

# Family Matters

## NEIGHBORHOOD POWER PROJECT CASE STUDY: FAMILY MATTERS



PROGRAM STAGE:  
**IMPLEMENTING EFFICIENCY  
RECOMMENDATIONS**

NEIGHBORHOOD:  
**ROGERS PARK**

BUILDING TYPE:  
**MULTIFAMILY MID-RISE**

ORIGINAL CONSTRUCTION:  
**1920s**

ORGANIZATION STAFF:  
**10 FULL-TIME**

COMMUNITY IMPACT:  
**1,000+ PEOPLE ENGAGED  
ANNUALLY**



### MEET FAMILY MATTERS

Family Matters partners with youth, families, and communities to cultivate a way of living in the world that develops strong relationships, meaningful communication, and safe environments for courageous social change as they seek to build an equitable society for all.

The organization engages more than **1,000 members of the Rogers Park community** each year through **three key initiatives: Youth Development, The Family Matters School, and Community Engagement.**

### WHY SUSTAINABILITY?

Driven by young community members' concerns about the environment, Family Matters sought opportunities to improve their building operations. Family Matters' values align with the mission of the Neighborhood Power Project (NPP) — **to show it's possible to have sustainable buildings in any community, regardless of resources.**

Family Matters operates in a 100-year-old building that is inefficient and needs frequent repairs. Limited by a small staff and operations budget, cost is an important consideration for the Family Matters team. The NPP's pro-bono services and grant opportunities made the program feasible for the organization to tackle many urgent upgrades and keep sustainable operations in mind.

### STEPS 1-3: BENCHMARKING & ASSESSMENT

After a Kick-Off Workshop, building performance specialists, WSP, benchmarked the building's energy and water consumption in ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager and performed a virtual building assessment on December 18th, 2020. The specialists found that the **energy use intensity is 12% higher than the median for comparable buildings.** The assessment was also an opportunity to discuss occupant discomfort, such as **temperature variance throughout the building.** Specialists also identified the **main sources of energy and water consumption: space heating and lawn irrigation.** The team consolidated recommendations into a comprehensive roadmap that outlined opportunities to reduce energy, water, and waste consumption.

**“ In addition to cost savings, being supported by a team of experts [through the NPP] is so beneficial because members of the Family Matters staff don't have to spend our limited time doing research in areas outside of our expertise. ”**



**ANN HINTERMAN**  
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & GRANTS MANAGEMENT,  
FAMILY MATTERS

## NEXT STEPS

With the aid of utility incentives, rebates, and the NPP mini-grant, Family Matters will work to implement resource reduction measures over the next year, outlined in the graphic to the right. Family Matters will also work to incorporate other sustainability upgrades for the building, such as:

- » Heat radiator testing
- » Motion detector light switches
- » Rain barrel
- » Centralized trash bins

After the upgrades are implemented, energy and water consumption will be analyzed to measure the savings.



### LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

For Earth Day and prompted by brainstorming from the NPP, Family Matters and their community did a waste clean-up and audit for the building. Through these learning opportunities and by interacting with an efficient building, children and their families will expand the sustainability conversation throughout the Rogers Park neighborhood.

## PRIORITIZED UPGRADES



### SMART THERMOSTAT

Optimizes heating and cooling schedules while increasing thermal comfort.



### NEW WATER HEATER

Meets hot-water building demands efficiently.



### BOILER PIPE INSULATION

Reduces heat loss compared to uninsulated pipes while improving efficiency.



### LED LIGHTING

Reduces energy consumption and improves sensory comfort.

## TIMELINE



### LIGHTING: ADDRESSING ACCESS & SUSTAINABILITY

The team at Family Matters realized an LED lighting upgrade was an opportunity to improve the learning environment for children with sensory issues. Partnering with Twenty-One Senses, Family Matters is ensuring the lighting upgrade also focuses on the color temperature of the LEDs to create a supportive space.

"Working under harsh, bright lights can cause eye strain and headaches. For people with sensory sensitivities, lighting can seriously affect someone's ability to participate in programs. By removing the fluorescent and harsh incandescent bulbs and replacing them with softer LEDs, the lighting in Family Matters' space will simultaneously become more cost-effective and more accessible and inclusive."

-Jen Puccini, co-founder and Executive Director, Twenty-One Senses

## ABOUT THE NEIGHBORHOOD POWER PROJECT

The Neighborhood Power Project (NPP) is a collaboration between Illinois Green Alliance, Environmental Defense Fund, and Elevate. The NPP supports nonprofit buildings in and around Chicago on their sustainability journey through pro-bono consulting, grant funds for sustainability upgrades, and support to share their projects with the community. For more information, email [NeighborhoodPowerProject@gmail.com](mailto:NeighborhoodPowerProject@gmail.com).

**Neighborhood Power Project**



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