



Local History:
Digitizing Chicago's Community History
eChicago 2011:
Democracy, diversity, and the digital

Rebeccah Sanders, Executive Director
Chicago Cultural Alliance

Our Mission

To effect social change and public understanding of cultural diversity through first voice perspectives.

The Alliance increases the visibility and impact of Chicago's ethnic assets by leveraging partnerships between member organizations and major institutions.

The Alliance assures the long-term efficacy of its public education, marketing, preservation and social service programs by providing organizational development assistance to its Core Members.

Our Vision

The Chicago Cultural Alliance uses the strength of its constituents' first voice to make a regional and national impact on cultural and civic policy in order to effect social change.

The Alliance promotes cultural understanding and provides invaluable resources for government, museums, libraries, universities, businesses, and other educational and cultural institutions.

Partner Institutions

- **Chicago History Museum**
- **Chicago Zoological Society - Brookfield Zoo**
- **Children's Memorial Hospital**
- **Chinese Mutual Aid Association**
- **Jane-Addams Hull-House Museum**
- **North Park University**
- **The Field Museum**
- **The University of Chicago - Center for International Studies**
- **United African Organization**

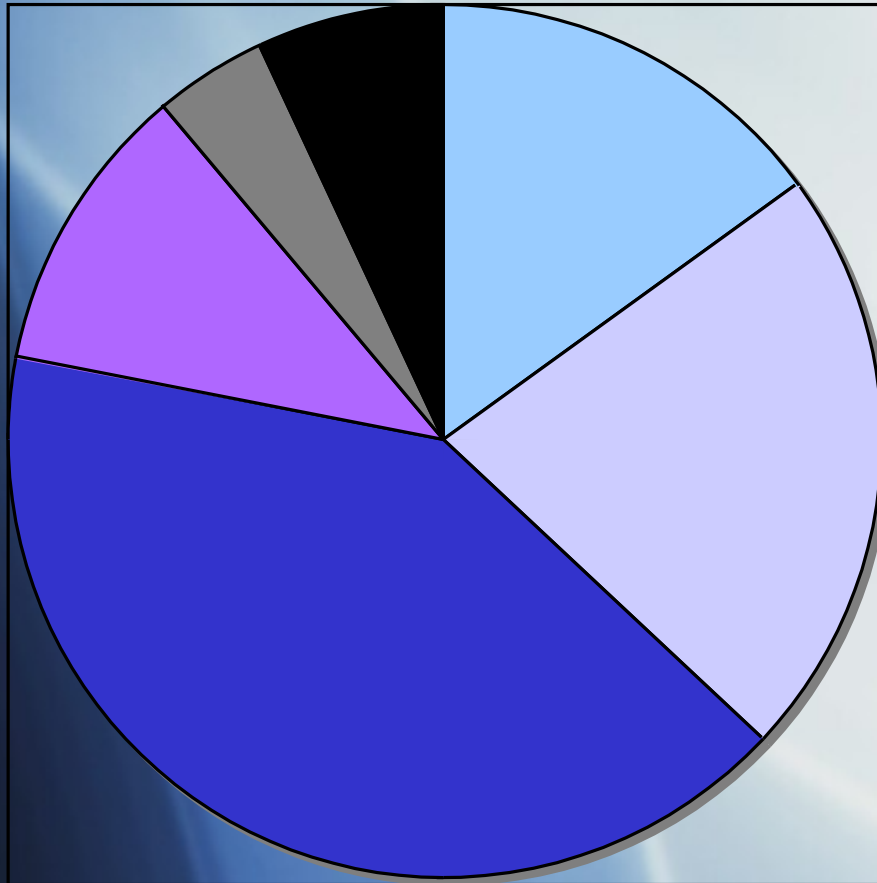
Associate Members

- **Changing Worlds**
- **Project for Civic Reflection,
Valparaiso University**

Core Members

- **American Indian Center**
- **Arab American Action Network**
- **Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture**
- **Bronzeville Children's Museum**
- **Bronzeville Historical Society**
- **Cambodian American Heritage Museum & Killing Fields Memorial**
- **Casa Aztlan**
- **Casa Michoacan**
- **Chicago Japanese American Historical Society**
- **Chinese American Museum of Chicago**
- **DANK HAUS**
- **Ethiopian Community Association of Chicago**
- **Filipino American Historical Society**
- **Illinois St. Andrews Society**
- **Indo-American Heritage Museum**
- **Institute of Puerto Rican Arts & Culture**
- **Italian Culture Center at Casa Italia**
- **Korean American Resource & Cultural Center**
- **Latvian Folk Art Museum**
- **Mitchell Museum of the American Indian**
- **Polish Museum of America**
- **Serbian Cultural and Arts Center St. Stava**
- **Swahili Institute of Chicago**
- **Swedish American Museum**
- **Ukrainian Institute of Modern Art**
- **Ukrainian National Museum**

Core Members



 **African & African American**

 **Asian**

 **European**

 **Latino & Carribean**

 **Middle Eastern**

 **Native American**

Core Members

Community-based ethnic museums, cultural centers, and historical societies

Places of community gathering

Touchstones of ethnic identity



Core Member Collections



- Individually they tell the story of a community
- Collectively they tell the story of Chicago
- Deeply personal
- Profoundly important in understanding Chicago

Core Member Collections



- **Range from several hundred to over 100,000 pieces**
- **Wide variety of items**
- **Donated by community members**
- **Maintained with few resources**

Core Member Collections



- **Chinese American Museum of Chicago**
- **Fire in 2008**
- **Worked closely with Core Members and Partner Institutions**
- **Loss of majority of collection**

Conservation & Collections



- **Assessments**
- **Trainings**
- **Shared Staff**
- **Resource allocations**
- **Digitizing**
- *Funded by the Gaylord & Dorothy Donnelley Foundation*

Conservation & Collections 2009-2010



- **10 Core Members** received reports on **state of their collections and practices**
- **5 Workshops** hosted by **The Field Museum & Chicago History Museum**
- **Building conservation library and supply kits**
- *Funded by the Gaylord & Dorothy Donnelley Foundation in 2010*

Conservation & Collections: 2011



- **Expansion of assessments to include item-specific recommendations**
- **Expansion of workshops to include policy boot camps**
- **Building registration systems at Core Member sites through software & shared registrar**

Conservation & Collections 2012



- Continue assessments and direct service work
- Begin the process of digitizing
- Building a shared archive

Digital Archive



- Portal for entry to museums
- Creates greater public access
- Organized “beyond ethnicity”

The Hapa Project

What are you?

I am a 16 year old female. A sister and an aunt. I am the third to the youngest of 6 kids. I am a proud arab muslim girl from the suburbs.

What is your ethnic identification?

My ethnicity is a very proud Palestinian from Palestine. I am one of those people that is not ashamed of saying I am an arab, muslim Palestinian

