



Jane Addams Hull House Association
~History~

Jane Addams Hull House Association is the direct descendent of the settlement house founded by Jane Addams in 1889. In the words of our founder, our purpose is to “Aid in the solutions of life in a great city, to help our neighbors build responsible, self-sufficient lives for themselves and their families.”

We carry on this mission today as one of Chicago’s oldest and largest social and human service agencies.

Ms. Addams established her residency in Hull House based upon several basic principles:

- **Live in the community as an equal participant in the local issues of the day.**

Unlike the social workers and society matrons who visited the poor and then returned to their middle class homes every evening, Ms. Addams and her colleagues lived where they worked. The settlement concept was central to the success of the Hull House community, and the practice of neighbors helping neighbors became a cornerstone of the Hull House philosophy.

- **Believe in the fundamental dignity of all individuals and accord every person with equal respect regardless of their ethnic origins, gender, age, etc.**

Ms. Addams believed that if people –of any age, race, gender, ethnicity - were allowed to develop their skills, that person could not only make a better life for himself but contribute to the community as a whole.

- **Believe that poverty and the lack of opportunity breed the problems of the ghetto. Ignorance, disease, and crime are the result of economic desperation and not the result of some flaw in moral character.**

Ms. Addams promoted the idea that access to opportunity was the key to successful participation in a democratic, self governing society. The greatest challenge and achievement of the settlement was to help people help themselves.

We build on the enduring vision of Jane Addams. She foresaw a compassionate, interdependent world revolving around the principles of social justice, fairness, tolerance, respect, equal opportunity, civic responsibility and hope for every individual, family and community. Hull House Association itself is an evolving community where committed staff and volunteers serve, nurture and learn from each other, and those who – at every stage of life – come to our door in need.

Jane Addams Hull House Association is still in the heart of the community. Each year, more than 60,000 people receive help through a variety of programs including foster care, job training, child care, counseling, education and literacy. Our programs continue to be community-based so they can be most responsive to the needs of children, families, and seniors. We continue Jane Addams' simple mission of *neighbors helping neighbors*.