

INDEPENDENCE PARK COMMUNITY

VOICE

COMMUNITY

Calling All Storytellers

Carolyn Chandler

Dear Neighbors,
As the editor of our much-loved neighborhood newsletter, I'm reaching out with an exciting opportunity for those who have a flair for writing and a passion for community stories.

We are looking to expand our writing team! Whether you're a seasoned writer or someone who's just starting out, we believe everyone has a story to tell. This is your chance to share your unique perspective, unearth hidden gems in our neighborhood, and connect with fellow residents through your words.

What We're Looking For:

- Enthusiastic individuals who love our neighborhood.
- A wide range of topics such as local events, resident profiles, history pieces, gardening and caretaking tips, book reviews, and more!
- Engaging and accurate content that is original or otherwise free to print (such as public service announcements).



Why You Should Join Us:

- Connect with your community.
- Be in the know on local happenings.
- Develop your writing skills.
- See your name in print!

No prior experience is necessary, just a genuine interest in writing, a love for our neighborhood, and a drive to volunteer a little of your time and mind to help build our community.

If you're interested or know someone who might be, you can:

- Join our 30 minute Google Meetup on Wednesday, March 13th at 7 p.m. CST to learn more about what it means to write for the Voice: meet.google.com/zrb-scsa-nfv

- Reach out to us at newsletter@gipna.org with a brief introduction. This is also a good way to let us know if you're joining for the Google Meetup so we can add you to the invitation.

If you're particularly interested in writing about parenting and caretaking, be sure to read Katie Kobeszka's book review on page 6 and let her know using the form mentioned there.

Let's make our neighborhood newsletter more vibrant and inclusive than ever. We can't wait to hear your stories!

Warm regards,

Carolyn Chandler

Editor of the Independence Park Community Voice

NEIGHBORHOOD

Join Us for the GIPNA Annual Meeting

Mark your calendars! The Greater Independence Park Neighborhood Association, GIPNA, is excited to announce our annual meeting, set to take place at the Independence Park Fieldhouse on Sunday, April 14, from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. We're inviting all neighborhood residents and our elected officials to join us for this important gathering.

The afternoon will kick off with a one-hour social hour, offering a great opportunity to catch up with neighbors, meet new friends, and enjoy remarks from our attending elected officials. Following this, we'll move into a shorter meeting segment where the Nominating Committee will introduce the slate of candidates for officer and Board of Director positions, leading up to the board election.

This meeting is a fantastic chance to show your support for the GIPNA board, get involved in our community's future, and strengthen ties with those who make our neighborhood a wonderful place to live. We hope to see you there to join in on the discussions, decision-making, and socializing with fellow residents and leaders.

The next GIPNA Board meetings will be on Tues., March 5, and Tues., April 2 at 7 p.m. Join us online via Google Meets meet.google.com/nkn-dcgc-tfd. This link is also on the [gipna.org](https://www.gipna.org) website under "Events."

COMMUNITY EVENTS



MARCH

MAR. 4—30th Ward Night, 5-7 p.m., 5714A W. Belmont. Meet with Alderwoman Ruth Cruz to discuss problems, ideas, etc.

MON., MAR.—4 AFAC MEETING, 6:30 p.m., Athletic Field Park. athleticfieldpark.com

TUES., MAR. 5—Domestic Violence Meeting, 11 a.m., 17th District Police Station, 4650 N. Pulaski Ave. Domestic violence hotline 877-863-6338.

TUES., MAR. 5—GIPNA Board Meeting, 7 p.m., meet.google.com/nkn-dcgc-tfd

SAT., MAR. 9—30th Ward Weekend, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., 5714A W. Belmont.

MON., MAR. 11—30th Ward Night, 5-7 p.m., 5714A W. Belmont. Meet with Alderwoman Ruth Cruz to discuss problems, ideas, etc.

WED., MAR. 13—CAPS Beat 1732 Meeting, 6:45 p.m., Athletic Field Park.

WED, MAR. 13—Calling All Storytellers, Google Meetup, 7 p.m. See article on page 1.

SAT., MAR. 16—Murphy Night Owl Carnival, 6:30-10 p.m., IPLC Gymnasium, 4057 N. Harding. See article on page 7.

MON., MAR. 18—Ward Night, 5-7 p.m., 5714A W. Belmont. Meet with Alderwoman Ruth Cruz to discuss problems, ideas, etc.

TUES., MAR. 19—Senior Meeting, 11 a.m., 17th District Police Station, 4650 N. Pulaski Ave.

WED., MAR. 20—IPAC Monthly Meeting, 7 p.m., Independence Park Fieldhouse, Room 100.

SAT., MAR. 23—Egg Hunt, 10-11 a.m., Athletic Field Park. Information about signing up to be posted at a later date. See athleticfieldpark.com.

MON., MAR. 25—30th Ward Night, 5-7 p.m., 5714A W. Belmont. Meet with Alderwoman Ruth Cruz to discuss problems, ideas, etc.

APRIL

MON., APR. 1—30th Ward Night, 5-7 p.m., 5714A W. Belmont. Meet with Alderwoman Ruth Cruz to discuss problems, ideas, etc.

TUES., APR. 2—Domestic Violence Meeting, 11 a.m., 17th District Police Station, 4650 N. Pulaski Ave. Domestic violence hotline 877-863-6338.

TUES., APR. 2—GIPNA Board Meeting, 7 p.m., meet.google.com/nkn-dcgc-tfd

SAT., APR. 6—Openlands Tree Planting in the Kilbourn Park neighborhood.

MON., APR. 8—30th Ward Night, 5-7 p.m., 5714A W. Belmont. Meet with Alderwoman Ruth Cruz to discuss problems, ideas, etc.

WED., APR. 10—CAPS Beat 1732 Meeting, 6:45 p.m., Athletic Field Park.

SAT., APR. 13—30th Ward Weekend, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., 5714A W. Belmont.

SUN., APR. 14—GIPNA Annual Meeting, 1:30-3:30 p.m., Independence Park Fieldhouse Auditorium. See article on page 1.

MON., APR. 15—30th Ward Night, 5-7 p.m., 5714A W. Belmont. Meet with Alderwoman Ruth Cruz to discuss problems, ideas, etc.

TUES., APR. 16—Senior Meeting, 11 a.m., 17th District Police Station, 4650 N. Pulaski Ave.

WED., APR. 17—IPAC Monthly Meeting, 7 p.m., Independence Park Fieldhouse, Room 100.

MON., APR. 22—30th Ward Night, 5-7 p.m., 5714A W. Belmont. Meet with Alderwoman Ruth Cruz to discuss problems, ideas, etc.

SAT., APR. 27—Annual Alley Cleanup, 9 a.m.-noon. Meet at the corner of Lawndale and Byron. See article on page 16.

MON., APR. 29—30th Ward Night, 5-7 p.m., 5714A W. Belmont. Meet with Alderwoman Ruth Cruz to discuss problems, ideas, etc.

MAY

LUN., MAR. 4—Noche del Distrito 30, de 5 a 7 p.m., 5714A W. Belmont. Reunirse con la Concejal Ruth Cruz para discutir problemas, ideas, etc.

LUN., MAR. 4—Reunión AFAC, 6:30 p.m., Parque del Campo Atlético. athleticfieldpark.com

MAR., MAR. 5—Reunión sobre violencia doméstica, 11 a.m., comisaría del distrito 17, 4650 N. Pulaski Ave. Línea directa de violencia doméstica 877/863-6338.

MAR., MAR. 5—Reunión de la junta directiva de GIPNA, 7 p.m., meet.google.com/nkn-dcgc-tfd

SÁB., MAR. 9—Fin de semana del Distrito 30, de 9 a.m. a 1 p.m., 5714A W. Belmont.

LUN., MAR. 11—Noche del Distrito 30, de 5 a 7 p.m., 5714A W. Belmont. Reunirse con la Concejal Ruth Cruz para discutir problemas, ideas, etc.

MIÉ., MAR. 13—Reunión CAPS Beat 1732, 6:45 p.m., Athletic Field Park.

MIÉ., MAR. 13—Llamando a todos los narradores, Google Meetup, 7 p.m. Ver artículo en la página 1.

SÁB., MAR. 16—Carnaval de Murphy Night Owl, 6:30 a 10 p.m., Gimnasio IPLC, 4057 N. Harding. Ver artículo en la página 7.

LUN., MAR. 18—Noche de Distrito, de 5 a 7 p.m., 5714A W. Belmont. Reunirse con la Concejal Ruth Cruz para discutir problemas, ideas, etc.

MAR., MAR. 19—Reunión de personas mayores, 11 a.m., comisaría de policía del distrito 17, 4650 N. Pulaski Ave.

MIÉ., MAR. 20—Reunión mensual de IPAC, 7 p.m., Independence Park Fieldhouse, sala 100.

SÁB., MAR. 23—Búsqueda de huevos, 10 a 11 a.m., Athletic Field Park. La información sobre cómo registrarse se publicará en una fecha posterior. Consulte atleticofieldpark.com.

LUN., MAR. 25—Noche del Distrito 30, de 5 a 7 p.m., 5714A W. Belmont. Reunirse con la Concejal Ruth Cruz para discutir problemas, ideas, etc.

ABRIL

LUN., ABR. 1—Noche del Distrito 30, de 5 a 7 p.m., 5714A W. Belmont. Reunirse con la Concejal Ruth Cruz para discutir problemas, ideas, etc.

MAR., ABR. 2—Reunión sobre violencia doméstica, 11 a.m., comisaría del distrito 17, 4650 N. Pulaski Ave. Línea directa de violencia doméstica 877/863-6338.

MAR., ABR. 2—Reunión de la junta directiva de GIPNA, 7 p.m., meet.google.com/nkn-dcgc-tfd

SÁB., ABR. 6—Plantación de árboles en Openlands en el barrio de Kilbourn Park.

LUN., ABR. 8—Noche del Distrito 30, de 5 a 7 p.m., 5714A W. Belmont. Reunirse con la Concejal Ruth Cruz para discutir problemas, ideas, etc.

MIÉ., ABR. 10—Reunión CAPS Beat 1732, 6:45 p.m., Athletic Field Park.

SÁB., ABR. 13—Fin de semana del Distrito 30, de 9 a.m. a 1 p.m., 5714A W. Belmont.

DOM., ABR. 14—Reunión Anual de GIPNA, 1:30-3:30 p.m., Auditorio Fieldhouse de Independence Park. Ver artículo en la página 1.

LUN., ABR. 15—Noche del Distrito 30, de 5 a 7 p.m., 5714A W. Belmont. Reunirse con la Concejal Ruth Cruz para discutir problemas, ideas, etc.

MAR., ABR. 16—Reunión de personas mayores, 11 a.m., comisaría de policía del distrito 17, 4650 N. Pulaski Ave.

MIÉ., ABR. 17—Reunión mensual del IPAC, 7 p.m., Independence Park Fieldhouse, sala 100.

LUN., ABR. 22 Noche del Distrito 30, 5 a 7 p.m., 5714A W. Belmont. Reunirse con la Concejal Ruth Cruz para discutir problemas, ideas, etc.

SÁB., ABR. 27 Limpieza anual de callejones, de 9 a.m. a mediodía. Reúnete en la esquina de Lawndale y Byron. Ver artículo en la página X.

LUN., ABR. 29 Noche del Distrito 30, de 5 a 7 p.m., 5714A W. Belmont. Reunirse con la Concejal Ruth Cruz para discutir problemas, ideas, etc.

COLOR CLUB

Be sure to check out additional art programming and events at Color Club! www.colorclub.events/events

COMMUNITY

Our Neighbor Pete

Sadly on January 4, 2024, we lost Peter John Zielinski to a sudden stroke after he was taken to the hospital by volunteers from the Night Ministry. Pete, who lived in his orange tent by the 90/94 Addison on-ramp, was a familiar figure in our neighborhood.

In the wake of his passing the Orange Tent Project was instrumental in honoring his memory, gathering his belongings and leading prayers at his tent. Pete was also remembered at two special Masses at St. Wenceslaus Catholic Church.

Pete was more than just a neighbor; he was a friend to people like Crystal, who knew Pete for over 7 years and supported him generously with friendship and conversation. She shared this memory: "Pete would walk the alleys and find plants near death and bring them to me to save them. He called me "the hospital." He named each and every one of them and returned to check on them to see how they were doing."

To honor Pete, please consider donating to the Night Ministry (thenightministry.org) or the Orange Tent Project (orangetentproject.org), to help others like him find the support they need. Pete's story is a poignant reminder of the difference kindness and community support can make.

INDEPENDENCE PARK COMMUNITY VOICE

The Independence Park Community Voice is published by the Greater Independence Park Neighborhood Association (GIPNA), a 501(C)3 corporation.

This newsletter is for the Independence Park community. Please consider renewing your membership or joining GIPNA now. We need your support. Thank you.

Editorial: Carolyn Chandler

Photographer: Robin Hochstatter

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For submissions for May/June 2024 Issue:

Editorial Deadline: April 10, 2024

Advertising Deadline: April 10, 2024

The editorial board reserves the right to edit all submissions. Errors in advertisements are the sole responsibility of the advertiser.

E-MAIL: INFO@GIPNA.ORG

MAIL: GIPNA, P.O. BOX 18184
CHICAGO IL 60618

WEBSITE: WWW.GIPNA.ORG

The Greater Independence Park Neighborhood Association (GIPNA) is dedicated to maintaining and enhancing the quality of life in the Independence Park community by involving, informing, and encouraging people to participate in matters relating to the community, and by protecting the historical, social, cultural, and architectural character of the neighborhood.

This all-volunteer publication is made possible by the creative voices of our community and the generous support of area advertisers.

Join GIPNA on Facebook

Check out the GIPNA Facebook page for news, alerts, and conversation with your neighbors. Post your own comments to get the word out on your activities and announcements. To find the page and like it, search for GIPNA: Greater Independence Park Neighborhood Association.

GIPNA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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GIPNA BLOCK REPRESENTATIVES

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3600 Grace - Alison Benjamin
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3700 Irving Park Road - John Kuczura
3800 Irving Park Road - Linda Lehman
3700 Lawndale - Dorene Jordan
3800 Lawndale - Mark and Casey Watkins
3900 Lawndale - Cy Clausen
3600, 3700 Monticello - Pat Clark
3800 Monticello - Barbara Shaw
3900 Monticello - Cindy Schuch
3700 Ridgeway - Dawn and Josh Urban
3800 Ridgeway - Karen Fontanetta
3900 Ridgeway - John and Sang Kuczura
3800 Springfield - Roseann Seablom

FUN (DRAISER)

Add a Little Color to Your Front Lawn!

You've probably noticed the colorful GIPNA lawn signs in the neighborhood. The cost for the 12" x 18" flag is only \$20 and includes the flag stand. Go to <https://gipna.org/historic-independence-park-lawn-flags> or order online using the QR code below. Flags purchased by each Friday will be delivered to your front lawn the following weekend.



NEIGHBORHOOD

Independence Branch Library Calendar

Jessica Kimpel

MARCH

Closed March 4 and 31

PLAY DAY

Monday, 11, 18, & 25 @ 10:30 a.m., Meeting Room

Bring a friend or meet a new one during our open and unstructured play group time for kids and caregivers.

For ages up to 5 years old.

STORY TIME

Wednesday, 6, 13, 20, & 27 @10:30 a.m., Meeting Room

Talk, sing, read, write, and stay to play with us!

For ages up to 5 years old.

LEGO® PLAY

Thursday, 14 @ 4:30 p.m., Meeting Room

Build and inspire others with your creations. All builds will be displayed with a juice box reception to follow. For ages 5+.

SCIENCE CLUB

Thursday, 21 @ 4:30 p.m., On the Stairs

Join us for a series of programs featuring hands-on STEAM activities. For grades 2-6.

COMMUNITY CINEMA

Meeting Room

Captain Marvel, 2019, PG-13

Saturday, 2 @ 11 a.m.

The Marvels, 2023, PG-13

Saturday, 2 @ 1 p.m.

FIRST-TIME HOME BUYERS' SEMINAR

Thursday, 7 @ 6 p.m., Meeting Room

This comprehensive seminar will outline the homebuying process and answer your questions.

SILENT BOOK CLUB

Tuesday, 12 @ 6-7:30 p.m., Meeting Room

Readers and introverts unite! Join us for an hour of solo reading of whatever you like. Hang out after to chat with your fellow readers (or not).

Light refreshments will be provided.

BYOB(OOK) Club

Thursday, 21 @ 6 p.m., Meeting Room

A book club with no assigned reading! Join us to share what you are currently reading or a favorite title you recommend. Meet fellow book lovers and get ideas of what to read next.

BLOOD DRIVE with THE AMERICAN RED CROSS

Friday, 29 @ 10-3 p.m., Meeting Room

Honor Clara Barton (the founder of the American Red Cross), women, transgender, and gender non-conforming people with your donation. Register at RedCrossBloodDrive.org or you may call 800-733-2767 to register. <http://tinyurl.com/22fduj3e>

continued on pg. 4

Where There's Smoque

Suzie Bohacik

Where there is Smoque, there's steak! And what a unique and delicious concept of steak it is.

Smoque Steak, from the same owners of Smoque BBQ, opened in the neighborhood in May 2023. Located at 3310 N. Elston, this place is worth a visit. When you go, do go for the steak. However, this gem is more than just a steakhouse. It's brunch, it's a date night steak house, and it's now a newly turned wine bar (formerly known as the market space), so you have your pick of how to experience this beauty of a place.

If you are looking for a brunch spot close to home, Smoque Steak has plentiful options and plentiful portions to boot in a lofty warehouse, making for a chic space. The brunch cocktail menu includes some great options that we—my party of four—had not indulged in prior to Smoque Steak.

So on the recommendation of our awesome server Alec, some of us ordered the Cherry Basil Sgroppino and we were not disappointed. The guava passion fruit bellini and espresso martini were both hits at the table, too!

Because we wanted everything on the menu, but there were only four of us, we compromised on two starters for the table: the house double-smoked bacon and the bacon cheddar potato fritters. The portions are generous and the leftover fritters came home with me (just as savory and delicious the next morning warmed in the oven).

For the entrees, which were all shared, we had a mix of a perfect brunch spread: smoked salmon tartine, banana brittle french toast, lobster biscuit benedict and shrimp and grits. Delectable choices, generous portions and so, so delicious.

For a unique take on steak, choose Smoque Steak! The steak is prepared in three separate steps all coming together for a melt in your mouth bite. First the meat is smoked. Then for the fun/unique

part, it is sous vide, which is a technique in French cooking that vacuum-seals the food and then is heated at a precise temperature in a water bath. To finish, it is seared and basted in a house garlic butter and plated with seasonal greens. Choices include familiar steakhouse cuts: ribeye, filet, and NY strip, but I guarantee this will not be anything like a familiar steakhouse experience!

However, other options for dinner are available. Don't overlook the non-steak options, including a pork chop, chicken, pasta, seafood, and veggie option.

Make sure to include a side or three, as it will be hard to choose.

Each one is more mouth-watering than the next.

Lastly, if you are looking for a glass of wine, check out the newly opened wine bar within Smoque Steak. It features a rotating list of wine and a small plates menu. It seats 30 at the bar and makes a perfect place to meet our neighbors for an enjoyable evening out!

Whichever way you choose to go to Smoque Steak—hopefully, for it all—I hope you have as enjoyable a time as my party and I did.

How lucky we are to have this place as part of our community!

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APRIL

Closed April 24

PLAY DAY

Mondays @ 10:30 a.m.

Meeting Room

Bring a friend or meet a new one during our open and unstructured play group time for kids and caregivers.

For ages up to 5 years old.

STORY TIME

Wednesday, 3, 10, & 17 @10:30 a.m.

Meeting Room

Talk, sing, read, write, and stay to play with us!

For ages up to 5 years old.

LEGO® PLAY

Thursday, 11 @ 4:30 p.m.

Meeting Room

Build and inspire others with your creations. All builds will be displayed with a juice box reception to follow. For ages 5+.

SCIENCE CLUB

Thursday, 18 @ 4:30 p.m.

On the Stairs

Join us for a series of programs featuring hands-on STEAM activities. For grades 2-6.

COMMUNITY CINEMA

Meeting Room

The Incredibles, 2004, PG

Saturday, 13 @ 11 a.m., 2023, PG

Incredibles 2

Saturday, 13 @ 1 p.m., 2018, PG



Promoting and Attracting Business in Independence Park

Greg Shea

You love our neighborhood, of course, but have you ever wondered if more people feel the same? And if the businesses in our area also feel our love?

And, heck, why aren't there more of them?

Well, a group of area businesses have taken on the challenge of finding the best way to promote our area businesses and attract a few new ones if we can. This nascent group has been meeting monthly with the tentative title of Explore Irving Park Chicago (EIPC). The goal of the group has been to decide on the best ways to support the local businesses and attract more to our neighborhood.

GIPNA president Scott Dewey has led the charge to organize this group of business leaders and help to set goals and reach consensus. Possible options include setting up a Chamber of Commerce or a Special Service Area (SSA). An SSA would set up a designated tax district with proceeds to be used in the community for business needs.

This effort is just getting started, but there is tremendous energy and creativity being deployed, so stay tuned as plans unfold. Great things are happening! The first official EIPC event is being planned for around Mother's Day.

"We're very encouraged by the optimism and engagement of the businesses in our area," Dewey said. "It's a start and we're going

to keep engaging with the business leaders to see if we can make a positive impact for the entire neighborhood."

If you are a local business or know of one that would like to get involved, reach out to Greg Shea at greg.shea@gipna.org.

GIPNA Community Blood Drive: Neighbors Came and Gave

Sue Ryan

Many warm-hearted neighbors came out to donate a pint of blood on February 18 in the Independence Park fieldhouse auditorium. Throughout the late morning and afternoon, neighbors filtered in and out and bags of blood were collected and readied to go out to those in need. It was a very successful drive as all of the sign-up slots were filled even before the drive began and several others came as walk-ins. A total of 24 neighbors donated 28 pints of blood. Kudos to Eric Garcia who regularly helps out at the Farmers Market for bringing four members of his extended family to donate.

The promotion materials claim that a donation saves three lives. I wasn't sure how they derived that statistic, so I asked GIPNA resident and blood drive organizer, Judy Glaser. She explained that blood consists of blood cells, platelets and plasma and all three components are used in medical procedures. In essence, one pint of blood could go towards saving the lives of three different people.

As with any GIPNA sponsored

event, it is the volunteers whose efforts allowed folks to conveniently donate in the neighborhood. Thanks to Judy Glaser and Dickie Nichols for working with Vitalent to host the blood drive as well as being on the front lines for scheduling, outreach, setting up and checking in donors. Thanks also to Bob Theo of Alps Original Pancake House, Katherine Duncan of Katherine Anne Confections and Chris Cunningham of JT's Genuine Sandwich Shop for donating gift cards for lucky raffle winners.

If you were unable to donate this time, GIPNA hopes to have more drives especially during the Farmers Market. Hope to see you at the next one.



Free Recycling Resource: TerraCycle.com

Terracycle.com is partnering with 137 different companies offering free recycling for an alphabet of many common, everyday products. Create an account with TerraCycle.com and select which products you want to recycle, fill up a box for each separate category/company, print out a free label, and take the box to the post office.

The entire list of 137 is very surprising and it's encouraging that so many companies are offering free recycling. Who knew you could recycle Gold Toe Socks!

Here are nine examples of some products that you can easily recycle for free:

- Arm & Hammer: toothpaste tubes
- Babybel: product packaging, such as cellophane, tag, net, metal clasps, wax, plastic wrappers and pouches
- Bimbo Bakeries USA bread, buns, bagels, and English muffins bags including brands: Thomas', Sara Lee, Brown Berry, Lender's Bagels, Boboli, and many others.
- Bausch + Lomb: all brands of contact lenses and blister packs
- Dunkin': Dunkin' brand flexible ground and whole bean coffee bags
- Febreze: empty aerosol containers
- Gillette: all brands of blades, razors, and plastic packaging
- Herbal Essences: packaging of this particular brand
- Swiffer: duster refills, dry pad refills, wet pad refills

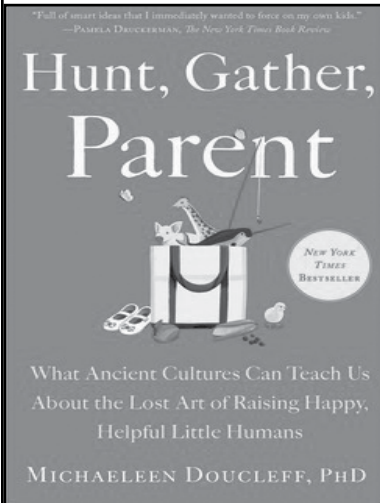
Check with the TerraCycle.com site frequently as the list changes what they or the various companies will accept.

CAREGIVER TIPS

Hunt, Gather, Parent Informs and Inspires

Katie Kobeszka

I recently came across and read the following book, *Hunt, Gather, Parent - What Ancient Cultures Can Teach Us About the Lost Art of Raising Happy, Helpful Little Humans* by Michaeleen Doucleff and I wanted to share more. Our community is unique and this book emphasizes the importance of needing a village to raise kids. We are so grateful to live here with you all. If you haven't read this book I recommend it! Here is my review:



Reading this book is like chatting with your coolest friend who just traveled the world and picked up all these incredible parenting tips. Doucleff combines storytelling and research in a way that's both enlightening and relatable. She skillfully unravels the secrets of tribes and

communities worldwide, offering invaluable insights into fostering resilience, responsibility, and joy in our little ones.

What sets *Hunt, Gather, Parent* apart is its practicality. Doucleff doesn't just stop at revealing the fascinating customs of various cultures; she seamlessly integrates these lessons into our modern lives. I appreciate the authenticity in Doucleff's writing. Her personal experiences and trials add a genuine touch, making the book feel like a tool that I can realistically try right away at home.

In a world saturated with parenting advice, *Hunt, Gather, Parent* stands out as a guide that not only informs, but also inspires. It's a must-read for anyone seeking a balanced, joyful, and culturally enriched approach to parenting.

Share Your Tips

Are you a caregiver that is interested in writing, have a topic you want to see, or just want to help other caregivers? Sign up if you are open to writing one article a year or helping to gather/collect info for someone else writing the article. For example, you could share books you recommend, gift ideas, camps, etc. All the help is appreciated.

Scan this QR code and we'll be in touch!



ENVIRONMENT

City of Chicago Food Scrap Drop Off/Composting Program

Alison Benjamin

Last fall the City of Chicago began a free food scrap drop off and composting program. I've been an enthusiastic participant for the past four months and here's a user review. I think I'd give it three to four stars, partially based on the aspirations behind the effort and mostly because the process performs as advertised.

Even household food waste becomes a problem for municipal landfills, so a residential food scrap composting program gives all of us a chance to reduce landfill gasses. The city has designated 15 spots across the city to drop off food waste, open daily 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. The locations nearest to GIPNA are 3143 N. Rockwell (just south of Belmont) and 4605 W. Lawrence. Both locations are in the parking lots of city offices and a bit tricky to locate. Just look for the row of GREEN carts. Carts are lined and latched to keep out rodents. Unlatch the bin and deposit your food scraps. Locations have been very clean with plenty of space in the bins any time I have visited.

Here's the list for ACCEPTED and NOT ACCEPTED at the drop off sites.

ACCEPTED

- Fruits and vegetable scraps
- Cooked food
- Meat, fish, bones
- Dairy (cheese and yogurt)
- Eggshells
- Bread and grains



- Coffee grounds and tea leaves (remove all filters)

NOT ACCEPTED

- Bags of any kind, not even compostable bags
- Pet waste
- Napkins or paper
- Food ware or packaging
- Yard waste
- Pizza boxes
- Liquids
- Produce stickers
- Rubber bands

Food scraps collected are transferred to an aerobic composting facility where it is composted, screened and then sold to governments and landscapers. Whole Earth Composting is the only actively operating composting facility permitted by the IL EPA in the city.

If I have quibbles about the program it's that you have to sign up at the city website (probably to monitor interest), that only coffee grounds—not filters—are accepted, and that you are driving to a location to reduce pollution. Also if you're a family with a busy life, it means one more errand out of the home to remember.

On the whole, I'm glad the City has taken the initiative to offer a pilot program so that perhaps—one day—we can have household food scrap collection along with other recycling pickups.

... On the Dog Side

From the haiku journals of Andy Jack



Notes on contemplating spring...

Spring will be popping
Sunshine flowers are to come
Time for planting fun



Almost Having It All in 2024

Elen Ryan

It's 2024 and the burning question remains—can a working mom really have it all? Neighbor Dawn Urban, working mother of three kids, isn't so sure. But she feels like she's pretty darn close to it. Dawn and hubby, Josh, live on Ridgeway with their three kids: Conor, 10; Caleb, 8; and Makenna, 6. Dawn, a nurse at Lurie Children's Hospital, does her best to balance a 30-hour work week and raise her kids with Josh. Born and raised in Rockford, Dawn decided to become a nurse at age 11 after she was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes and was cared for by an amazing nurse. She received her nursing degree in Rockford and moved to North Carolina where she worked for two years. She moved back to Chicago in 2008 for a pediatric ICU position at Children's Memorial Hospital where she worked with the sickest of the sick kids. She met Josh in 2012, the same year the hospital moved downtown.

Dawn and Josh married and Conor was born shortly thereafter. When their second child, Caleb, was born 14.5 months after Conor, Dawn stayed home for a year. She then worked for four years as a labor and delivery nurse at

Norwegian Hospital, working one shift a week. Daughter Makenna was born during this time. Dawn quit this job in 2019 after too many shifts were canceled. Then came Covid. The kids were all home, she oversaw e-learning (not easy), then home schooled (really not easy). In 2022, Dawn was finally able to take a three day a week—ten hours a day—position in Lurie's pediatric endocrinology unit. And the juggling continues. When Josh is out of town for work (about 30% of the time), Dawn is BUSY. She gets up at 5:20 a.m., wakes up the three kids, feeds them and gets them to before-school care by 6:45 a.m. She works her 10-hour shift, picks up the kids at after-school care at 6:00 p.m., feeds them, helps them with homework and gets them to bed by 8. She has two hours to pack lunches, clean up and get ready for the next day before she goes to bed at 10:00. Not surprisingly, she is quick to fall asleep. When Josh is home, she works from 6:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and there is no need for extended care as he shares the workload with Dawn.

The above paragraph sheds a light on what working parents, usually working moms, have to juggle. Dawn says it's worth it because she loves her job, her colleagues, and her patients. Though her shift normally starts at 6:30 a.m. on days she's flying

solo, she doesn't get to work until 7:45 a.m. But her wonderful colleagues provide coverage for her and she can make up that time at the end of her shift. Flexibility is key and INVALUABLE and she realizes how fortunate she is to have this. Her work is always interesting, the doctors with whom she works are really smart and compassionate, and she is so gratified to see her patients improve over the days, weeks or months she

works with them.

Dawn loves being a mom and is deeply satisfied with and proud of her work at Lurie. She knows she couldn't do this without her strong support system. She is profoundly grateful for Josh who does so much when he's home, her colleagues, extended family, and friends who help out in a pinch and good before/after-school care programs. So on balance? She almost has it all.

SCHOOLS

Murphy School Update

Dr. Rebeca Schick

Often when we think about the role of a neighborhood school within the community it serves, the idea of interconnectedness of families, students, and the broader community emerges. Murphy School is truly a neighborhood school and shines in its place within the community. Our staff, students, families, and community members are collectively working to provide support, learning experiences, extracurricular activities, and competitive sports to our school

community.

We are super proud of our Robotics team heading to the First Lego League Challenge State Championship. Our competitive Cheer team won first place for the second year in row at the North Regional Competition and is going on to City Semi-Finals. The Murphy Owls are doing awesome things!

Please join us for the annual Murphy Night Owl Carnival with the Friends of Murphy and help us continue to grow and do the work of serving our community. The event will take place on Saturday, March 16, from 6:30-10 p.m. at the IPLC Gymnasium. 4057 N. Harding. Buy your tickets NOW at friendsofmurphy.org.



Your Voice Matters Again!

Sue Ryan

Neighborhoods are subjected to the whims of political dealmaking and there is no better example of that than ward mapping. Alders have sole control to carve up the city into 50 wards and we seem to get bounced around to various wards including the 45th, 39th, 35th and 30th. For the past ten years, the GIPNA boundaries were within the 45th Ward. But that changed last year when the majority of GIPNA residents shifted to the 30th Ward with the exception of those who live north of Byron and remain in the 45th Ward.

So why does it matter which ward you are in? It matters because Ruth Cruz, the new alder of the 30th Ward, has embraced participatory budgeting (PB) which gives residents a say in spending \$1.5 million in discretionary funding. These monies are used to benefit the ward. Jim Gardiner, the 45th Ward alder, does not offer participatory budgeting in his ward.

There are many ways to bring constituents into the process of divvying up money. Alder Cruz held a series of meetings to gather ideas. The meetings were held at three different locations. None of the meetings was particularly convenient to our neighborhood, a point that I raised to her staff. After ideas were collected and organized into various themes, Alder Cruz held another series of meetings to whittle down the list to a manageable number. In addition to funded projects, constituents voted on the percentage of dollars to allocate to

repaving streets and repairing curbs, sidewalks and alleys.

Breakdown of spending:

\$500,000 funded projects

\$500,000 repaving/repairing roads, sidewalks, alleys and curbs

\$500,000 funds to be allocated at a later date

I appreciate that the ward staff tried to be as fair, equitable, and transparent as possible. The staff did some strategic planning to bundle projects from across the ward with a similar theme. This benefits our community because relative to others, Independence Park is smaller and would likely not garner enough votes for projects specific to our neighborhood.

Residents then voted online to choose among the various bundled packages. The three winning packages were beautification, bike lanes, and monies towards a turf field at Gray School. Because our ideas were bundled with the beautification package, we did score a few wins:

1. Landscaping and yard maintenance, especially along Parkview Terrace which abuts the expressway and the park.

2. Mural restoration on Pulaski by the CTA Blue Line. All of the bike lane projects are on Milwaukee Ave, so if you bike along that street, protected bike lanes are coming your way.

Lali Fonseca, the ward's business and community outreach coordinator, stressed that neighbors should contact the 30th Ward office with any issues and concerns. When it comes to street repaving and repair, the ward keeps a list. Take a minute to call 773/628-7874, email Ward30@cityofchicago.org or connect on social media (30th Ward Alderwoman Ruth Cruz). To plead your case, send pictures of

the ginormous potholes that run the length of some blocks. There is something to be said for the squeaky wheel. Granted there are likely more squeaky wheels than there are dollars to repave streets, but it's worth a try.

I want to thank Lali for taking the time to explain the process, answering my questions and listening to my suggestions: live streaming meetings so that constituents can participate even if they can't be there in person and posting information about the process and the results on the ward's website. If you want to stay on top of news in the ward sign up for Alder Cruz's newsletter by calling the office or signing up online. Our voices only matter if we use them.



Christopher added, "Daffodils. They are always the first thing that pops up that lets me know that spring is on the way!"

For Rebecca Corkill, the arrival of "street sweepers" heralds the new season, marking a transition towards cleanliness and renewal. And the Thompson Family looks forward to the communal energy that builds when "Independence and Athletic Field Parks are full of patrons."

The theme of community and nature intertwined further with Laura's observation: "Tulips and daffodils emerging along with neighbors coming out of hibernation and being outside together." Others mentioned "Robins," "Tulips and the magnolia trees," the emergence of "Crocuses and redbud blooms," and the blooming "Iris reticulata," underscoring the rich tapestry of botanical life stirring back to action. Rebecca Martinez and Grace spotlighted specific flowers, with Martinez celebrating "Vibrant tulips popping up!" and Grace noting "Tree buds on midwestern magnolia trees, called cucumber trees (*Magnolia acuminata*)." Kathy O'Neill humorously notes the dual appearance of "trees blooming and random dudes in shorts" as unmistakable signs of spring.



NEIGHBOR POLL

Signs of Spring: Neighbors Weigh In

Carolyn Chandler

As winter's chill begins to wane, our neighborhood starts to buzz with the anticipation of spring. To capture this seasonal shift we asked residents to share what they consider the first signs of spring in our area. The responses, filled with personal touches and shared experiences, paint a vibrant picture of our community awakening to warmer days.

Daffodils emerged as a clear favorite, symbolizing the onset of spring for many. Jenny Kotz noted, "When my favorite diehard daffodil surfaces in this ragged patch of landscape by our porch. Live long, little buddy. You give me hope that the endless winter is almost over." This sentiment was echoed by others, with one neighbor linking the bloom to cultural pride: "Daffodils - I am Welsh and they are the national flower which Welsh folk wear on March 1st."

These reflections from our neighbors highlight not just the biological markers of spring, but the emotional and communal rejuvenation that comes with the season. Whether it's the blooming of daffodils and tulips, the return of familiar wildlife, or simply the sight of the community coming together outdoors, it's clear that spring's arrival is an event eagerly awaited by all. Let's cherish these signs and the hope they bring for brighter, warmer days ahead!

Next poll: What's the main thing you think of when it comes to cicada broods like those we'll see this spring?

Share your thoughts by visiting tinyurl.com/jksd4b4k or scanning the QR code below.



NATURE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Spring Into Spring

Lorraine Antieau

When, after months of snow, cold winds, icy sidewalks, and gloomy skies, spring begins to creep into the neighborhood, what are your favorite sensations?

It's subtle at first, but signs of spring have already begun, starting with longer days. Even as I was writing this during our coldest week of January, the afternoons were growing longer. By the time you read this, plants are beginning to rouse themselves underground, early spring bulbs are putting up tender shoots under frozen earth, and sap is stirring in the maple

trees. Grass and perennials will slumber awhile longer, but if you watch carefully, before long new leaves will begin to green the neighborhood.

One day soon, I will be awakened before 5 a.m. and grumble, "Why do those silly robins have to be so noisy?" Or perhaps I will burrow under the covers contentedly a few minutes longer, listening to the coo of mourning doves.



Longer, brighter days. Clear sidewalks. Rain, instead of the frozen stuff. Snowdrops



and crocuses peeking through the last—or maybe not—snowfall. The glorious flowering of magnolias and rebuds, and oh, the fragrance of those magnolias! Squirrels chasing each other round and round, up and down tree trunks.



Baby bunnies dotting the lawns in the evenings. The trees budding, then leafing out, and later, "whirlybirds" swirling down from the maples. Lilacs putting out their beautiful blossoms and filling the air with that beautiful aroma! In some places the bluebells will spread their bright blossoms at our feet.

Let's not forget the human "creatures," who are also awakening from their wintering! Don't you love that first really nice weekend when it seems that everyone has come out to the park? The playground is alive once again with children swarming over swings and slides, tennis players volleying on the courts (maybe this year we'll even have pickleball!), families gathering under the trees, the first pitches of softball thrown. Benches are filled with lovers and friends chatting or

eating picnic lunches. Strollers, bikes and scooters whizz by. It has always seemed to me to be one of the very finest things about living in Chicago.

And neighbors! Although we say "hi" during the cold months, help shovel sidewalks, and check in with each other in weather emergencies, what a joy it is to dawdle on the sidewalk or over the fence, catching up with each other without rushing back into a warm house! Friends we haven't seen in months poke their heads out the door and we visit leisurely.

As spring progresses, we can look forward to the annual parade of blossoms and leaves, birds, birdsongs and nests, bees, butterflies, ants, and other insects, along with the occasional raccoon or opossum. The feel of sun on our skin as we shed our heavy winter gear, gentler breezes, dirt under our fingernails or raindrops on our faces. There are a multitude of ways to get up close and personal with nature this time of year!

Other notable natural events to look forward to this spring: the 17-year and 13-year broods of cicadas will emerge, and the total solar eclipse on April 8 will be partially visible in our area.

If you're interested in planting trees with Openlands this year, Kilbourn Park neighborhood has a tree planting event on April 6! Mark your calendar now and watch for sign-up information in a future GIPNA email blast.

Meanwhile, there are dozens of ways to enjoy nature not far from your front door! Forest Preserves, nature centers and parks, the lakefront and the river walks all beckon, so get outside and enjoy the spring!

COMMUNITY

Rats Redux

Sue Ryan

For the ninth consecutive year, Chicago has taken the top spot as the rat capital of America, according to Orkin Pest Control. Based on rat sightings, our neighborhood is pulling its weight contributing to the infestation. It takes a village or, rather, a neighborhood to minimize the rat population.

What can you do?

1. Homeowners and tenants: inspect your garbage bins. Are they overflowing with garbage or is the lid broken? Oh, how rats love an overflowing bin. It's an entrance to a grand buffet. If you are a homeowner and need another bin, contact 311. They are free. If you are a tenant, contact your landlord or management company to request an additional garbage bin.
2. If you occasionally have more garbage than your bins can handle, don't just cram it in and leave the lid partially open. Ask a neighbor if you can dump excess garbage in a near empty bin.
3. Pick up after your dog! Rats enjoy dog poop. Remember, if rats can't feed, they can't breed.
4. Request rodent baiting in the alley. Call 311 or submit a request online.
5. If you are a tenant and your landlord is not responsive, contact your alderperson who can send a Streets and Sanitation worker to inspect the property and inform the landlord of potential code violations if the property is not in compliance. Please be a good neighbor and do your part.

CAPS: What Is It and Why Does It Matter?

Pat Clark

What is CAPS? CAPS is the acronym for Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy, which is part of the Chicago Police Department. Our neighborhood is in the 17th District and our immediate area is Beat 1732. The Police Station is located at 4650 N. Pulaski.

CAPS works with local residents to discuss neighborhood issues with local police for joint solutions, and meets the second Wednesday every month in the Athletic Field Park fieldhouse on the second floor at 6:45 p.m. The next meeting is March 13. Check the GIPNA calendar on page 2 for the rest of the year dates. The meetings last about one hour.

At the meeting, the CAPS officers and our Beat Facilitators, Valerie and Wes Matucha, Indy Park residents, make introductions, explain how the meeting is organized, hand out paperwork that covers the crime stats broken down by types of crime and special flyers for things such as crime prevention tips, and call attention to any events that might be going on at the 17th District Police Station. For example, sometimes there are special events for children or free document shredding.

Barb Baronski, Alderwoman Ruth Cruz's Scheduler/Outreach Director, always attends the CAPS meetings and relays information that is relevant to the 30th Ward. The 33rd Ward frequently sends a rep, plus a state rep or two drop in from time to

time. It's an excellent opportunity to talk with them before or after the meeting if you have any issues.

Next the CAPS officers ask for input on old issues that have been covered at a prior meeting to see if the problem has been resolved. For example, it has been brought to their attention several times about the illegal parking that has been going on around the perimeter of Independence Park, especially from about 5:30 to 9:30 p.m. on weekends. Numerous residents had contacted Alderman Gardiner's office about this parking problem and suggested that parking tickets be issued, but didn't see any results. CAPS Officer Louis Miro contacted the alderman's office and asked that the alderman follow up by having the Department of Finance issue tickets, which did happen.

The officers then ask if there are any new problems that the police can help with. If the officers cannot immediately address the new issue, they promise to find out and get back to the resident either via email (usually very quickly) or by the next meeting. If you are uncomfortable discussing a police matter before others, you can always speak to the officers in private after the meeting or email them at caps.017district@chicagopolice.org

Why should you go to the CAPS meetings?

As we are all too well aware, nothing has a simple solution. It takes the whole community, the police, and City government working together. Attending CAPS meetings is important even when you don't have a problem as it is a very good way to understand how interconnected we all are. We are lucky in our area to have very few crime problems, and we want to keep it that way.

Coyote and Pet Safety Through the Year

Jodie Barger

Did you know that Chicago has one of the largest urban coyote populations in the country? Coyotes are all around us. Our neighborhood has many features that make it great for coyotes. The undeveloped areas that run along the freeway make for great dens. I have had two coyote sightings since I moved to Indy Park, which makes me pretty lucky because the coyote is very elusive. They prefer to avoid human contact as we are a potential source of harm.

Coyotes are predators and will prey on smaller animals like rats. We have one of the largest rat populations in the city—a buffet for coyotes! This makes them an asset to our neighborhood because they reduce the population of nuisance animals. Unfortunately, they will also hunt small dogs and cats (although I would bet on the cats to win the fight). They will also scavenge food scraps.

Generally speaking, coyotes will not attack any creature that is 30 pounds or larger. Why is 30 pounds so important? Most coyotes weigh 25-30 pounds. They will not attack an animal that might injure or kill them, so they avoid an even match. However, there are special circumstances—like if the coyote is injured or protecting its young—when a coyote will attack a larger creature.

What should you do if you run into a coyote during a dog walk? It turns out that this depends on the time of year.

February: Coyotes find mates and build their dens. ALWAYS leash your dog! Make sure your dog is spayed or

neutered so that they do not attract unwanted attention. If you see a coyote, DO NOT run. DO NOT let your dog chase the coyote. DO NOT turn your back on the coyote. Instead, shorten your dog's leash so it is close to you, stay where you are, make yourself appear large (raise your hands over your head, unzip your coat), and shout at the coyote until it goes away.

March-July: It's pup time! Adult coyotes are more alert, ready to protect their young, and teaching the pups to hunt. Follow the same safety guidelines but know that if it does not run away, you might be close to its den or its pups. Back away from the coyote while you are shouting, but DO NOT turn your back or run away.

August-February: These months are normal coyote behavior time. Generally, they will not attack any creature that is 30 pounds or larger UNLESS they are injured, sick, or threatened. If you have a larger dog, keep them on leash. Domesticated dogs chase each other for play but coyotes see this as an attack and will respond defensively. If you see a coyote, DO NOT run, DO NOT let your dog chase the coyote, DO NOT turn your back on the coyote! Instead, shorten your dog's leash and keep it close. Make yourself appear larger and shout at the coyote until it goes away. If it does not go away, throw rocks at it or take a few steps toward it while you are shouting. This is called 'hazing' and teaches the coyote to avoid the location.

All year around: If you have a small dog (less than 15 pounds) and you see a coyote, you should pick up the dog and hold it during your coyote encounter. If you have a fenced yard, you should supervise small dogs when they go out. Coyotes can jump or scale fences that are 12 feet tall! If you see a coyote that appears sick or injured, then you should call animal

control. If you see a coyote that approaches humans or does not respond to hazing, then the coyote has become used to humans and is no longer predictable. That makes the coyote more dangerous and you should also call animal control to report the animal. Never feed a coyote or try to approach it. Do not haze or confront a coyote that is running away or trying to avoid human contact.

This information was adapted from the book *Urban Bestiary* by Lynda Haupt and from the Cook County Coyote Project. Visit urban-coyotersearch.com/coyote-info/how-avoid-conflicts-coyotes for more information about coyote behavior and how to respond if you see one.

Easter baskets (please don't donate other types to aid consistency), along with plush animals, filled (with candy or toys) plastic eggs, small toys and wrapped candies. Contactless donations of items can be made using our Amazon registry - scan the QR code or visit amazon.com/hz/wishlist/l/3QD9HUJMOCODM?ref_=wl_share. That list also can be used to buy similar items locally (they don't need to be exact matches). Locally purchased donations can be taken to the Big Helpers store at 4184 N. Elston from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Monday through Friday or to the enclosed front porch at 3833 N. Tripp at any time.

We encourage organizations to do their own collections or create assembled baskets from the list of items we can supply. Please contact program coordinator Jason Tebbe at tebbe.g@gmail.com for details of what's included in the baskets or arrange a special delivery of donations.

Beginning this month, the Pantry requires clients to bring their own reusable bags for most food (except where required, such as with meat options). Each client is being given several reusable bags during their first visit during March or later but thereafter will have to either bring reusable bags or use emptied boxes to take away their groceries. No one-use plastic bags will be available to bag regular groceries. Our goal

is to aid the environment while reducing costs and making use of the reusable bags that most families own already. Please note, we are not asking for donations of reusable bags.

The Pantry is thrilled to have received a \$10,000 grant (the maximum provided) from the Grubhub Community Fund's Full Plate Program. We are one of a number of nonprofit organizations in the Chicagoland area providing food to those suffering from food insecurity that were selected for the grants.

Thank you to everyone who shopped at Whole Foods Market during the company's Give Local program that ran December 6-26. The campaign's funds were evenly divided among more than 600 local food redistribution nonprofits and resulted in a donation of \$2,799.12 to the Pantry.

Thank you to our new neighbors at the Northwestern Medical Center in Old Irving Park, 4445 W. Irving Park Rd., for adding us to the volunteer opportunities available to employees throughout the hospital network. We've had several employees help at our distributions already.

We are pleased to say we are working with the Sage Brigade, a group of senior volunteers organized by 33rd Ward Alderwoman Rossana Rodriguez's office, to help other seniors find and apply for benefits that meet their specific needs. The Pantry is providing the Brigade with a range of food items for up to 20 seniors each month. The volunteers come to the Pantry to pack up the food we've allocated and deliver it where needed.

Thank you to everyone who supports our mission to be "Neighbors Helping Neighbors!"

Irving Park Community Food Pantry

4256 N. Ridgeway Ave.

Chicago IL 60618

773/283-6296

e-mail: info@irvingparkfoodpantry.org

Web: www.irvingparkfoodpantry.org



COMMUNITY

Irving Park Community Food Pantry

John Psiharis

The basket program is underway!

The Irving Park Food Pantry has begun its annual spring basket program in which we will give baskets of toys and goodies to our clients' children 12 years and younger. The program runs through March (prior to Easter on March 31) and we are still collecting donations.

We are asking for donations of dollar-store plastic bucket-style



Dogs, a Neighborhood's Best Friend

Sue Ryan

Growing up in a large family, my siblings and I were never able to convince our parents to have a pet or two. The closest we got was a white mouse that my brother had for a science experiment involving a maze. The mouse not only figured out the maze, but also an exit out for it, escaped, and was never seen again. We brought home stray dogs, unwanted cats, rabbits, and other assorted creatures—all of which were turned away. My mom's constant refrain was that we (seven kids) made so many messes, and she didn't need pets adding more. She was not wrong in her assessment. So, I have never been properly inducted into the 'Must love dogs' culture and don't have a natural affinity towards dogs.

Yet, I see the impact that dogs have on their owner, other dog lovers, and the neighborhood. I see the smiles when neighbors greet each other and their dogs. Somehow a dog has the almost magical ability to bring neighbors together. With their curious disposition, dogs force their owners to stop so they (dogs, not the owners) can sniff one another out. Small talk ensues, names are exchanged and soon the owners' status is upgraded from strangers to acquaintances. In many cases,



these chance encounters become more frequent and chats about dogs give way to discussions of family, neighbors, and other non-dog topics.

Ridgeway resident Scott Dewey concurs with this sentiment. "I am amazed at the social impact dogs and dog-ownership have in our neighborhood to the point that when I ask about an unfamiliar name, invariably the answer is something along the lines of "you know her - she has that black lab?" And along with "how are your kids doing?" and "how did your mom's surgery go?", I hear just as often "how's your dog doing on that new medication?"

West Walker resident Laura Ell shared a similar experience. "I have two corgis and a terrier. The corgis are friendly and gregarious, and I have lost count of the many dogs who stop at the front gate and look to see if the corgis are out. I've talked to many of the pet parents who tell me that their dogs pull them to my house to visit the corgis. It always amazes me how these little obnoxious dogs garner such a following. But I'm grateful because I've met so many strangers and neighbors because of them."

I can't help but think that our neighborhood is a safer place because folks are out walking their dogs anywhere from 5 a.m. to midnight. It's hard for a would-be thief to smash a car window or break into a house when a dog and its owner are watching. Who needs an organized block watch when you have 100 dogs and their owners patrolling the streets?

Neighbor Dickie Nichols agrees. "I don't walk much after dark but when I do, I feel safer with other dog-walkers out there. Unfortunately, safety is an issue no matter the time, but having a dog at

my side offers some protection, although my pup would likely turn onto his back asking for a belly rub rather than defend me!"

According to Dickie, she is now healthier both mentally and physically. "During the year that I didn't have a dog, I became more of a recluse and gained 10 pounds immediately. Now that I have a new pup (a five-year old rescue), I had forgotten how much I enjoyed that hour of solitude (I am retired so I have that luxury), walking my pup, and listening to a podcast. Walking a dog is sort of like the "going to the gym syndrome": it's so hard to get yourself to go, particularly when the weather is bad,

but once you're out there, it feels so good. I also have more energy! I haven't lost the 10 pounds yet, but I have faith those pounds will come off pretty easily, even in the winter."

While I may never own a dog, I am thankful for those that do because they not only enhance the quality of life for their owners, but that of the neighborhood as well.



PUBLIC SERVICES

Help Dogs Find Those Who Wander

Autistic individuals, people with developmental disabilities, and seniors with dementia are likely to wander from their homes and other safe spaces, putting them at risk of death or injury.

The Cook County Sheriff Office's WATR Program, which stands for Wandering Aversion, Training, and Response, is intended to train family members, caregivers, and social service providers on ways to limit the risk of wandering. The WATR Program serves these vulnerable individuals by:

- Supporting families, caregivers, and social service providers of individuals that wander with resources and information that can aid in the search for and safe return of those individuals.
- Promoting awareness of the dangers of wandering and the need for community involvement to

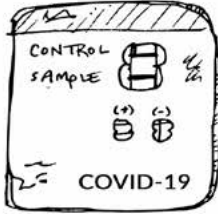
bring about the safe return of these individuals when wandering incidents occur.

One important way the WATR Program is doing this is by providing scent kits that help canines track scents in emergency situations. These kits allow an individual's scent to be stored for years without contamination by other environmental factors, helping first responders search for a missing individual. If you are interested in receiving a scent kit for a loved one and live in Cook County (only), fill out a Scent Kit Request Form at cookcountysheriffil.gov/departments/community-relations/community-programs/sheriff-wandering-response-program/scent-kit-request-form/ They will contact you to coordinate pickup.

If you would like more information about the WATR Program's services and training opportunities, please contact the Sheriff's office at ccso.wandering@ccsheriff.org and let them know you learned about this program through GIPNA.

Independence Parka

by erica dreisbach



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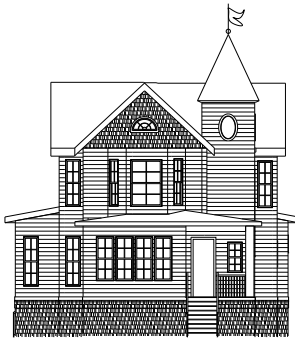
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