A Community Development Corporation and the Cultivation of Educational Opportunity

by

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For you, Dad. I miss you and I think you'd be proud.

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Abstract

In the last decade the number of families struggling to afford housing has grown rapidly throughout the United States. Despite the widespread urgency of this issue, there is an absence of scholarship in educational research about how affordable housing policy and programs affect students' educational opportunity. This lack of research focused on the intersection of housing policy and education is not surprising. Housing policy is complex – made up of multiple programs and policies that are delivered and governed by federal and local governments but also including both public and private stakeholders. These stakeholders are often comprised of non-profit organizations (Community Development Corporations), developers, lenders, housing authorities, schools and school districts. In this study, I propose that Community Development Corporations (CDCs) are under-researched organizations that may offer important insights into the relationship between housing and educational opportunity. As such, the core empirical question of this research is: How and to what extent do CDCs cultivate educational opportunity in low-income contexts? To address this research question, Small's organizational embeddedness perspective provided a theoretical guide for my data collection and analysis. Additionally, I engaged in a case study approach. Data collection included interviews with key stakeholders, document analysis and observations. Ultimately, this study seeks to inform researchers, educational and community leaders, and policymakers about the ways in which low-income families embedded in CDCs access and mobilize educational opportunity.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements ii
Abstract iv

List of Figures vii

List of Tables viii

Chapter 1: Introduction 1
Purpose and Context 1
A focus on low-income rental programs 3
Research Questions 7

Chapter 2: Literature Review 9
Housing Conditions 10
Quality 10
Crowding 13
Housing and School Mobility 14
Neighborhood Effects and Housing Policy 17
Tenant-based programs 20
Place-based housing 22

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework 33
Organizational Embeddedness 33
Organizational embeddedness and its underlying assumptions 34
Organizational embeddedness and Community Development Corporations 38

Chapter 4: Research Methods, Data Sources and Site Selection 40
Research Design 40
Qualitative research 40
Case study 41
CDC and site selection 41
Participant selection 44
Data collection 44
Data analysis 47
Site Selection 48
The history of OTE and OTECH 53
Ethical Considerations 58
Trustworthiness 58
Member checks 59
Triangulation 59
Researcher Positionality 59

Chapter 5: Findings 63
Macro-level factors: Shaping Educational Opportunity 63
Guiding organizational purpose 63
OTECH is embedded in a robust organizational network 77
Gentrification and residents' fears 86
Gentrification and neighborhood organizations 91
Benefits derived from organizational connections 92
Relationship with local University 96
Summary of macro-level factors 104

Micro-level: Factors that Influence Access to Educational Opportunity **105**
Housing stability issues facing OTE residents and the work of OTECH 105
Access to organizationally embedded resources...... 111
Access to information 112
Children's Art Corner...... 116
Summary of micro-level Factors...... 126

Chapter 6 - Discussion: Findings and Interpretations **128**
Analysis of Findings **128**
What are the regular practices or practices that these organizations employ?...... 130
How are these organizational practices shaped by neighborhood poverty? 144
Do organizations, such as CDCs, protect against the effects of living in neighborhood poverty? 146
Reflections and Limitations **149**
Suggestions for Researchers and Practitioners **150**
Recommendations for future scholarship 150
Suggestions for practitioners 153
Concluding Thoughts **155**

References **157**

Appendices **166**
Appendix A: Interview Protocol for CDC Administrators and Staff **167**
Appendix B: Interview Protocol for Parents **169**
Appendix C: Interview Protocol for School Staff **171**
Appendix D: Observation Protocol **172**
Appendix E: Document Review Protocol **173**

List of Figures

Figure 1. Federal housing expenditures mismatched with household need. ______ 4

Figure 2. How organizational brokerage occurs. ______ 37

Figure 3. OTE's growing Black and White income gap. ______ 51

Figure 4. Raising rents in OTE. ______ 52

Figure 5. Raising house values in OTE. ______ 52

Figure 6. 1939 Home Ownership Loan Corporation map of North Side of Chicago. ______ 54

Figure 7: Population change in OTE from 1940 to 2015. ______ 55

Figure 8. Decreasing Black population in OTE. ______ 87

Figure 9. OTECH observable practices. ______ 127

List of Tables

Table 1. Affordable housing programs with unit count. 5

Table 2. Examples of the work that CDCs typically engage in. 30

Table 3. List of CDCs surveyed for site selection. 43

Table 4. OTECH partnerships 77

Table 5. Resources and programing offered through OTECH 112

Chapter 1: Introduction

Purpose and Context

In the last decade the number of families struggling to afford housing has grown dramatically. In 2013, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) reported that approximately 7.7 million very low-income households faced "worst case housing needs," meaning that these families received no housing subsidies and lived in substandard housing and/or paid more than half of their annual income to rent. That is an increase of 2.6 million households from 2003 (Steffen et al., 2015). Federal rental assistance programs, which help over five million households secure decent housing fall considerably short of meeting our nation's housing needs (Schwartz, 2010; Steffen et al., 2015). It is estimated that these much needed programs provide rental housing to less than one in four families who actually qualify for them ("Chart Book," 2016b; Schwartz, 2012). Yet, in spite of this, policymakers have routinely slashed funding for federal housing programs. From 2010 to 2013 budget austerity measures reduced financing for housing assistance programs by 13.3%. By 2016 funding was still $2.1 billion dollars below 2010 levels ("Chart Book," 2016a). As a new administration takes over with an increasingly neoliberal agenda these trends are only expected to worsen.

The complex and pervasive nature of our nation's affordable housing crisis has far-reaching implications for children, families, and the organizations that serve them. Scholar Jean Anyon (2005) argues in her book, *Radical Possibilities* that perhaps "one of the most important education reforms may be housing policy reform" (p. 93). Research has demonstrated that families and communities benefit from high-quality affordable housing

that goes beyond providing basic shelter to provide an environment where children can thrive academically. For example, quality affordable housing can decrease residential mobility that can lead to homelessness; increase access to quality schools and educational resources (such as on-site youth programming and workforce development); and mitigate against housing related health issues such as lead poisoning and asthma that impact educational outcomes (Brennan, 2011; Brennan & Lipman, 2008; Cunningham & Graham, 2012; Miller, 2011). Considering this – that housing impacts a child's possibilities for thriving – educators, researchers, and policymakers must lend more purposeful focus to the ways in which affordable housing programs and policies are associated with educational opportunity. Housing literature is replete with articles and empirical studies that address the physical effects of housing and housing mobility programs on youth outcomes, but is devoid of empirical work that parses out how housing policies and programs interact to shape educational opportunities - such gaps are especially notable in the educational literature.

This absence of scholarship focused on the intersection of housing policy and education is not surprising. Housing policy is complex – made up of multiple elements and delivered through a medley of programs that are governed by federal and local governments but include both public and private stakeholders. These stakeholders are often comprised of non-profit organizations (Community Development Corporations), developers, lenders, housing authorities, schools and school districts. This degree of complexity has meant that time-strapped housing and educational policy-makers rarely coordinate their efforts (Smrekar, 2009). Accordingly, there is a need for better understanding among education researchers of how housing and housing policy impacts

neighborhoods and communities that they serve. Considering this, it is my aim to develop a more nuanced understanding of connections that exist between housing and educational opportunity for children. I propose that Community Development Corporations (CDCs), which I define and discuss shortly, are under-researched organizations that may offer important insights into the relationship between housing and access to educational resources. To position this study, I first give a brief explanation of my motivations for focusing on low-income rental residents and programs, then give an introduction to role of CDCs in the affordable housing, community development and education landscape. Finally, I introduce this study's guiding research question.

A focus on low-income rental programs. Federal housing policy and programs first emerged out the New Deal in the 1930s with the aim of providing affordable housing for the poor and working class. In the eighty years since this first legislation was enacted, the federal government has supported a wide range of affordable rental and homeownership programs and policies. It is worthwhile to note, however, that in 2008, while federal government agencies spent $40 billion on these affordable housing assistance programs, the government also subsidized homeowners and investors (through mortgage interest deductions and property tax exemptions) to the tune of $120 billion - that is four times what the U.S. spent on affordable housing programs (Schwartz, p. 89). In a report released by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (2013), researchers documented the degree to which federal spending favors high-income homeowners. Figure 1 represents the mismatch between housing assistance needs and expenditures. Of the households facing severe cost burdens (paying 50% or more of income on housing), 65% earn less than $30,000 a year and receive merely 23% of federal subsidies and tax benefits.

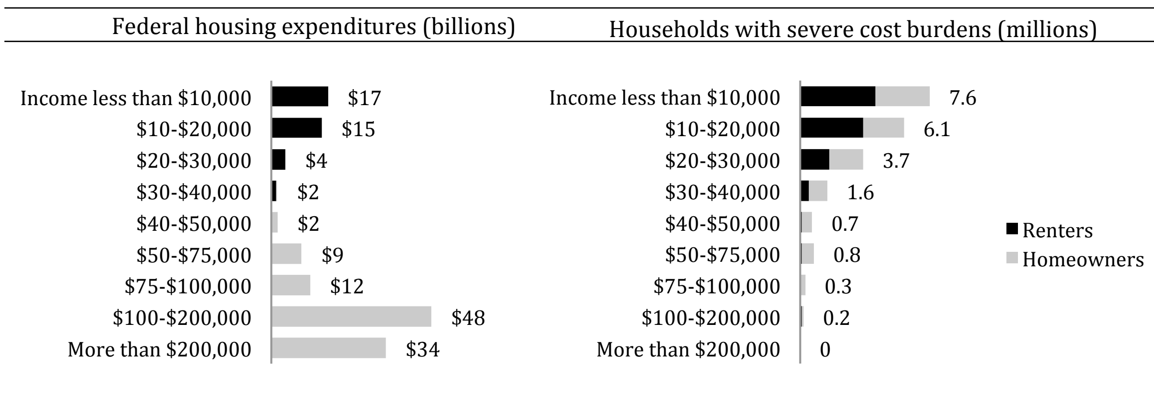

Figure 1. Federal housing expenditures mismatched with household need.

Note. Note. Adapted from “Chart book: Federal housing spending is poorly matched to need,” by W. Fischer and B. Sard, 2014, *Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.*

In comparison, households making $100,000 or more benefit from 57% of the federal subsidies and tax benefits earmarked for housing. It is clear that households with the most severe housing cost burdens are getting the least amount of federal assistance. Moreover, the 8.5 million very low-income (earning less than 50% of Area Median Income) families who are renting make up 40% of total households (renters and homeowners) that are facing severe housing cost burdens. Yet, these low-income renters only receive a quarter of federal housing subsidies. My research will focus on these disadvantaged low-income renters that are disproportionally Black and more susceptible to issues of homelessness, overcrowding, and poor housing and neighborhood conditions.

Most of the federal rental assistance programs fall within two categories (refer to Table 1): project-based programs or tenant-based programs. Project-based programs, or supply-side housing, subsidize the construction or rehabilitation of publicly or privately owned housing. Tenant-based programs, or demand-side housing, authorize low-income

families to use unrestricted rental vouchers in the market of their choice (Leventhal & Newman, 2010).

Project-based programs	
Public Housing	1.2 million units
LIHTC	2.5 million units
Project based vouchers	1.1 million units
Tenant-based programs	
Housing Choice Vouchers	2.2 million units

Table 1. Affordable housing programs with unit count.
Note. From Joint Center for Housing Studies (2012)

Project-based programs are managed directly by HUD and the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program, which the U.S. Treasury Department administers. Aside from the LIHTC program, well-known programs managed by HUD include Public Housing and Section 8. In the last decade most of HUD's project-based funding has been cut in favor of tenant-based programs, thus leaving LIHTC as the main engine behind the development of affordable housing programs in this category (Leventhal & Newman, 2010; Schwartz, 2012). Tenant-based assistance consists of the Housing Choice Voucher program that allows low-income households to use a rental voucher in the private market to pay for housing – in this case the voucher goes to the tenant, not the landlord. Rental vouchers such as these have been used in the well-known and researched desegregation projects - Gartreaux from the 1970s, Moving to Opportunity (MTO) from the 1990s, and, most recently, the Baltimore Thompson program. From these two housing approaches – project and tenant based – there emerged a question that continues to be debated today: Should we focus on community (project-based) development policies or on moving low-income

families to more affluent communities (tenant-based)? Further along in my literature review, I provide an overview of how reformers have pursued both approaches with varying degrees of success (Von Hoffman, 2012).

The Role of Community Development Corporations. These affordable housing programs cannot be discussed in isolation from the nonprofit housing sector. The development of public housing once rested almost exclusively with the federal government when, in the 1980's, the Reagan administration sharply cut the growth in housing expenditures. This change, coupled with persisting housing segregation, gave growth to nonprofit housing organizations (Schwartz, 2010). The significance of this growing non-profit sector is illustrated in the requirements by several of the federal housing programs. For example, state and local governments managing LIHTC's must earmark 10-15% of projects to nonprofits (Schwartz, 2010). While these nonprofit groups vary widely in location, size and scope of work, housing remains integral to their mission. To date, nonprofit organizations are responsible for producing 1.5 million housing units for low-income families and account for 33% of federally subsidized housing (Bratt et al,, 1998; Meléndez, Schwartz, & Montrichard, 2008; Schwartz, 2010).

Generally, non-profit housing organizations fall within one of three categories: Community Development Corporations (CDCs), large regional nonprofits, and nonprofits that manage supportive housing for the homeless and those with special needs (Schwartz, 2010). This study will focus on CDCs – as they represent greatest portion of the nonprofit housing sector and are well known for their work in rental housing development and community-related services. In a 2005 report, the National Congress for Community Economic Development (NCCED), a former trade association of CDCs, estimated that there

were approximately 4,600 of these organizations in operation. In all, these organizations have produced 1.25 million low-income residential units and created 774,000 jobs throughout the United States. (Meléndez & Servon, 2008; National Congress for Community Economic Development, 2005; Schwartz, 2010). Beyond providing housing, CDCs tend to broker both social and organizational ties that are associated with greater material and mental wellbeing. These services often encompass economic activities that include commercial real-estate development, community organizing, workforce development, food assistance, and youth and education programming (Schwartz, 2010). Collectively, CDCs have responded to the lack of quality educational programs and institutions in their neighborhoods by opening their own Head Start programs, hosting after-school tutoring programs and opening charter schools. Selected CDCs (Abyssinian Development Corporation, Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation, CAMBA, and Mid-Iowa Community Action Inc.) have even applied for and been awarded Promise Neighborhood grants from the Department of Education. Among the organizations that are relevant to low-income families seeking housing and access to improved educational opportunity, CDCs are perhaps the most crucial.

Research Questions

Increasingly, researchers have documented the impacts of neighborhoods on students' achievement and school opportunities (Anyon, 2005; Jencks, 1972; Miller, 2011; Sampson, 2012). This research, combined with the urgency of the nationwide affordable housing crisis, has spurred a growing body of literature that explores the ways in which the aforementioned housing tenant-based programs interact with neighborhoods to affect educational outcomes. While these studies have yielded some interesting findings, they

have been largely inconsistent (Imbroscio, 2012; Sampson, 2012; Smrekar, 2009). In addition, they fail to examine or comment upon the other types of affordable housing policies and programs, such as those managed by CDCs, that work to provide residents and their surrounding communities with housing and a comprehensive array of social services. Thus, for a study about how families make and use the connections that matter to their children's education – few cases seem more appropriate than that of families living in affordable housing run by CDCs. As such, the core empirical question of this research is: how and to what extent do CDCs shape a family's access to educational opportunity? Additional questions that guide this study include: What are the regular practices or practices that these organizations employ? How are these organizational practices shaped by neighborhood poverty? Do organizations, such as CDCs, protect against the ill-effects of neighborhood poverty?

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This literature review is based upon over two years of rigorous review of both scholarly and policy literatures pertaining to housing and neighborhood effects. I embarked upon the review with an iterative intent – hoping to discover how policy developments and empirical findings in these areas are associated with the broader discourse on low-income students and educational opportunity. To identify articles, I first searched for peer-reviewed articles in Academic Search Primier, Education Full Text, ERIC and Google Scholar using a range of terms such as *low-income housing, housing policy, housing programs, housing quality, neighborhood effects,* in combination with *education, education outcomes, education opportunity* and *schools*. I excluded articles that were not focused on themes around housing and educational opportunity/outcomes and was left with a total of 76 peer-reviewed articles. With these articles, I used "snowball referencing" to locate an additional 20 results. Finally, I extended my search to include relevant book chapters, newspaper articles and government and policy-oriented reports. This review synthesizes the major themes from this resulting body of literature (over 100 articles, reports, and chapters in total) and sets the stage for this study.

Many researchers have investigated and documented housing effects on educational outcomes. In this section I explore the most consistent themes that link housing to educational outcomes: housing conditions, housing mobility, and neighborhood effects and housing programs. It is important to note that these dimensions, which affect educational outcomes in different ways, are interrelated.

Housing Conditions

While wide-ranging in- and out-of-school factors affect students' education-related experiences, it is clear that children's basic housing conditions are critically affective upon their educational outcomes (Anyon, 2005; Brennan, 2011; Cunningham & Graham, 2012). This section focuses on two main themes: housing quality and crowding.

Quality. We spend enormous amounts of time in our homes. In fact, it is estimated that of the 90% of time people spend indoors, 66% of that time is spent in homes (Wallace, 1987). The quality of a housing unit has been shown to impact the educational progress of children. For example, a child living in substandard housing conditions and exposed to allergens – such as cockroaches, mold and dust mites – can experience increased rates of school absenteeism (Conley, 2001; Braconi, 2001). The most commonly cited housing conditions linked to educational outcomes are characterized by (a) environmental hazards, which include exposure to allergens, neurotoxins, pesticides and pollutants; and (b) structural and maintenance deficiencies, which include a lack of heating and plumbing, broken steps, windows, and various other structural issues.

The research on the impact of home-based environmental hazards on children's wellbeing is exhaustive. Researchers have demonstrated the relationship between childhood asthma and common indoor allergens present in poor quality housing. These allergens include cockroaches, dust mites, mold and cats (Blackman et al., 1989; Conley, 2001; Mudarri & Fisk, 2007; Rauh, Landrigan, & Claudio, 2008; Wu & Takaro, 2007). Over time, studies have shown positive association between asthma and absenteeism, further documenting that the average number of days missed increases as the student's asthma severity level worsens (Chugh, Khanna, & Shah, 2006; Doull et al., 1996; Fowler, Davenport,

& Garg, 1992; Gutstadt et al., 1989; McNaughton et al, 1993; Moonie et al, 2008; Silverstein et al., 2001). Furthermore asthma, the most prevalent health condition among youth disproportionately effects Black children in urban centers (Beck et al., 2013; Forno & Celedon, 2012; Fowler et al., 1992). Additionally, Moonie and colleagues (2008) found in their cross-sectional study of third through twelfth grade students that students who suffered from persistent asthma showed lower performance on the state assessments than their non-asthmatic peers.

Related research finds that exposure to lead – a dangerous neurotoxin –leads to cognitive impairment and behavioral problems (Conley, 2001; Braconi, 2001; Kaiser, et al. that follow children into early adulthood (Zhang et al., 2013). Despite the overall decline of Blood Lead Levels (BLL) since the 1970s, the 2009-10 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey found that over 1 million children under the age of six have BLLs over the CDCs reference level for concern. Of those affected the most from high BLLs, Black children were found to experience significantly higher BLLs than White children (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013; Health, 2005). Researchers have found that deteriorating lead paint on walls is the single largest cause of the lead poisoning in children (Lanphear et al., 1998). Even though the use of lead paint in indoor areas ceased in the mid-1970s, approximately 1.2 million low-income families with children under the age of six are still living in homes that contain significant amounts of lead hazard. Given this, it is not surprising that approximately 35% of all low-income housing has been found to have lead hazard (Jacobs et al., 2002).

Childhood exposure to lead has long lasting effects on both cognitive and behavioral development. Researchers have found that increased blood lead level is associated with

lower IQ scores (Bellinger, Stiles & Needleman, 1992; Canfield et al., 2003) and cognitive functioning tests (Dietrich et al., 1993; Needleman et al., 1979). In a their analysis linking blood lead level data with assessment data from Detroit Public Schools Zhang and colleagues (2013) found a significant correlation between blood lead levels and academic achievement in grades three, five, and eight. Furthermore, higher lead exposure in early childhood meant poorer scores on standardized tests providing confirmation of the long-term detrimental effects of lead exposure in early childhood on academic outcomes.

Kaiser and colleague's (2008) research findings suggest that students suffering from lead exposure receive services for behavioral, speech and developmental problems at higher rates than their peers. Interestingly, Fergusson, Boden, and Horwood (2008) longitudinal study of children from birth to 21 years of age found that although lead exposure was positively associated with criminal behavior, the associations were weak and could be explained by the relationship between lead exposure and educational achievement.

In addition to these environmental hazards, a housing unit's physical deficiencies may also pose a threat to a child's development. In the American Housing Survey, a federally sponsored biannual study of housing, housing units are categorized as having severe or moderate housing problems if they have electric, plumbing, physical upkeep, heating and hallway deficiencies. In 2007, about 6.8 million families resided in severely or moderately deficient housing – these deficiencies are most prevalent among Black and Latino city residents (Braconi, 2001; Breysse et al., 2004; Conley, 2001; Schwartz, 2010). While less is known about the impact of physical housing issues on academic outcomes, a number of studies have linked children's emotional (Blackman et al., 1989; Davie, Butler, &

Goldstein, 1972; G.W. Evans, Saltzman, & Cooperman, 2001) and cognitive development (Greenberg et al., 1999; Obasanjo, 1999) to poor housing quality. Conversely, however, when controlling for demographics and socioeconomic status, Conley (2001) found that housing quality did not have significant effects on educational outcomes of children.

Crowding. An interest in crowding developed in the 1960s when ethnologist John Calhoun linked high population density among laboratory rats to a breakdown in social behaviors that led to a marked increase in aggression and illness (Calhoun, 1962). Based on findings from his study, researchers began to explore the effects of population density on humans. The resulting studies give evidence to negative effects associated with a higher persons-to-room ratio that may include withdrawal, poor physical and mental health, and irritability (Altman, 1975; Conley, 2001; Gove, Hughes, & Galle, 1979). Accordingly, the most widely accepted definition that has emerged out of this research defines household crowding as measured by the ratio of household members to rooms. A ratio greater than one indicates that there are more household members than number of rooms and signifies overcrowding (Leventhal & Newman, 2010).

Researchers have found an assortment of mental health, social behavior and cognitive problems among children that experience household overcrowding. Studies controlling for socioeconomic class have linked crowding to social-withdrawal (Liddell & Kruger, 1989), strained family interactions (Martin & Walters, 1982; Wolock & Horowitz, 1984) and increased levels of aggression and conflict (Aiello, Nicosia, & Thompson, 1979; G.W. Evans et al., 2001; Maxwell, 1996; Murray, 1974; Ruopp, 1979). Additionally, the documented cognitive effects of overcrowding on children include lower cognitive aptitude and academic performance. Findings from Conley's (2001) study using a national

representative longitudinal dataset showed that when controlling for demographics and class, students who had lived in crowded households completed significantly less schooling than their peers by the age of 25. Braconi (2001) not only found that school-age children living in crowded homes had more difficulty completing homework, but that overcrowding significantly increased the probability that students would drop out of high school, regardless of gender and SES.

Some argue that cultural heterogeneity contributes to crowding tolerance and its effects. For instance, immigrant families from Central and South America may prefer closer personal space than families from the U.S. or Western Europe. Evans and Lepore (2000) empirically tested this belief and found that "cultural differences of crowding are not equivalent to differential psychological impact of high density" (p. 208). In other words, while they found differences in the ways cultural groups perceived crowding they found no difference in the ways that the cultural groups tolerated the psychological effects of crowding. Furthermore, consistent with the aforementioned research, they found that density is positively associated to mental and emotional stress as defined by the Psychiatric Epidemiology Research Instrument Demoralization Index (Evans, Lepore, & Allen, 2000). Ultimately, this research finds that crowded housing environments can produce conditions that negatively impact a child's learning.

Housing and School Mobility

In addition to housing quality, research suggests that housing mobility, often accompanied with school mobility, has negative effects on students' academic achievement. Furthermore, schools that have large populations of mobile students face the dual challenge of meeting the educational and social needs of mobile students while also

meeting the needs of the more stable student population. According to five-year migration data collected as part of the March 2010 Current Population Survey (CPS) researchers found that approximately two-thirds of households living in rental housing moved within a five-year period compared to less than one-quarter of homeowners – indicating that lower income rental families appear to be at heightened risk for residential mobility. Factors that most often contribute to a low-income family's changing residences include unaffordability, substandard housing and neighborhood quality (Kutty, 2008).

It's important to note that not every move is disruptive to a child's development. In fact, moves to communities with access to better schools may prove to be especially beneficial (Kerbow, 1996). A 2010 study by the U.S. General Accounting Office that followed a cohort of kindergarteners from 1998 to 2007 found that 70% of students changed schools two times or less. Their research found a statistically significant variance among the student population who changed schools two times or less and those students who changed schools more than four times (13% of student population). These students who changed schools four or more times were disproportionally Black, poor, living in single mother headed households, and renting. In their follow-up interviews with parents, teachers and administrators, researchers found that families tended to move frequently due to inabilities to pay rent, resulting in evictions and foreclosures (United States Government Accountability Office, 2010).

While research indicates that student achievement is affected by interrelated aspects that include socioeconomic status, demographics and parental background, there is evidence that mobility can affect outcomes in isolation from these other factors (Fantuzzo et al., 2012; Haveman, Wolfe, & Spaulding, 1991; Parke & Kanyongo, 2012; Tucker, Marx, &

Long, 1998). Fantuzzo and colleagues' (2012) study of mobile and homeless students in the Philadelphia School District found that mobile students, which made up 41% of the student population, had lower math and reading achievement scores than their non-mobile and non-homeless peers. According to their study results indicate that the population of students who experienced both school mobility and homelessness fared worse academically than all other comparison groups. Their findings support the research that associates unstable home and school environments with poorer academic achievement.

Beyond falling behind in reading and math, research demonstrates that student mobility is often positively associated with academic disengagement and student drop out (Rumberger & Larson, 1998). With data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Langenkamp (2011) employed ordinary least scores regression and propensity score matching to capture effects of transfer students. She found that transfer students reported lower levels of self-esteem and educational expectations and more types of delinquent behavior (drug use and violence) than their non-mobile peers. Her findings also suggested that transfer students have higher suspension rates, lower GPAs and higher rates of course failure.

Research indicates that the negative effects of high student mobility are also born on non-mobile students. The incidence of new students in class and school puts added stress on school staff that may disrupt classroom learning. In Chicago Public Schools, Kerbrow (1996) conducted a study to examine the effects of student mobility on schools. He found that teachers in schools with high mobility rates were placed under significant instructional constraints. For instance, classrooms where students were coming and going made long-term curriculum planning more difficult. Teachers were less able to observe the

effects of their instruction, thus making lessons review oriented. Furthermore, curriculum pace was so affected across grade levels and subjects that by 5th grade the schools with higher student mobility rates trailed behind the less mobile schools by at least one grade level (Kebrow, 1996).

Among the studies that link residential mobility to educational achievement, moving homes appears to be particularly detrimental to students who come from single parent households (Astone & McLanahan, 1994; Rumberger & Larson, 1998; Tucker et al., 1998). Similarly, it has been demonstrated that mobile students who lack parental support may experience greater negative emotional and academic outcomes than their mobile peers with parental support (Tucker et al., 1998).

Overall, this body of literature reviewed excludes qualities of the surrounding low-income housing neighborhoods as well as the services that are often brokered by the housing organizations that run them. These studies are mostly concerned with effects of housing and mobility on youth development and educational achievement. As demonstrated, students' living conditions characterized by problems in one or more of these areas can significantly complicate their access to educational opportunities. Although educators and other key leaders often have little or no control over students' exposure to such housing-related challenges, they can better serve students through more active understandings of the policies and conditions that animate them.

Neighborhood Effects and Housing Policy

Beginning with Wilson's (1987) work on the increasing concentrated poverty in urban neighborhoods, the influences that neighborhood-level factors have on student achievement have been well documented (Anyon, 2005; Elliott et al., 1996; Jencks, 1972;

Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2004; Sampson, 2012). There is a growing interest in the ways in which public housing and local neighborhoods interact to shape educational opportunity—including a mounting body of research that addresses how mixed-income tenant-based programs such as Gartreaux and MTO and place-based housing initiatives such as public housing and HOPE VI intersect with neighborhood effects to impact student achievement and educational outcomes. Today these programs are set in a housing policy and research context that finds itself at a crossroads between individual/family driven interventions and community development.

The earliest of these programs and policies emerged out of antidiscrimination legislation that aimed to provide poor minority groups with access to White suburbs (Schwartz, 2010). Yet, despite desegregation efforts there remains a persisting level of housing, neighborhood and school isolation by race and class. The enduring level of segregation can be attributed to government's failure to enforce the landmark mark Fair Housing Act of 1968. Passed just days after the assignation of Martin Luther King Jr., the Act prohibited discrimination based on race, sex, religion, nationality, disability and family status in all facets of the housing market. ProPublica's investigative piece, by reporter Hannah-Jones (2012), revealed that shortly after the Fair Housing Act was signed into law, President Nixon put a halt to the bill's enforcement that continues to have long lasting effects. In a 1972 memo to his domestic policy chief, Nixon wrote, "I realize that this position will lead us to a situation in which Blacks will continue to live for the most part in Black neighborhoods and where there will be predominantly Black schools and predominately White schools" (as cited in Hannah-Jones, 2012). This is an especially poignant example of the deeply embedded political ethos that connects housing to

education and has shaped the historical, institutional and structural means by which people of color have been disproportionately disadvantaged. Even decades after 1968 Fair Housing Act, reports released by HUD and the Government of Accountability Office (GAO), in 2009 and 2010, affirmed that the Federal Fair Housing Act provisions for "affirmatively furthering" fair housing were not being enforced. Effectively meaning that communities across the nation have remained un-penalized for maintaining practices and policies that concentrate poverty and reinforce residential segregation (Hannah-Jones, 2012).

Because of the undeniable link between a student's zip code and school attendance, the formerly institutionalized housing segregation policies and unenforced Fair Housing Act have left an indelible mark on education by creating poor segregated schools of urban Blacks and Latinos with long-standing economic and racial achievement gaps (Anyon, 2005; Barton & Coley, 2010; Reardon et al., 2013). Subsequent research, using the 2010 Census data found that Black-White segregation remains remarkably high despite the notable migration of minorities from cities to suburbs. Whites live in neighborhoods that are 75% White, whereas Blacks and Latinos live in neighborhoods with high minority representation and few White neighbors. Additionally, according to the Black-White dissimilarity index, 60% of Blacks or 60% of Whites would have to move to a different Census tract for Black and Whites to become evenly distributed (Logan & Stults, 2011). In a similar study using 2010 Census data, researchers explored residential segregation and difference in neighborhood equity. They found that on average, Whites, regardless of income level, lived in neighborhoods with poverty levels at around 11%; whereas Black households lived in neighborhoods with poverty levels twice that amount. In all, Black families are disproportionately represented in high-poverty and racially segregated

neighborhoods that are often characterized by high crime rates, lack of quality employment and health care, limited access to public transportation and social isolation (Logan, 2013; Massey & Fischer, 2003; Wilson, 1987). Educational researchers and policymakers, recognizing the indisputable link between residence and school attendance, have implemented desegregation policies and programs such as open enrollment, school vouchers, and charter school options. Yet, despite these efforts, "double segregation" by income and race, is on the rise, continuing to concentrate low-income minority students in low-performing schools (Gallagher, Zhang, & Comey, 2013; Orfield, Kucsera, & Siegel-Hawley, 2012).

Tenant-based programs. Within the last 30 years housing researchers and policy makers have made similar efforts to desegregate concentrated neighborhoods of poverty and race with two notable federal tenant-based (mobility) housing programs - Gautreaux and Moving to Opportunity (MTO). While these mobility programs differed in significant ways they were created with the same aim of evaluating the effects of moving mostly Black disadvantaged households in densely populated public residences to more affluent neighborhoods. Findings from these programs indicate that neighborhoods wield irregular and complex influences (Sampson, 2008; Small & Feldman, 2012; Smrekar, 2009). The Gaurtreaux Project grew out of the 1976 the Hill v. Gaurtreaux court decision, an ACLU – initiated class action lawsuit that forced the Chicago Housing Authority to desegregate Chicago public housing. Just 20% of the 7,500 families that were awarded vouchers chose to move to private apartments and were randomly placed in either urban areas or more affluent suburban areas. For families that were relocated to more affluent suburban neighborhoods, researchers noted generally positive educational outcomes. Overall,

children in these families attended better schools and experienced increased student educational achievement and wellbeing than their low-income peers who stayed in urban Chicago neighborhoods (Rubinowitz & Rosenbaum, 2002). However, these positive findings associating residential mobility are ungeneralizeable and largely inconclusive. The Gautreaux project was not a random experiment - families in the program were not randomly assigned to vouchers. Furthermore, Popkin and colleagues (2009), in their thorough examination of the program, found that, "only a handful of participants who had either moved back to the city or lost their Section 8 assistance were even included in these samples" (Popkin, Buron, Levy, & Cunningham, 2000, pp. 929–930). Additionally these select group of residents were not surveyed pre-move, but only post-move (Popkin, Levy, & Buron, 2009).

In a 1994 effort to piece out the effects of neighborhood mobility on educational outcomes, HUD sponsored MTO, a randomized social experiment to "test" the Gautreaux results in five major metropolitan areas. The study randomly assigned very low-income families with children into one of three groups: (1) a control group that was not given rental vouchers but continued to live in project based public housing, (2) a comparison group that received unrestricted Section 8 vouchers, and (3) an experimental group that received Section 8 vouchers that could only be used in low-poverty areas. Initial results from the study indicated that outcomes between groups, cities, and school age children varied significantly (Johnson, Ladd, & Ludwig, 2002). In subsequent analyses, researchers found that even four to seven years after moving to more affluent neighborhoods, children in the experimental groups did not show better academic outcomes then their peers from the control group (Brooks-Gunn, Duncan, & Sanbonmatsu, 2006). In light of these findings,

researchers have documented some methodological issues with the design of the study that may have created threats to internal validity. For example, school composition and academic quality varied only slightly between students living in public housing and attending high poverty schools and those students who relocated--meaning that the families in the experimental group that moved to higher income neighborhoods were sending their children to schools that were just marginally better than the schools that children from the control group were attending (Sampson, 2008; Turner & Briggs, 2008). Furthermore, the families in the experimental group only had to stay in their new housing for one year. At the four to seven year follow-up, researchers found that approximately 40% of those who moved to higher-income neighborhoods had moved back to a low-income neighborhood (Clampet-Lundquist & Massey, 2008).

Place-based housing. Despite inconclusive findings, tenant-based assistance programs (modeled after these mobility experiments) are growing. Meanwhile public housing developments experienced a 19% loss in overall units from 1994-2008. This substantial shift towards mobility/voucher programs away from public housing - the most salient form federally subsidized low-income housing – is in reaction to increasingly neo-liberal policies, the rising operational costs of federally managed housing, and the negative effects associated with neighborhoods that are distinguished by high density, low-income, high minority populations. Schwartz (2010) describes public housing, "as the oldest and, until recently, largest housing subsidy program, that evokes many, mostly negative images in the popular imagination: extreme poverty, grim architecture, neglected grounds, and, not least, crime. Though certainly true in some places, these images do not portray the reality of most public housing developments" (p. 125). In all, housing researchers have

found that the majority of public housing is in good form. In fact, in 1999 HUD commissioned a survey of public housing residents and found that 75% of families were satisfied or very satisfied with their housing units and the project's development (Schwartz, 2010). According to some researchers public housing has either no effect or may actually have a positive effect on student academic outcomes (Currie & Yelowitz, 2000; Newman & Harkness, 2000; Reingold, Van Ryzin, & Ronda, 2001). Additionally, public housing may provide low-income residents with access to public transportation, increased services and important social networks that families living in low-income privately owned and managed housing may lack.

Jacob (2003) studied the public housing demolitions in Chicago and their impact on student achievement. He compared groups of students living in public housing scheduled to close to students living in public housing projects but with no plans of closing. Ultimately, he found no difference in the academic performance of students who moved due to demolition compared to those students stayed in their public housing. Jacob (2003) also found that "children affected by the closures were considerably less likely to be living in high-rise public housing in subsequent years but were still living in high poverty neighborhoods and attending schools identical to those of the control students. Indeed, even those students who did move to substantially better neighborhoods did not end up in significantly better schools" (p. 4).

In contrast, other scholars have found that academic outcomes of students living in public housing are significantly lower than those students not living in public housing projects (Schwartz et al., 2010). In one such study, Schwartz et al. (2010) examined how students living in public housing in New York City performed on standardized exams and

how the quality of schools serving these students differed. Controlling for demographics and income they found that students living in public housing scored significantly lower on math and reading assessments then their peers living elsewhere in the city. These findings could not be explained by differences in school quality – the same study showed no noteworthy difference between the resources of the schools attended by students living public housing compared to their peer group. “This suggests that students living in public housing perform worse than their classmates who have the same observable characteristics and who attend the very same school but who do not live in public housing. In other words, neither observed individual attributes nor the school attended can alone explain variation in academic performance” (p. 15).

The inconclusive outcomes from Gautreaux, the insignificant findings from MTO, and the mixed results from project-based low-income housing research bring into question the true consequence of mobility programs and housing research. Imbrascio (2012) argues that these kind of anti-poverty programs that focus on the individual rather than the community can only work on a small scale. For example, findings from MTO demonstrate that it is not enough for families to move to higher-income neighborhoods - families must move to higher income neighborhoods with good schools. Yet, given the nature of deteriorating inner-ring suburbs, Imbrascio reminds us that availability of such neighborhoods is scarce. Additionally, most of the neighborhood effects and housing mobility research rests on the assumptions that high quality urban schools just do not exist and that all project-based housing situated in high-poverty urban neighborhoods negatively affects families and children. Contrary to this assumption, researchers have documented that there are successful public schools and public housing projects that

effectively serve urban communities (Johnson et al., 2002; Kirp, 2013; Shapiro, 2004). As Harding and colleagues (2011) assert, "contemporary research on this topic has largely failed to recognize the diverse types of families living in poor neighborhoods or the potentially wide variety of ways that they may respond to a given set of neighborhood conditions" (p.1).

Community-based housing development. Community based development efforts can be designed to respond to this neighborhood heterogeneity to support schools and create better neighborhoods for the low-income residents who already live there. Hope VI is an example of a federal place-based program. From 1993 to 2010, under the HOPE VI place-based program, HUD awarded $6.7 billion to redevelop and demolish blighted public housing projects. In the process of creating better quality affordable housing it has reduced the nation's public housing stock – in the midst of an affordable housing shortage - by approximately 40,000 units. Even so, this model provides us with valuable insights into an integrated project-based approach to housing and educational improvement. One of the five goals of HOPE VI is to "create healthy, sustainable communities with an emphasis on high-performing schools" (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2013). While there have been studies that examine the neighborhood and community effects of HOPE VI (Popkin et al., 2009; Turbov & Piper, 2005), Smrekar and Bentley (2011) were the first to explore the effects of HOPE VI projects on local schools. Their qualitative study examined how this program shaped HOPE VI parents' social interactions and networks with those of parents living in low-income housing but non-HOPE VI communities. Using ecological and social area analysis, they found that schools situated in the HOPE VI communities experienced positive shifts that could not be explained through a change in

student racial diversity. They attributed the improved school environments of HOPE VI neighborhoods to a higher prevalence of neighborhood institutions, social networks, community engagement and increased quality of neighborhood infrastructure. The characteristics of all three HOPE VI neighborhoods cultivated important positive social networks among residents that were absent in the non-HOPE VI neighborhoods. Their preliminary findings suggest that the collateral effects of housing redevelopment may link to increased educational opportunity.

In sum, the vast majority of this literature focuses on macro-level neighborhood influences ignoring the scope of neighborhood diversity – it neglects to inform us about whether and/or how families living in distinctive low-income neighborhoods tied to high-quality resource-rich organizations fare in comparison with those who benefit from fewer organizational ties (Mario Luis Small & Feldman, 2012). For the remainder of this literature review I will focus on the ways in which community embedded housing organizations – such as CDCs – may create valuable links to educational opportunity by responding to their unique neighborhood conditions.

Community Development Corporations. Brooks-Gunn and Duncan (1997) revealed that the effects of poverty on children directly correlate to lower achievement outcomes. Poor children and their families suffer from lack of adequate housing, transportation, nutrition, health care and parental stress due to low-wages and lack of employment. Thus, perhaps the most significant issue affecting the welfare of low-income families is their ability to access these much needed resources (Small & Stark, 2005).

CDCs have long been embedded in low-income communities of color to provide housing and additional supportive services. In the mid 1960s, the government's inaction to

desegregate housing, gave rise CDCs' heightened roles in combatting poverty, crime, joblessness, segregation and dilapidated housing in blighted neighborhoods. From the 1980s to 1990s, CDCs spurred development in inner cities from cost-to-cost. As housing development made measureable impacts in the neighborhoods they served, leaders of CDCs began to realize that housing was only a part of community development and that more attention needed to be directed toward creating quality resources in neighborhoods. Thus, in addition to engaging in housing development, prominent CDCs began offering social services (such as parenting classes, anti-drug programs, child care, and medical clinics) and engaging in economic and commercial development (Von Hoffman, 2012). In addition to offering social services, CDCs also began to broker much needed social and organizational ties to the residents in their communities. Today, CDCs' primary mission of providing affordable housing for the poor has expanded to more broadly serving community needs that encompass economic, social and educational issues.

There is mounting evidence that CDCs are becoming more engaged in school improvement efforts. Beyond Housing of St. Louis, Missouri and Community HousingWorks of San Diego, California are examples of CDCs - both in operation in their communities for over 30 years – that focus on housing but also view their charge as community development corporations through a very wide lens. These CDCs, operating in very different comminutes, have strategically brokered partnerships to provide residents with parenting and employment resources while also providing residents with transportation and childcare.

In 2008, Beyond Housing began meeting with public officials and the local school district to address community needs within the inner-ring suburbs of St. Louis where they

had been developing affordable housing for years. These initial talks evolved into a full-fledged partnership between the school and CDC. Today, the school district superintendent sits on the Beyond Housing board of directors, and they have engaged over 400 residents and other stakeholders to create a comprehensive agenda for educational and community improvement (Naimark, 2012). That same year, across the country in St. Louis, Community Housing Works became engaged in local education issues when the school district cut funding for transportation services to their residents. This move by the district meant that low-income families living in Community Housing Works units were paying $30 extra a week to transport their children to and from school. Realizing the budgetary strain this was causing families, Community Housing Works organized residents to form a school transportation campaign. Through their community organizing efforts they were able to set up an agreement with the school district – families contributed a small weekly amount to transportation costs and that amount was matched by the district (Naimark, 2012).

Similarly, in response to poor educational outcomes of the children they serve, CDCs in Arizona, New York, New Jersey and Washington DC have opened charter schools. One such CDC is Chicanos Por La Causa, Inc. (CPLC), headquartered in Phoenix, Arizona. This CDC was formed in 1967 by a group of young Latino activists who wanted to improve lives for Mexican-Americans. Today, this organization is one of the largest CDCs in the country and serves 125,000 residents across the state of Arizona. Over the years their primary mission of building and managing quality affordable housing has grown to encompass economic development programs, health and social service programs and a variety of educational related programing. Beyond running Head Start and school enrichment programs CPLC operates two charter high schools in Tucson, Arizona. These schools were

incorporated in 1995 with the mission of "increasing educational achievement and graduation rates, developing leadership, promoting civic participation, and increasing college entrance and graduation among Latino youth" ("Chicanos Por La Causa, Inc.," n.d.).

In the Northeast, Abyssinian Development Corporation (ADC) is a CDC that has worked in Harlem since 1989 to deliver affordable housing, social services and economic redevelopment to its residents. In fact, just in Harlem they have developed over 1,500 affordable rental units and over 200 homeownership opportunities. In 2001, they combined forces with the NYC Department of Education and New Visions to open a public elementary school serving 300 students and a combined middle and high school serving approximately 560 students. For these schools, ADC administers college preparation and leadership programs, after-school and summer programming and a museum ambassadors program. Additionally, in 2010 ADC was one of the organizations that was awarded a Promise Neighborhood grant from the Department of Education to improve the educational and developmental outcomes of children in distressed communities ("Abyssinian Development Corporation," n.d.).

Functions of CDCs
Main operations
Develop affordable housing Manage affordable housing Commercial development
Direct services
Youth programing Workforce development Family counseling services Charter schools
Other services and resources
Community organizing Program referrals School-community partnerships

Table 2. Examples of the work that CDCs typically engage in.

While these CDCs are engaged in a remarkable range of services (refer to Table 2) and are located in very different communities, their approaches to improving educational opportunities for their neighborhoods have striking similarities. They have all worked closely with their residents to broker partnerships with community organizations, schools and government agencies in response to the lack of quality educational institutions and programs. Beyond providing housing, Warren (2005) suggests that the types of school-community collaborations that CDCs are engaged in can help improve school and student outcomes by:

- Increasing administrator and teacher knowledge of surrounding community which creates a more holistic understanding of children's needs

- Creating school-community partnerships that help deliver greater resources to schools and families
- Increasing parental engagement in schools
- Supporting school and classroom activities
- Creating better home learning and living environments
- Creating reform programs that are rooted in the local community (p. 166-167)

Thus, families and schools that are connected to community based resource-rich organizations are likely to accrue substantial benefits.

While there is a noteworthy body of literature addressing the impacts of neighborhood effects and housing programs, little has been done to understand how individuals and families actually gain access to important resources. To address this gap in the neighborhood effects literature, Small and Stark (2005) studied if and how low-income mothers were provided with access to valuable resources through their childcare centers and whether the quality and amount of connections ("ties") afforded by the centers varied when considering neighborhood poverty. Interestingly, they found that poor mothers living in higher poverty neighborhoods were linked to more organizational ties than their peers living middle-class neighborhoods. In fact, they suggest that de-concentration policies (such as MTO) that aim at moving people out of poor racially segregated neighborhoods may result in placing families in more affluent neighborhoods with poorly connected organizations. Their findings indicate that a key role of neighborhood institutions is to serve as resource brokers to businesses, nonprofits, and government agencies. Given this, I suggest that researchers build upon the traditionally researched themes in housing and education to examine how organizations – specifically CDCs – impact and shape housing and educational opportunity. As organizations that develop and manage affordable rental

housing, CDCs can significantly shape a family's housing conditions and housing stability. Additionally, as I have demonstrated, these organizations that are becoming increasingly involved in neighborhood and school improvement efforts may create greater educational opportunity for the residents and communities they serve.

Collectively, this research suggests that the effects of housing-related variables are important factors in students' wider educational opportunity infrastructures. Just as CDCs have taken a more integrated approach to housing development to address these educational issues, so have educational reform movements. These reform movements challenge us to broaden our perspective of the "core work" in education that has typically been rooted in school-specific issues (i.e. school strategies and student outcomes) to a more ecological perspective (Miller, 2012). This perspective maintains that a child's academic achievement can be overwhelmed by poverty and other assorted neighborhood characteristics, and, notwithstanding the fact that all children have internal capacities to thrive, their communities often create formidable barriers to educational equity. Children cannot learn well if they lack safe housing and neighborhood environments. Additionally, access to out of school programing and services for families and children can significantly influence students' experiences (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997; Brooks-Gunn et al., 2006; Warren, 2005).

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

Mario Small's organizational embeddedness framework lends critical insights into the ways organizations such as daycare centers, schools, and places of work tend to structure not only *who* people interact with, but *how frequently and with what nature* these interactions occur. Given that CDCs are resource rich neighborhood-based institutions, my research asserts that these organizations are vibrant, yet often under-tapped repositories of relationships (ties), information, and resources relative to the education process. In this section I first proceed with an overview of the organizational embeddedness framework, then I describe the underlying assumptions that guide this framework, and finally I explain why CDCs represent an ideal setting for studying how organizational embeddedness may affect a family's access to educational opportunity.

Organizational Embeddedness

A major tenant of Small's framework holds that that social capital models neglect to explain *how* actors form ties to key resources. In his book *Unanticipated Gains*, Small (2009) notes that this "theoretical lacunae" generates some noteworthy issues. First, theory of social network inequality, which demonstrates that social ties are beneficial, is unable to explain *why* some actors have more ties than others.

> Researchers increasingly acknowledge, to their credit, that to properly answer this question they must take into account unobserved differences among people that determine who is well connected in the first place. As a result, researchers have examined ways of statistically controlling for these differences. This solution, however, addresses only half of the problem: how people make ties is not merely a statistical nuisance to "control away"; it is a substantive process to understand. (p.9)

Therefore, it is not only important to document the effects of social ties, but it is essential that we unpack the causal explanations that result in the formation of these social ties.

Furthermore, social capital research in urban settings ignores how the networks of neighborhood organizations may inform or are informed by the effects of concentrated poverty and neighborhood context. As noted my literature review, researchers have mostly been concerned with the broad uneven effects of concentrated poverty and racial segregation on a person's life chances (DeLuca & Rosenblatt, 2010; Sampson, 2008, 2012). Researchers hypothesized that neighborhoods characterized by high poverty rates and high concentrations of minorities (mostly Black) suffer from "social-disorganization" - which they describe as the absence of informal and formal social networks. These socially-disorganized neighborhoods, researchers claim, typically suffer from high crime rates, social isolation and access to low quality schools (Smrekar, 2009). While studies of social-disorganization theory continue to link low-socioeconomic status and the concentration of minority groups to the availability of social capital, there is a growing body of literature that rejects this notion that a neighborhood's population defines an individual's access to opportunity. Small (2008) "argues that these strong conceptions [of poor urban neighborhoods] ultimately undermine scholarly efforts to understand the complexity of poor neighborhoods or their residents in the twenty-first century. If sociological ideas are useful to the extent they identify or clarify phenomena that were previously unknown or misunderstood, then these models fail by both misrepresenting poor Black neighborhoods and masking important aspects of their conditions, creating muddled pictures where clarity is called for" (p. 389). Moreover, Small demonstrates that the study of well-connected neighborhood organizations can help broaden our understanding of the differences that exist within and between neighborhoods.

Organizational embeddedness and its underlying assumptions. Thus, to

address these issues in the social capital and neighborhood effects theories, Small developed the organizational embeddedness framework to examine how people make connections and the organizational contexts that affect resulting social capital. He argues that organizational embeddedness impacts a person's social capital and that this framework can provide answers to three key questions: (1) what do organizational contexts affect? (2) how do they affect things? and (3) why do they affect things? (p. 11). I will proceed by describing how Small answers each of these questions through his organizational embeddedness perspective.

The what. Organizations help people make social and organizational ties through the interactions and activities that they provide their members. For example, a low-income family embedded in a CDC may have increased ties to quality after school programs, organizations that improve financial literacy and other community based organizations that improve well-being.

Organizations not only provide and link people to resources but they also impact *access to* and *mobilization of* social capital. Small (2009) asserts that organizations negotiate and execute the mobilization of social capital by cultivating an environment that "encourages trust, pro-social norms, supportive services, information sharing, the provision of services and the distribution of material goods" (p. 14)

The how. Organizations broker social ties. Small defines brokerage as "the general process by which an organization connects an individual to another individual, to another organization, or to the resources they contain" (p. 19). Thus, in this study, CDCs represent the brokers and the organization – they connect their residents to other people, to other organizations and to resources embedded within their organization. Small (2009) identifies the following two ways by which organizations act as brokers: "actor driven or institution driven" and "purposive or nonpurposive brokerage" (p. 19).

Small (2009) explains actor driven or institution driven brokerage as "the process by which a person in the organization connects people to other people, to other organizations, or to the resources of either; institution driven brokerage is the process by which an organization, in the normative or cognitive sense brokers any of these connections" (p. 19). For example, if a new family moves into a housing complex managed by a CDC and the building's project manager (actor) hosts a gathering to introduce existing neighbors to the new family, the actor is helping connect persons to other persons. If the mother from that new family ask a CDC staff member (actor) their suggestion for pediatricians and that staff member recommends a few doctors they know in the area then that actor is connecting a person to an organization. A case of institutional driven brokerage occurs if that mother who's struggling financially approaches a CDC staff member (actor) for help and that staff member automatically refers her to an organization that provides financial counseling. This is an example where the organization is formally and institutionally connecting a person to another organization.

Purposive or non-purposive brokerage (Figure 2) occurs whether or not the organization or broker intends to connect people to people, to other organizations or to

resources. For example, the CDC staff member who hosted a gathering to introduce the new family to current residents acted purposefully to form connections among the building's residents. Small argues that a person's (actor's) personal motivations may operate dependently or independently on the organization's mission.

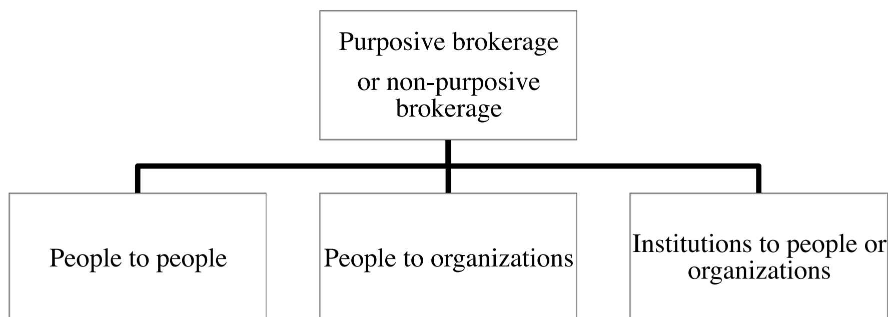

Figure 2. How organizational brokerage occurs.

The why. Note that "a neighborhood's organizational ties are influenced not merely by the demographic traits of its residents but also by external institutional factors, such as pressures by the state and non-profit sector, both of which may help organizations develop and sustain ties in otherwise disorganized areas" (p.3). Given this, the mobilization of social capital within organizations is influenced by both internal motivations of staff and its members as well as external motivations. The personal goals of an organization's members contribute to the organization's internal motivations, whereas external motivations placed on organizations may consist of demands from private donors as well as federal, state and local policies. "One important implication is that few external entities are able to exert stronger influence than the state, which can impose regulations with the threat of fines,

penalties, decertification or incarceration. As a result, it is possible that state pressures may be so powerful that they increase social capital in measureable ways."(p.3).

Measuring Effectiveness. The underlying assumptions of the organizational embeddedness framework that I've outlined in this chapter asserts that organizations broker ties for multiple reasons that are contingent upon the actor who does the brokering and if the brokering is either purposive or non-purposive. Furthermore, Small demonstrates that internal and external pressures also greatly influence organizational brokerage. These factors working together, in seemingly complicated ways, may greatly impact a person's social capital. Small (2009) stresses while this process may seem disorderly, there are processes to systematically measure an organizations ability to facilitate and broker social and organizational ties effectively. He suggests that organizations that broker social ties effectively meet these qualities: (1) create many opportunities for members to broker ties, (2) ensure that opportunities are both regular and long lasting, (3) foster a pro-social environment, (4) create a supportive institutional environment, (5) ensure that internal motivations support opportunities, and (6) that external and economic pressures contribute to its sustainability and growth. To broker organizational ties effectively organizations must be (1) resource rich, (2) participate in diverse organizational networks, and (3) promote networks to fulfill the objectives of differing populations (Small, 2009, p. 21). This framework will provide a theoretical guide for my data collection and analysis as I examine how CDCs, embedded in specific neighborhood contexts, act to broker ties to educational opportunity.

Organizational embeddedness and Community Development Corporations. Community Development Organizations, as described in this study, are perhaps the most

important neighborhood-level organizations that low-income families seeking affordable housing are embedded within. In addition to providing affordable housing, these organizations provide access to a wide range of social and educational services. Similar to the childcare centers that Small observed, CDCs offer "analytical leverage to study the role of multiple sets of pressures while holding the type of organization constant" (p. 22). In this study, I used the organizational embeddedness framework to guide data collection and analysis. Interviews, survey questions, observations and document reviews were developed to explore the types of educational resources embedded in a CDCs and how and under what conditions members mobilized access these resources. Neighborhood and school level demographic and academic data were used to contextualize this study.

Chapter 4: Research Methods, Data Sources and Site Selection

Research Question(s): How and to what extent do CDCs shape a family's access to educational opportunity? Supporting questions that influenced this study included: What are the regular practices that these organizations employ? How is this process affected by neighborhood poverty? and Do CDCs contribute to or buffer against the negative consequences of neighborhood poverty?

As aforementioned, Small's (2009) organizational embeddedness perspective guided the conceptualization of my qualitative research design. More specifically, I used a case study approach to examine how one CDC embedded in a low-income neighborhood affected families' access to educational opportunity. In this chapter I identify the methods I used to answer my research question. First, I present the qualitative design that I used for my study, followed by criteria for case selection, data collection methods and analysis, a rich description of this study's site, ethical considerations, trustworthiness and validity. I conclude with a discussion of my own positionality as researcher and the overall limitations and contributions of this study.

Research Design

Qualitative research. Creswell (2012) wrote that "qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (p. 37). Scholars embark on qualitative research methods to lend further insight into complex problems or issues that need exploring. By using a qualitative research design I was able to gather data by observing and interviewing people in their natural settings.

Furthermore, a qualitative design enabled me to build upon and explain Small's organizational embeddedness perspective through a housing and education lens. For this study, a quantitative approach simply would not have fit my research question. Understanding the links within and among neighborhood organizations that promote educational opportunity would be incredibly challenging to capture with existing quantitative measures. For example, quantitative measures may not be perceptive of neighborhood composition or of class, race, gender and individual differences. "To level all individuals to a statistical mean overlooks the uniqueness of individuals in our studies" (Creswell, 2012, p. 40).

Case study. To address my research question, I engaged in a single case study approach. This approach is appropriate because I explored – though in-depth and exhaustive data collection - access to educational opportunity within a bounded system (Creswell, 2012). Furthermore, this method allowed me to examine contextual conditions (Yin, 2009) that I believe are important to the underlying assumption of this study – that organizations matter in the lives of low-income families. Merriam (1988) defined case study as "an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon or social unit" (p. 21). As such, a single case study method offers the opportunity to detail one phenomenon (CDC) with all its variables in a natural setting. Following case study logic, I collected data in the form of interviews, observations and documents. Additionally, to examine neighborhood contextual conditions, I also analyzed how the local neighborhood conditions impacted the CDC.

CDC and site selection. Robert Yin, in his well-known handbook on case study methods, asserts that the case model is not meant to be representative. Distinct from

sampling's purpose to generalize characteristics to a larger population the case method is used when the researcher aims to provide a "clearer procedure for discovering previously unknown practices or processes during the conduct of the study" (Small, 2009, p. 227). A CDC was selected based on the following aspects: (1) the CDC specifically serves low-income families with children, (2) the CDC has a long-standing history of working embedded within a low-income urban neighborhood, (3) the CDC provides a wide range of social services, and (4) they have prioritized a focus on education.

To identify a CDC based on these criteria I began by reviewing CDCs that work in the Midwestern cities. To confirm eligibility and access I contacted approximately seven CDCs, over the phone or through email to ask a number of informal questions based on the criteria listed above. During this process I became increasingly aware of the similarities that exist among CDCs (see Table 3). Thus, there was not a specific criterion that led me to choose one CDC over another; rather it came down to the group's responsiveness and openness to my research.

	Year founded	Number of low-income rental units	Educational programing or initiatives	Other programing provided	Population in greater metropolitan area
CDC 1	1979	139	Youth-business mentoring program	Focused on adult employment support	650,000
CDC 2 - OTECH	1977	800	After school programing, education related organizing efforts	Wrap-around services	2.1 million
CDC 3	1967	1,663 rental units	Youth safety programing, community youth organizing	Through collaborative programing with other organizations	9.5 million
CDC 4	1990	537	Student housing, wrap around services for middle school children	Community organizing, immigration services, job training, financial wellness classes	9.5 million
CDC 5	1984	1,500	After school programing	Workforce development, basic needs assistance	3.5 million
CDC 6	1985	1,900	Youth summer employment program	Utility assistance	2 million
CDC 7	1977	500	Childcare	Community organizing, parenting support groups, job counseling, and financial education	4.6 million

Table 3. List of CDCs surveyed for site selection.

Without exception all of the organizations listed in Table 3 formed in response to

deteriorating neighborhood conditions and evolved over time to offer a wide array of residential support programing. CDC 2 or Old Town East Community Housing (OTECH), the CDC that is at the focus of this study, offers programing comparable to its' industry peers – their work is not idiosyncratic. Thus, while this case study does not seek to be representative of all CDCs, it does lay the groundwork to understanding how these organizations work to influence educational opportunity in the communities they serve.

Participant selection. This single case study is anchored in the perspectives of diverse stakeholders – CDC administrators, program level staff, parents and community members. I interviewed both participants whom my CDC contact recommended and whom my liaison did not select.

Data collection. To answer my research question, I engaged in multiple forms of data collection that include: interviews, observations and document review.

Interviews. Interviews are the primary method for qualitative data collection. For this study, I conducted 15 semi-structured interviews with CDC staff, residents (parents), local school staff and community members to explore the nature of and access to educational resources. These interviews, which typically lasted an hour, took place in staff offices, at the local elementary school and over the phone. Semi-structured interviews allowed me to triangulate responses by providing comparable information across subjects. Furthermore, with this interview method I was able retain some amount of open-endedness to explore and probe generalizations, themes and understandings as they emerged throughout the study (Wengraf, 2001).

My interview protocols were carefully shaped by Small's organizational embeddedness framework. For example, the interviews with CDCs administrators and staff

were used to unearth resources that the organization makes available to families and the networking opportunities that they provide them with. Additionally, I asked questions to understand and examine the *motivations* behind interorganizational ties and the *nature* of those ties. Interviews with parents and community members were used to understand, from their perspective, whether and how they had formed ties in the CDC, how they understood those relations, and under what circumstances they mobilized these ties. Ultimately these questions allowed me to analyze the availability and quality of resources embedded within a CDC as well as how ties are formed in these settings, what types of ties they are, and how useful those connections truly are. As with Small's (2009) study on childcare centers, my goal with interviewing was not to attain repetitiveness, but saturation. Thus, data collection continued until I reached theoretical saturation on all major concepts and their interrelationships (Conrad, 1978).

Finally, in order to validate the interview protocol (Appendix A), I piloted the protocol with one CDC staff member and one parent. I then listened to the recordings of the interview and modified the questions in order to collect data that more directly aligned with my research question.

Observations. One of main methods of qualitative data collection is observation. This method is particularly important because participants "do not always do what they say they do" (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2002, p. 312). Furthermore, Eisenhart (2001) reminds us that "to be involved directly in the activities of people still seems to be the best method we have for learning about the meaning of things to the people we hope to understand. Only by watching carefully what people do and say…do we stand some chance of grasping what is meaningful to them" (p. 23). Thus, observations contributed to a more holistic

understanding of my research question. I was able to observe participants firsthand in their natural setting to see things that perhaps participants were unaware of or unwilling to discuss. I observed meetings and attended on site classes for children. Additionally, I collected qualitative open-ended field notes on the physical conditions of the buildings and the social interactions among residents and among residents and CDC staff.

Anzul, Ely, Freidman, Garner, & McCormack-Steinmetz (2003) write that the "very act of observing can alter what is being observed" (p. 419). Thus, since my very presence as an observer impacted the natural setting, I made a concerted effort to minimize intrusiveness. Anzul and colleges (2003) have outlined four central issues that guided my own participant observations: (1) I only participated within the needs of my study, (2) I made myself as aware as possible of the ripples caused by my observation, (3) I was sensitive to the fact that as I attempted to lessen or counter those ripples I might have thwarted the participant-observer relationship, and finally (4) I described in the report both what worked and what did not (p. 419). At times with permission of the participants I utilized an audio recorder to capture a record of what occurred for further analysis. Also, I followed up observations with informal conversations and formal interviews with participants to increase understanding and to triangulate data. I created a working draft of an observation protocol (Appendix B) to help guide the collection of field notes.

Document review. Hodder (2003) writes that documents are an important component of qualitative research "because, in general terms, access can be easy and low cost, because the information provided may differ from and may not be available in spoken form and because texts endure and thus give historical insight" (p. 156). Thus, for this study I collected and reviewed both internal and external documents that are relevant to my research question. These documents include – meeting minutes, memos, newsletters, policy documents, brochures, news articles and the like.

Data analysis. To analyze my data from interviews, observations and documents I used the constant comparative method. This method involved a continual comparison of existing data with new data. Bogdan and Biklen (2003) described the constant comparative method as "a research design for multi-data sources, which is like analytic induction in that the formal analysis begins early in the study and is nearly completed by the end of the data collection" (p. 66). Thus, data collection began with when I first contacted participants and continued until I reached theoretical saturation (Glaser, 1964).

Immediately following each interview I wrote up thorough field notes. These notes included details about the participant responses and paid particular attention to non-verbal reactions to the questions. Additionally, I included descriptions about the interview setting as well as notes about any changes that I needed to make to the protocol. I also documented themes that emerged out of interviews and related to my research questions and theoretical framework. To organize my field notes I used the following codes that differentiated between these categories: methodological notes (MN), analytical notes (AN), and theoretical notes (TN). These field notes worked to guide my analysis so that I captured elements that may not have been included in the transcripts alone. They also

helped guide future interviews.

Before beginning another interview, I reflected on the existing interview protocol to ascertain the relevancy and necessity of questions based on the information that was gathered in the aforementioned process. As a result, I left out some questions, reworded and/or reordered them to align with my research question and to optimize the interview experience for participants. Additionally, I made sure to transcribe each interview shortly after it had taken place.

Observation and document collection began early along in the data collection process so that these findings were a part of the constant comparative method. Similar to my approach with interview data, I set aside time after each observation to write detailed field notes. As with the interview data, I identified and coded both the documents and observations into methodological (MN), analytical (AN), and theoretical (TN) notes.

Throughout this process, I used NVivo to import transcripts form interviews, observation notes, documents, and all field notes. Once imported, this software allowed me to engage in a coding process to find patters and relationships among collected data. Glaser and Strauss (1967) note that the defining rule for the constant comparative method is "while coding an incident for a category, compare it with the previous incidents in the same and different groups coded in the same category" (p. 106). With the coding and categorization of my data I was able to determine gaps in my data collection as it related to my research question and guiding theoretical framework.

Site Selection

The research for this study focused on Old Town East Community Housing (OTECH), a CDC located in Old Town East (OTE) - an urban neighborhood situated in a large

Midwestern city that I call Riverside for the purposes of this study. I chose an understudied city and neighborhood for my research in an effort to broaden and more accurately depict the diversity of settings that exist within education research. Harding et al. (2011) assert that "…researchers need to shift focus away from broad theories of neighborhood effects and examine the specific practices through which, the characteristics of a neighborhood might affect an individual" (p. 277). By studying a housing organization's impact on a child's access to education opportunity in OTE I hope to illuminate more nuanced neighborhood and organizational conditions that foster and deliver educational opportunity to some of our cities' poorest residents.

In its most simple form, the story of OTE is all too familiar. A once bustling immigrant-built neighborhood lost its vibrancy as the area's first wave of European immigrants moved out to the suburbs – accelerated by the structural and social forces of suburbanization, White flight, red-lining and racial steering. Poor Black families gradually replaced the neighborhood's original inhabitants and structural barriers of inequality began to erode local conditions. Aging dilapidated buildings became abandoned while poverty, crime, unemployment and homeless rates rose. The area was labeled a ghetto or in the case of OTE, a "super ghetto" - and it continued to be neglected by local and federal governments. Eventually, in the early 90s young White artists and bohemians, looking for cheap rent and city life, started to move into the neighborhood. The city took notice and investments and redevelopment plans began to pour in. Soon it became a hip, thriving neighborhood repopulated with trendy businesses and young professionals. A renaissance!

If OTE's story is limited to this simplistic yet culturally dominant narrative then we fail to see the value in its predominantly Black community. Ruth, a long-time resident of

OTE, describes her motivations for staying in OTE:

> *I'm not going anywhere 'cause you know what, people run to suburbs and all that. I told my kids, I said, we're making our camp here and you're gonna be somebody here. You gonna know that you got character, you got respect, you got citizenship and you're gonna do it right here. And I must say with the help of god I've been very blessed and stuff. You hear all the bad things…you know…we had roaches and the whole nine yards…but we had so many kids that had went to college and really did things and no body ever talks about those things…its just all bad. And really like I said before the royalty of the quilt was already intact…the people…we are the threads that bind.*

Here Ruth expresses pride in raising all five of her children in OTE. As a young mother, Ruth did not see her neighborhood as just a "ghetto;" to the contrary, she saw it as a home made up of people and organizations she trusted and came to lean on. Small (2008) asserts that pathologizing neighborhoods such as OTE with terms such as ghetto or slum ignores the diversity and significance of poor Black neighborhoods.

> If sociological ideas are useful to the extent they identify or clarify phenomena that were previously unknown or misunderstood, then these models fail by both misrepresenting poor Black neighborhoods and masking important aspects of their conditions, creating muddled pictures where clarity is called for. Relying on propositions or assumptions scarcely substantiated by the available data, strong conception contain important grains of truth, but ultimately perpetuate the very stereotypes their proponents often aim to fight (p. 389).

In the case of OTE, these stereotypes have meant that many of the long-term residents and organizations are left out of the progress. The predominant narrative that OTE is undergoing a transformation that benefits all residents is misguided in several ways. Poor Black neighbors who make up the majority of OTE residents do not meet their White counterparts on equal ground.

OTE is made up of four Census tracts that sprawl across 300 acres just northeast of the city's downtown business district. According to the 2015 U.S. Census numbers, of the 820 children under the age of 18, 72% of them live in families with incomes that fall below the federal poverty level. Furthermore, childhood poverty in OTE is concentrated in the quarter square mile that surrounds the only public school, Loveland Elementary, in the neighborhood. In that census tract, unemployment for Blacks is at 38% compared to 11% for Whites. Of the 295 children that live in that area – a staggering 93% live in Poverty.

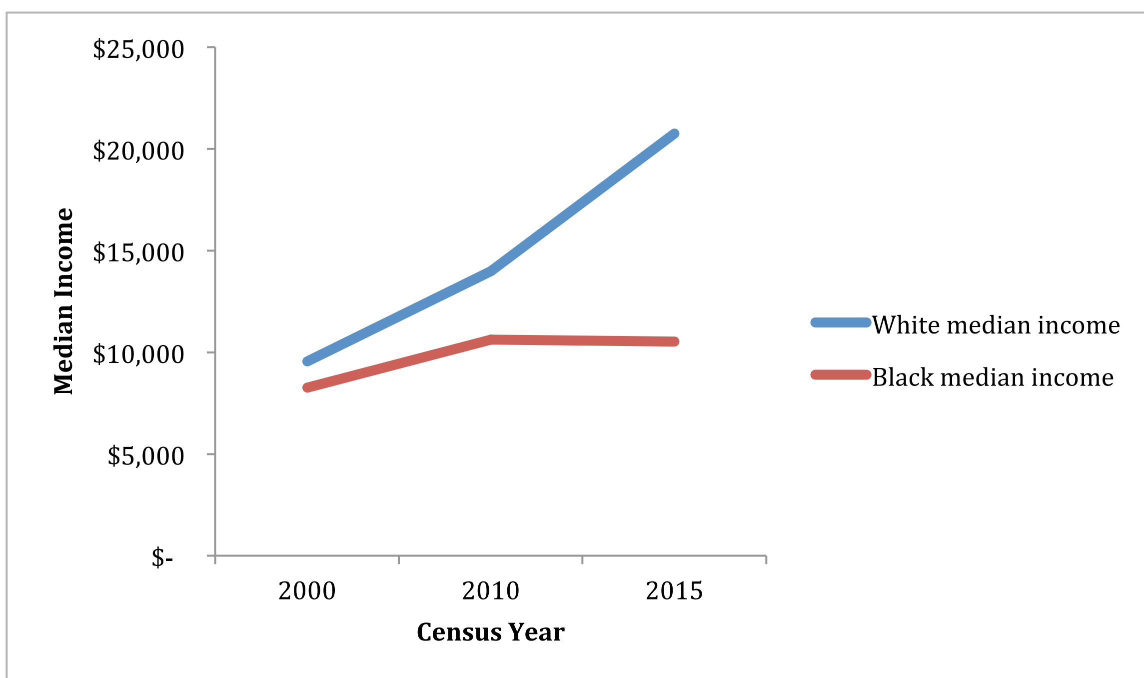

Figure 3. OTE's growing Black and White income gap.

Additionally, the Black and White income gap is growing (Figure 3). While income has seemingly stagnated for OTE, Black families', rents and housing prices continue to rise (Figures 4 & 5). From 2000 to 2015 median rents have more than doubled and home prices have tripled. Despite these rising property values in 2010 approximately 48% of OTE's housing units were listed as vacant and in 2014, out of the city's 52 neighborhoods, OTE

ranked second for the highest number of shootings.

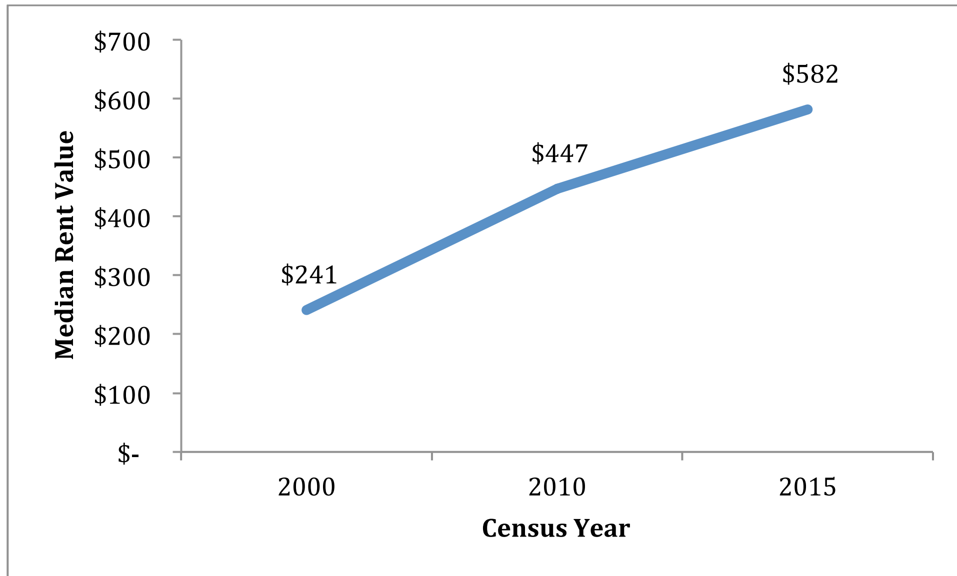

Figure 4. Raising rents in OTE.

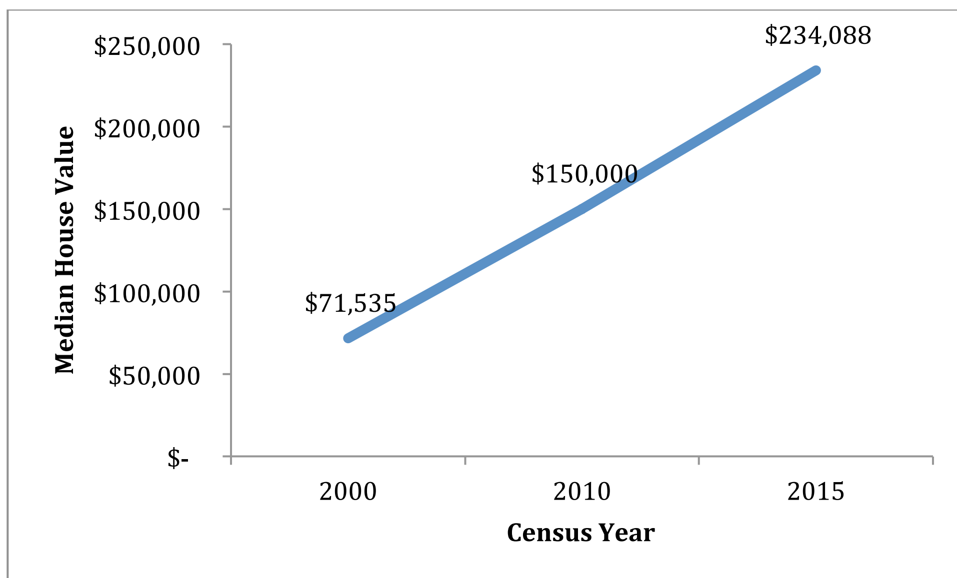

Figure 5. Raising house values in OTE.

Yet, if the mostly Black community that inhabits OTE is only described by its high

unemployment, crime, vacancy and depopulation then we risk glossing over a rich history of grass-roots community organizing and social justice work that has created a robust network of wraparound and educational services to help OTE's poorest residents. Furthermore, persistently, defining poor neighborhoods and their residents in such rigid terms can limit the opportunities for education research and policy to address contemporary issues. Gorski (2012) notes that these common stereotypes of poor people "can misdirect well intentioned efforts to develop and implement effective policies for mitigating or eliminating socioeconomic inequalities in schools." Living in poor urban neighborhoods is not uniformly experienced (Small, 2008).

The history of OTE and OTECH. Most of what is known today as OTE, was first settled by a massive influx of German immigrants that started arriving in the early 19th century. Over time, tens of thousands of immigrants settled the area making it one of the densest communities in the United States by the late 1800s. Bustling from growth and thriving industry, the new settlers of OTE built sturdy three-story brick brownstone buildings, churches, and meeting halls reminiscent of European Italianate architecture. Over the next hundred years these German residents were replaced with White Appalachians escaping economic hardship and the passage of Blacks moving North during the Great Migration of the 1930's. It was during this era that Blacks were segregated in to very specific neighborhoods in Riverside – one of which was OTE - due largely to the federally backed policy of redlining – marking in red ink whole areas of cities to delineate where they would not lend. Most frequently, as was the case here, it was these Black neighborhoods that were determined to be the most risky and unfit for home loans. Additionally, even communities with small numbers of Black residents were marked as

"hazardous". For example, In the 1939 map of the North Side of Chicago (Figure 6) the now defunct federally backed Home Ownership Loan Corporation marked neighborhoods in yellow and red that were the "least desirable" areas and posed the greatest "threat of infiltration of foreign-born, negro, or lower grade population" (Nelson, 2014). Essentially the federal government declined to insure mortgages in those neighborhoods and thus, White families living next to Black families found their home values quickly depreciating (Hannah-Jones, 2012).

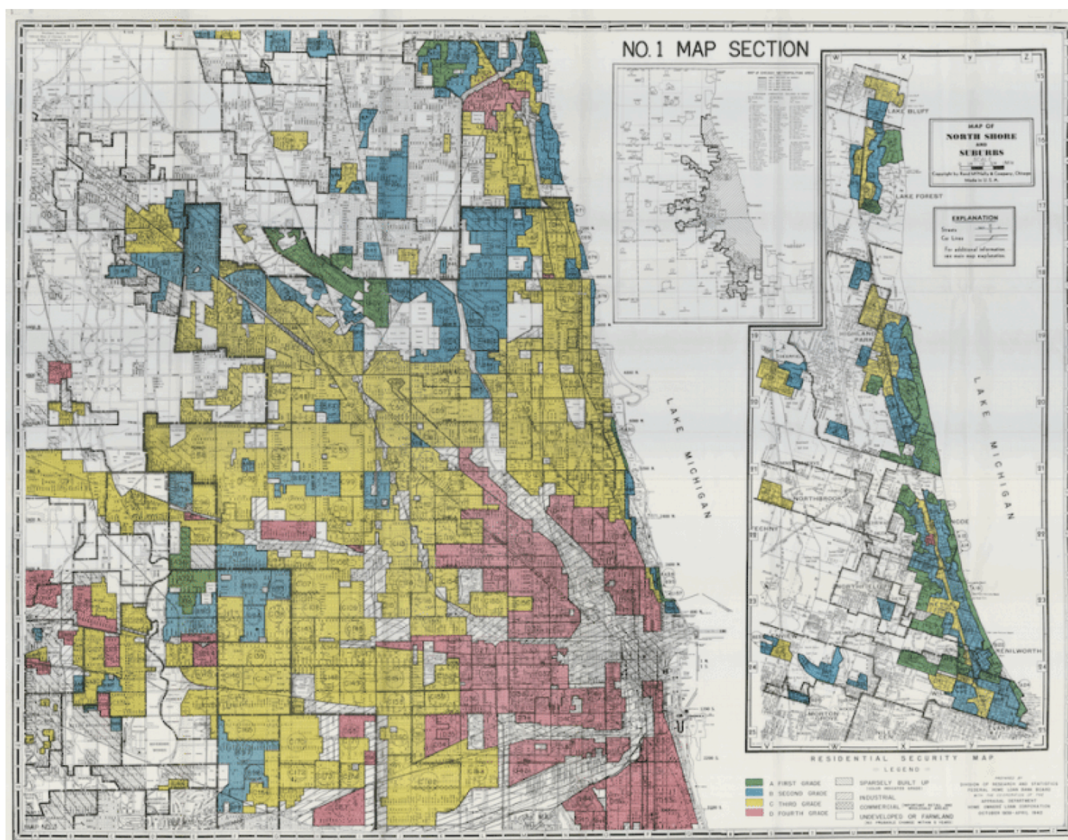

Figure 6. 1939 Home Ownership Loan Corporation map of North Side of Chicago.
Note. From Badger (2015).

Not only did they refuse to insure mortgages in Black neighborhoods but they also made it nearly impossible for Black families to purchase homes. Nationally, from 1934 to 1962, a

staggering 98 percent of the home loans insured went to White borrowers. This left Black renters particularly vulnerable and segregated (Hannah-Jones, 2012). In OTE, these federal policies culminated in a population shift. According to the U.S. Census, by 1980 approximately 60% of its White population had moved out of the neighborhood leaving nearly 1 in 4 buildings in the neighborhood vacant. Figure 7 demonstrates this dramatic shift in population.

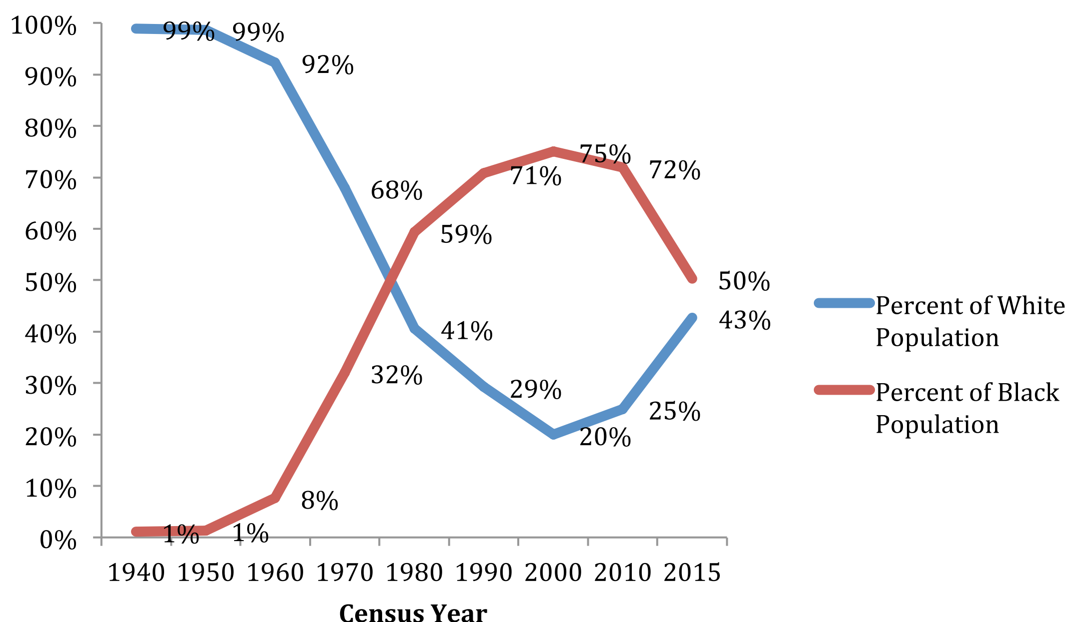

Figure 7: Population change in OTE from 1940 to 2015.

OTE residents, burdened with the effects of depopulation, negligent landlords and loss of services and businesses began to organize and in the late 1960's the Neighborhood's Citizen's Movement (NCM) was founded. Martha, a long-time resident and an original co-founder of the NCM remembers:

> *It was about a neighborhood's right to self-determination. When we saw injustices, we would organize around that. If it was seeing homeless people on our stoops we felt hey*

> *they deserve a roof over their heads. We thought that people deserved decent affordable housing and we needed educational resources for our community. So we did organizing work around that and then as a result of some of that we were successful.*

This organization laid the foundation for many of the social service organizations that work in OTE today. Over time, members branched out to create a variety of formal non-profits to raise money, garner more political support and provide much needed services and interventions to neighborhood residents. Again, Martha:

> *This movement created our CDC (OTECH) and then if you think of the NCM as a wheel…and the hub of that wheel is our belief of basic human rights and no matter if you have penny in your pockets doesn't mean you don't have good ideas about your community or want good things for your kids and through that movement we created the spokes in that wheel to strengthen it…which means these various grass roots organizations.*

While OTECH, the CDC that is the focus of my research wasn't officially incorporated as a non-profit organization until 2006 its history – as Martha noted - is rooted in the NCM. In the late 70's members of the NCM incorporated a grassroots tenant-housing cooperative. This non-profit acted as organizing agent for local residents to build community and develop small amounts of residential real estate. The rents they charged did not exceed 30% of a resident's income and all rent went back in to the maintenance and development of affordable housing in the neighborhood. Acting as a true neighborhood cooperative, the managing board was made of up community residents and staff members. In fact, more than half of the board was made up of tenants – giving them the largest vote in the organization. In addition to working on improving their neighborhood they were also able to bridge relationships with organizations and people outside of their community to mobilize a large volunteer base ("Mission & History | Old-Town-East Community Housing," n.d.). People from all over the city were involved in Saturday clean-up crews and programs such as "Adopt an Apartment" and "Adopt a Project." In the late 80's, due to federal budget

cuts in housing, another housing non-profit sprung up in OTE. This organization, with a larger operating budget yet similar direction from tenants and neighborhood stakeholders, incorporated as a CDC to redevelop abandoned buildings into affordable housing units. By the early 2000's, despite the work of these housing groups and local advocates, OTE began losing affordable housing units and long-term residents. In fact, in just one year the neighborhood lost approximately 900 units of affordable housing when one of the neighborhoods largest landlords went bankrupt. The two housing non-profits, feeling the urgency to secure long term affordable housing for its residents, decided to join forces to form OTECH in 2006. OTECH is now the biggest property owner in OTE. And today, many of OTECH's board members and staff were not only involved in the work of these two housing organizations but were also original members of the NCM. As a result, both the personal and organizational history of organizing around social and economic justice issues continues to guide the core work and mission of OTECH.

While the majority of OTECH's work focuses on developing and managing low-income housing, OTECH is also engaged in providing a diverse array of social services to its residents. With a 33-member staff and an executive director that has been with the organization for over 20 years OTECH has successfully restored 86 properties (440 housing units). Carrie, OTECH's executive director explains:

> *Our inventory is some of the most challenging because its scattered sight and its historic buildings and they're all rehabbed at different time periods so there's not one apartment that fits a toilet over here…it may not even be the right one for the toilet in the apartment next door alone the building down the street. So it's challenging. And then of course the community that we work with…having low incomes…there's a lot of stress.*

In fact, 51% of their residents earn less than $10,000 a year. Additionally, they provide permanent supportive housing programs for chronically homeless, chronic alcoholics and

recovering alcoholics. In several of their buildings they provide access to 24-7 social workers that live on site. These housing services are enriched through a vast array of organizational partnerships and community volunteers that OTECH has assembled throughout the years. Through these partnerships, they are able to offer residents access to important goods and services that include but aren't limited to food-banks, educational enrichment programs, health care and faith-based services. Low-income families embedded in OTECH depend on this organization for crucial services.

Ethical Considerations

As a researcher, I understood that it was my responsibility to guard the participants and the data that they provided. To avoid doing harm, I was honest and forthcoming about my research and respected each participant and their unique perspectives (Conrad, 1978). At all times, I kept the rights of the participants in mind and made sure that participants signed off on informed consent forms before establishing a research relationship. I was sensitive to the confidential nature of these interviews and maintained their anonymity by removing their names from documents. My findings are presented in a manner that protects participant's anonymity and at the same time maintains the accuracy of the data provided.

The review and approval by the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Internal Review Board (IRB) delivers additional assurance that my research is conducted according to state and federal laws and guidelines regarding the ethical involvement of human participants.

Trustworthiness

Establishing trustworthiness is critical in qualitative research. Glesne (2010)

outlines eight main verification procedures to help researchers maintain trustworthiness: (1) sustain prolonged engagement and participate in ongoing observation, (2) triangulate data, (3) use peer review and debriefing (4) perform negative case analysis (5) clarify research biases (6) do member checking (7) provide rich thick descriptions and (8) utilize an external audit. For the purposes of this study, I have focused on member checks and triangulation.

Member checks. Throughout this study's data collection process I shared insights and tentative conclusions with participants during both informal and formal interviews (Merriam, 1998). This process allowed me to test these conclusions and search for any disconfirming evidence.

Triangulation. Broadly speaking, triangulation means that the researcher will take a variety of measures to enhance the validity and trustworthiness of their work. I address this in my own study by drawing on multiple sources of data (interview, observations, documents, etc), including multiple stakeholders (CDC administrators, CDC staff, parents, and community members), and by recognizing my own positionality (discussed below). Using these methods increases the validity and accuracy of my research findings.

Researcher Positionality

For this section, I turn inward to recognize how my personal experiences, worldviews, and beliefs may shape the lens though which I interpret and write this. I grew up in Cincinnati, Ohio, a city that is still highly segregated by race and class. In the 80's and early 90's, though my family lived in a predominately White working-poor neighborhood just north of the central city, I attended an elementary school in downtown Cincinnati that was part of a neighborhood known as the West End. Daily travel to and from school,

through the racially divided neighborhoods, taught me an early lesson about systematic inequality. The differences between neighborhoods were stark and noticeable even to a child. Poor Black neighborhoods in Cincinnati and especially the West End were, and to some extent still are, characterized by physical and social isolation, lack of transportation, a scarcity of amenities, high vacancy rates, high crime rates and joblessness. Thus, at an early age, I formed a strong conception of what characterized urban neighborhoods or "ghettos."

Soon after college, my early conceptualizations of the ghetto were challenged. Unsure of what to do after graduating, I took an AmeriCorps position and relocated for a year to South Tucson, Arizona. Whereas the West End was characterized by its poor Black residents, social, and physical isolation, South Tucson (referred to as "el Barrio" by its residents), an equally poor neighborhood, differed in significant ways. Most noticeably it was predominately Latino and was populated by a fair number of small and vibrant grocery stores, restaurants, hair salons, and churches that were missing from the West End. I took note, and after a year in AmeriCorps, tired of the desert, I headed back East, this time to pursue a graduate degree at the New School in New York City. With a few friends and no money, I landed in an apartment located in the heart of Flatbush, a predominately low-income West Indian community. Again I found myself living in what the neighborhood effects literature would term "ghetto." But, much like my experience in South Tucson, Flatbush continued to expand my conceptualization of the characteristics that make up low-income communities. Unlike my experiences in the West End and South Tucson, Flatbush was overflowing with restaurants, churches, hair salons, dance halls, grocery stores and non-profit organizations. Moreover, this neighborhood had ample access to both public and communal (but illegal) private transportation known as "dollar vans".

These life moves and accompanying neighborhood observations served as a catalyst to my graduate schoolwork in low-income housing and community development. Through my studies and later professional work as an Asset Manager with the national non-profit housing intermediary, Local Initiatives Support Condition (LISC) I had the opportunity to work intimately with CDCs in the neighborhoods that they served throughout New York City's five Burroughs. I leaned that while poor places are challenging places to live, they are not all challenging in the same way. For example, the neighborhood where I attended school in the West End exhibited a scarcity of amenities, high vacancy rates, limited access to grocery stores and transportation, and was located several miles away from White neighbors; however, in neighborhoods like Spanish Harlem, I noticed an abundance of people and establishments, a close proximity to Central Park and easy access to express stops for major subway routes. Over time, what I have learned is that concentrated neighborhoods of poverty and race are not homogenous across cities or even within cities. Thus, these experiences of living in diverse neighborhoods and working directly with CDCs motivated me in this work.

Given that my experiences likely influenced and shaped my research, it was my goal to model self-awareness throughout this study. I paid careful attention to how my biases might determine what themes I searched for as I collected and analyzed data. Throughout this process, I was particularly aware of race and socioeconomic class; I am White middle-class researcher studying an organization that works in a predominately poor Black neighborhood. I made a concentrated effort to interview people of color – to give them voice and representation in this study. Additionally, when talking to White and Black participants I posed questions that directly worked to unpack and expose race issues that

existed within OTE and OTECH. Ultimately, as a researcher I aimed to understand the diverse and unique structural factors that operate as limiting or supporting conditions in families' access to educational opportunity.

Chapter 5: Findings

I have organized my findings in to two primary levels: the macro and micro levels. At the macro-level, OTECH works broadly to influence and shape education policy to provide increased access to educational opportunities to children who live in the community. Micro-level factors exist at the program level to directly advance students' academic, physical and social outcomes. The themes that emerged in each of these levels overlap and, in many cases, directly influence one another. In all, they appear to account for the elements that form the ways in which CDCs may shape families' access to educational opportunity.

Macro-level factors: Shaping Educational Opportunity

OTECH, in spite of being a housing organization with a mission that focuses on "developing and managing resident-centered, affordable housing in an effort to promote an inclusive community" has influenced and shaped broad educational issues in the OTE community. From leading a successful campaign to save the local elementary school to building ties with regional youth organizations, OTECH has become a central actor in creating educational opportunity for residents that live in OTE. What are the organizational characteristics that animate this work? Two themes emerged as being particularly noteworthy. I found that OTECH had (a) guiding organizational purpose and (b) robust organizational connectivity. These practices have allowed OTECH to shape broad educational issues in their community that influence access to educational opportunities for those who live there.

Guiding organizational purpose. I found evidence that OTECH is authentically

committed to cultivating a socially just community in OTE. This *organizational purpose* mobilizes and binds staff and community around a shared vision and narrative that extends beyond their mission to provide the neighborhood with affordable housing. In fact, in addition to providing brick and mortar housing services, OTECH works more broadly to improve the community's access to social services, employment, and educational opportunities. OTECH's organizational purpose is informed and shaped by its' history in OTE and their hiring practices. Importantly, I found that it is also complicated by a racial mismatch that exists within the organization and between the organization and the broader OTE community. Yet, despite this, OTECH – with its guiding organizational purpose - is able to remain actively engaged in grassroots community organizing efforts.

Support of OTECH's commitment to social justice was especially salient in the interview data that I collected. From the leadership of the organization down to entry-level staff and community members, nearly every person I spoke with described being personally motivated by a desire to create a socially just community. The following quotes reflect this:

> *So, a position became available with OTE Housing Network and I really felt like the group here in the neighborhood was about long-term solutions. What I was doing for the county - because we had to - was more triage and Band-Aids. Knowing that what we were doing wasn't really for the long term and so wanting to work on long-term solutions and not being able to advocate the way I wanted to is what drew me to this organization. So, I applied for a position with OTECH and I got it. That was in 1993 and I didn't have any housing development experience but I was committed to the mission." – Carrie, Executive Director*

> *I was drawn to work with OTECH because it's an agency that really works to promote social justice in everything that they do. I've worked with agencies that are kind of just filling a need but OTECH really works to advocate for broad social change, inclusivity...in everything that they do. That's why I really wanted to work with them and that's kind of what motivates me going forward. – Sarah, OTECH Intern*

> *When I was younger I never really thought I would be doing what I do now. My mom*

used to do it. She fought for parks to be put in – everything on the west side of Sherman. She was on the council and they was fighting for different things and I was watching but I was like "Oh ok, I'm over here being young and silly you know", I never really thought that I would be entrenched like I am now. Martha, Carrie Johnson, my mother, her name was Ruth Jones too, all these ladies kind of groomed me up so I just kind of fell into this spot. There's some real history and you know I mean my mom used to be out there. She'd come home fix us dinner and tell us we had to go to a community meeting and we like "oh, geez…what for now?". And Martha was, she was a youngster then, she was out there. You know so I grew up with activists and people willing to put up the fight, that's what drew me too working with OTECH. – Ruth, Loveland School Parent Engagement Director

Even before I had been to this neighborhood I was drawn to stories of struggle where the side that isn't told…you know there's truth there and stuff happening there…but that side isn't really told. I think that's why I was drawn to this line of work and this neighborhood…it just really ropes you in and that's why I stayed. – Anna, Resident Services Coordinator

There's just a lot of issues that need to be addressed in OTE. The high income of the new people - their income is very high so they're making housing very limited for people with low income. That's my passion...to be able to have people maintain...to stay where they're living at...that have low incomes. I'm just trying to inspire, encourage and give hope through my own lived experience. Because of what's going on around you, you have to be involved in the community. – Monica, OTECH AmeriCorps Intern

Either from one's lived experience in OTE or from an interest in engaging in social justice issues – the people that make up OTECH are authentically driven by a desire to create a more equitable neighborhood.

Many of the senior staff and board members that I interviewed have been working and living in OTE for the last twenty to thirty years. They were first drawn to this work as young community activists fighting for fair housing. Eventually their work parlayed into more structured and formalized activities now run mostly through OTECH:

When we first founded our housing organization we wanted to do it differently in terms of not being a slumlord. We didn't want to do that. We wanted to do it differently - to have people involved in the work, to have residents have a voice in our organization. So throughout our whole history of OTE housing residents have had seats on our board. In our earlier years if anyone would want to be involved in volunteering - we had these Saturday work crews, it was just you know sweeping out buildings, getting them boarded up until we could raise the money to buy the

> *buildings. Sometimes people never met their landlord…we were long past the era where you had small mom and pops…sometimes people were sending their checks to a large group who had a lot of units and didn't really know you. But I think our relationship, because we're here on the streets, building relationships - we have an office - they see us - they can come in and pay their rent and just get involved and I think over the years that we've figured out too is that who we were committed to serve - persons of low income - there's going to be issues facing those families. And it took us some time to build up some operational money…you know…so that we can really improve the longevity of how long people stay in our units when we have the hard social work component to work directly with our residents so that if there's something that come's up financially…so that you're going to miss a month's rent…that…you know that...you have that understanding and then you can work out a payment plan or if there's certain needs that a family has…social workers know where to refer folks…if it's health matters, going to the clinic with them or getting all those basic things. – Martha, Resident Board Member*

Here Martha highlights the organization's evolution. They initially started to accumulate and renovate properties piecemeal, to serve as an alternative to the larger, mostly negligent landlords. Over time they grew, accumulating more and more properties, but always working to provide a quality affordable housing alternative while also giving voice to their residents.

Interestingly, despite their strong proclivity to work on broad-level social justice issues in a poor Black community, I found that there was a racial mismatch among staff and leadership. This mismatch seemed to be influenced by both their history and hiring practices. If you remember in my description of OTE, the racial makeup of the neighborhood has changed. What was once a majority poor White neighborhood in the 1970s shifted to a poor Black neighborhood in the 1980s. While both Black and White residents were involved in the Citizen's Movement of the 70s, this movement that helped shape many of the organizations working in OTE today was rooted in the leadership of a White man named Toby Grey. Toby Grey has since passed, but several of the White leaders from that era still live and work in OTE. In fact, they make up much of the leadership in the

neighborhoods' key organizations – including that of OTECH. What I found was that while OTECH's staff is roughly 50% White and 50% Black the leadership is almost entirely White. In other words, there is a racial mismatch between the organizations leadership and staff and the residents that they serve. While I found no instances of direct racism or racial preference, I think it is important to consider why the leadership of an organization that serves mostly Black people has remained White and what impact this might have on the organization itself and its surrounding community. Thus, to this end, I will discuss instances of racial mismatch and its results throughout my findings.

OTECH's strong history of activism and shared sense of purpose among leadership has influenced hiring practices as well as OTECH's overall programmatic flexibility. In the case of this organization, a person's commitment to the neighborhood and to social justice issues seems to matter more than any specific skill set. The general idea behind this is that staff can become proficient in certain skills needed for their position title, but not trained to care about issues that they are not already authentically engaged with. Joe, OTECH's Director of Housing Services, describes the implications of these hiring practices particularly well here:

> *The thing I like about this low-barrier approach to our programs…our housing programs, our youth programs, is that we have this culture of folks who are all in it together for the cause or for the mission. I think there's some really skilled people around town who do great program development and they find these great programs based on best practices but I see a lot of programs that don't work because it's the culture of the organization that's putting them on. You know, either they're not good people who are really in it for the right reasons or the organizations are so top down and focused on money that programs fizzle. So I think it's just about having good people to start with who are really committed to what they're doing.*

This formative practice of hiring people who are mission-driven broadens the scope and flexibility of work that OTECH is involved in. For example, Anna, a Resident Services

Coordinator, is able to link her day-to-day work in housing to other issues that impact children and families:

> *There are folks that just come in and rent from us. We're just their landlord, but for others…we've learned over the years that a lot of folks can use support to stay housed. And so that's our goal to keep people housed…and to keep them housed well…to not just be getting by but hopefully to be moving forward. So that's what's cool about this place…we want to see some of these things happen for folks…so we have Resident Services so I can help keep people stably housed and then maybe even reach some other long term goals.*

Oftentimes, the "other long term goals" that staff help residents with range from help with finding a job, connecting a resident to a substance abuse program, enrolling them in continuing education or helping them find furniture for their apartment. In essence, the staff has the flexibility to work outside of their job descriptions to pursue work related to social justice issues – this work is not defined through their mission statement, job titles or job descriptions, but it is denoted through their broader sense of organizational purpose.

It is worth noting here that Carrie, Joe, and Martha - OTECH's most senior leaders that help shape the work and character of the organization - are all White. Furthermore, most of the staff members involved with community outreach efforts and youth programing are also White. In my interviews I found that OTECH staff thought about race, but did not necessarily see it as an organizational issue to address. Christine, the White Youth Development Coordinator explains:

> *the reality is that each of us individually…let's say there's 30 something employees...all of our perspectives and attitudes and biases and levels of comfort vary from each other and that's not race dependent...that's just kind of true...but I think the thing that is really cool about our organization and the way that our administrators choose to actively be intentional about it is creating safe spaces to express that or to negotiate it.*

By expressing her belief that staff's experiences are not "race dependent" Christine exhibits colorblindness ideology - an ideology that negates the factor of race in one's life

experiences. Christine goes on to clarify that if cultural issues do arise, OTECH copes with these differences by maintaining an accepting workplace environment; "I think everybody feels safe to be sensitive to those things ….it seems like there's enough respect. Like a deep level of respect for what everyone brings as a strength and it never feels divisive...at least to me." Evidence of this cultural openness, Christine explains is found in OTECH's staff handbook:

> *I think , that they [OTECH] do a pretty good job of trying to give people space to be themselves...to express what is important to them...like our dress code...I don't know if this is really relevant...I love that in our policy handbook it's just one sentence...which I'm not really used to - it's one sentence that says, "please wear clothes that allow you to do your job" so you know I feel like that leaves so much room for people to dress how they want.*

This interview revealed that colorblindness at OTECH is couched in multiculturalism. Christine, as with the OTECH's White administrators, is racially privileged and it is unlikely that she experiences disadvantages due to race. This combined with a lack of awareness about race issues within OTECH means that they are more likely to ignore systems of racial privilege. This is especially noteworthy because OTECH is an organization that seeks to dismantle systems of privilege in OTE.

When I asked Violet, a Black resident board member and board vice president about the racial mismatch at OTECH she replied:

> *It's not a problem…it's not broken, so don't fix it. It don't need fixing...so if it's not a problem then we won't foresee problem...like I said it's a diverse group around there and I think pretty much it's racially balanced and it might be leaning more toward one side than the other...it's a pretty close balance. It's racially balanced and no one has had any problems as far as I know of.*

Violet, involved with OTECH since the 1980s, has been a friend to the central leadership staff for decades. Her allegiance to the organization and to those friendships may influence her perspective. When I probed deeper – asking her why she thought there were more

White people than Black people in positions of leadership - she did express a need for OTECH to bring on more people of color:

> *That's because of the new folks moving in. Everyone moving in is Caucasian, so that's why. And a lot of people have deceased and Caucasians are moving in and becoming members of OTECH. So we can't do anything about until we advocate and solicit for more African American's to come on board....*

Rita, the Black principal at the local public elementary school put it this way:

> *I don't even know if that's something they've considered. I think that there are people who are a part of those organizations like OTECH who are extremely passionate about the work that they do, and who have been here a long time and I don't know what work has been done behind the scenes…if any…to engage people who may have leadership capacities who have been a part of those communities also…to be a part of that upper level planning. I know that they do call on Ms. Ruth a lot…she's been a staple in this community…but as far as offering her any standard type position on a board or anything…I don't think anyone has…I don't know…I can't speak to what anybody's reasoning might be…but I am sure there are people who are in this community…who are of color who would contribute very very valuably to those organizations….I don't know what their process is for seeking those people out or if they have a process…or if they even want to…I think they just may feel very passionate about what they do.*

It is clear that OTECH is driven by a strong organizational purpose that sees a family's ability to maintain stable housing interwoven with matters related to employment, education, mental and physical health. Yet, these issues of race within the organization may complicate this work.

***Community organizing: Saving Loveland Elementary School and preserving public space*.** The cultivation of both individual and global organizational purpose means that OTECH routinely engages in community work that falls outside of the provision of housing and informs access to educational opportunity for the neighborhood more broadly. Two examples of how OTECHs organizational purpose has directly worked to shape access to educational opportunity are illustrated through the (1) leadership role that OTECH assumed in an organizing effort to save OTRs only remaining public elementary school, and

(2) their continuing engagement in OTE's struggle to save vital community space for children from being developed into high-end condominiums.

Saving Loveland Elementary. The story to save Loveland started in 1999 when Riverside Public Schools (RPS) released a facilities master plan that included indefinitely closing both of the elementary schools that served OTE residents. By 2005, RPS had demolished one of the elementary schools and boarded up the other dilapidated building - former home to Loveland Elementary School. Students and teachers from both schools were sent to a swing space in a neighboring community. Over time, it became clear that both schools were to remain permanently closed. During those years Carrie, OTECH's Executive Director, had maintained a strong relationship with Loveland. In fact, before its closing in OTE she sat on Loveland's Local School Advisory Committee. Through her relationship with the school, with other neighborhood organizations, and with OTECH's residents Carrie knew that the permanent removal of Loveland would be a big blow to the community. So it was under her leadership that OTECH joined forces with two other neighborhood organizations – the Contact Center and the Goodman Neighborhood Center to form OTEPS – Old Town East for Public Schools. OTEPS organized neighborhood residents as well as former Loveland teachers and administrators to prevent the school from closing in OTE. Ruth Jones, an OTE resident and the current Loveland School Parent Engagement Director, remembers that time:

> *Yes, in 2004 they [Loveland] closed and told us we would be back in 2 years but that didn't happen. They scratched it, and so we were moved to up on top of the hill at 2120 Vine… and we stayed up there until 2 years ago…Carrie Nolan, Martha and Will Williams and Cathy and Kate and everyone got together and said we need to go back to the table. By that time a lot of us parents were just disenchanted…we had been fighting, fighting, fighting…but they came up with the group OTEPS and said "we're going back to the table, will you all come again resume the fight?" And so we went back and forth, back and forth with the district and it was like…they'd change their*

mind and so now we're back here. The bigger honchoes didn't think we were coming back. There were people that looked us directly in the face and made it a race issue; "But there's not enough White kids; we're looking for other kids to be in here"? I mean why wouldn't you want, when you talk about citizenship and just good work, to train up the kids that are here. You don't go looking for another set of kids and move them into another school. I heard one lady, "they should just send the kids to Pleasant Ridge where they can get what THEY need." Well, they can get what they need right here. What's at Pleasant Ridge that isn't here? You know? There are incredible resources here and for people that have really worked hard. You got Violet…there are so many different people that…I could call all the names – Kris Johnson, miss Rita Johnson - you know people that have been on the ground. Ava Leery. These ladies have been on the ground…they've been foot soldiers…they've been out here.

OTEPS created a list of demands, shaped by community input and parent surveys, to accompany the reopening of Loveland School. These demands included:

- A high quality and stable teaching staff
- A spacious playground where the children can play
- A larger parent center to increase opportunities and involvement in the school and community
- Smaller class sizes so truly no child will be left behind
- Music classes so the songs in the children's hearts can be expressed
- Art lessons to give them an outlet for their creativity, and a library to encourage learning and thought

Over the next several years OTREPS members attended public hearings, conducted neighborhood tours for teachers, staff and parents to strengthen the school-community relationship and stood on icy street corners holding signs that advocated for the school's reopening. By 2007, the School Board approved the reopening of Loveland as a community school and in 2011 the school officially reopened - meeting most all of OTREPS demands.

We wanted to make sure that once we lost Thompson Park Elementary that we had a public neighborhood school. So our organization, the Contact Center - an advocacy group, the Goodman Neighborhood Center, OTE Community Council and then some of the preservationists (folks who we don't always get along with)…all came together around…and the families too…around preserving Loveland. So that was a long

> *engagement process that we were involved in advocating that Loveland be saved and renovated so it was a huge success….it finally happened. – Carrie, OTECH Executive Director*

OTECH was not motivated economically to advocate for the reopening of Loveland School – but by a broader sense of organizational purpose. As Violet, a resident Board Member puts it; "Because some of those kids lived in OTECH housing we supported them fully...because after they closed Thompson Park that was the only neighborhood school left. So that's why we played a major role."

Saving our Courts! Preserving public space. In September of 2016, OTECH found itself in a similar struggle to preserve valuable public resources. This time, instead of a school, it was a basketball court and community garden slated for development into high-end condos. The courts and garden sit adjacent to Loveland School, in the section of OTE that is most densely populated with families with children. In fact, the courts are partly bordered by OTECH family housing. Though most of the economic redevelopment and gentrification has taken place several blocks south of this area, in 2014 a local housing developer submitted a proposal to the city and neighborhood council that would tear down the courts, the community garden, and some surrounding affordable housing to build 21 market-rate row houses priced between 400,000 and 600,000 dollars each. In partnership with two other neighborhood organizations, parents and local youth, OTECH again found itself at the helm of a community organizing effort. In an open letter to the city council the group wrote: "We can't afford to sacrifice access to safe play, healthy foods, green community space and enrichment opportunities for more private profit. Let's instead commit our efforts to working toward good neighborhood development with community need at heart!" Their alternate proposal included moving the development to another area

of OTE – thus maintaining the courts and garden while also requesting developers to include affordable housing units to serve all residents living in OTE.

Because OTECH is engaged in an array of community work they are particular effective at organizing residents around issues such as this. For example, OTECH runs a program called Children's Art Corner (CAC) – an after school art class for kids in the neighborhood. This youth program was first started in 2007 to provide a creative outlet for the low-income youth in the neighborhood. They meet twice weekly, serve anyone from 5-14 years of age, and are located in a building that sits directly across from Loveland School. Staff has found that through this work they are able to engage and support local youth in peaceful protest demonstrations. In October of 2014, staff from CAC met with youth that attended CAC and others from around the community to silently dribble basketballs outside of a community hearing to protest the development. Additionally, neighborhood youth, supported by CAC staff, have also testified at city and neighborhood council meetings. One evening, during an observation I conducted at CAC, Anna the Resident Services Director from OTECH, brought in a thick stack of CityBeats –a local newspaper. Splayed out on the front cover was the article "New Plans, Old Tensions," an article that detailed the planned redevelopment and the community's concerns. Excitedly, Anna tossed the papers smack in the middle of the worktable that most of the children were seated around, "Y'all made it on the front page!" On the cover was a photo of about 20 boys and girls from the neighborhood silently dribbling basketballs and holding signs in protest outside of a city council meeting where the plans for the redevelopment where being discussed. Many of the children in that photo were sitting there around the table – none of them had yet seen the article. The group spent the next 20 minutes reading excerpts from the article, admiring the photo and

talking about their experience protesting. It was during this time that I heard them voice their fears about the redevelopment proposal and the larger socioeconomic changes taking place in neighborhood. In this instance, OTECH, through its work with CAC, gave children and staff a space to reflect and act on the changing neighborhood conditions – thus acting as a practice for social change.

When I asked Sarah about OTECH's direct involvement in the organizing efforts behind "Save our Courts," she responded by describing some of the actions the youth had participated in as well as some of the cross sector relationships that had resulted from their efforts:

> *It was in April (2015)...sometime in the spring when we took the kids to community council but then actually just a few weeks ago (June 2015) we took the kids to city council where the kids actually spoke in front of Riverside City Council members about why they wanted to keep their courts....I cried...it was amazing. Yeah, but the issue is...we went to OTE Community Council and the kids spoke there and ultimately the OTE community council spoke against the development that was going to knock down the courts....but now the issue is that that plot of land is right in-between OTE and Mount Auburn and I think it might technically be in Mount Auburn and so their community voted for the development even though all the kids that use those courts are from OTE ---those are OTE kids-- the land is technically Mt. Auburn. So the city is like we don't care what OTE thinks because it's technically in Mt Auburn so that's kind of an ongoing issue with that...but yeah Loveland was a big partner with us on that and they still are because they were going to call...it was like $400,000 single family homes that they were going to develop there...which is ridiculous...they were going to call it Loveland Row...without having even talked to Loveland about it at all. None of the teachers new about it...the principal didn't know...so when we were advocating with the kids and the families that live up there and Loveland found out and became really involved with us.*

On display is Sarah's comprehensive understanding of the development issue at hand – that the courts while a neighborhood mainstay are actually sitting on the land of a bordering community. This demonstrates OTECH's ability to explain and navigate sometimes complicated zoning issues in both formal and informal settings to advocate for the community they serve. Furthermore, this also serves as an example of how OTECH's

involvement in such organizing efforts broadens and tightens their relationships with local organizations – one of which is Loveland School. Sarah continues to describe both individual and organizational motivations for becoming involved in the effort:

> *These are smart kids and when we were advocating it was really like ...we want to be able to empower this neighborhood for them to be able advocate for themselves...we don't want to step in and be like we're here to save the day. We want to give these families, these moms, and these kids the opportunity to see how this works and to be able to speak for themselves for their own experience because you know - they're the expert of their own experience. So it was a lesson for me to step back and allow people to advocate for themselves. Technically I'm an outsider, I mean I work there, but technically I'm an outsider so it's not for me to speak for their experiences. I think it was a good experience for everybody. Hopefully the outcome turns out positive.*

OTECH involvement is inspired by an implicit, yet unstated commitment to serve and care for the greater good of its community. For OTECH that means connecting housing to broader social issues – like education, access to public space, health care, employment and transportation. While Sarah is similarly motivated, she also finds personal purpose in her relationship with the youth that she works with.

Ultimately, the community organizing campaign to save Loveland school and improve school climate benefits all children in OTE – not just OTECH residents. Similarly, the organization's fight to preserve the basketball courts and community garden represents a struggle to maintain access to public space for all youth in the community. In these two examples, we can see that the organization's broader purpose serves as a practice to shape macro-level programing to increase an entire community's access educational opportunity. They have an important role in organizing educational opportunity for residents of OTE. If OTECH's work is shaped by a strong sense of organizational purpose and a broad commitment to social justice (not just brick and mortar housing issues), then the next question is, how does OTECH animate this work?

OTECH is embedded in a robust organizational network. OTECH is not organizationally isolated. It is connected to a diverse group of organizations that include universities and businesses, as well as non-profit, for-profit and government institutions (See Figure 1). In fact, they list 35 partners in their program materials. In the combined interviews that I conducted, staff referred to 14 different organizations as being important to their work. These organizations are both large and small and located in OTE, but also regionally. Through my research, I found that these relationships, while serving different purposes, shaped OTECH programming, and brokered vital resources vital to low-income families living in OTE.

OTECH Partners	Relationship
Local and national banks	Funding for housing and community programming
Loveland School	Coordinate youth programing, build community trust
Local neighborhood centers	Community programming, source of volunteers
Social services organizations	Funding for wraparound services, oversee program compliance
Government housing and development agencies	Funding for low-income housing and associated programs, oversees housing compliance
Local housing organizations	Partners on housing projects
Local universities	Funding and community programing, source of volunteers
OTE community center	Partner for programming
Corporations	Funding and volunteers
Local K-12 school	Funding and volunteers
City mayoral office	Political partner, helps with housing and community programming
Other non-profits	Funding and volunteers

Table 4. OTECH partnerships

From its founding, OTECH has created and sustained social ties to a remarkable array of organizations and people within and beyond the OTE community. Martha, one of the founding members of OTECH and a current resident board member notes that this type of

relationship building with other organizations has always been a part of OTECH's culture: "it's how we do things…over time…step by step…and it's about building relationships and that's what makes a neighborhood a good neighborhood I think."

Throughout the years OTECH has maintained a close connection with Goodman Neighborhood Center, Loveland School, the YMCA, local churches and a variety of key social service organizations. For this study, these organizational relationships are noteworthy because of the rich educational resources that they may offer children and families living in OTECH and in the community at large. I found that these groups work together to create a community that not only offers access to a network of programing, but also work to support a broader social movement in OTE. In the following section I explore the motivations behind OTECH's relationships with these organizations and how these relationships work to impact the children and families that they serve. Finally, to illustrate how organizational relationships may evolve over time, I detail findings relating to how one of OTECH's most important connections evolved from an informal to formal partnership.

***OTECH - making connections*.** I found that OTECH is motivated by multiple factors to develop and maintain ties with resource-rich organizations that are driven by internal and external factors. These factors include the aforementioned commitment to social justice, a shared organizational history, OTECH's relationship with residents, and formal partnerships with non-profits, schools, corporations and government agencies.

*A shared history and building trust***.** OTECH has formed some of its strongest relationships with people and organizations through a shared history. All of the OTECH leadership staff and board members that I interviewed have worked with the organization

for twenty plus years. Carrie, the Executive Director of OTECH has worked with the organization for twenty-one years; Joe the Director of Housing Services for twenty-four years; Violet, the board president has served on the board for twenty years, and Martha an OTECH board member has worked with the organization for thirty-five years. Similarly, other community members that I spoke with also have roots in OTE that go back decades. Ruth Jones, the Director of the Parent Engagement Center at Loveland School has lived in OTE for fifty-five years. Dan, a local professor who is closely allied with OTECH has been working in the community since the early 1980's. These individuals that make up OTECH and other neighborhood institutions are not just isolated to working within the bounds or confines of their organizational duties, but they are tied to a greater community - through friendship, past employment experiences and the many formal and informal titles that they hold. For example, Ruth Jones, is not only the Director of the Parent Engagement Center at Loveland but she is also a grandmother to children who attend the school, a resident of OTECHs, a board member of the Goodman Neighborhood Center and an "old friend" to Martha. Martha is an original founder of the aforementioned Citizen's Movement, a cofounder of the Goodman neighborhood center, the Board Secretary of the Goodman Neighborhood Center, an OTECH Board member and a resident of OTECH. Here, Martha explains the significance of this shared history:

> *I think it's a movement that created our CDC and then if you think of it [the movement] as a wheel…and the hub of that wheel is our belief of basic human rights and no matter if you have penny in your pockets doesn't mean you don't have good ideas about your community or want good things for your kids and through that movement we created the spokes in that wheel to strengthen it…which means these various grass roots organizations. Obviously the Drop-In center, Persons Homeless, The Homeless Coalition is where the homeless people have a voice. And then Goodman was sort of, what I've always considered, the education and art wing of our movement; and then Old Town East Community Housing obviously is that - I mean you gotta have homes for people to live in if you're going to do anything. So we all have this relationship*

together. I think Old Town East Community Housing can claim the work that Goodman does because we're all part of the same movement, you know? So Goodman's done a lot and then Anna at OTECH - she gets called on by the Goodman Center to help do community journey's to help people wanting to understand about the neighborhood issues - about what's going on - to really know the picture about poverty and what's happening in the schools. So we call on her, because she's got a lot of concrete information around families and things like that. And obviously, when we first started, what the neighborhood people wanted was a homework room. So Goodman neighborhood center opened up a homework center and then we closed when they started this whole new plan they started creating what they call community schools. So then schools….there were no after school homework rooms. We did it, but now the school doing it. But what Goodman does – they facilitate a writing circle with 5th grade girls - our community ed coordinator does that.

OTECH is embedded in a community, rich with organizations, that has spent years cultivating relationships with neighborhood residents and organizations. By being a part of this organizational field, OTECH is able to capitalize off of the confidence and trust that residents may feel towards one or more of these groups – thus facilitating the brokerage of important OTECH resources. Consider Ruth's experience and overall impression of the Goodman Neighborhood Center:

For a 10 year stretch in the 90s I was home bound…ok…a long time asthmatic….had diabetes develop…you know severe issues. But my kids they had a place away from home which was Goodman… they played mallet, steel drum band and they were in the camps in the summer…they were in the homework center there. This was in the 90s….so when I was sick I knew that my kids could leave here and go to another place that was just like home. But I had connections with Martha and Miss Ingram, Sista Mary, Sister Carrie, Julie…you know people that cared for my kids and knew my situation. When I couldn't be there, they were there…you know what I'm saying…that's what I'm talking about community involvement. So I knew where my kids were I knew they were safe you know and so all of that it really matters you know and my kids have grown up…they're well rounded you know and everything. So I'm grateful for that village experience.

The Goodman Center served as a safe haven for Ruth during particularly challenging life events – it became a place she learned to trust. Her involvement with the Goodman Center also networked her to other key organizations – one of which was OTECH. In fact, Ruth now resides in one of OTECH buildings and through her position as the Director of Parent

Engagement at Rothenburg – Ruth regularly refers homeless families to OTECH for assistance with housing issues. She also encourages neighborhood kids to attend OTECH's youth programing – the Children's Art Corner. Because of the strong history and organizational network that they are embedded within, OTECH is able to capitalize off of the trust that partner organizations cultivate with the people that they serve – thus helping to create what Ruth has characterized as a "village experience."

Cultivating organizational relationships based on residents' need. In addition to this shared history that connects OTECH to other neighborhood organizations and people, OTECH has also formed connections to institutions based on resident interests and needs. For example, the informal relationship that Anna and Christine have formed with the school has been, in part, cultivated through their work with the children who attend Children's Art Corner:

> *So we have a connection with the school. It's hard to define. We try to go to different events that our kids are at…we try to know some of their teachers. If we have a mom come to us and say their child's having an issue we might offer to go and assist at the school or reach out if you know the kid needs extra support, whether it be therapy or speech therapy or some sort of special-ed thing…we help advocate on that front. So that's often how we're interacting with the school. Years ago…so there used to be an elementary school over here near Washington park…that was torn down and the neighborhood had to fight to save Loveland up here so OTE was involved in that effort to save the school. So that was an advocacy way that OTECH was involved…so there's still some hang over from those, you know, connections and I think we're allies for them. But I think day to day it's really just trying to have relationships with some teachers. CAC is right across the street from the school so some of the teachers know about us and they can send a kid over if they think the kid might benefit from being in our programming. One of the forth grade teachers, her names is Katie, she volunteers at CAC. She was a Northburgh student too…she did the urban residency program…she teaches at Loveland and she lives in the neighborhood and she volunteers with CAC. I don't know how she manages to spend so much time with kids but she does…she's amazing. So there's some cool dynamics there. –Anna, Resident Services Coordinator*

> *Like the last couple years on parent-teacher conference day, which is kind of like an open house, we'll go to that just to kind of introduce ourselves to a couple of teachers. Yeah, just saying that not necessarily that you're going to call us - but hey this kid is in*

> *your class and he comes to our art program and we know his mom. So you know there's a relationship there. – Christine, Youth Development Coordinator*

From both Anna and Christine we also learn that the relationship with the school was formed and is supported from their shared experience in advocating for Loveland to stay open, from their shared desire to meet the needs of the children and families they serve, and from the informal relationships that have developed between teachers and OTECH staff. Additionally, this connection with the school also means that they are aware of any significant changes happening within the school walls:

> *Within the last year we've tried to develop more of that familiarity with the administration and their community resource person and their social worker...just to strengthen that availability or that access. So that does come into play. I think that Loveland has been struggling with a lot of change so the last couple years…I don't know how long she was actually there...it was a couple of years I think, but her name was Abby...maybe...or maybe Ms. Krueger for sure. She was the previous principal. She had a really good reputation. The school was struggling academically, socially, there was a lot of violence...just a lot of trauma happening in the population and so that comes out in school and so they brought her into kind of hopefully, turn it around and she did a really, really, really, really, really great job at forming relationships with parents...at gaining their trust...at building confidence in the kids. Test scores were going up...like a lot of positives and then very...I think this is maybe a common story...she did such a great job that she was asked to take a higher position I think in like North Dakota and she left to take it...and the new principal…you know...that's a really hard position to walk in to...especially when you are less familiar with the history or the culture that's been developing...like the previous history...like again just that disruption of some stability that's being built in the community...that disruption can be like a rug being pulled out. So yeah, I think this current academic year I think has been pretty tumultuous from what I've heard from teachers....maybe some back fighting...I know that kind of with that there was also this big retirement issue...there was like a change in the way that teacher's retirement funds were going to happen and it basically was like if you retired this year...then you were going to get more benefits, So a ton of huge long-term stakeholder teachers left which is really hard.* – Christine, Youth Development Coordinator

Furthermore, OTECH sees their own mission to keep families stably housed as being uniquely linked with the Loveland's mission. Joe, the Director of Housing Services, explains:

> *Yeah, I think we just try to keep our finger on the pulse of the school because we know the school is a huge resource in this neighborhood…if we don't have a school that's*

> *doing well and doing good for our families we won't have our families here. And we want them here so I, yeah, I am a big fan of Loveland and it doing well.*

OTECH staff also expressed a sense of pride in the school:

> *Since the renovation…that school is beautiful…I think the kids are just so excited to be there…it's clean, it's new, it's what they deserve to have…it's special…it's just great…its what our kids need. The renovation was really exciting…it's gorgeous. And to have such a solid, sturdy presence on a block that struggles…you know it's just really strong to have a school there. – Anna, Resident Services Coordinator*

Among my interviews with the school staff, I found that the school was aware of the housing work that OTECH was engaged with, but not necessarily their community-wide social service programing and organizing. For example, 3 out of 4 of the school staff I interviewed knew about Children's Art Corner – the children that attended, the adults that staffed it, and the program hours – but they did not know that it was run by OTECH. Similarly, in a my interview with the Loveland principal I found that while she regularly attended community council meetings at OTECH's home office, alongside OTECH staff, she only loosely associated OTECH with those meetings. In one instance she stumbled when asked where the council meets: "OTE community council meets at the HUB…the Findlay Street neighborhood…no not Findlay Street…the Old Town East neighborhood housing center…we call it the Hub." While she may not be aware of OTECH's involvement in certain programs and activities she is knowledgeable about the housing work that they do: "When we have parents who have needs…or if we're finding that there are some unfair practices happening that impact our families then I definitely have them [OTECH] get involved right away to see if there is anything that can be done…so that we don't have families that are being displaced unfairly and things of that nature." By virtue of their community-wide informal and flexible programing, OTECH may struggle with promoting the functions of their organization to key community leaders and organizations. Yet despite this, Rita still

views the work that OTECH does as being critically important to the lives of the student's she serves:

> *They are a critical organization in this neighborhood and I'm hoping that they're impact will continue to make sure that there is diversity in this neighborhood... economically...not just looking at skin color...but economic diversity and the type of housing and development that happens in this community...there should be mixed development in this community...I believe that was the goal when this whole revitalization happened in OTE...I want that to continue to be the focus and the goal because otherwise it directly impacts my families. You know a lot of my families need low-income housing and they deserve high quality housing...just because they can't pay high market rent doesn't mean that they don't deserve to be a part of this community or remain a part of this community and enjoy the changes that are happening...the changes were long overdue...people here worked so hard for this.*

Without displaying much awareness of the wrap around services and community organizing that OTECH does, Rita expresses the importance of student's access to affordable housing – especially in light of neighborhood gentrification. This highlights the importance of the housing work that OTECH is engaged in as it relates to schools.

Thus far, we have seen how resident's educational needs shape the work of OTECH and thus the organizational relationships and brokerage that OTECH shares with Loveland School. In turn, these organizational relationships serve as a way to connect both the OTECH and the residents with important resources.

OTECH is connected to an array of organizations. Lastly, as a mid-size successful non-profit, OTECH has developed a robust network of relationships with businesses and private and public institutions that provide resources essential to OTECH's work. Some of these relationships not only fulfill the OTECH programmatic needs but also serve to further the mission of partner organizations. For example, OTECH has a working relationship with several Catholic high schools and universities in the area. These schools, which are service oriented in nature, organize volunteers to clean and paint low-income housing units,

beautify vacant lots, deliver furniture to low-income residents, secure donations for basic household items, help plan holiday parties, and organize food drives. OTECH sees several benefits to this type of relationship – it helps them gain support from the broader community, trim program costs, and provided much needed services to their residents.

OTECH also forms relationships with outside organizations to fulfill grant requirements that compel OTECH to form ties with other organizations. For example, while the relationship with the YMCA Camp was first initiated informally through the hard work of a staff member – it has been maintained and broadened over the years to fulfill on-going grant requirements. Similarly, as an AmeriCorps host organization, the AmeriCorps Vista member forges relationships (as per grant requirements) with local businesses and community leaders. On the housing side, a multifamily building that OTECH renovated and opened in 2013 was awarded funds by City, State and Federal agencies and a non-profit foundation. Each of these awards come with requirements – some of which ensure that families have access to health care, educational programing, mental health and nutritional services. As is often the case, the amount of grant money awarded does not cover the cost for OTECH to offer these services in-house. Rather, they are encouraged and expected to form relationships (where needed) with organizations that have an established track record of offering these services to the community. Consequently, for this housing development, OTECH has formed new ties with a health care provider, church and education based non-profit.

In an environment where OTECH receives and offers resources through formal and informal ties cultivated through a shared sense history, relationships with residents and program funding requirements, the neighborhood also seems to play an important role in

shaping the connections OTECH develops. Large non-profits, corporations with a focus on giving programs, and government institutions all look to a neighborhood's defining characteristics as a way to help funnel their resources. In most cases, these groups identify the neighborhoods most in need and send their resources there. Over the years OTE has demonstrated a lot of need. In 2013, in the four Census tracts that makeup OTE, 80% of children were living in households earning less than $24,250 for a family of four. These high poverty rates, combined with OTE's unique neighborhood characteristics attract volunteers, and public and private grant monies from across the city. Thus influencing OTE's organizational density. OTE is a neighborhood that is rich in organizations, as Anna describes:

> *How I see it, you know, is that we have someone come in here and they rent from us and they go to the Contact Center, they go to welfare rights meetings and then they you know…walk to Our Daily Bread to get a meal if they're short and they go to the to the Food Pantry…that's strength. That's their network. That they're struggling through their poverty and they're surviving…that's strength…*

These organizations create a supportive web of services for persons living in poverty.

Gentrification and residents' fears. While OTE is a neighborhood that is rich with organizations that help some of Riverside's poorest residents – it is also neighborhood in flux. Wealthier White residents are moving in and displacing poor Black residents. From 2000 to 2015 OTE went from being 75% Black to just 50% (see Figure 8). With those new residents, restaurants, bars, stores and businesses that serve higher income earners are also pushing their way into the neighborhood- thus changing the organizational makeup of the neighborhood.

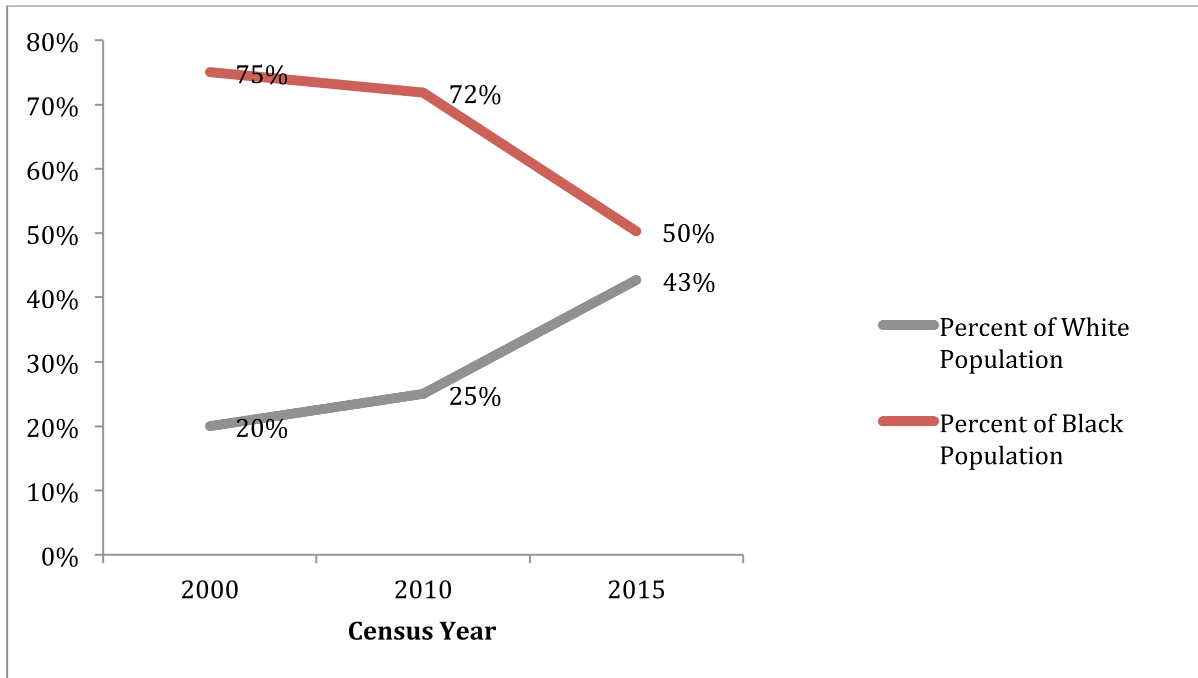

Figure 8. Decreasing Black population in OTE.

In 2014 and 2015 OTE lost two of its largest and longest standing organizations that serve the neighborhood's poor and homeless. One had been in OTE for 90 years and the other for over 40 years. These moves, coupled with the changing population, and the development of high-end storefronts, has not gone unnoticed by OTECH staff and residents. In every interview that I conducted, OTECH staff, school staff, and community members voiced concerns over this gentrification. I found that gentrification in OTE has created a mobilizing sense of urgency among organizations and key actors to collectively organize to preserve affordable housing, services and business for the existing low-income community. Alternately, it has also pushed some organizations out and created a sense of mistrust between the community and OTECH. OTECH is after all a landlord – the largest in OTE. The following quotes from staff illustrate how this fear sometimes manifests itself in their work with residents:

> *I think that there is a fear; well I know there's a fear. My residents always ask me "when is our building going to be sold?" And I always tell them we will not sell your building. But gentrification creates that fear in low-income people so I think that the fact that their landlord can tell them "you are safe here, we want you to be here…we will be here…so you will be here" is…well, sometimes those words don't mean enough because that fear is really strong. -Anna, Resident Services Coordinator*

> *I think our families have extra challenges because of all the gentrification happening in the neighborhood. It's really hard because we, as an agency, are trying to stay alive and thrive in OTE when almost all the other affordable housing agencies have been pushed out...the Drop-In Center has been pushed out...which is huge...and so our families, some of them, you know, will call and say "when are you going to kick us out?"..some of them feel more secure...like they know we're not going anywhere. Sarah, OTECH Intern*

> *One of the things I wanted to say about relationships with the residents is…it's interesting how we have to reassure residents fairly regularly - maybe every couple of months or so it'll come up like, "we heard you're selling the building - are we going to have to move?"…so that happens and just again we say "No, we're not. We're here with you. That's not what we're going to do." Just seeing all that change with all the buildings with new people…they want to know "are you gonna be one of the people that sells the building?" So that happens…more and more. And we keep saying…no we're not…you know us…but they see it happening to other buildings. – Carrie, Executive Director*

Staff are on the front lines working hard to counter this discourse – resident trust and engagement are fundamentally important to providing residents with housing and wrap-around services. Yet, residents are seeing their neighbors move out, stores that they once frequented close, and organizations that they once depended on, move. Of course, the neighborhood's children are also impacted by the neighborhood change:

> *Well, first and foremost it is a direct impact on the stress and the strain of what's taking place...nothing's wrong with change...that's inevitable...change is going to happen anywhere you are. What affects us is the changes that are happening that are impacting our families...it's bringing a lot of stress and economic strain...and emotion. Stress on the families because they are uncertain about what's going to happen...it's bringing a lot of fear and then there is the lack of communication on some fronts...not all fronts…that the left is not talking to the right...some in the community may not be communicating with the school...to come in and ensure our families that they're just trying to enhance what's going on...not just erase....so that's the fear that's taking place...it's stressful because some families are being displaced...that impacts schooling...that affects numbers...that disrupts families ...there's definitely an impact on*

> *the families here. - Angela, Loveland School Community Learning Center Resource Coordinator*

> *Yeah, there's a lot of gentrification and kids definitely pick up on that. There's not enough adequate housing for families and a lot of kids are being moved out because people are buying up their buildings and renovating them and making them very, very expensive. So there's just like a lot of transition. – Sarah, Intern*

Rita, Loveland's school principal adds:

> *The impact is really very emotional and traumatic that I can see. There are lots of things that are beautiful that are happening in OTE where our families don't necessarily feel welcome…they feel excluded. There are developments that are happening and their voices are not being heard or they're not being asked their opinion of what they think. Like the basketball court developments. So you know I've seen it have a very traumatic effect on my kids and families.*

When identifying the mistrust and trauma that residents undergo as a result of gentrification, one has to consider the racial composition of OTECH itself. As previously noted the racial mismatch between the organization leadership, staff, and community introduces important complexities. One finding of particular note was that OTECH newer staff and volunteers often resemble the gentrifying population that are displacing poor residents of color. For example, Christine, a young White woman who grew up in an upper middle class suburb of Riverside, began volunteering with OTECH during college and shortly thereafter was hired at the organization's Resident Engagement Coordinator. She has since moved into the neighborhood. As a resident of OTE and an employee of OTECH she is uniquely aware of the effects of gentrification:

> *So, our families are dealing with intense racism...like they talk about wanting to go to some of these new restaurants but they can't afford it or if they try to afford it they will experience all kinds of discrimination when they try to access these things. On top of living in poverty most of our moms are survivors of domestic violence. So on top of all those things you have these intricate layers of oppression that have formed by strangers coming in to the neighborhood by making the people who live there feel like they're strangers. I would say that those are some or the more unique challenges that our families face specifically living in the neighborhood that they're in. – Christine, Youth Development Coordinator*

What is interesting here is that Christine identifies racism and gentrification as issues that have profound effects on residents' lives, yet does not reflect on how her own race and socio-economic background might complicate the work of OTECH. In addition, as I was pouring through materials from OTECH I found photos taken – all from the last five years – of different events hosted by OTECH. In these photos, I saw evidence of camaraderie and friendship between the staff and community, but also evidence of a stark racial divide. For example, in late October of 2016 OTECH hosted a campfire at one of the neighborhood community garden plots. On a cool dusk evening, residents gathered around a bonfire to make smores. Before sitting down around the fire, the photo taken captured people assembling smores and pouring drinks at a table. On one side of the table stood five young White staff members and volunteers from OTECH, on the other side stood fifteen community members (men, women, and children) - all Black. Rita, the Loveland school principal puts it this way:

> *How are you not contributing to gentrification when everyone who is moving in is coming from affluent White homes? So, you're saying your immersing them into this community, but they're just contributing to the issues…*

Violet, OTECH's own board president and resident expresses nervousness about being pushed out:

> *People that moved out feel pushed out...and they see who's coming in and they feel bad about it...but you know...I may be getting pushed out too...because of the way things are going...we'll see its a lot to absorb.*

This research exposes a disconnect between the organization and the community. OTECH leadership, when asked to reflect on organizational race issues, were initially surprised by my questioning but did acknowledge the need to diversify leadership and staff roles. Martha, a White resident board member and founder of OTECH, noted that they engage

residents in leadership roles within the organization (such as resident board member positions) as a way to give residents voice and power. Martha explains:

> *Having neighborhood residents present reminds you of our mission. It obviously, when we're talking about issues around safety on the streets, community issues then neighborhood residents have a lot to say about that. It just reminds you why we're doing what we're doing. If they're not there I think you distance yourself from reality or something.*

Carrie, OTECH's executive director, also notes that resident board members, who make up half of OTECH's board, "keep it real. We learn what's going on, on the street level and what the real concerns are and what the real needs are. I guess that's what they bring. They keep us in check and focused on what's really important." While these resident board members lend an important voice that helps shape the direction of the organization they cannot make up for the lack of diversity among OTECH's leadership and staff.

Gentrification and neighborhood organizations. Joe, Anna, and Christine note that gentrification has caused a shift in the neighborhood's organizational makeup and will likely impact the work that they do:

> *Yeah, I think we take it for granted that there's this network…and now we're kind of not going to take it for granted…you know the Drop-In Center is moving and City Gospel and so when they're gone…having those two big shelters gone will really, really change things. You know, I think Joseph House is a place for Homeless vets…I think they're selling some of their property. The Theresa Community Center was there for a hundred and whatever 15 years and they did a lot of youth programming and they closed last year. There will definitely be some change. The Contact Center…they're really just making it….and a lot of folks who've been private developers have said that that's a big weakness to this neighborhood. A lot of folks have said that the big problem with Old Town East is that you have so many poor people….and you have all these organizations that are catering to them. So they used that thinking to move the Drop-In Center and City Gospel…so it's just…you know…yeah. We don't value this network of groups nearly as much as they deserve. – Anna, Resident Services Coordinator*

> *Yeah, I think a lot of folks had their start really in the late 70's early 80s…and there's been a lot of organizations that have come and gone too…a lot of small mom and pop organizations that may have been around in the 80s or 90s and aren't here*

anymore…a lot of it is due to resources…there aren't as many community development resources as there were in the 80s…so there's a lot less housing groups. There used to be probably 6 different housing groups in the neighborhood, now there might be three.. – Joe, Director of Housing Services

While there are kids who are struggling and facing the same types of issues it's so much harder to draw them out and to identify them and to see them and vice versa for them to see you. In the Washington park area...where most of the gentrification is taking place….and it's kind of figuring out how we can draw people out and gain access into their spaces in a way that doesn't feel like we're infringing on them. So yeah, that's kind of a different challenge. But we know that kids are still wanting things to do. -Christine, Youth Development Coordinator

Here we see that the neighborhood context has the ability to influence the organizational ties to which residents, embedded in OTECH have access to. Additionally, as previously noted, gentrification combined with a racial mismatch between the organization and community may also erode the trust that residents feel towards OTECH. In all, as access to important resources begins to shrink in OTE, the work in which OTECH is engaged becomes even more vital for residents.

Benefits derived from organizational connections. OTCH offers direct social services and programming to its residents but also refers people to organizations. The connections that OTECH cultivates and sustains with such a diverse organizational network may present distinct advantages for families embedded in OTECH. These relationships help residents acquire an array of information, and access to programs and services - such as access to youth programing, free health care, food, employment information, substance abuse counseling, domestic abuse counseling, and utility payment support. In one such case OTECH, recognizing its own programmatic limitations in the face of community need for more youth programing, partnered with organizations to provide residents with access to a wider array of youth services:

Partnerships are a huge part of what we do. Even for this, the youth engagement

thing...what we've done is...well one of our interns pulled this initial list of all the available youth programs in the neighborhood…we go through, contact them, find out if there is a fee associated, what age groups, what days they meet...like get the initial information, put it into a packet. We made that list available to our residents...we hosted a meeting to go through them to identify...do you think your kids would be interested in all of these? And we connected them to these organizations. So we're not necessarily providing the programming. But, like, for example two of families that came, both of them wound up being pretty ready to engage with things. Like they both signed their kids up for a spoken word program…kind of hip hop program. So that definitely relies strongly on us forming a partnership with that organization and then if they go...we'll follow up with the kids and that program and then that's how this other partnership develops. If it's strong enough where they say hey, "we recognize that you're sending 40 kids to YMCA summer camp."..which we are now every summer..."how about we provide some scholarship for your kids so you're not having to work so hard to come up with that money?" and we're like "YES! That would be amazing." So yeah, we're working on really strengthening the summer camp partnership too.- Christine, Youth Development Coordinator

Not only do staff connect residents to programing and organizations, but through this work they also connect residents to each other. Furthermore, they follow up with the kids and families about the quality of the program. Thus, vetting the programs quality for future participants.

Through my interviews I found that OTECH regularly provides supportive referrals or collateral contacts to their residents. Meaning that once a staff member refers a person to an organization for a specific service – OTECH follows up with both the resident and the organization. Carrie, OTECH's Executive Director explains:

There's all the support that goes with that, because just a referral sometimes just isn't enough…and then depending on what it is, so like Community Action Agency which provides energy assistance during the winter months…it depends on the person…maybe a referral would be enough…but sometimes it's not because the system is so hard to access. So I think there's a lot of advocacy that goes with that and helping people get their appointments and getting people to their appointments. Sometimes the referral's enough and sometimes it takes a lot more.

OTECH recognizes the importance of referring residents out to organizations because, in many cases, their staff are ill equipped to handle some of the life issues that residents are

struggling with. The following quotes reflect OTECH's desire to connect residents with meaningful services:

> *As closely as we can develop relationships with clients, it's also important for our own...I think as professionals...to acknowledge our own limitations and roles...that's really important...like for me to say...even if this person is disclosing to me...that doesn't mean I'm a therapist or that I'm qualified to fix this situation...I can just kind of take that information and hopefully advocate for and empower them to connect to those services. So it's kind of like standing in this in-between...I would say almost all referral based...technically we can acknowledge that there is an in-between stage of somebody who isn't quite ready to engage. So yeah we guide them to resources that help with...mental health is a big issue, recovery, substance abuse, like a lot of those things...it's sort of being the reception point when people are ready to engage with those issues and then to encourage them to move on into those resources. – Christine, Youth Development Coordinator*

> *You kind of learn which organizations do a better job at providing their services...like we might have kind of a short list… we trust these agencies more or we know I'm not just sending this person down an endless path because that can be really daunting and obviously kind of discouraging if you're like oh yeah, call this number and that number is out of service. So I think that's kind of on us to be up on that because its also a really, really quickly evolving thing. That's actually a big challenge – like the list that I was given when I started of community resources...let's say it was mental health community resources...that's totally different now...and that's time that gets taken out of your day...where you know you kind of feel like you're chasing your tail because you're constantly having to find the new resource...or this place is tapped out...where are the funds? Where is the place that previously no one was calling because now they have more funds? So we try and take on some of that burden so that it doesn't fall back on our residents who are already struggling with so much because it can be so discouraging...understandably...so that's a huge thing. – Anna, Resident Services Coordinator*

OTECH acts as an effective broker to the residents and the community it serves because it generates useful connections with organizations and offers supportive referrals. Nothing illustrates how these organizational connections may impact residents' lives better than Monica's story.

Monica, a Black single-mother to a six year old and three grown children first landed in OTE as an addict. Her journey in this community, she explained, began eleven years ago at the Drop-In Center – a homeless shelter that was originally started by some of the very

same founders of OTECH. Because the two organizations have always maintained a close working relationship it was during her time at the Drop-In Center that she learned about OTECH. In fact, a social worker, soon after Monica's arrival to the homeless shelter, connected her with an OTECH staff member who was able to find Monica a place in one of their supportive housing buildings. This building, still in operation, reserves 20 apartments for homeless people that are recovering from substance abuse issues. They offer on-site counseling in addition to on-site Narcotics Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous meetings. Stable housing, coupled with supportive services helped Monica get back on her feet. She's been eight years sober and now lives in OTECH family housing with her youngest daughter. I asked Monica how she managed to recover so successfully. She said it was through the help of social service agencies and faith; "By the help of organizations, the 12 step program and I'm a spiritual person and so, you know, I believe I was favored and saved from the horrors of my choices and bad decisions. You know I was spared. My life was spared." About a year ago Monica was hired by OTECH to serve as an Americorps Vista member to help residents connect with local employment opportunities. This means that Monica is able to live, work and send her daughter to school in OTE. She explains, "I just walk to get around 'cause I live on East Burrough Ave. So, OTECH is right across the street from Thompson Park. And how I get there is I walk. My 6 year old goes to St. Louis. So I walk her to school come back home and get ready to come to work as an AmeriCorps Vista member here [OTECH] and when I'm done with work I walk to go pick her up." Even prior to Monica working with OTECH, she accessed vital resources, available through OTECH, that helped keep her stabilized:

> *Before me joining the AmeriCorps Vista, I used to come here and get help with job searching and resumes and you know that sort of thing. They go the extra mile to help*

you be comfortable and to succeed or to help you with any need that you need for a person with low income...yeah they go the extra mile to make you feel loved and a part of it, you know.

Along with access to social services, employment and housing, Monica has also been able to choose what she feels is the best schooling option for her daughter. Instead of sending her to Loveland Elementary, she sends her child to the local catholic school:

Well, I picked it out because I new it would have smaller classes and she's super shy and so I knew I liked the public school which is right across the street from me...but there are more students in a class there and I didn't want her to get left behind you know. She's pretty smart but she doesn't talk like in group discussions and all that. I just picked it because it was cheaper by me being on lower income...I don't have to pay the full amount of tuition. I got a scholarship for my daughter.

In addition to choosing the school for her child Monica also has the ability to choose from an array of extra curricular activities available through OTECH:

Every program that I know of I try to get my daughter involved in...like OTECH has their own program for children...like the art class...so she goes to that and then there's the Goodman Center that has piano lessons and she does that. She just started that and this will be her 5th or 6th class we're coming up on...but I know OTECH also helps some of the residents children to get in to extra curricular activities. They go around and get on the internet to see what the kids would like to do...the parents come in and tell them what they kids would like to do and then OTECH helps fund some of it...

In this case, for Monica and her daughter, being embedded in OTECH has meant important access to supportive and educational services such as schools, employment, extracurricular activities, and housing.

Relationship with local University. One of the more interesting and perhaps substantive relationships that OTECH has developed is one with a public university located about an hour north of OTE. Over the years this relationship evolved from an informal to formal, programmatic partnership that now exists between the university and OTECH. This relationship sheds light on the observable practices that help form and shape the informal and formal networks in which OTECH engages.

In the early 1980s a young, newly hired professor of architecture – with a focus on urban design – went out in search of a community to study and work within. Naturally, drawn to both the community and to the incredible inventory of historic buildings, Dan found his way to OTE.

> *I went down there, and obviously as an architect I was very fascinated with the architecture. This is an amazing environment, but I was also looking for controversy - because that's who I am. I figured that there was going to be a struggle in this neighborhood - over its future. I could tell it was a very vibrant area. At the time, in 1981 it had an interesting half and half mixture...half White and half Black. I kind of started asking around and going down regularly to OTE and I found out that there was this new planning process put in place to generate a new comprehensive plan for OTE...it started in 1980 and in early '81 I started attending those meetings.*

For the next ten years Dan continued to visit OTE in a professional, yet ad-hoc manner. He would work on different neighborhood projects and bring students down for site visits. Over time, he began forming ties to local people and organizations – one of which was OTECH. In fact, for a period of time he even sat on the organization's board. Meanwhile, in the mid 1990s he had a group of students who expressed a strong interest in applying what they were learning in the classroom to the world around them.

> *So I brought these students down and we met with Carrie [OTECH Executive Director] and the construction manager. These students wanted to do a little design-build project and so we were shown this little apartment that they couldn't seem to keep rented and you know, "is there something you can do with this?" was the charge. We walked in and we understood why they couldn't keep it rented - it was a rabid worn series of rooms that you're kind of like "what the hell is going on here?" So the students went to town; they had full power to do what ever the hell they wanted. There was no budget...I mean I think students paid for things themselves...but they also tried to do their own fundraising and we kind of let them go. We were down there every Monday, Wednesday and Friday and at the end of the semester we went down to take a look at everything and everyone kind of said "wow, this is really kind of cool and we need to keep doing this."*

In short, this informal, mutually beneficial relationship between Dan and OTECH marked the beginning of a formal design-build program that Dan founded with the support of the

University administration and the local OTE community. Over the last decade, the original design-build program has evolved in to a full fledge, brick and mortar, University Community Engagement Center. Students, from all different disciplines, spend the course of a semester living in OTE – taking a full course load at the Engagement Center while also interning with neighborhood organizations. For example, Education majors spend the semester living in OTE and teaching at Loveland; Architecture and Interior Design majors work with OTECH to design and build units for low-income renters, and Social Work majors are matched with any number of social service organizations that serve the neighborhood residents. OTECH not only provides these students with housing, but also rents one of their buildings to the University to serve as their Engagement Center – a place where students, professors and community members coalesce for classes, the sharing of meals, neighborhood meetings and even retreats.

OTECH has played a key role in the development of this Center, not only by providing a physical space for the University, but by also serving as a gateway organization that has connected Dan and other professors and students to people and organizations. Dan notes:

> *Well, OTECH houses the Center and the residency program that we have had since 2006. We've also still continued with the design-build studio - so we are living there and we're getting 25 - 30 hours a week of this design-build work. All except for one, no two projects, OTECH has been the total source of the buildings that we've worked on or in. So OTECH is probably our most significant community partner.*

While this center has provided students and professors with a space to learn that cannot be reproduced on the University's campus, it has also linked the OTE community with resources that work to improve the living conditions of families and children. Thus mutually benefiting both organizations. In the Center's own words they aim to "further a

progressive social transformation" for students, professors and the community. One way in which the Center does this is by actively engaging with residents. For example, in a recent project students from the design-build program surveyed residents in one area of OTE and found that people needed a Laundromat. They worked with residents to design the space and eventually build a Laundromat in one of OTECH's buildings. Additionally, along with OTECH and several other neighborhood organizations, the Center sponsors retreats to the Highlander Research and Education Center. In fact, in the winter of 2015 they were able to send over 20 people – Loveland teachers, Northburgh University students and professors, community members, and OTECH staff. This relationship that OTECH has developed with the University has helped galvanize support and build trust among the community and other stakeholders to help sustain a broader social movement towards creating a just community in OTE.

Not only has this relationship helped to maintain and build upon a broad social movement but it has also brought real educational-related resources to OTECH, the neighborhood, and school. In fact, the Children's Art Corner – the after school program ran by OTECH – was first started by a student intern that worked out of the Center. Martha, from OTECH recalls:

> *It was through the Engagement Center – a University student in 2007 - they started doing art stuff with kids in the neighborhood and eventually it became known as the Children's Art Corner. So that has really grown from 2007 'til now and you know they write grants and we have a paid coordinator for that, but you know it started off as an all volunteer effort because they have to do community service when they're doing the residency program. Well, we were supportive of that. It's really grown and I think that the families feel that we really care…you know, the kids get to go on camping trips and they have block club parties and they build relationships.*

Beyond serving as an incubator for educational programing and directly shaping the quality of affordable housing OTECH is able to offer its residents, the Engagement Center

has also connected new people with valuable skill sets to the OTE community. Two of people I interviewed – the Resident Services Coordinator at OTECH and a teacher at Loveland school - had actually been students that attended the University Engagement Center. The following quotes illustrate the impact that the Center had on them:

> *It [University] wasn't really what I wanted…it wasn't challenging as a social work student…so I sought out something that was a little more real. I found this residency program where students live in the neighborhood for a semester and I signed up to do that. I came down here in the fall of '07 and did my internship here at OTECH. At the end of the semester I decided to stay in the neighborhood so I commuted back and forth to school so I could keep living here. And then after I graduated, about 9 months later, a position opened up at OTECH that I had interned with…this neighborhood is just really great, really strong people….I was really drawn to it. – Anna, OTECH Resident Services Coordinator*

> *After my sophomore year I did a summer emersion program - that's where you live in OTE and have to work with different community organizations that you pretty much intern at. The ones I interned at were daycares and the first few weeks...I was like, "This is dumb. I don't want to live here, I don't want to be here." But, by the end of my third week I was like I love this community so much. Yeah, and then at one of the places I was offered a paid job for the rest of the summer so I ended up working there for the summer and I ended up living and working with OTECH as well. So I actually lived in one of their buildings and also worked. I probably lived a block away from where I worked....it was really great. So that summer I ended up falling more in love with the community....my neighbors, my students...and was like ok I'm probably going to student-teach at Loveland.– Katie, Loveland Teacher*

Katie, the Loveland teacher who also volunteers at the Children's Art Corner goes on to explain how living and teaching in the same neighborhood has shaped her teaching experience:

> *It's also a challenge because I don't really have that much separation. But, it's also beautiful because some parents...I'll seem them at the grocery store and they'll be like "wait, why are you at this grocery store?" And I'm like, "Because I live here." And so then we get to talk about that and I think it just makes kids understand that I'm here. During the residency program we would have Sunday night dinners with everyone in the program. The people who cooked each week got to invite community members that they knew and so some of the students...well there's one particular family...who I invited to come to dinner. So some of the kids have had dinner with me. Last summer I took some CAC students to my Dad's house...I lived north of Meyers and they like camping at my dads...he lives on a farm. I think that most parents that just trust me*

> *now. One, they trust me because I work at Loveland...but they also trust me...the more see me as a peer rather than I'm just a teacher because I'm their neighbor. I've been around for a while so other parents will vouch for me. Like the mom of that family that I invited over for dinner called me one day after school...usually her kids would stay after with me to help me clean or just hang out and she called and I was like "hey how are you doing?", she told me that she had just finished going to school to be a medical assistant. Then she asked me to be her person of reference for her job! And I felt so honored because I was like..."wait you're like asking me to do this? Yeah, I can do it! Are you sure?". It was great...she got the job and they called me and I got to talk to them about how I know her...so I feel like there's just so many benefits to me living here. And there are also challenges because kids know where I live and some kids will say like,"well, I saw that you had this person come over the other day", and I'll be like "what are you talking about? "*

Katie is able to build trust with the students and families she serves by just being present in their lives, through her work at OTECH, as a teacher at Loveland, and as a neighbor. In this capacity she has been able to connect students with new cultural experiences and in one case even help a parent obtain employment. The work Katie is engaged has been facilitated by OTECH and their ongoing relationship with the University. In fact, OTECH still provides volunteer opportunities and access to affordable housing for Katie:

> *Renting from OTECH has definitely been a plus for me. Before I became a teacher, when I was just a tutor, I wasn't making very much so it was nice. The housing was affordable. It didn't exceed 30% of what I was making. Also, the apartment that I had – I didn't want to have one that was with any assistance because I knew once I got a job I would have to move and I didn't want to have to do that...so my rent is very cheap. When I first moved in I paid $430 a month. I've been living here for a year and a half and it went up $5 so it's not like a tremendous increase. It's affordable and I also have the whole second floor of my building and so it's a decent size. If I were to rent from another place it would probably be about $875 for a studio apartment...it's become very expensive to live in OTE.*

What is notable here is that OTECH and the Center, understanding the value of having teachers live and work in their community, worked with Katie to help her secure housing.

Importantly the Center has also become a key resource for Loveland school administrators. Rita, Loveland's school principal explained that this Center has become one of the most important neighborhood organizations that she relies on to help understand

and connect to the community:

> *They've really helped me learn about what's going on in the community because they are so immersed in the community. I attribute that very valuable partnership to what I've been able to learn and some of the connections and relationships that I've built with people who have been staples in this community. Not new people coming in per say but really the important voice of those who have been in the community…they have such a strong history.*

Yet despite the importance of this organization, Rita notes:

> *With the Engagement Center… with the Urban teaching cohort…I mean I have not seen any…and I've only been here two years…all of the student teachers that have come through here have been White…all of them have been. When trying to…I mean things that I have control over…like selecting the staff…when looking through applicants I am not not thinking about who will be able to connect with the kids…who's had they're experience and who can really…I mean I'm thinking about that. Do I want my staff to be diverse? Absolutely…so I'm not just looking at people of color, but I mean you do have to consider how staff and teachers will impact the children…so it is difficult when you look at the student teachers who come through here.*

Given Dan's depth of experience and work in OTE, I asked him about this. How would things be different if OTECH and other organizations – including that of the Center's– reflected the racial composition of the OTE community? He replied:

> *I don't know. That's a good question. It unsettles me a little bit. I wonder about these things too...I think one answer is that...remember when I came down here in 1981 it was a 50/50 mix roughly at that time...or somewhere close around that time and so one answer is that someone like Martha…you know a lot of these people have been around since that time...and as the neighborhood changes to a more of a Black space they've always been there. The other answer perhaps is that even though, lets say OTECH community housing has Carrie Nolan Rivers - a White woman - there's still mix in the organization itself...although in some of the leadership positions it's still...right...it's still mostly White. Although there are people of color that work in OTECH...there's people of color that work at Goodman...yeah the Coalition for the Homeless I think now has more or less three White guys...that's kind of a problem..the shelter house or the former Drop-In Center is run by a South African woman and there are people of color who are important case workers and have a long history in that organization...yeah...I don't know.*

While he first acknowledges race as issue he then circles back to explain and even justify the lack of diversity in leadership by describing OTEs history and the racial composition at

OTECH itself. It is evident that he has thought about race issues – but has not seriously considered or reflected on the impact that this racial imbalance within OTE's key organizations. I also asked Lisa, a White university professor that administers the Urban Teacher Cohort through the Engagement Center, about why more people of color are not represented in her program. She replied, "There have been some, but I think there needs to be more intention…I didn't answer why there's not right now…just because I think that there's a lack of that kind of stuff…it has to be really intentional." Rita, the school principal, made a particular poignant observation regarding this; "They're not approaching it through a race lens because they don't have to…its just really difficult because I think they want me to do what they won't."

Notwithstanding the complexities of race - this relationship, as noted in my interviews, has produced important benefits for the OTE community – especially Loveland, for university students and professors, and for OTECH the organization. The informal organizational relationship that developed between Dan and OTECH developed into a formal partnership between OTECH and the university.

In addition to this University, OTECH also has relationships with two other local universities. Student-volunteers from these schools regularly help clean out units that are being turned over to new renters and also participate in neighborhood cleanup crews. Recently, recognizing the need for developing an emotional intelligence component to their youth programing (Children's Art Corner), OTECH staff sought out the help of a Social Work professor from one of these Universities. Much like the beginnings of the Community Engagement Center, this initially informal relationship has now developed in to a more

formal relationship between the University and OTECH. Christine, the Youth Development Coordinator explains:

> *So she reached out to her [University professor] to set up a meeting - invited her to art class...essentially developed this relationship and I can't express the reason it's worked so well, maybe because of the flexibility. Basically she was bringing all these tools to us and then saying you know this program [CAC] more than me....like you know better than I what your kids will respond to, how they might react to some of this...so she was like do whatever...we can change it...we can adapt it, we can use some of these pieces and not all...we can do everything...tell me what role you want me to play. I can be super teachery on top of it or I can just hang back and let you do this. It's been fun and interesting to experiment with the tools and over the last year I would say, man what a learning process! Like from that we've learned what kind of works and doesn't work. It's just this ongoing process that feels really strong and really authentic. Ultimately, I think it gives tools to the kids to feel that sense of personal agency and choice and power in knowing that their words matter...that somebody will listen to them and cares about how they feel and that you don't have to yell and smack someone in the face to be heard. It's all about cultivating a cultural community in our classrooms.*

The university professor now attends CAC classes on a regular basis to help staff respond to the student's emotional needs.

Summary of macro-level factors. OTECH has worked to influence and change macro-level neighborhood conditions through a variety of observable practices; they share a strong organizational purpose, they engage in community organizing efforts, and they are engaged in mutually beneficial relationships with organizations across the region. Through this work, OTECH has both provided and received numerous forms of resources from the organizations that it connects with – information, staff, investment, clients, and political capital. These resources help OTECH meet its organizational needs that not only help shape access to affordable and quality housing, but also bring in key educational-related resources and opportunities to many families living in OTE, not only those families renting from OTECH. Additionally, aside from providing key services to residents of OTE, this broader organizational network actively advocates for families to garner support for a

more equitable neighborhood development. Many of the practices used to influence macro-level neighborhood factors are also at work to influence access to programing and services at the micro-level.

Micro-level: Factors that Influence Access to Educational Opportunity

Just as OTECH works broadly to shape policy and resource allocation, it also operates on a micro-level scale to help shape and improve the lives of residents in the day to day. Interestingly, as a housing organization that provides direct services to its residents, its relationships to renters often fall outside the boundaries that define the traditional tenant-landlord relationship. Yes, they are a landlord, but as demonstrated, they also appear to care tremendously about the overall physical and social well-being of the people and neighborhood they work and live within. It is evident that OTECH does not just care about rent collection. To the contrary, if staff notice a resident is late in paying rent or utilities they are expected to probe deeper to understand underlying factors contributing to the late payment and then construct an intervention for that resident. In this section of my findings, I will first detail the housing stability issues facing OTE residents. Then I will describe how OTECH's unique relationship with residents and organizational structure helps ameliorate these issues. Lastly, I will detail some of the key resources (beyond low-income housing) that OTECH provides its residents. I found that OTECH offers resources that mostly fall within one of two categories: (a) information provided to residents (b) and free programing and services. This direct allocation of resources appears to impact families' access to educational opportunity.

Housing stability issues facing OTE residents and the work of OTECH. When questioned about the most significant issue facing youth in OTE, Ruth Jones, the Parent

Resource Coordinator at Loveland, replied:

> *I think the biggest thing is homelessness now. People try to work but when you the working poor you are always at a deficit. The parents are trying to work so they can't really provide the stability because they out there trying to bring in a dollar and so it's like a vicious circle you know. Parents want to see they kids excel – they really do – but sometimes they don't know how to get to that point cause they got this pressing issue, "I can't get welfare anymore. I got to get a job. I can't maintain this household so now I gotta move in with somebody who might not care for us moving in with them." And we have a lot of kids who are homeless so we try to do what we can do. Alicia, she braids hair…so kids come in and get they hair washed and she braids them and stuff. Now, I got a young lady sitting in there right now who's homeless.*

According to Loveland school level data, in the 2013-14 school year out of the 350 students enrolled there were 123 student withdrawals throughout– that is a staggering 35% of students that withdrew from school at some point during the school year. While all of these students may not be homeless, we do know that changing schools mid-year is an indicator of housing instability. As Ruth pointed out, poor families are having an increasingly difficult time accessing welfare, living-wage jobs, and affordable housing. In fact, in the 20 years since welfare reform, the data shows that number of families receiving assistance has significantly declined as poverty rates remain at an all time high. In 1996 Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) had served 68 out of every 100 families living in poverty. By 2014 only 23 for every 100 families living in poverty received assistance. As TANF assistance declined the number of families' actually living in poverty increased by 17% during that same time period ("Center on Budget and Policy Priorities", 2015). Increasing poverty rates, housing shortages and changes in local education policy impacts a teacher's classroom in very real ways. Katie, a teacher at Loveland, detailed the high-mobility in her own classroom during the 2014-15 school year:

> *So at Loveland, this year we served more students than we ever have. A giant increase. 99% are on FRL. I would say about 98% of the school is African American or biracial. There are probably three families that are Caucasian...there is a lot of transition. Kids*

move around A LOT. So I know starting out this school year I had about 28 kids in my classroom and then in my 2nd and 4th grade class there was also 28...but by the end I like looked at my roster and I had I think 41 students in my home room and then about 36 in the second room. There's just so much movement...kids just move around a lot and that's mostly because of housing issues.

This high level of student certainly impacts Katie's teaching. Throughout our interview she indicated that a highly mobile classroom impacts her ability to deliver instruction to her students. Students constantly cycling in and out of her classroom throughout the year puts strain on her lesson planning and it impacts her classroom environment. These effects of high mobility on students, teachers and schools serves to illuminate the importance of neighborhood organizations such as OTECH.

As a housing organization that serves individuals and families with low-incomes, OTECH is working on the front lines of poverty in OTE. According to their 2015 year-end report, OTECH serves nearly 800 households – 54% of those households live in extreme poverty and earn under $9,999 a year. 107 families make no income whatsoever. While some residents depend on social security, unemployment, disability, child support, and public assistance, the majority of families (60%) are employed in low-wage jobs. As we might imagine, life for these families is not easy. They are often faced food shortages, stress, and economic hardship that threaten their housing stability. OTECH not only provides these families with an array of formal housing-based supportive-programs, but also devotes a significant amount of human capital – at a more informal level - to ensure that families remain housed. Christine, the Youth Development Coordinator, notes:

I would say the biggest difference between us and a traditional landlord is that we also work on things outside of the home so that would mean like, you know, getting signed up for things like food stamps, disability, social security, employment...like a part of our job could be like driving to interviews and getting someone ready for a job interview. So those provide a lot of opportunities to get to know people and get to know what's going on...so like on that ride to the job interview, hopefully a relationship has been

> *cultivated enough where it's kind of just like you're just going to this thing and your resident feels comfortable enough to disclose information to you...*

The relationship that staff is able to cultivate with residents' means that they often have initial insight into the stress that families face. In my research I found that they are uniquely positioned to identify some of the early signs of a family struggling to make ends meet and thus intervene early to make sure that that family stays stably housed. The following quotes from staff reveal OTECH's dedication to keeping families housed:

> *We want to keep you housed. We'll work with you, and you're not going to get evicted over something mundane…like damaging something in the unit or not paying your first months rent so folks will eventually break down a little bit and say hey, this is a different type of organization. – Joe, Director of Housing Services*

> *I think because of the type of place we are we really want to keep our people housed probably more than any other landlord. I mean that's our goal to keep you with us. So people will see us standing by people, and having their backs through some hard things and through many other issues that would have gotten them evicted time and time over. I think that that creates a stability that our residents feel and then that the community feels. – Anna, Resident Services Coordinator*

In this vein, OTECH can provide us with insight into a unique model of housing and direct service provision.

From the interviews, observations, and document reviews that I conducted, I learned that OTECH staff not only work to keep their residents stably housed, but the organization itself is structurally organized to facilitate this purpose. For instance, their Resident Services team systematically engages in work that falls outside of the typical landlord responsibilities to welcome and stabilize residents. The following interview exerts from Resident Services staff members demonstrate the ways in which OTECH might learn of a family's struggle and then work to help that family gain access to important resources:

> *So the way I would love for it to happen is for folks to come to us and say I'm struggling in this way – please help! It rarely happens…usually it manifests in a way that their housing is jeopardized so utilities are about to be turned off or their rent's*

behind so one of us will show up and say " we noticed you haven't paid rent in a few months….we'd love to talk to you about what's going on." and slowly but surely we'll start peeling back the layers. They're not working…if they're not working why can't they find a job? You know, so you start to see the whole person and once you see the whole person you see all there is to work on. Bring me something that might need to happen in one's life and we've probably worked on it. Like, we need to sit with you at the hospital, we need to help you get to the hospital, we need to help figure out how to get a bed, we need to help get your kid enrolled in school, there's a problem with the bus, there's problems with your mental health... you name it. We'll address it." - Christine

We want you to be in housing, we want you to succeed in housing and so we're providing every single resident with access to resident services...resident services really just will attend to every need....like people will ask, what does resident services do? Like resident services will do whatever you need...that might be driving you to a job interview or helping you get utility assistance or connecting you to all kind of resources and programs. They really try to provide holistic support in whatever way...in whatever that looks like. -Sarah

I think half of what Anna and Christine and property management folks are doing is trying to help people retain their housing. Folks just struggle month to month to pay the bills, pay the rent, keep the utilities on…so that's a big part of the struggle…but then you get into the issues of domestic violence, mental health and addiction and that's another big part of working with people and helping them keep their housing….but I mean as far as the other kind of gamut of social services we offer…I mean from furniture…to…I mean gosh…anything really. – Joe

Similarly, I also found an example of this work occurring while reading through OTECH internal documents. In April of 2016 an 84-year-old homeless woman walked in to OTECH office, filled out a rental application and was able to sign a housing lease that day. Not only was she able to quickly sign a lease, but that same day, Joe the Director of Housing and Resident Services and Christine the Youth Development Coordinator then took her bags of laundry to the on-site washer and dryer and proceed to do several loads of this woman's laundry, all as they continued their full workday of meetings, paperwork and phone calls.

By separating the resident services from the property management and maintenance teams, the organization carves out a deliberate space for resident voices and needs. Despite these distinct organizational structure OTECH staff work in concert with one

another. Christine explains:

> *Because property management is really diligent...both property management and our maintenance staff can keep eyes and ears open...they might initially identify something. So they might say, "oh, we got a maintenance request order for a door being destroyed or kicked in." and that would be them contacting us to say "hey we're going to approach this from a maintenance property management perspective of replacing this door...charge them a fee...you know whatever...but you should check in because maybe there's some domestic violence happening." And then we can engage with them on that issue. So it's really powerful in that way. Yeah. – Christine, Youth Development Coordinator*

This level of communication and flexibility among staff helps residents keep stably housed. By continuing to build relationships with their residents – across their organizational structure- OTECH is able to maintain their position as a trusted landlord and partner in the community. The benefits of this trust can be seen in their successful organizing campaigns that have included Save Our Courts and the bid to keep Loveland Elementary School in OTE.

Additionally, during one of my organizational observations at OTECH's front office, I witnessed several instances that further illustrate the mutual trust and understanding cultivated between OTECH and their residents. One man, likely in his mid-40's walked into the office to joyfully announce a recent work promotion – he wanted to thank the Resident Services Coordinator for working with him when he fell behind on rent. A short time later, a young single mother walked in looking to unleash some steam and receive support for a tough few weeks she had had. The receptionist sitting at the front happily lent an ear. Violet, a resident board member recalls many years ago when facing eviction, OTECH staff reached out to provide her with housing:

> *All of a sudden they wanted market rent for a three-bedroom apartment. I told them I can't afford that. So that was a face- to-face visit that I did. Afterwards, I think it was maybe the next week I received a letter from them saying that I had three days to move. I was being evicted...but the thing of it is...3 DAYS? It takes 45 days for an*

> *eviction notice. You know to get it processed. But they told me I had three days to vacate the premises. So what I did was our kids helped me put our stuff in storage and I was livid...didn't know what to do...so I was walking out my back door on to 14th street and I happened to run in to Toby...Toby Grey...and I told Toby Grey and Toby Grey said go to the [OTECH] office and see Ruth Anne...Ruth Anne was the intake person and also the receptionist. So I did that and it just so happened at 1421 State Street had the 2nd and 3rd floor vacant. That was when the 2nd and 3rd floor went together. So I moved in there...that's how I became one of the residents for OTECH.*

There is nothing altogether remarkable about the Resident Services work in which OTECH is engaged. They do not employ expensive new technologies or rely on an intricate network and collection of resources to pass along services and information. Their work is effective because they provide help that lies within boundaries of support and trust. In 2015, OTECH reported that more that 80% of residents were return residents from years prior and 50% had been living in OTECH properties anywhere from five to twenty plus years. In addition to retaining existing residents OTECH is also growing. 2015 brought 90 new low-income units with 1.3 million dollars worth of capital improvements for 35 properties. Additionally, they helped open three new neighborhood businesses and non-profits, created 12 new full time jobs and 2 part time jobs and were able to give 1.5 million dollars to minority owned businesses.

In sum, their organizational growth and their ability to keep residents stably housed is not only facilitated by the aforementioned organizational purpose but also through an organizational structure and flexibility that works to support residents. OTECH's Division of Resident Services centralizes the organization's commitment to social justice issues and works in concert with other parts of the organization.

Access to organizationally embedded resources. Through my research I found that, through varying means, OTECH provides important information along with a vast array of programing and social services (See Table 4).

Access to Information	Description
News letters	Information about OTECH, staff changes, new projects, upcoming events, etc.
Bulletin boards	Information about social services, employment opportunities, and events.
Fliers	Information about classes, events, or neighborhood news.
Door to door	OTECH staff goes door to door to provide info about programing.
Direct programing/services	**Description**
Children's Art Corner	Youth program that meets twice a week. Participation is open to anyone between 5 to 14 years old.
Narcotics Anonymous	Offers onsite meetings to aid addicts in their recovery.
Case management	Onsite case management provided to OTECH residents. Helps with employment, treatment, medical care, education and referral services.
Single mother's support Group	Peer-to-peer support group that meets weekly. Meant to support, inspire and empower women by sharing experiences, and building personal bonds. Also helps with job searching.
Job and career training	Connects residents with employment resources.
Resident activities	Celebrations, block parties and resident forums.

Table 5. Resources and programing offered through OTECH

Access to information. OTECH occupies a two story renovated brownstone in the heart of OTE. For the size of the organization it is a relatively small space overflowing with desks, file cabinets, and staff. Visitors are welcomed in to the front office, a small but brightly painted waiting room with large bay windows that let in plenty of natural light. On one of their walls their mission statement hangs; "Old Town East Community Housing is a non-profit organization that works to build and sustain a diverse neighborhood that values and benefits low-income residents. We focus on developing and managing resident-centered, affordable housing in an effort to promote an inclusive community." On another

wall hangs a bulletin board containing fliers for people to read as they wait. One flier contains program and event information for the local food bank. Another flier advertises for a single-mother's support group detailing meeting times and location. Yet others promote free eye exams taking place at a neighborhood church, information on Medicaid, free church meals, and emergency utility information. A bright orange event announcement for "Celebrating Our Beloved Community" hangs square in the center of the board. With a date, time and location the flier reads: "This year's program focuses on building community through written and spoken word. Local poets are collaborating with neighborhood residents to create original pieces reflecting their experiences in Old Town East." On a table nested between chairs in the waiting room there's a stack of OTECH's latest newsletter and a local paper. Not only are these fliers and newsletters available in OTECH's main office, but they are also distributed and hung throughout every building that they manage. For example, near the mailboxes in one of the resident properties hangs a similar bulletin board filled with fliers and information on social services. A large OTECH calendar with social events hangs next to the bulletin board.

Through the design of these common physical spaces that residents frequent, OTECH is able to broker information even when that information is not specifically requested. In other words, residents – busy balancing family and work - don't have to ask for information about services that they might need but do not know exist. As I sat in the waiting room and toured OTECH buildings I saw residents check out the calendar of events and take information from fliers posted on bulletin boards, thus mobilizing the connections for residents that they might not even know they need. In this capacity OTECH is able to target relevant information to the low-income residents they serve in OTE – for example

they advertise workshops for local job training programs, free after school activities for children, information on neighborhood food banks, and various other social service programs that meet the needs of the specific populations that they house.

In addition to offering information through the use of these physical spaces – OTECH also delivers information through direct engagement with residents. For example, Christine notes:

> *We also have residents who are stepping in every day just to say hi and it's nice walking through the neighborhood just saying hi to people. We're just approachable and we respect each other. We do have parties and things like that. We have a holiday party every year for residents and we have block parties up on East Burrough. Then we do some of the other stuff like Toys for Tots, organizing that so that families and kids have toys for Christmas…if that's what they want. I just think we're different then the traditional tenant landlord relationship.*

OTECH plans social events around holidays, they sponsor block parties, and even go door-to-door to deliver information. In fact several staff members whom I interviewed spoke about knocking on resident doors to introduce themselves and to provide information about new programing. One staff member did note however, that this is and should be done with care, as it's important to not intrude on families' personal spaces.

Social events like block parties and block clubs also serve as spaces where residents can access information while also strengthening their relationships with OTECH staff and other residents. The block-clubs, some of which have been around for the last twenty years (like the Elm Street Block Club and the Republic Street Block Clubs) and some of which were newly started in the past year (like the East Burrough Block Club) gather in OTECH meeting rooms. These block clubs all began as a way for residents to come together on a regular basis to talk about their neighborhood. Over the years they have hosted socials and 'meet and greets' with local political leaders, like the city's mayor and community board

members, they've organized neighborhood cleanups, and they also serve as a voice to address specific concerns that impact the block or building that they live in. For example, the East Burrough Block Club worked to petition an absentee landlord to clean up an abandoned building that their children have to walk by on their way to school.

These social clubs, facilitated by OTECH, not only provide an informal social setting to communicate information, but also serve as a means to engage and empower residents around important neighborhood issues. The aim in all of this seems to be to draw residents out, give them voice, provide a positive social community for families, and to match families with needed services.

Using informal communication to engage OTECH residents in programing. A resident who signs a lease with OTECH is not merely acquiring housing –but they are also enrolling in an organization that brokers information and social programing. In addition, OTECH also offers a wide variety of in-house social service programing to match the needs of the residents they serve. When asked how residents learn of OTECH programs and services, Joe replied:

> *So the holiday party is fliers in buildings, postings on our door and at the front desk. As far as the support, when tenants move in, I don't know if it's really on their mind at the time, but they're given information about our support services programs and we ask them if they need anything. So they get it at move in. I think that we're always trying to do a better job of making our programs real and known. Often times people are just so excited to be signing a lease that they're just like, "Ok, we get it". Then there's getting your keys and coordinating your move. But I guess that most times it might come is when there's trouble like paying the rent. So property management finds out and then they get referred to Anna and Christine to try and work on that stuff so the relationship might start then. We have a program, Children's Art Corner, so I think if especially you live in the East Burroughs are and you have kids when you move in…eventually you're going to find out about it through other kids and that how kids start going there. They start building relationships with Anna and Christine…and then, I don't know, I just feel like you just start knowing people and finding out about our programs.*

From Joe, I learned that OTECH relies on an interchange of both formal and informal modes of communication with residents. They post fliers, talk to renters at move-in, keep track of late rent payments, and rely on word-of mouth to help steer clients to the programs and services that they offer. By reaching out to residents in different capacities and at different times, OTECH is perhaps positioned better than any other neighborhood organization in OTE to provide valuable assistance to families that are living in poverty. Through my observations and interviews it became clear that OTECH's informal communications serve as an important practice to building trust and engaging residents in programing. An OTECH staff member described:

> *In some cases we might have a single adult who more or less could be kind of cut off from family members. Not to say that they don't have other people in their lives, but sometimes that happens so we might provide a little bit of stability or a little bit of connection for them. I work with one client, where I'm thinking of him specifically, and that's kind of true for him. He does not really have a network and I think the rent office has sort of become an entry point to that. He likes to come in to the rent office very often just to chat. So it can look like that and then there are also large networks of extended families, like you know aunts and uncles and cousins who live with OTECH maybe in different units maybe on the same street or a couple of streets over and so in those cases it winds up being that everyone knows everyone and that's how they learn about things. - Christine*

Children's Art Corner. The informal communication compliments the formal programing that OTECH offers. Children's Art Corner provides a particularly useful example of this. While most of OTECH programing is geared towards adults CAC – an afterschool art program - serves neighborhood youth. In 2007, a student intern from the Engagement Center, but working for OTECH noticed the need for more youth programing in the neighborhood and spearheaded the effort that ultimately shaped Children's Art Corner. Here, Joe the Assistant Director of OTECH, describes the initial development of that program:

> *I mean with CAC, it's all with Anna and Bill and Josh who helped start the program and they've kept it going for 7 years…and it's been their passion to do it because it's all outside of work. It's all in the evenings and all of their extra time so it's just that passion to want to reach out and serve these children. So for the first three years or so it was totally all volunteer and off the radar…finding space where ever they can find space…so we've formalized it and now it's grown…serves more kids….and now we're doing summer camps and fall camps and soap box derby and block parties and so we've just extended that. We've got a few funders who have really taken to it and see the value in it and are pretty much supporting it each year. We've got a part time person who's running Children's Art Corner. So that's been huge.*

They serve children from the ages of 5 to 14 and meet every Thursday and Friday from 6:30pm to 8pm. There is no fee to join and no application process. Youth can come and go as they please. Katie, a CAC volunteer describes it like this:

> *So we really like being able to serve everyone that comes in the door. You don't have to come to every class or pay a fee. We don't have to see your mom every night. It's really low barrier and we serve kids that a lot of existing programing don't. I feel like there's a need for that kind of programing; really accessible, really low barrier - constant, reliable, safe, programing.*

CAC occupies the first floor of an OTECH building that sits directly across from the Loveland school playground. The building's brick exterior is painted a muted yellow and sandwiched between a boarded up building on its left and a vacant lot on its right. A colorful mosaic sign that hangs above the front door reads 'Children's Art Corner'. When you walk in, there's a large table with chairs in the center of the room, shelves overflow with art supplies and games, and children's photos and artwork decorate the walls. During my five observations of CAC, I witnessed a rhythm to the class. Kids trickle in around 6:30 and make small talk with the staff and volunteers - of which there were usually three to four. In each observation I noticed that the staff and volunteers were all White and the youth in attendance where entirely Black, save one or two Latino children. Eventually, after the kids arrived one of the staff members would introduce the group art activity for the evening. There was always the option for them to work on their homework or to just do

their own thing.

Before getting started with the activity, staff bring the kids attention to a "mood meter" hanging on the wall. The kids and staff, using stick-it notes with their names, identify how they're feeling. For example, on one night a seven year old boy was feeling particularly happy so he placed his name in the upper right corner of the yellow box – another girl, maybe around the same age was feeling "chill" so she put her name in the bottom right, green box. They did this at the beginning and end of each class. During the times I attended, anywhere from seven to eighteen kids showed up and the art activities ranged from creating clay beads to making party hats and cloth and paper sail boats. Each time, they would wrap up the art project 30 minutes before 8 p.m., give the kids a whole fruit snack and pretzels and allow them to chat or complete any unfinished work. I found the atmosphere to be generally one of loud happy chaos. Christine explains that CAC is more of a social space for children, rather than a class and that it fills a unique programing need in OTE:

> *CAC is the weird step child of the after school programs offered in OTE...we're a little bit later in the evening and so sometimes kids come from those other after school programs to us…which we think is a strength to parents because it might be that time of evening where they're still kind of out late in the evening. It's not a great time to just be hanging around...so definitely it provides a safe place...but I think it also means that if this is a kid that's been up since 7, been in school all day, then an after school program and then they get to us. Man, some of them are having melt downs as soon as they walk in the door. So our program, maybe for that reason, is pretty loose.*

The adults and children in attendance all seemed to know and like each other. On one occasion, an 11-year old girl came in late and went up to one of the staff members crying. The staff member took her to the back room, talked with her, read her a book, and gave her a blanket and pillow and let her rest until the end of class. Without fail, at the end of each class I attended a few children would ask to be walked home. In every instance that I

observed, the staff happily obliged.

While somewhat chaotic in nature, I found that the CAC creates a safe, positive and welcoming environment for children living in OTE. From the interviews I conducted, it is evident that the staff members who manage CAC really work contentiously to create a constructive space for children who attend:

> *We try and walk that line of helping them navigate interactions with each other, but also giving them some freedom so that we're not just on top of them all the time. So, you know, I think that allows them to feel really comfortable in our space. That is important to us - that they feel ownership in it and I think that contributes to them caring about it and not trashing it. That's definitely been reflected back to us...which is good affirmation because that's what we want because when you think about them being at school all day and then maybe like an after school program that's very structured or kind of has a mission built in - they don't have a lot of agency all day long. They're like just being moved here, told what to do…maybe that's how some of them feel and so we want our space to be one where they feel comfortable to create and express. It's an evolving program which I think it really cool...we're all really flexible and responsive to what are the needs right now. The needs right now might be different then they were a year ago.*

Instead of being driven by a specific mission, CAC works to meet the needs of the children that walk through their door every Tuesday and Thursday night. In my observations and interviews, I found that staff and volunteers displayed empathy towards the youth that they serve. Not only did they work to take the child or family's perspective, but they also made efforts to mobilize caring and responsive helping behaviors. For example, the staff implemented the aforementioned socio-emotional piece or "mood-meter" to their programming. One staff member described it:

> *I think it's called the RULER approach, which is an acronym for how to basically interpret your emotions. So you recognize, understand, label, express and regulate your emotions. It was a program adapted from a program developed by this guy - Mark Bracket - he's like a Harvard person.*

CAC staff invited a local professor to help them implement the program in their classes. Again, the staff member:

It's providing so many more tools to the kids to like feel that sense of personal agency and choice and power…knowing that their words matter and that somebody will listen to them and care about how they feel and that you don't have to yell and smack some one in the face to be heard. Yeah, it's all about cultivating a cultural community in our classrooms. We get to define collectively as a group what are the rules for our space here for CAC...so that's actually a part of this RULER approach. It's the first thing you do.... it's a charter. I think we did 8 words of how do you want to feel when you're in this space and the kids came up with the words and it's driven by them. They're words were - safe, loved, powerful, excited, helpful, smart...I might be forgetting a couple, but those were all driven by them. We were like ok, we're going to be good listeners...like if we put that on them I think they would eye-roll and say whatever...but because they defined those things if they're hitting each other in our space we can say, hey, is what you're doing right now helping you and this other person to feel safe, loved, respected? And it kind of makes them stop and think about it and it also calls them back to themselves. You know like you defined that, that's how you want to feel in this space so I'm going to help you do that - accomplish your goal - yeah and that's been so effective.

The success of CAC in the community has served as a gateway to creating additional youth programing and activities. For example, in 2014 staff and youth from CAC decided to race in the city's annual soap box derby – their first year they entered they won. This generated so much excitement and pride amongst OTE residents that the group continued to train and race in the summers that followed.

This type of programing directly serves the neighborhood's youth, but importantly it also gives residents and staff the opportunity to approach one another in a more informal setting. In other words, residents do not have to go in to the main office to request information or services, they can talk directly to CAC staff when they pick up or drop off their children. Here, Christine speaks to the importance that CAC plays in facilitating her own work as the Resident Engagement Coordinator:

I have also been personally rooted and dedicated to the strength that CAC brings - even to that process. It ends up being a really good entry point into some families that might not want to initially engage with the rent office. Then I can kind of call with a different hat and say, "Hey, I'm Christine from the art center." And then it's a change in tone. So definitely I consider that a strength.

During my observations of CAC I witnessed several parents – specifically when picking up

their children - ask staff members for information about a YMCA summer camp application, OTECH social events, and even help with apartment maintenance issues. One mother, while picking up her child at CAC spent several minutes talking about some plumbing work that she needed done in her apartment. A staff member listened intently and then called OTECH's 24-hour maintenance staff on her cell phone to schedule the work for her. The mom was very grateful and left happy. Anna notes, "It's a different feel to just drop by the Art Center and maybe just discuss your food stamp case or your maintenance request then having to interact with us through the office." Anna reflects that working with kids through CAC has helped OTECH build trust with families:

> *Yeah, so I think that part of the neighborhood where CAC is, is where a lot of our families live, in a really tightly packed area…in East Burroughs. We have a lot of our family housing in one area up there. We own most of the buildings up there that are inhabited – there's a lot of vacant buildings there too. Everyone knows each other up there…it's just a ton of kids up there. And what's great about CAC, from a landlord's perspective, is that moms and families see us interacting with their kids. So we know their kids and during the day if they come in they see Christine and me here in the office. So, it's good buy-in from the families. They know who we are through their kids and they trust us sometimes first because of that. That whole dynamic I think helps us get some things done.*

In addition the relationship building that is facilitated among parents and staff, CAC also provides a space where parents can get to know and form relationships with each other. Christine explains:

> *Like I said the CAC program is a great landing spot and it can kind of be an initial - one of those initial connectors on the surface. Like lets say two parents...two mom's who don't know each other at all and might have a lot in common or who might not because they are living in different situations to be able to say, "hey your kid comes to the art center, and your kid comes to the art center...we're about to have a meeting about summer camp...can you both be at this meeting?" You know that's kind of a way to connect our moms or parents.*

My interviews with Loveland school staff further confirm the importance that CAC has in the community:

> *I think they do a great job…they bring out the artistic and just the sharing of the kids…they're able to impact, you know, and help them educational wise, art wise and emotionally. They build relationships with the kids…let them know that they matter. – Parent Engagement Coordinator*

Some teachers even volunteer with CAC. Katie speaks to the impact that volunteering with CAC has had on her own teaching:

> *Kids are like, "Wait you work at Loveland and you work here?" And I'm like "Well, I volunteer at this art class. I don't work there." So this has also been really great. There are kids that were my first time students this year, but I have known them since they were in first grade through the art class. It's been really great because I've also gotten to know families through that.*

CAC has also illuminated the community need for additional youth programing in other parts of OTE:

> *We've focused a lot on Creative Corner and the East Burroughs area...I guess I should mention another big thing we do in the summer is block parties in East Burroughs which brings everyone outside. So while we give so much attention to East Burroughs I think we've seen the strength in that its yielded some positive results, you know, residents that are more willing to engage with us in other aspects because of the work we're doing up there. So that was sort of the argument to say what if we were doing more of that in Thompson Park? Even though it is just several streets away, the demographics and the feel and access to the neighborhood space is very different. Which is a new challenge…on East Burroughs there's the elementary school, there's the playground, there's more public spaces, there are basketball courts and it's way more like what you would imagine any time you drive down the street after school lets out. It's just packed with kids and you know it's kind of like available...like they're looking for something to do. And that's not necessarily different in Thompson Park. But there's less public space and there's less kid oriented space because its more downtown and with all the redevelopment it's kind of like…what, are you going to see kids running around the restaurants? Not really.*

Because of the success that OTECH has had with CAC, they are now in the process of creating additional youth programing in the Thompson Park area. Through this process they are also connecting residents with one another:

> *Some of our Thompson Park Families don't really come to Creative Corner...because it's in a different section of the neighborhood...some of them do. But for the majority we do kind of less youth engagement with them. So we got a grant to start doing that this next year and so we had this initial meeting where I did a lot of preliminary work.*

> *I had to do a lot of door knocking, flyers under the door...trying to catch people...going to a door multiple times a day to catch them when they're home from work or in-between errands to try and get a face to face just so you know there is some connection to say, "Hey I'm going to be at this place...will you please come?" I did a lot of that with our Thompson Park families and we had two families show up at the meeting…which to me was a success! Two brand new families and both of them brought their kids...which was very positive. So for them to even meet each other...and I would definitely say that those were two families that wouldn't necessarily know each other or hang out. I think that there was some connection, like you know "well my daughter did this program so many years ago" and the other mom was like, "Oh yeah, one of my kids did that!". So just getting them in the same room which can be really hard...can kind of spark that engagement...or just knowing that there are other families in the neighborhood trying to use the same programs…and then also just our general resident engagement. We'll do a holiday part, which is usually a big family event. A lot of families come to our holiday party...so just to see other families there playing bingo and eating food.*

YMCA youth summer camp. In addition to offering in-house youth programing, OTECH has bridged a relationship with YMCA youth summer camp – known as Camp Wannago. Camp Wannago, is a well-known overnight summer camp that hosts children ages six to fifteen for up to a week at a time. They engage in activities ranging from sailing, kayaking, canoeing, horseback riding, ropes courses, and archery – all characteristics of dominant cultural capital. To attend, it costs a minimum of $610 per week – an opportunity that is cost prohibitive to most children growing up in OTE. Yet, in 2011 one staff member took it upon herself to write a grant that awarded funding to ten children living in OTECH buildings to attend Camp Earst. Camp leaders quickly recognized the value that these children brought to camp programing and decided to partner with OTECH and a local church to fund even more children. In 2016, they were able to send approximately 50 children from OTE to Camp Wannago. Additionally, one of the first children from OTE who participated in Camp Wannago has become a camp counselor. In the beginning, a core group of staff members, already burdened with a heavy workload, volunteered their time to enroll kids in camp, drop them off, pick them up and perform ongoing communication

with camp staff while kids were in attendance. Sarah, a social services intern, who was hired to work with the camp program at OTECH talks about the amount of work and support involved in providing this kind of programing:

> *Most of the legwork with summer camp is filling out the paper work. Parents have to sign a ton of paper work and it's our responsibility to make sure that it all gets out correctly...so I end up chasing parents down after work and sitting down with them in their homes sometimes until 10:30 at night just filling out all these forms. This year, Anna did a trauma informed care training with all the camp counselors about trauma because there's kind of a separation...like it's a YMCA camp...it's an expensive camp to go to so we can kind of tell...they call them the "scholarship kids"...you can kind of tell the difference between who's parents have paid for them to go and who are the scholarship kids. So she went in and did a training with the camp counselors; this is what trauma is and this is what trauma looks like and here's how to do deal with it. The camp counselors were really, really great. They would generally give the kids three strikes kind of behavior before they would ask us to send them home. The counselors there have really done a great job at working with our kids and understanding their very unique challenges. And the kids have really benefited from it.*

Not only does the staff take on the bulk of the lengthy administrative work of sending these children off to camp, but they also provide support and education for Camp Wannago staff members that benefit the youth attending from OTE. Interestingly, the amount time that staff spend organizing camp for OTE youth provide opportunities for both formal and informal connections to develop between staff, parents and youth. For example, while enrolling children in camp Sarah sat down with KrystinaKrystina, a single mother of five to help her fill out the paperwork. Here she describes a conversation that she had with Krystina:

> *I was like Krystina you're going to be a week without any kids and I thought she was going to say..."oh, I'm going to relax" or "I'm going to do this," but she was like…"I can't wait, I'm going to work the whole week!" and that was such a moment for me. Because here I thought this mom was going to talk about all the fun things she was going to do to relax and she was just excited because she has to...I mean her littlest is 7 now...and she has to be at home when he gets back from school if the older kids can't watch him so she was just excited to be able to work 12 hours a day all week...and so that was really a moment for me...I was like "ok, this is it...this is the reality".*

What seems significant here is not that Sarah is helping Krystina enroll her children in camp but the way in which she portrays her interaction with Krystina. She shows respect for her – and recognizes Krystina's resilience in the face of raising five children. Sarah also identifies this as a moment of self-learning wherein her assumptions about single mothers living in poverty are challenged.

During the time I spent observing OTECH's after school programing, I witnessed, on several occasions, staff talking amongst each other and with the children in attendance about summer camp. The staff members, as well as children, were noticeably excited about camp. In many of my interviews, OTECH staff spoke proudly about being able to send youth to Camp Wannago.

Children embedded in OTECH, participating in this type of programing, may be forming social ties with youth that represent forms of dominant upper-class cultural capital and employment opportunities. Conversely, the upper-class White kids that attend the YMCA are also exposed to the non-dominant cultural capital of the kids attending from OTE. Despite OTECH connecting neighborhood youth do different forms of cultural capital; access to social capital for these youth may be limited. I asked Sarah if children from OTE connected with their camp friends throughout the year, she replied;

> *Those aren't really relationships that are very sustainable. Geographically they are so separated. Maybe more with the older kids because…they're not supposed to…but they take their cell phones. I remember we were picking up one of the 8th grade girls and she and this girl were adding each other on Facebook and exchanging cell phone numbers. But with the littler kids, not really. Most of these kids are White affluent kids from suburban neighborhoods...so I think it's like really awesome for them. They build friendships while they're there...absolutely. I remember we when we dropped the kids off, even before we left to drive off, they were playing basketball with some other kids that they had just met. So I know that during the time there they make those friendships...which is good for them but also good for the other kids at camp to see...to break down those stereotypes that they might have.*

Additional social services offered in-house . In addition to purposely creating important access to youth programming, OTECH also offers a vast array of in-house social services. These services target adults – often times the parents of children who attend Loveland and other local schools. These services include, but are not limited to: Narcotics Anonymous meetings, a single mothers support group, on-site case management and job and career training. All of these services aimed at address residents day-to-day needs, help keep individuals and families stably housed. For example, Monica an AmeriCorps VISTA member working at OTECH and also living in an OTECH owned building with her five-year-old daughter saw the need for a single mothers support group:

> *I live on East Burrough and that's a very hard area...like drug infested and stuff…so I made an initiative to go meet with one woman that I felt was like the boss lady...that everyone follows. I stepped out on faith and I met with her last week so I'm trying to form this women's group to empower each other and then eventually as we meet. I want to form like a support group where we just talk about the struggles of women...as African American women, as single mothers...you know, build the bond with them and let them know that they matter and that they're important...that their children need them and that they are role models and I know it's hard but by supporting each other we can do this…*

Monica, although initially hired to work with residents who were having trouble making their utility payments, was encouraged to start this group by OTECH managers and staff members. In the fall of 2016, Monica officially founded the OTE Single Mom's Support Group. Carrie, the Executive Director, notes that; "Monica was able to bring new programing to the street that we hadn't provided before. It's powerful recognizing each others strengths and supporting and encouraging each other." While residents benefit from the network of organizations that OTECH partners with, they also may benefit by participating in a resource-rich organization with qualified volunteers and staff.

Summary of micro-level Factors. Over the years, OTECH has cultivated an

organizational culture that normalizes the linkage of housing services to family and community well-being. The Micro-level factors – in interaction with broader Macro-level influences - call attention to how OTECH serves as a trusted repository of information and resources. Thus, the observable practices that enable OTECH to work effectively at the macro and micro levels include a guiding organizational purpose, community-organizing work, connection with organizations, and resident access to social-service programming and information (See Figure 9).

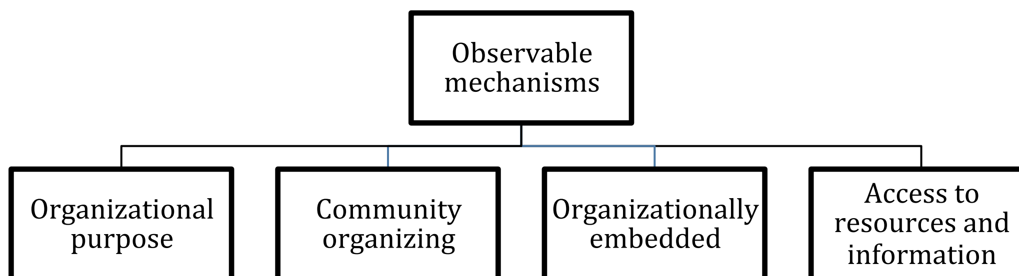

Figure 9. OTECH observable practices.

Through these practices OTECH may act as an important organization for residents who are otherwise isolated and economically disadvantaged to access critical resources. They also provide a way to understand how organizations broker meaningful ties.

Chapter 6 - Discussion: Findings and Interpretations

In this study, I've I focused on how one CDC, embedded in a specific neighborhood context, worked to impact children's access to educational opportunity. The guiding research question that shaped this work was: How and to what extent do CDCs shape families' access to educational opportunity? Additional questions that influenced this study included: What are the regular practices that these organizations employ? How are these organizational practices shaped by neighborhood poverty? and Do organizations, such as CDCs, protect against the ill effects neighborhood poverty?

This final chapter is divided in to four main sections. First, I summarize and analyze the major themes that emerged from my findings as they relate to the aforementioned research questions and literature review. This is followed by my personal reflections and a summary of the limitations I faced as a researcher. Finally, I conclude by offering recommendations for scholars and practitioners. Because OTE reflects so many urban communities in cities such as Chicago, Milwaukee, Indianapolis, Clevelend, and Cincinnati, this research is useful in both theoretical and practical terms. Ultimately, these findings serve as a groundwork for understanding how CDCs and other neighborhood based organizations may work to influence educational opportunity.

Analysis of Findings

In returning to the research question that guides my work, I found that OTECH works to address educational needs at the macro and micro levels – thus shaping families' access to educational opportunity. For instance, when a single mother with children rents

from OTECH she finds herself embedded in an organization that may transform her everyday experiences. This organization operates by a set of norms and obligations that shape her networks and opportunities. Through the course of a day, OTECH may provide her directly with housing, information about goods and services, social service programing, educational programing for her children, and the opportunity to broaden her networks. They also influence her experience in the neighborhood at-large through collectively organizing in broader social justice movements. For example, she may send her child to the public elementary school that OTECH fought to keep in OTE.

Foundational to this relationship that OTECH has with its residents and surrounding community is trust. Bryk and Schneider (2002), in their longitudinal study of twelve elementary Chicago schools, found that relational trust among parents, community members and school staff positively impacted a student's learning. Relational trust, they found, is formed over wide array of social exchanges that either facilitates or fails to facilitate access to community wide resources. OTECH has cultivated trust with residents and the broader community through both informal and formal relationships. For example, the following quote from an OTECH staff member provides insight into how simple interactions between staff and residents can ultimately enhance capacities for trust formation:

> *You know, so you start to see the whole person and once you see the whole person you see all there is to work on. Bring me something that might need to happen in one's life and we've probably worked on it. Like, we need to sit with you at the hospital, we need to help you get to the hospital, we need to help figure out how to get a bed, we need to help get your kid enrolled in school, there's a problem with the bus, there's problems with your mental health... you name it. We'll address it.*

Trust comes when organizations such as OTECH work with people on issues that they care about. This community broad based trust can provide support for school based

educational reform (Bryk & Schneider, 2002*).* Not all CDCs create such an environment, just as not all residents benefit equally from being embedded in OTECH. Yet, it is reasonable to think that this case is similar to the work that CDCs do nationwide – though it may be one of the more successful cases.

Collectively, CDCs have a long history of being embedded in low-income communities and responding to the diverse and growing needs of the neighborhoods they serve (Von Hoffman, 2012). Beyond offering housing and a wide array of social services, there is also growing evidence that CDCs are engaging in efforts – such as the ones that OTECH has been involved in - to improve overall access to educational opportunities (Naimark, 2012; "Chicanos Por La Causa, Inc.," n.d.; "Abyssinian Development Corporation," n.d.)) Related to this growing body of research, Small's (2009) study on childcare centers provides evidence that organizations embed families in important contexts that provide low-income families with vital access to resources and networks. In this section I proceed by discussing the driving research questions that shaped this study.

What are the regular practices or practices that these organizations employ? This study's findings illuminate several important and observable practices that facilitated OTECH's work. These practices - cultivating a strong organizational purpose, community organizing and participating in a robust organizational field – offer insight into how community-based organizations can create institutional conditions that benefit low-income communities.

Anchored in organizational purpose. OTeCH acts not just as a low-income housing landlord, but also as a non-profit human service organization that supports social rights. Its history is anchored in a moral struggle for economic and social justice. Hansenfeld and Garrow (2012) write that human service organizations such as these operate on the "essential principles that each citizen is entitled to an acceptable standard of living, that this standard is protected from market forces, and that it is guaranteed as a matter of right, both through some assessment of deservingness" (p. 296). While such principles are not clearly defined in their mission statement or by existing organizational jargon, it is certainly evident through my interviews, observations and document review that the founders, staff, and administration engender this social justice purpose in their day-to-day work, thus impacting OTECH's hiring practices, their organizational structure and operations.

In fact, while collecting data for this study I became increasingly surprised at how present this social justice theme was in each person that I interviewed. While I had hypothesized that the functions of this organization extended beyond their mission of providing housing, I did not expect to find that this work was rooted so firmly in the staff's collective desire to create an economic and socially just community. Ruth's (the parent coordinator at Loveland School) description of OTECH's executive director aptly portrays the organizational attitude towards their work in the community:

> *Carrie Nolan [OTECH Executive Director], she is a real fighter. She is a real fighter. She's not going to let it go down without the fight. She's going to be there – people like that it's invaluable. But we know that, and this is a life work – it's not just something you can fight a little bit and then withdrawal. Its forever – it is what it is. It's gotta be in your heart…its gotta be in every fiber of your being you know and stuff…this is what it is. And so Carrie Nolan…she embodies that…and everybody else…this is truly her life work…yeah, so I mean this is the job before any other job…this is the job.*

I found, as Miller (2015) suggests that, "there is a palpable difference between organizations that are authentically animated by *zeal*—passion, exuberance, commitment, and care—and those that operate with more detached, business-like practice."

This study suggests that a strong organizational purpose is cultivated over time through a shared history and deep connection to the community. For example, many of the organization's leadership and board members were involved in the social justice movements in the 1970's that eventually gave birth to OTECH and several other social service organizations that still work in OTE. Collectively these individuals, tied to OTE and to one another through their shared interests, experiences, work and friendships, have shaped the organizations hiring practices and organizational structure. For example, on more than one occasion, leadership indicated that they were more interested in hiring someone with an interest in social justice issues over someone that holds a specific skill set. This has meant that, as a housing organization they have uniquely positioned themselves to respond to the economic and social needs of their residents. Beyond having leasing, property management, maintenance and real estate development teams - all status quo for housing organizations - they also have a resident services, resident engagement, and a social work department that are specifically focused on providing programing and to the families they serve. This sense of purpose, which has manifested itself operationally in the organization has helped cement OTECH's collective orientation towards promoting social justice issues that extend beyond providing people with rental housing. In other words, a global sense of purpose (not to be confused with the organization's mission) significantly impacts the work of OTECH.

That this organizational purpose seems guided by OTECH's tenured leaders

entrenched in the community and organization's history presents benefits, but also may generate some important obstacles. First, in my interviews and observations I found that there was a racial mismatch between leadership and staff. While the makeup of OTECH is roughly 50% White to 50% Black, the administrators and resident engagement staff are entirely White. My findings do not allow me to attest to any racial discrimination or favoritism, but based on literature we can hypothesize how these racial dynamics may impact the ecology of OTECH and overall effect of youth programing.

Research has demonstrated that if people in political power represent the socioeconomic characteristics of the communities they serve, then policies are more likely to represent and benefit the community (Eisinger, 1982; LeRoux, 2009; Mladenka, 1989). LeRoux's (2009) study of racial representation in nonprofits used multivariate regression to unpack the impacts of racial mismatch on an organization's engagement in activities that engage their client base. This research found that when a non-profit's board and leadership staff did not represent the makeup of staff and clients then the organizations provided less political education and mobilization to their clients – they became less effective at politically empowering Black clients through programming. Conversely, she found that when there is an agency client on the board of the non-profit than that non-profit is more likely to engage in politically representative activities.

In addition to the racial mismatch among staff and leadership, I also found that there was a racial mismatch between staff providing youth programing and the youth in attendance. In my observations at Children's Art Corner I noticed that, without exception, OTECH staff and volunteers were White and all of the youth were Black. We know from cultural capital theory that racial mismatch between instructors and students can undercut

academic outcomes and complicate classroom interactions (Bourdieu, 1973; Lareau, 1987; Lareau & Weininger, 2003; Valdes, 1996). Studies have demonstrated that Black students taught by White teachers receive lower ratings on both behavior and skill than their White counterparts (Downey & Pribesh, 2004; McGrady & Reynolds, 2013). These evaluations are also linked to lower test scores (Roscigno & Ainsworth-Darnell, 1999) in Black students. Downey and Pribesh (2004) found that these patterns could be explained by White teacher bias. Conversely, the academic benefits of a racial match between students and instructors may be heightened sense of student engagement and trust (Dee, 2004; Lareau & Weininger, 2003; McGrady & Reynolds, 2013). OTECH is not a school however it does operate youth programing and thus may be subject to some of the same issues that exist within classrooms.

In my interviews with organizational leadership and staff I found that OTECH does try to recognize and address racial issues. For example, the board vice president is a Black resident who has been involved with OTECH since its' very beginning. They also routinely engage residents and children in organizing efforts. Yet, the racial mismatch between OTECH leadership and its staff and residents may have important consequences for how well they respond and represent the needs of their community – consequences that I was not able unpack in this study. Does OTECH inadvertently reproduce inequalities that are diametrically opposed to their organizational purpose or does their organizational purpose supersede the effects of the racial mismatch within their organization?

Community organizing. Researchers have demonstrated that poverty is linked to poor educational outcomes (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997; Sampson, 2012; Wilson, 1987). Policy efforts to address these outcomes through vouchers and charter schools have

produced no better results than the public schools they are replacing (Warren, 2014). This current state of education leaves us wondering how to make changes that will provide children with heightened educational outcomes. Educational reform movements are shifting focus from test score gains, teacher trainings, and classroom pedagogy to address broader issues of structural racism and concentrated poverty that exist within the communities that shape our schools. Warren, (2014) writes that vital to these reform movements is "a social movement that creates political and cultural change to transform the racial inequities in public education itself and to connect this transformational effort to a larger movement to combat poverty and racism" (p1). As demonstrated through this case, CDCs may already be engaged in this important work. How has OTECH transformed its community through community organizing? What impact does this have on education opportunity for OTE residents? To answer these questions, I consider the following analogy.

Visualize a Banyan tree. By canopy cover, Banyan trees are one of the world's largest trees. In fact, the largest Banyan covers five acres and is made up of a remarkable network of roots, branches and trunks (Mannan, 2013). A Banyan grows out of a single seed - developing a main trunk with thick expansive branches. Those branches drape vines that grow into their own woody trunks, which in turn, mature into a new network of more branches, vines, and trunks. One tree begets another, yet still remains connected to that main trunk. In India, Banyans are sacred – they symbolize eternal life, act as a gathering place for villagers, and their extensive canopies shield people and animals against harsh elements. It is even believed that the Buddha achieved enlightenment beneath a Banyan tree.

Now consider community activism in OTE. Residents first organized in the 1960s to protest racism and deteriorating neighborhood conditions - this initial effort planted the seed for community organizing in OTE. This early organizing effort propagated an array of community organizations and leaders - OTECH is one of those oldest community organizations. It is one trunk in a vast community of trunks, branches and vines that make up the canopy of a broadening social justice movement. In recent years OTECH'S community approach to education has extended the canopy to included Loveland School. They led the movement to keep Loveland School open. In turn, Loveland – a vine that has taken root – is similarly engaged in community organizing efforts, such as the fight to save OTE's youth basketball courts.

The "Save our School" victory was not only marked by its success in keeping Loveland in OTE – but also by its ability to transform school culture. OTECH organized side by side with students, teachers, parents and other community members to build a better school – they demanded smaller class sizes, music and art classes, a parent center, and high quality teaching staff. Warren (2014) asserts that "transformational change" is:

> …broader and deeper and refers to changes in the way people think and act within or across a range of institutions. In organizations, transactional change modifies organizational procedures, while transformational change involves changes in norms, values, and assumptions. Transactional changes are certainly important but on their own are not likely to address the systemic institutional and cultural problems such as deficit thinking in public education. They will matter only to the extent they are connected to and help advance broader efforts at transformational change (p. 8).

Loveland's transformation became publicly apparent when in 2014, just three years after the school was reopened in OTE, Loveland went from being in "academic emergency" to a turnaround school. Lisa, a Northburgh University professor, worked with Loveland before and after the school was reopened. She describes what the change was like within school

walls:

> *The culture of the school took an immensely more positive direction. I can remember that before I was afraid to walk in the office and sign in because I didn't know who was going to yell. But you know, under new leadership, just two years later little kids – preschoolers - were walking down the hallway. They never knew me...but they would hug me! "Of course you're an adult and you're here to help me." You'd hear teachers in the hallway hugging on kids and loving on kids and it was awesome...awesome.*

In addition to pushing the school to hire quality staff and leadership, this movement also inspired and supported Loveland's growing involvement with the OTE community. For example, in 2015 Loveland's principal along with several students and members of OTECH staff spoke at a local community meeting to protest the redevelopment of neighborhood basketball courts. In that same year, Loveland 5th and 6th graders organized an awareness march in the gentrifying part of OTE to bring awareness to the poverty and growing wealth inequalities in their community. And, in 2016, the school started a student enterprise program that gives 4th and 5th graders the opportunity to intern with businesses and organizations in OTE.

Lareau (1987) argues that White middle-class families are better organized around their schools than poor and working-class families – thus giving them more power to advocate on behalf of their children. Yet, this research demonstrates that Loveland Elementary, a school that serves a predominately low-income Black community, is entrenched in a rich tradition of community organizing. Community organizing, that in this case, may help insulate youth from the negative impacts of living in poverty as well act as a practice to embolden families and children to advocate for educational and community reform themselves. OTECH's approach to community organizing has operated as an important practice for shaping educational opportunities for residents of OTE. It has linked residents to democratic processes and institutions that promote civic participation.

Participate in diverse and robust organizational fields. OTECH is connected to a vast array of resource rich organizations that influence the services and information available to its residents. These organizations represent a range of fields that include education, health care, local cultural centers, and public and private institutions. They are local schools that serve neighborhood children, they are universities involved in community engagement activities, and they are businesses volunteering and providing charitable donations. These organizations include health clinics, soup kitchens, social service agencies, and local cultural centers. In fact, organizations such as OTECH since the beginning of our country "have played a pivotal role in creating organizational responses to human needs. They foster private-public relations in funding and managing services" (Hasenfeld & Garrow, 2012, p. 297) My findings suggest that OTECH brokers ties with organizations not only because of the nature of economics, but also out of organizational interest. Goods and resources are brokered through non-profits, businesses and government organizations. Through its ties, OTECH not only cultivates an "organization response" to human needs around housing, but they also are able to use these ties to provide social services and programming that respond to a more global purpose.

A study of over 300 childcare centers in NYC, supports this finding. Small (2009) discovered that these centers were often heavily connected to other organizations based on "financial, normative and cognitive" incentives:

> Childcare centers both provided to and received from the organizations in these fields various resources – information, staff, funds, legitimacy, clients, services, political capital – to meet their institutional needs. For example, in the summer of 2004 many childcare center workers in New York collaborated with other centers and with childcare workers unions to organize a strike for higher wages. The political capital acquired through the collaboration was an instrumental resource in the pursuit of higher wages. While many resources such as these benefited the centers institutions, many others primarily represented a benefit to the parent. For

> example, certain university hospitals sent health professionals in training to some childcare centers to perform free oral or general health exams on children. These patron-specific resources derived from organizations in all fields. (p.133)

In all, these childcare centers were able to broker organizational ties to help mothers' access information and services that they lacked through social or cultural capital. The similarity between OTECH and these childcare centers calls attention to the diverse interests and organizational networks of community based organizations. In the case of OTECH, its relationship with Northburgh University demonstrates how and to what benefit these organizational ties form. Importantly, the partnership that has developed between Northburgh and OTECH has always been mutually beneficial. These two organizations first connected when Dan, a new professor, set out to find research work in OTE. OTECH, open to new ideas and relationships, found that they needed Dan's skillset as an architect to help them advocate for urban planning projects and with the designing and retrofitting of their low-income housing properties. Over the years, as the mutual benefits became actualized, this more informal relationship between Dan and OTECH turned in to a full-fledged partnership with the university. The university benefits from this partnership by being able to provide their students with rich hands-on internships and their professors with research opportunities. OTECH benefits from the knowledge, political support, and extra manpower that the university's Community Engagement Center provides. The value in this is that this relationship has not only helped provide residents with quality housing, but it has also brought very real education related resources to OTE. For example, a student-intern from the university started CAC. Similarly, the center has brought in teachers and social workers that now work full time in OTE.

On a more micro-level, these ties that are formed inter-organizationally are

animated through the everyday work that OTECH does with residents. To broker and sustain organizational connections OTECH uses both supportive referrals and collaborations. For example, residents working with staff social workers are frequently referred out to any number of social service organizations in the area for mental or physical health issues. In my interviews I found that staff accompanies residents to these organizations and/or follows up with both the residents and the organization providing the service. Carrie, OTECH's executive director notes that, "Sometimes the referral's enough and sometimes it takes a lot more". In many cases services are only successful if they are accompanied with consistent support. These types of supportive referrals not only benefit the resident, but also serve to strengthen relationships between OTECH and partner organizations. In addition to offering supportive referrals, OTECH also collaborates with organizations to offer important programing to residents. For example, Children's Art Corner (CAC) partnered with a University of Riverside professor to provide socio-emotional programing for youth attending their evening classes. The benefit of this is that youth are learning how to better understand and express their emotions.

In all, residents embedded in OTECH acquire services through these supportive referrals and collaborations. These organizational ties are mobilized not only because of the nature of economic markets but also out of organizational interest. In research, the use of organizational collaborations and referrals has been well documented in churches, schools, childcare centers, and health clinics (Marwell, 2004; Marwell & McInerney, 2005; Small, Allard, Marwell, & McQuarrie, 2013).

While organizational ties offer distinct advantages – connections to youth programing, free health care, food and employment – there may be some disadvantages to

participating in organizational networks. One disadvantage can be explained by "institutional coercion." Small (2009) notes that institutional coercion is when people or organizations are asked to forgo their own rights or self-interest to represent the good of the organization. "Organizational contexts complicate this conflict by introducing a third party, the organization, whose interests are neither exactly those of the individual nor those of the collective" (Small 2009, p. 188). I found evidence of institutional coercion in this study when interviewing Rita – the principal of Loveland. I specifically asked Rita how she balances her role as a principal with the expectations that outside organizations (like OTECH) may place on her. She responded:

> *…it's tense, because you know my experience is limited to the parents I interact with. It is a strain for me because I think they sometimes want me to do certain things that are not within the capacity of my job. What I mean by that is, if I had a dual role – if I were a resident of OTE and I were the principal here - there would be some type of security for me saying "you know, I wasn't speaking on behalf of Loveland. I was speaking as a resident in this community." I am just the principal – I represent Riverside Public Schools. So if I say something it's not like Rita said, it is RPS said….and that's very difficult because I am articulate. I think people have an expectation that I'm supposed to say or do something that I can't do. Or they ask me to facilitate things in my building – this stuff can't come back on me…we can't take certain positions on things because we are stewards of RPS.*

Here we see that Rita is sometimes asked, for the good of OTECH, to forgo her own self-interest. Thus representing conflict that can exist between individual interests and that of the organization. While there are advantages that come with being organizationally connected there are also distinct disadvantages occur when organizations or actors feel obligated, beyond their own level of desire or interest to advocate for an organization.

Organizationally embedded resource rich programing and information sharing. Upon first glance, it is hard to understand why OTECH – a housing organization - might offer services to its residents. Providing resources requires time, energy and expense on

the part of the organization and staff. For example, OTECH helps new and old residents find furniture. These residents might not have furniture because they were previously homeless, they might have had bedbugs and need new furniture, sometimes furniture breaks or the makeup of the household changes. Regardless of the situation, OTECH prioritizes helping residents furnish their apartments. In order to offer this service, staff have to scramble to piece together different items from different places – they make phone calls, write emails, and coordinate drop-offs or pick ups. As one might imagine, this takes a lot of time. Tenants do not necessarily expect these services and in most cases it is not economically rational to offer them. Yet, as demonstrated, OTECH is motivated by an internal sense of purpose and history, and by certain outside pressures that help shape programing and service allocation. These internal and external factors not only impact broad access to resources for the residents and neighborhood – but they also directly shape the services offered. OTECH, like many CDCs nationwide, have discovered that you cannot provide successful housing to low-income families without caring for the family. From Beyond Housing of St. Louis Missouri to Community HousingWorks of San Diego and Chicano's Por La Causa in Phoenix, Arizona, CDCs are offering residents access to after-school programs, substance abuse programs, outpatient behavior health services, parenting classes, immigration services, domestic violence shelters and support groups, HIV services, and employment services.

Programing such as this not only provides families with access to important services, but it also helps residents form social and organizational ties amongst each other and with OTECH staff. Small (2009) found that ties in childcare centers were effectively brokered when they presented families with "multiple opportunities to interact (a)

frequently, (b) durably, or (c) in a focused manner" (p. 179). In this study, OTECH's Children's Art Corner serves as an example for this type of programing. CAC is a low-barrier youth program that twice a week, late in the evenings when it is toughest for parents to find after-school care. Over the course of two hours parents and children trickle in socializing with each other as well as OTECH staff. Parents and children are not only forming relationships with each other, but they are also engaging in informal relationships with OTECH staff. The value in this is that it builds trust between OTECH and residents as well as gives parents the opportunity to ask the staff informational questions about programing or services and address any housing concerns or issues they might have.

Not only does OTECH provide residents with access to important programing, they also help residents activate these services by information storage. In the childcare centers that Small (2009) researched parents obtained valuable information through their participation in the center: "When a center is the broker between two parties, it may operate as a passive communicator, because centers are physical spaces with desks, tables, walls, libraries, and bulletin boards, all of which function in part to disseminate information collected in brochures, books, newsletters pamphlets, and posters" (p138). Like these centers, OTECH uses physical spaces as a way to pass information to their residents – this serves as a form of passive brokerage. Residents are routinely provided with information that they might not even know to ask for – such as job training workshops, free health clinics, after school activities, and a variety of social service programs. In the case of childcare centers, "physical repositories" mobilized networks for the parent, thus "effectively procuring the resource in a way advantageous to the least purposive parent." (p. 139) One first time mother, standing in front of a center's bulletin board, found a

pamphlet on baby food storage; "I didn't know how long to store it, to be honest with you; after I opened it I didn't know how long it was safe to store," (p. 139-140) This quote highlights the ability of organizations to target populations based on their specific needs and conditions. CDCs are organizations that serve mostly low-income families and they are able to provide these families with information and services that are directly relevant to their life circumstances.

How are these organizational practices shaped by neighborhood poverty? In OTE, the concentrated poverty perspective would argue that OTECH's ability to form organizational ties and provide meaningful services to their residents is weakened due to the absence of the middle class. Yet, this study found that OTECH – embedded in a low-income neighborhood - is tied to a vast number of organizations. Interestingly in a study of 300 randomly selected childcare centers in NYC - the centers with the most organizational ties were found in the poorest neighborhoods. In fact, "centers in high-poverty neighborhoods provided 28 percent more referral ties and had 44 percent more collaborative ties than centers in non-poor neighborhoods." (Small, Jacobs, Messengill, 2008, p.405) Contributing to this was the fact that outside corporate and government funders used neighborhood poverty as a proxy when allocating resources. OTECH, similar to many of these childcare centers, works in one of Riverside's poorest neighborhoods. For example, 2013 Census figures indicate that in the four Census tracts that comprise OTE the vast majority of children - 80% - live in households with incomes below the federal poverty line of $24,250 for a family of four. In the Census tract that is home to Loveland School (where most of the children in OTE are concentrated) 98% of children live in poverty. This high concentration of poverty is why local private schools and other service organizations

might send their volunteers and resources to OTE instead of another community in Riverside. In other words, conditions in OTE are not just shaped by competition for goods and resources – but by local organizations, private funders, and public policy and programs. OTE's neighborhood characteristics – it's central geography, vibrancy, historic architectural legacy, and it's high poverty – not only impact the work that OTECH does, but they also influence the neighborhood's overall organizational density. This is significant because as Small (2009) asserts, "for access to certain resources, a poor actor may find it easier to be targeted if he or she is connected to an organization in a poor neighborhood, given the place-based orientations of high-level brokers of organizational ties" (p. 168).

However, there are complexities to being embedded in well-connected organizations that serve low-income communities. For example, in OTE, the community has to deal with gentrification and the changes that that is bringing to the neighborhood. In many ways, the attention that OTE has received from outside organizations (both private and public), coupled with the work of community-based organizations has meant cleaner parks, reduced crime, and new housing developments and amenities – all characteristics that make the neighborhood more appealing to higher income White professionals. Just as the neighborhood's residents and organizations have begun to reap the benefits of decades of hard work they now have to cope with the forces and trauma of gentrification. In my interviews residents expressed anxiety about the security of their housing and lack of affordable retail, and OTECH staff voiced concern about long-standing neighborhood organizations that were either closing doors or moving across town. As the socio-economic makeup of OTE changes we should consider how the changing demographics might change the flow of resources to organizations like OTECH and the people they serve. As people and

organizations are displaced, gentrification, like deconcentration policies may undermine the work of OTECH and its ability to reach poor individuals. Poor families live in complex communities and systems - it is for this reason that the concentrated poverty perspective is too narrow to lend sufficient insight into the work of OTECH. Ultimately, my findings show that the work of OTECH is continuously shaped by a variety of external motivations –that not only include neighborhood conditions but also the influence of politics, private and public stakeholders.

Do organizations, such as CDCs, protect against the effects of living in neighborhood poverty? Social isolation theory maintains that people living in low-income neighborhoods are separated from important middle-class social networks that provide information and access to education and jobs (Wilson 1987; 1996). Researchers who study deinstitutionalization theory, argue that concentrated poverty creates absence of middle-class capital that leaves residents struggling to gain access to important resources – resources that include quality schools, employment opportunities heath services, and transportation (Sampson, 2008; 2012; Small, Allard, Marwell, & McQuarrie, 2013b). However, Small, Jacobs and Massengill (2008) assert that these theories neglect one important factor – "the networks of organizations." They maintain that organizations are not only meaningful due to the direct services they deliver, but they are also meaningful because people are given "*access to* through their organizational ties" (p. 388). In other words, "organizational ties may substitute for what is unavailable through social ties," (Mario Luis Small, Jacobs, & Massengill, 2008) thus serving to buffer against the effects of poverty.

In a review of Brofenbrenner's model and Ungar's social-ecological interpretation,

Ungar, Ghazinour, and Richter (2013) find that "the more a child is exposed to adversity (e.g. exposure to violence, poverty, disability) the more the child's resilience depends on the quality of the environment (rather than individual qualities) and the resources that are available and accessible to nurture and sustain well-being" (p350). Being embedded in an organization such as OTECH may help buffer exposure to neighborhood poverty. For example, a child living in OTECH housing, yet exposed to the everyday stressors that accompany poverty, has access to supportive programing and coordinated systems that may help mitigate the negative effects of poverty. Through OTECH that child has access to afterschool programing and increased food security. Furthermore, OTECH may provide the child's parents with access to support groups and social services in addition to helping them pay utility bills, find jobs, and furnish their apartments. Researchers have shown that in youth who are exposed to high levels of environmental stress resulting from poverty and violence, individual characteristics matter less than environmental factors. In a study of 497 adolescents, researchers found that there was a strong positive relationship between youth resilience and better functional outcomes and access to high quality services. The children who were connected to high quality programing fair better then those who did not have access to those programs (Ungar et al, 2013). This not only highlights the important role of organizations to a child's well-being, but it also emphasizes the need for high-quality, targeted interventions.

Though varying in form, policy measures to promote individual social networks commonly assume that poor Black neighborhoods are isolated - lacking social and economic resources for upward mobility, and that one can remedy the situation by either moving people out of the high poverty, high crime neighborhood or creating a new

environment. In his research and writings on the work of people and organizations, Small adds a new perspective. He asserts that, "above all, what researchers have called a person's social capital, depends substantially on the institutional practices of the organizations in which the person routinely participates" (Small, 2009, p. 177). The story of OTECH provides us with an important example of how an organization may shape not only a family's access to resources and to social capital, but also a neighbohoods. In other words, a single-mother living in a low-income neighborhood such as OTE embedded with organizations that are well connected might experience the effects of poverty differently than a single-mother living in poverty, but in isolation from well connected organizations. For this reason, my study contributes to and extends Small's organizational embeddedness perspective by highlighting community level (macro level) outcomes – not just an individual's.

In all, this study demonstrates how OTECH works to offer specific educational and social service programing (micro-level) to the families they serve while also connecting the community's educational needs to the larger web of community challenges and history (macro-level). My findings demonstrate that OTECH influences the larger conditions affecting the neighborhood in addition to offering families access to key education-related resources.

Though the course of this study I have contributed and built upon Small's organizational embeddedness persepective by highlighting the community level outcomes rather than just individual effects. Small asserts that people make ties through organizations that improve an individual's well being, yet neglects to document the influence that organizations wield on neighborhoods.

Reflections and Limitations

The seed for this study was planted almost fifteen years ago when, as an undergraduate, I went with a group from my university to spend a weekend sleeping on the floor of a children's music room in an urban community center. It was then that I was first introduced to the work of organizations such as OTECH. During that trip, I heard from a vast array of community members and leaders that were working to protect their neighborhood from the lack of public investment, drugs, violence, dilapidated housing, a housing shortage, and an underwhelming public school. These people were passionate and committed and their stories, along with the friendships I made that weekend, stuck. In a way, my work has come full circle back to that weekend. It reflects how my own organizational embeddedness - in a university student organization – connected me to ideas and people that continue to shape and inform my work.

What surprised me in this study was the organizational cohesiveness around OTECH's vision of social justice. This vision animated the relationship that staff had with residents and each other. It also meant that, organizationally, they kept a pulse on the neighborhood, listening and responding to its changing needs. This came through in each of my observations and interviews and it was impressive. However, this organizational commitment to social justice does not mean that OTECH is without its issues. For example, as the study progressed, it became clear to me that I was being referred to mostly White staff and community members. Although, enamored with the breadth and depth of their programing, I was challenged to think about race – my own and that of OTECH's staff and leadership. As a researcher, it was a lesson in how to approach issues through a critical lens, despite the admirable work one's subjects might be engaged in.

Because this is a single case study of a CDC, I am not able to generalize my results to the wider population. However, as Corbin and Strauss (1990) note, "the more interviews, observations, and documents obtained, the more evidence will accumulate, the more variations will be found, and the greater density will be achieved. Thus there will be wider applicability of the theory because more and different sets of conditions affecting phenomena are uncovered (p. 190-191)." So while generalizations may be limited, by providing a rich contextual description about the CDC and surrounding neighborhood, I have produced a study can shed light to organizations and schools that work in our diverse urban communities (Lincoln & Guba, 1990). I propose that the heuristic nature of this study might broaden our discourse on organizational and community level factors in which low-income families are increasingly embedded.

Suggestions for Researchers and Practitioners

This study outlines the how one CDC, embedded in a specific community, shapes access to educational opportunity for its residents. This nuanced look at OTECH, through the stories of those involved, suggests further research and practitioner engagement in this area is needed. In this section I offer recommendations for scholarship and practice.

Recommendations for future scholarship . The principal contribution of this dissertation to the existing body of literature is to (a) broaden our understanding of the organizational embeddedness perspective and to (b) attempt to document the ways in which CDCs, throughout the U.S., may cultivate increased access to educational opportunity. As I previously addressed in this study's literature review, analysis of low-income housing effects on student outcomes should move beyond the well-researched housing quality and mobility programs to the effects of housing on educational opportunity

delivered through community organizations. In this study, I demonstrate that both housing and organizations matter to the education of children living in poverty. To continue to build and inform this line of inquiry I lay out the following suggestions for researchers:

Focus on CDCs and similar community based non-profits. The story of OTECH highlights the degree to which an organization can reach and serve families and children. As organizations that develop and manage affordable rental housing, CDCs can significantly shape a family's housing conditions and housing stability. Additionally, these findings demonstrate that these organizations that are becoming increasingly involved in neighborhood and school improvement efforts that may create greater educational opportunity for the residents and communities they serve. Thus, their growing involvement in education reform deserves our attention. Furthermore, this line of inquiry is especially immanent as we enter into an era of an increased neoliberal abandonment of social services, public education, and housing assistance. In the next four years, organizations such as OTECH will likely see decreased federal and state funding, yet increased need. I suggest that future researchers expand the scope of this study to a broad base comparative analysis of CDCs in varying communities to continue to deepen our knowledge of the ways in which CDCs impact children and families. These questions seem particularly relevant: How are these organizations shaped by federal, state and local government policies? How do they cultivate trust with residents? How do CDCs link their efforts to schools? What types of direct services do CDCs offer their residents? What resources do CDCs broker? How are the resources brokered? Do resources improve access to educational opportunity? How does the academic performance of students embedded in CDCs compare to that of their peers?

Understand the practices. I propose that we pay close attention to the practices that enable CDCs to deliver flexible, meaningful, and impactful programming. Do they form broad, collaborative networks? What are the important organizations and partnerships within their networks? How do they remain competitive and relevant? Ultimately, the aim for future research should be to understand how school and community-based actors could capitalize on the education potentials of CDCs and vise-versa.

Address racial mismatch. In practical terms, this study suggests a need for both researchers and practitioners to bring greater focus to issues of racial mismatch. How might racial mismatch impact an organization's activities and community responsiveness? In what ways could this impact organizational behavior? What are the benefits of a racially representative leadership and frontline staff?

Consider place. For years, scholars from varying disciplines have documented the effects that community-level factors (housing, crime, employment, health, transportation) have on student academic outcomes (Anyon, 2005; Elliott et al., 1996; Jencks, 1972; Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2004; Miller, 2011; Sampson, 2012). And yet, the "…current educational discourses seek to standardize the experience of students from diverse geographical and cultural places" (Gruenewald, 2003, p. 7). Educational concern for a student's broader educational environment has been overshadowed by the emphasis placed on federally mandated high-stakes accountability. This dominant discourse in education policy, that minimizes the notion that place matters in education, has meant that little attention has been given to the specific conditions and environments that reproduce the class status of families in education settings. This study illustrates how place matters. OTE's unique history, organizational density, and socio-political climate has shaped the

work of OTECH and the lives of the families that they serve. There are important differences between and among urban spaces and, as researchers, we need to bring greater attention to the uniqueness of place-specific socio-economic, political, and environmental factors. Thus, to account for neighborhood heterogeneity, researchers should distinguish the effects of the specific neighborhood characteristics in which these organizations are embedded.

In all, this research asserts that analysis of low-income housing effects on student outcomes should move beyond the well-researched housing quality and mobility programs to the effects of housing on educational opportunity delivered through community organizations. Additionally, to account for neighborhood heterogeneity, researchers should work to distinguish the effects of the specific neighborhood characteristics in which these organizations are embedded.

Suggestions for practitioners. We know that approaches that focus on what is going on in the school or classroom can only partially impact academic outcomes (Anyon, 2005; Reardon, 2011; Sampson, Sharkey, & Raudenbush, 2008; Warren, 2014). Thus, as CDCs become increasingly engaged in local education issues, educators should work to bolster their awareness of CDCs and develop strategies to work with them. In the setting of this current study, educators were working hand in hand with OTECH to increase community access to valuable resources and to improve student outcomes, school climates, teacher quality and parental involvement. To tackle the inequities in our public schools, practitioners must continue to broaden their approach to address the structural inequalities in our communities. As Miller, Wills, and Scanlan (2013) write, these "place-based initiatives are developed, diverse networks of leaders will be called to bridge

organizational boundaries, cultural differences, socioeconomic differences, and physical distances to develop coherent plans of action for collective "Neighborhoods" (p. 2). The following are my suggestions to practitioners:

Form ties to CDCs and community-based organizations. This study illustrates the advantage of tie formation between schools and community-based organizations. This informal and formal relationship that developed between Loveland, OTECH, and neighborhood residents cultivated a sense of relational trust that meant that educators and staff could work in tandem to meet the needs of youth living in OTE. In light of this, a practical recommendation for school leadership and staff would be to simply ask students and families what neighborhood organizations they trust. Alone, community schools such as Loveland, may be able to provide important services to students, but they cannot change the effects of poverty and poor housing conditions. As such, many researchers have posited that the work of school-community partnerships should always consist of an array of organizations and actors to effectively meet the needs of students and their broader community (Anyon, 2005; Evans, 2004; Miller, Wills, & Scanlan, 2013; Warren, 2005; Warren, 2014).

Engage in community organizing. The findings of this dissertation emphasize the importance of community organizing. As demonstrated, OTECH advocates for and represents the needs of their residents – residents who were previously homeless, low-income youth, victims of domestic violence, and people who suffer from substance abuse and mental health issues. Through mobilization, the OTE community of organizations and people were able to create transformative, authentic engagement and change for their community. Warren (2014) writes, "community and youth organizing is foundational to

the emergence of a movement because it is through this process that local people with the most at stake in educational equity and justice—parents and students—build relationships and gain the support and courage to take action to make change" (p10). As we have seen with OTECH and their relationship with Loveland School, successful community organizing requires involvement from teachers, school leaders, students and parents. The effects of community organizing are not only evident in OTE, but communities across country are organizing with teachers unions to prevent schools from closing, to combat neighborhood violence, and to advocate for low-income housing developments (Warren, 2014). If our aim is to create better schools and more equitable communities, fair housing advocates, educators, and parents must find allies in each other and organize.

Concluding Thoughts

This concludes my research study. The findings produced two major themes that illustrate the ways in which housing organizations, such as OTECH, are able to shape a family's access to educational opportunity: (1) they provide meaningful assistance to their residents that take the form of youth programing, social services, and access to information, and (2) they employ organizational practices – at the macro and micro levels - that facilitate this work. In all, this study suggests that organizational embeddedness may play a crucial role in shaping families' access to educational opportunity.

As we enter into the uncertainty of the Trump administration, non-profits, such as OTECH, and the low-income families they serve will be forced to adapt to a changing landscape. This landscape will likely be characterized by increasingly neoliberal policies – policies that reduce federal spending on social services while simultaneously increasing fee for service programs and vouchers. Moreover, neoliberal policies such as these "are

manifest in the entry of for-profit organizations, growth in completion, and increases in exposure to market forces" (Hasenfeld & Garrow, 2012). This climate makes understanding and supporting the work of non-profits like OTECH all the more important. It is my hope that this study can help inform how school and community based actors can capitalize on the "education potentials" of CDCs.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Protocol for CDC Administrators and Staff

Interviewee name:
Date:
Location:

I. Introduction
   - Overview of my study and research interests
   - General statement: Please carefully consider your responses, refrain from using direct identifiers or giving highly sensitive information, and/ or 3rd party reporting.

   - Informed consent

   1. Do you have any questions before we start?

II. Background information
   2. Tell me a bit about yourself – How did you come to this position? What motivates you in your work?
   3. How long have you been in your current position?

III. CDC environment
   4. Describe the population that your CDC serves. What kinds of relationships do families have each other?
   5. What is your relationship like with residents?
   6. What is the relationship like between staff and residents?

IV. Embedded resources in CDC
   7. Describe the work of your CDC - What types of services do you offer your residents? How often are these services offered? For how long have you offered these resources? What is attendance like?
   8. Now, I'd like to ask about services the CDC may provide by bringing in staff from other organizations. Does this CDC bring collaborate with other organizations to provide on-site programming?

V. Educational resources embedded in CDC
   9. More specifically, what types of educational resources do you offer your residents? Is there a cost?
   10. How often are these services offered?
   11. For how long have you offered these services?
   12. What is attendance like?
   13. What types of outcomes do these resources produce?
   14. Why do you offer these resources? (grants, mission driven, community demand, etc)
   15. What if anything supports or inhibits the provision of these resources?
   16. In what ways do you or your staff help out residents outside of these formal resources? How does this occur? Can you give me an example?

VI. Brokering resources
   17. What organizations does your CDC work most closely with? Are these usually referrals or do you collaborate with these organizations? How do these connections help students/families with school-related matters?

18. Do you refer residents to these organizations? If so, why?
19. How do you refer residents to these organizations?
20. How often do you refer residents to these organizations?
21. How do your residents benefit from being linked to these organizations?
22. What is your relationship like with these organizations?
23. What are the supporting or inhibiting factors that contribute to resident referrals?

VII. Relationship with local schools

24. How is our CDC active in local education issues?
25. What is your relationship like with the local schools?

VIII. Closure

26. Is there anything I've missed?

Appendix B: Interview Protocol for Parents

Interviewee name:
Date:
Location:

I. Introduction
   - Overview of my study and research interests
   - General statement: Please carefully consider your responses, refrain from using direct identifiers or giving highly sensitive information, and/ or 3rd party reporting.
   - Informed consent
   1. Do you have any questions before we start?

II. Background information
   2. Tell me a bit about yourself and your family.
   3. How did you come to live here?
   4. Tell me about the school your children attend.
   5. Aside from school, what do educational services look like to you?

III. CDC environment
   6. What is it like living here compared to the other places you've lived?
   7. What kinds of relationships do families livening here have each other?
   8. What is the community like here? Supportive environment for children learning?
   9. What is your relationship like with other residents?
   10. How have you gotten to know other residents?
   11. What is your relationship like with staff?
   12. What is the relationship like between staff and residents?

IV. Embedded resources in CDC
   13. What kinds of services does this organization offer? Are they onsite? Do they cost anything and if so how much? Have you attended or made use of any of the services that this CDC offers? In no, why not? If yes, what have you participated in? In what ways were these services helpful or not helpful? How often do you make use of these services? Did other residents participate?
   14. How did you come to learn about these services?

V. Educational resources embedded in CDC
   - Explain educational resources
   15. More specifically, what types of educational services have you taken advantage of? Are they onsite? Do they cost anything and if so how much? Have you attended or made use of any of the services that this CDC offers? In no, why not? If yes, what have you participated in? In what ways were these services helpful or not helpful? How often do you make use of these services? Did other residents participate?
   16. Have your children benefited from participating in these services? How so?
   17. What if anything supports or inhibits you or your families participation in these services?

VI. Brokering resources

18. Do you or any member of your family receive services from other organizations? How did you get connected with these organizations? Have these connections helped students/families with school-related matters? If these services are off site how do you get to them?
19. How have you or any member of your family benefited from being linked to these organizations?
20. What is your relationship like with these organizations?
21. What is your relationship like with the local schools?

VII. Closure

22. Are there services or resources that you wish you had access to?
23. Is there anything I've missed?

Appendix C: Interview Protocol for School Staff

Interviewee name:
Date:
Location:

I. Introduction
- Overview of my study and research interests
- General statement: Please carefully consider your responses, refrain from using direct identifiers or giving highly sensitive information, and/ or 3rd party reporting.
- Informed consent

1. Do you have any questions before we start?

II. Background information

2. Tell me a bit about yourself.
3. How did you come to be a teacher at this school?

III. School environment

4. Describe the school you work at. What are the students and teachers like?
5. What are the most pressing issues that students here face?
6. How are parents involved in the school?

IV. Relationship with neighborhood organizations

7. Does the school work closely with other neighborhood organizations? How are those relationships formed?
8. What neighborhood organizations or programs are important to the work that you do?
9. What are the most important organizations in OTE?
10. What have your interactions with OTECH been like? How frequent are they? How do you understand their role in the community?
11. Tell me about OTECH – what kind of work do they do? What is the school's relationship like with OTECH?
12. How did you come to learn about OTECH?

V. Closure

13. Is there anything I've missed?

Appendix D: Observation Protocol

Elements of the Framework	Questions to Guide Observation	Possible Observation Sites
Embedded resources	• How are resources offered to residents? Actor driven or institutionally driven? Purposeful or non-purposeful? • What types of resources are offered to residents? • How do residents take advantage of resources offered?	Observe main offices, facility walkthroughs, attend CDC events, classes, and information sessions
Brokering ties	• How do CDCs link residents to other organizations? Actor driven or intuitionally driven? Purposeful or non-purposeful? • How do residents benefit from these ties?	Observe main offices, facility walkthroughs, staff meetings
Organizational environment	• Does the CDC encourage a pro-social environment among residents? • What actions are taken to create a supportive community for residents? • How are residential and building grounds maintained?	CDC events, classes and info sessions, staff meetings, facility walkthroughs, signs and displays within the building

*No personally identifiable data will be collected from non-consenting persons

Appendix E: Document Review Protocol

Source	Data
CDC website	CDC mission statement, staff information, programs and services offered, history of organization, partners
CDC generated	Strategic goals, staff agenda and minutes, CDC data profile, job descriptions, professional development materials, flyers and brochures, newsletters, meeting minuetes from classes and info sessions
Other	Local newspaper

*No personally identifiable data will be collected from non-consenting persons.