

## Challenge#6: Little Village

This week's challenge explores the rich history of the neighborhood of Little Village. When Mexican and Central Americans immigrants came to Chicago, they faced many challenges. In response, they made choices that shaped the neighbor of Little Village making it an essential part of the city's identity.

### Step 1

**Visual Exploration:** BEFORE reading the short article, *A Strike in La Veintiseis* for our *Hood by Hood: Discovering Chicago's Neighborhoods Challenge* take a moment to explore the images in the article. When looking at the images ask yourself the following questions:

1. What's going on in this picture?
2. What do you see that makes you say that?
3. What more can you find?

### Step 2

**Reading:** Read the article *A Strike in La Veintiseis*

### Step 3

**Read Along with the Museum Audio:** After reading the article read it AGAIN but this time you can read along with a member of the museum. They have some fun insights about the article!

### Step 4

**Video Discovery:** Watch these short clips

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RuO52DZYuOA>

### Step 5

**Chicago Flag Neighborhood Star Activity:**

The Chicago flag has 4 stars that signify important events to the city. However, the city is now 183 years old and many events have taken place since the flag was designed. As a large diverse city, different immigrants that came to the city changed the city. What if each neighborhood would add a 6<sup>th</sup> star to the flag to represent their neighborhood? Using the graphic organizer provided help design a neighborhood star for **Little Village!**

## Little Village: A Strike in La Veintiséis

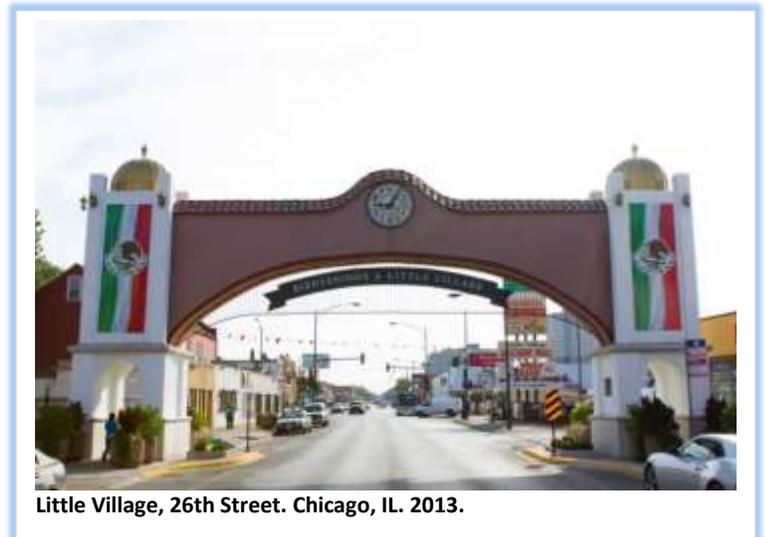
In Chicago, when someone says “*la veintiséis*” they’re referring to the neighborhood of Little Village. *Veintiséis* is the Spanish word for the number twenty-six. The reason it is called *La veintiséis* is because the busiest street in the neighborhood is Twenty-sixth Street. *La veintiséis* is a very busy street with vendors, people, and cars. It is sometimes referred to as the “Mexican Magnificent Mile,” because it is the second highest earning shopping district in the city. *La veintiséis* has hundreds of Mexican businesses and restaurants. You can buy traditional indigenous pottery and Mexican sweets there, and everywhere you go are people speaking Spanish and English. In the summer, you can smell the delicious aroma of food coming from the carts of the street food vendors.

Before it was known as *La veintiséis*, in the 1800s, Little Village was home to immigrants from Poland and Czechoslovakia. By the 1960s, many of them moved to the suburbs, while at the same time, Mexican families were migrating to Chicago. Many Mexican families came to make *La veintiséis* their new home.

When Mexican immigrants moved to *La veintiséis*, they faced many challenges. One of the challenges that they faced was access to a good education and schools that were not overcrowded.

In 1998, a group of civic and community leaders known as the Little Village Community Development Corporation (LVCDC) made the choice to come together to make their community better. LVCDC organized residents into block clubs to help each other. They worked together to focus on violence prevention. They also became involved with the struggle to support the development of a new high school in the community. Up until the 1990s, Little Village had only one high school, but the school was overcrowded, which made learning hard for the students.

The parents in Little Village decided to organize, and they asked the city government to build a new school. The mayor at the time was Richard M. Daley. During his campaign for mayor of



Chicago, he promised the community that a new high school would be built. Three years passed, and the school had not been built. Parents in Little Village were upset that the mayor had not kept his promise to them. They eventually learned that the money that was intended to be used to build the new school was given to a school on the North Side of the city. This was upsetting because schools in the North Side had a lot of resources already. This upset the residents of Little Village, especially Manuelita Garcia.

Manuelita Garcia was a 75-year-old Mexican woman from Little Village. She was an **activist** in the community. She was upset that the students were not going to get a new high school. On Mother's Day 2001, Manuelita Garcia and thirteen other Little Village residents made the choice to go on a hunger strike. For nineteen days, the activists did not eat until the city government agreed to build the new high school. The hunger strike only lasted nineteen days, it helped them achieve their goal.

Two months after the strike ended, Manuelita and the community members heard from the city government. They were promised once more that the school would be built. With guidance from the parents who went on strike, Little Village Lawndale High School opened in fall 2005.

Mexicans in Little Village faced many challenges. The choices they made changed the city of Chicago. Their activism helped build a new high school in Little Village. More importantly, they made sure that their voices were heard. Their efforts went on to support and inspire people to become activists in their communities and change communities across Chicago.

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 **What is an activist?**

An activist is a person who believes strongly in political or social change. Activists do many different things. They often participate in public protests. Some activists are dedicated to creating cultural institutions for their communities. Some activists are artists and write books or create art that inform the public about their political cause. Activists have been responsible for the most important social changes. People like Martin Luther King Jr., Ida B. Wells, Dolores Huerta, and Nelson Mandela are examples of activists who changed the world and improved the lives of many people.

**Designing The Fifth Star on the Chicago Flag**

What if each neighborhood added a fifth star to the Chicago flag to represent its neighborhood? For this activity you will design a star to represent the neighborhood you explored. Using what you learned about the neighborhood to help you design this star think about the following questions:

Questions	Draw a picture to represent your answer!
What was ONE challenge facing community members?	
What was ONE decision community members made about the challenges they faced?	
What was a change this community made to the city of Chicago?	

After exploring the challenges, decisions, and changes, choose ONE you want to represent neighborhood history and design your star. You can use markers, crayons, pencils, pens, and paints.

