“Nothing we do as a society is more important than educating our children.”

–Robert Zimmer, President, The University of Chicago
The University of Chicago Charter School is a public school on the South Side of Chicago operated by the University of Chicago Urban Education Institute.

North Kenwood/Oakland, founded in 1998, educates children from prekindergarten to grade five. Donoghue was created in 2005 and also serves children from prekindergarten to grade five. Carter G. Woodson, launched in 2008, provides schooling to children from grade six through eighth. Woodlawn was established in 2006 and educates students from grade six to grade 12. Together, the four University of Chicago Charter School campuses offer children a prekindergarten through grade 12 pathway to college.

The University of Chicago Charter School provides students with rigorous instruction and comprehensive academic and social supports to accelerate learning, develop college readiness, and cultivate self-responsibility and leadership. Our campuses provide extensive instructional time, including a longer academic day and an extended day, week and year. We take a research-based approach to instruction, engaging students in ambitious intellectual work. Students undertake research projects in the humanities, sciences, and social sciences, beginning in elementary school and culminating with thesis projects in the senior year. Each campus envelopes students in a culture of high academic achievement, with explicit attention to issues of race, class, culture, and gender that affect urban schooling.

The school uses diagnostic assessments to gauge student progress towards learning standards, using the results to fine-tune instruction, introduce interventions, and target academic and social supports. Intensive professional development, supports, and incentives are in place for teachers and school leaders. An advanced technological infrastructure supports teaching and learning. Parent centers and parent leadership are integral to our school culture. Above all, our teachers, staff, and leaders are dedicated, knowledgeable and skillful educators who teach, support, and inspire our students to achieve at high levels.

Who We Are

The University of Chicago Charter School consists of four campuses with a single mission:

To prepare students for college and success when they get there
Highlights

High Academic Achievement

In 2010, NKO students outperformed students in the state of Illinois in terms of meeting or exceeding standards in reading and math.

City, State, and International Recognition

Carter G. Woodson and Woodlawn students won certificates at citywide science fairs. Carter G. Woodson students presented their video documentaries at the statewide history competition. Woodlawn students were recognized at the UN World Habitat Day for their urban planning projects.

College Prep

Woodlawn students participated in tours to colleges, including Bennett College, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and North Carolina A&T.

Teacher Leadership

Teachers from all four campuses formed a collaborative to align and enhance the science curriculum, prekindergarten to grade 12. As one result, higher percentages of students met or exceeded state standards in science.

Parent Satisfaction

More than 90 percent of Donoghue parents indicated the staff treats children with respect, celebrates the success of all students, and provides students with extra help when needed.

Rising to the Top

Including selective enrollment high schools, Woodlawn ranked 13th among the top 15 high schools in terms of its 11th grade students making expected test score gains in math. 65 percent of Woodlawn juniors made expected gains, 18.5 percent more than in 2009.

Increasing Opportunities

The University of Chicago Charter School is increasing education opportunities for children. In 2009-10, the four campuses all together enrolled 1,592 students. Our enrollment will grow to 1,800 by 2013.

Investing In The Future

The University of Chicago Charter School's FY10 budget totaled $17.9 million. 21 percent of this amount consisted of grants and gifts.

Prekindergarten Counts. Prekindergarten programs at NKO and Donoghue provide children with a strong foundation for academic success. Higher percentages of kindergarten students who participated in our prekindergarten programs reach literacy benchmarks than those who did not. Illinois has the goal of funding prekindergarten for all children. However, the budget crisis has jeopardized this effort. We must raise funds to sustain prekindergarten.

College Success. Nationally, only 40 percent of African American college students graduate within six years. To support 100 percent of Woodlawn’s graduates to earn bachelor’s degrees in a timely manner, we have invented the role of college transitions counselor. This counselor helps graduates negotiate the complexities of college as they select courses, develop relationships with faculty members, and balance study, a job, and life. Funding this new position is a high priority.

Our long-term goal is to increase our resources to the level invested in public schools by New York, Boston, and Atlanta. These cities have historically spent $3,000 to $7,000 more per student than Chicago.
### Success

**We Can Count**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All Grade Levels*</th>
<th>2008 ISAT (Reading/Math/Science)</th>
<th>2010 ISAT (Reading/Math/Science)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NKO</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DONOGHUE</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WOODLAWN</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPS</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Carter G. Woodson opened in 2008 and so is not represented on this table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3rd Graders</th>
<th>2010 ISAT (Reading)</th>
<th>2010 ISAT (Math)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NKO</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DONOGHUE</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPS</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>77%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5th Graders</th>
<th>2010 ISAT (Reading)</th>
<th>2010 ISAT (Math)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NKO</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DONOGHUE</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPS</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>K - Grade Five</th>
<th>2008 Reading Benchmarks</th>
<th>2010 Reading Benchmarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NKO</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DONOGHUE</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2010

98% of CGW eighth graders chose the high schools they now attend.

Among the high schools selected are Jones College Prep, Chicago Academy of the Arts, Marist High School, and the Woodlawn Campus of the University of Chicago Charter School.

of Woodlawn’s first senior class were accepted to colleges and universities.

Among the colleges are Oberlin, University of Chicago, Carleton College, Clark Atlanta, Beloit, Indiana State, and University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana.
Partnership Spotlight

Betsy Gidwitz Supports Science Learning

Betsy Gidwitz believes in the University of Chicago Urban Education Institute’s mission to create knowledge to produce reliably excellent schooling for children growing up in urban American. She expresses this belief through her philanthropy: This past year, Gidwitz supported UEI’s University of Chicago Charter School with a gift to improve the sciences.

The science programs at all four campuses will be significantly strengthened due to Gidwitz’s support. The campuses will purchase laboratory equipment for science experimentation, organize a school-wide science fair, and have already created the space for a newly-formed Science Collaborative that consists of teachers from across the campuses working together to more tightly align curriculum from K-12. The collaborative is raising the bar for all students in terms of standards and expectations for learning, understanding, and applying scientific methods.

The science fair, a new opportunity for students thanks to Gidwitz’s support, allows students to explore new ideas, technology, and the principles of science. Through preparation and participation, students demonstrate mastery of the scientific research process and present findings to a panel of informed judges. Winners go on to compete in a Chicago Public Schools competition.

Rodney Bly, science department chair and instructor at the Carter G. Woodson Campus (CGW), is excited about the opportunities created by Gidwitz’s gift. He says, “The science collaborative provides an opportunity for our science teachers to understand the nature of science instruction across our campuses. Through the analysis of student work, such as the science fair, and science instructional practices, our collaborative efforts will lead to the development of an analytical, skill-driven framework that will improve student learning in science.”

Gidwitz also supports library science at CGW through the sponsorship of a librarian position. Jared Washington, director of CGW, says the gift “enabled us to open a fully functional and staffed library that has already become a valuable resource to classroom teachers and students alike.”

For Gidwitz, giving is an important and appreciated part of her life. She says, “It is a privilege to provide Chicago youngsters with an educational springboard for their own success in life.” Giving to improve education, particularly, is a priority for Gidwitz because she believes that “a well-educated public is essential to the well-being of our city, our country, and the world. Further, education is vital to the alleviation of poverty and the resolution of social ills.”

Gidwitz expresses confidence in giving to the school campuses because they are situated and grounded in the Urban Education Institute and the University of Chicago at large.

“The University of Chicago relationship assures that all programs will be grounded in rigorous research. Outcomes will be measured and evaluated, and findings will be published and made available to all with interest in the field,” said Gidwitz. “Further, the University of Chicago Charter School can call upon a broad range of University resources, such as the School of Social Service Administration and University libraries and technology services. The charter school offers extraordinary promise because it is comprehensive in its approach to urban education.”

The Conway Family Ensures Extended Instructional Time at NKO

A recent gift from The Conway Family provides significant support to extended day at the University of Chicago Charter School North Kenwood/Oakland Campus (NKO).

The Conway Family began to support NKO in 2009 because of its school model, which includes increased instructional time. The doors open at 7 a.m. with enrichment activities ending at 6 p.m. This enables students to spend four additional hours per day—732 hours per school year—honing their academic skills.

Conway says, “UEI’s charter school campuses are leagues ahead of comparable Chicago Public Schools, both in terms of quality of teaching and the learning environment generally.”
Among the 53 proud seniors who walked to the front of Rockefeller Memorial Chapel on Tuesday, June 8, 2010 to receive the first high school diplomas awarded by the University of Chicago Charter School was Shani Edmond. Enrolled in UCCS in first grade, Edmond has taken an educational journey that in many ways parallels the charter school’s growth.

“Shani and her peers are powerful proof that when we get leadership, instruction, teacher support, school culture and parent engagement right, children rise beyond what some believe is possible,” said Timothy Knowles, the John Dewey director of the Urban Education Institute, which operates the charter school.

Edmond is one of three Woodlawn charter school seniors who maintained a GPA of 3.7 during all four years of high school. Ninety-eight percent of the graduates were accepted to colleges and universities, and the students’ scholarship awards total $1.7 million.

When Edmond began school at UCCS, it had recently opened its first campus, North Kenwood Oakland. She would eventually rise through the grades to become a high school student at its third campus, Woodlawn.

Deborah Muhammad, Edmond’s mother, said she chose the charter school for Shani because she was impressed with the curriculum. “I wanted her to have critical thinking skills. I wanted there to be creativity in the way she was taught and that was all part of what was going on in the charter school.”

Edmond said, “Though I was not the best student in my early years, the teachers at North Kenwood Oakland were a big motivating factor for me to keep my head as much in the game as I could. They always cared, not just academically, but emotionally and socially.”

As Edmond grew, so did the charter school. In 2005, the school added a second elementary campus: Donoghue. In 2006, the Woodlawn secondary campus opened to serve students in grades 6 through 12. In 2008, the school expanded to its fourth campus, Carter G. Woodson, to serve an increasing need and focus on the middle years.

“When I learned there was going to be a high school, I was so excited, because there would be continuity for Shani and the curriculum would be strong,” Muhammad said.
Edmond overcame challenges and growing pains as a student. She also learned to leverage her network of teachers, administrators, and mentors until she became an academic worthy of a full Posse scholarship to the selective Oberlin College. At graduation, she learned she had also been awarded a scholarship from Fifth Third Bank for her achievements.

The University of Chicago Charter School has grown in many ways since it first opened and the work of the students shows the impact of that growth. As Edmond says, “UCW was a new school that allowed for a new ‘us’.”

Ninety-eight percent of all of the graduates at Woodlawn were accepted to college. This represents more than twice the amount of CPS students at large.

The students at UCW have and will continue to grow as they move beyond the doors of UCW; but with them always are important lessons. Edmond says, “Here at UCW I’ve grown up, but most of all I have grown out. Grown out of thinking that it is up to everyone but myself to allow me to succeed, grown out of believing that the color of my skin hinders me from being the best at what ever it is I choose to do.”

She continues, “In this battle to become someone, we’ve grown from oblivious 14-year-olds to discerning 18-year-olds. I can say that this is one fight that we have won.

And I know that this is only one of many fights we will encounter on our journey through the rest of our lives. Another lesson we have learned at UCW is, some of these fights we will lose, some larger, some more important; but sure enough we WILL win some.”

Shani Edmond now immersed in her first year of college has already risen to meet Mr. Evans’ expectations. In October 2010, 425 UCW students visited 25 colleges in 8 states. One of those colleges was Oberlin where Edmond acted as tour guide, motivational speaker, and role model.

It is fitting that the first-grader, who started a bit wobbly at the University of Chicago Charter School but with the hope that her school could help her realize a promising future, marked the end of her charter school career as its salutatorian and is already giving back.

In her salutatorian speech, Shani Edmond described with great emotion what UCW has taught and meant to her: “UCW has taught us that we will fight with our brains, not our fists, and rise high above the standards society has set for us, a bar which has unfortunately been set low. We will overcome any obstacle that is put in front of us, unafraid to fail because we know that we are not defined by our failures but from the lessons we learn from failing, and how we better ourselves because of them. We are more than what they tell us we are, and we are bigger than what they think we are.”

She closed the final address to her class of 2010 with the affirmative statement: “We are UCW, and we are history in the making.”

—David Williams
Valedictorian, Class of 2010

Excerpt from
Valedictorian’s Address
BY DAVID WILLIAMS
Class of 2010, Woodlawn Campus
University Of Chicago Charter School Corporation

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