Over one hundred and twenty years ago, L. Frank Baum lived in Chicago, on the corner of Wabansia and Humboldt Boulevard when he wrote the beloved book, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. Mr. Baum came up with the idea for the book while telling stories to children in Humboldt Park. In the 1950s the home was demolished, and years later, Bickerdike built one of the townhome buildings in our West Town Housing Preservation development on the site. To commemorate this world-renowned author, the importance of the story, and its connection to home, Bickerdike installed a yellow brick sidewalk along that corner.

In addition to the yellow bricks, a concrete mural wall was built at the corner, and bannered with the title *There's No Place Like Home*. In May of 2020, a tile mosaic created by Chicago muralist Hector Duarte, in collaboration with the Chicago Public Art Group, will be installed on the wall.

The theme, *There's No Place Like Home*, central to Mr. Baum's story, resonates with the many families and individuals that face housing instability due to rising housing costs. Now, over a century after Mr. Baum called Humboldt Park home, the location at Humboldt & Wabansia is home to nine families, and the rehab of West Town Housing Preservation was presented *The Polk Bros. Foundation Affordable Rental Housing Preservation Award* at the 26th Annual Chicago Neighborhood Development Awards.

**QUICK FACTS**

**L. FRANK BAUM BACKGROUND**
- L. Frank Baum lived in a house at 1667 N. Humboldt Blvd. when he wrote the Wizard of Oz in 1899.
- He came up with the Wizard of Oz while telling stories to children in Humboldt Park.
- His home was torn down before Bickerdike bought the vacant lot in the 1980s

**YELLOW BRICK “ROAD” & THERE’S NO PLACE LIKE HOME MURAL**
- The “Road” includes over 270 linear feet of sidewalk on Humboldt Blvd & Wabansia Ave. that was replaced with yellow brick concrete pavers.
- The project includes a rounded mural wall with a recessed display. It is made of cast concrete and stands at 11 feet long and 5 feet high.
- The mosaic mural, titled *There’s No Place Like Home*, was created by muralist Hector Duarte in his Pilsen studio in collaboration with the Chicago Public Art Group, and assisted by Alejandro Esquiliano and Edgar Lopez, and installation by Gustavo Sanchez.
- The mosaic consists of colorful ceramic tiles, combining themes of the Wizard of Oz with the preservation of area affordable housing and the struggle of longtime area residents to stay in the community despite rapid real estate appreciation and gentrification.

**WEST TOWN HOUSING PRESERVATION**
- The Yellow Brick Road site is part of our West Town Housing Preservation (WTHP) project, consisting of 318 units in 68 buildings.
- The 318 units underwent a rehab from 2017-2019, and the project was awarded *The Polk Bros. Foundation Affordable Rental Housing Preservation Award* at the 26th Annual Chicago Neighborhood Development Awards on May 13, 2020.
- The buildings are located in gentrifying areas. More than 100 of the units are within two blocks of the 606 Trail. WTHP has helped hundreds of families to remain in their communities despite the escalating area housing costs, providing the stability to raise children, and opportunities to get involved in the community, and save for college and/or retirement.

The Yellow Brick Road was made possible through generous donations from Linn-Mathes, Inc., Landon Bone Baker Architects, the National Equity Fund, CIBC, Fifth Third Bank, and Bickerdike Redevelopment Corporation. For media inquiries contact our Communications Manager, Libby Julia-Vazquez at 872.772.0332 or ljvazquez@bickerdike.org.