

\*[CRTI Tree Canopy](#)

\*\*[CDPH Air Quality and Health](#)



LP and TNC Partnership

## MSRN: Health Committee

**Goal 1: Reduce barriers to engagement with green space** which prevent community members from fully accessing the health benefits that nature provides.

- Installation of a new co-designed green space at local elementary school:
  - **Hammond Elementary (completed in Summer of 2024)**
    - 500 native plant and trees.
    - Formal and informal gathering space for educational and social opportunities
    - Artwork and sporting equipment for students and community





## LP and TNC Partnership

# MSRN: Health Committee

**Goal 2:** Contribute to the body of knowledge and best practice for community work at the **intersection of community health and green space.**

- Mobile Community Air Quality Monitoring (2020 – 2023):
  - **25 community participants** collected **+350 hours** of data
  - Monitored levels of **PM 2.5**
  - In the field observations and correlations between AQ and their surrounding environment
  - Facilitated discussions about **community action**





# An Opportunity to Grow: **Trees in Marshall Square**

## **Our Roots Chicago:**

- **75K trees in 5 years**
- **Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT)**

## **Data from AQ Monitoring**

- **Direct feedback from participants**
- **Areas of concern along major street segments in the community**





An Opportunity to Grow:

# Trees in Marshall Square

Building the case for support

- Engaging Community
- Engaging Businesses
- Engaging Network
- Engaging Local Leaders





# Spring 2024: +120 Trees Planted in MS.





LP and TNC Partnership

# Growing Our Urban Forest Continues

- Contracting **maintenance and supplemental watering services** for newly planted trees throughout establishment.
- Active **stewardship** and **community engagement** around newly established green spaces
- Tree Ambassador Grant recipients (**100 new trees**).
- Active participation in the **Tree Equity Working Group**
- Fostering a climate of **tree advocacy** through bi-lingual programs and workshops.
- 2024 Chicago Region Tree Initiative: **Urban Forest Advocate Award**.





# Thank You.

