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NEWS



MARCH

VOLUME 40 | ISSUE 2 | 2026



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OLD IRVING PARK NEWS | Volume 40 ♦ Issue 2 ♦ March 2026

A publication of the Old Irving Park Association by, for, and about people living in the neighborhood. Old Irving Park neighborhood boundaries include Addison on the south, Montrose on the north, Pulaski on the east, and the Milwaukee District North Line on the west (from Addison to Irving Park) continuing with the freight/Amtrak railroad tracks from Irving Park to Montrose (i.e., east of Knox Ave.). A map can be found on our website.

The Old Irving Park Association (OIPA) is a non-profit, all-volunteer community group active since 1983. The Old Irving Park News is published ten times a year.

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Cover: New OIP Planter.
Photo by Adrienne Chan

© Old Irving Park Association



Your Block, Your Impact: How Neighbors Are Creating a Cleaner, Safer Old Irving Park

— Dan William, OIPA Board President

The Old Irving Park Association is thrilled to announce the launch of our new **Block Ambassador Program**. This initiative represents a major expansion of our community cleaning efforts, aimed at making every corner of Old Irving Park clean, safe, and inviting. It's also a unique opportunity for neighbors to connect, build lasting relationships, and experience the satisfaction of making a real difference together.

Building on Our Success

Currently, OIPA's cleaning initiatives are focused on viaducts and business corridors, powered by a mix of dedicated volunteers and a paid service supported by state grants and donations. The Block Ambassador Program serves as a vital extension of these efforts, scaling our impact to improve the entire community.

How the Program Works

We have divided Old Irving Park into 10 dedicated service zones. Under this new model:

- **Volunteer Ambassadors** will lead a team dedicated to a specific zone (see map on page 3).
- **Monthly Cleanings** will be conducted by each team to maintain their assigned area.
- **OIPA Provided Tools:** OIPA will provide basic tools for the Ambassador and their team, if needed.
- **Consistency is Key:** Regular maintenance ensures our streets remain welcoming to residents, visitors, and local businesses alike.

The Impact: Beyond Aesthetics

A clean community isn't just about looks; it's about safety and quality of life.

- **Crime Reduction:** Research consistently shows that well-maintained, clean neighborhoods experience lower crime rates.
- **Advocacy and Resolution:** Ambassadors will serve as a bridge between the neighborhood and the local government. By identifying and tracking issues, OIPA can coordinate with the applicable Ward Office to ensure that concerns are reported, followed up on, and resolved.

Join the Team: Become an Ambassador

We are looking for dedicated neighbors ready to take an active role in the future of Old Irving Park.

What is involved beyond leading your team and cleaning?

- **Commitment:** Volunteer Ambassadors serve a two-year term.
- **Coordination:** Beyond cleanings, you will participate in periodic coordination with the OIPA Board to share feedback and report zone-specific issues.

Ready to help create connections and community pride while making a visible impact?

Reach out to us at KeepOIPClean@gmail.com and join a team of neighbors working to make Old Irving Park shine! Together, we can ensure Old Irving Park remains a premier place to live and work.



MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

Ambassador Zones of Old Irving Park



Calling All OIP Artists

Help Design Our New Neighborhood Sign!

Old Irving Park is getting a beautiful new look and we want you to be part of it. Through our beautification efforts funded by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) Grant, we will be replacing the existing Old Irving Park sign at the southwest corner of Irving Park Road and Keeler Avenue with a vibrant mosaic installation.

This new sign will celebrate the spirit, history, and character of our neighborhood and we are inviting residents of all ages to help shape it. We are looking for original sketches or drawings that represent Old Irving Park to you. Think landmarks, nature, architecture, community moments, or symbols that capture what makes our neighborhood special. From these submissions, local artists will create a mosaic background design for the new sign.

How to Participate:

- Email your artwork to hello@oldirvingpark.com
- Subject line: Artwork Submission
- Deadline: March 31

Questions: hello@oldirvingpark.com

Whether you're a lifelong artist or just love to doodle we want to see your creativity. Let's build something beautiful together. **Get inspired. Get creative.**

Be part of Old Irving Park history.

THE FINE PRINT: We appreciate all submissions, but do not guarantee that all submissions will be incorporated into the sign design.

If you submit artwork for consideration, you grant OIPA a nonexclusive, fully paid-up/royalty-free, assumable, perpetual, worldwide license to use your submissions on the new sign or other artistic installations in or around the Old Irving Park Neighborhood.



Time for a new sign!



OIPA EGG HUNT

**SATURDAY, MARCH 28
10AM**

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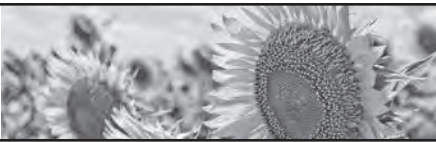
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Summarized Minutes of the General Meeting

on November 11, 2025 — Submitted by Nicholas Plagman-Frank, OIPA Secretary

Please note: The following report is being included several months after the event took place. As such, certain details—such as updates, actions taken, or subsequent developments may not be reflected in the summary below.

Meeting scheduled for 7 p.m. at St. John Episcopal Church Hall.

Meeting Started: 7:06 p.m.

Board Members in Attendance: Lynn Ankney, Jake Berger, Nicholas Plagman-Frank, David Ryan

Community Members in Attendance: Approximately 15 neighbors

The Old Irving Park Association convened its fall General Meeting at St. John’s Episcopal Church Hall, featuring a program focused on innovative approaches to rodent control, along with updates from local

advocacy groups and congressional representatives.

Treasurer **Lynn Ankney** opened the meeting by welcoming attendees, introducing the OIPA board members present, and recognizing **Cameron Cook, Grants Specialist and Congressional Aide for U.S. Congressman Mike Quigley.**

Guest Speaker

Lynn then introduced the evening’s guest speaker, **Cherie Travis**, whose participation was made possible by OIPA member and neighborhood resident **Claudia Hine**, who was connected through the Avondale Gardening Alliance.

Ms. Travis introduced herself and shared her credentials as an Instructor at DePaul University College of Law, where she teaches Animal Law. She then presented an overview of the rat contraception pilot program currently being tested in several Chicago neighborhoods. Ms. Travis explained that the City of Chicago spends significant resources annually on rodenticide-based rat control, despite evidence that rat populations have adapted to these poisons and continue to thrive near consistent food sources. She described rats as highly adaptable and neophobic, noting that they learn to avoid unfamiliar or dangerous substances and can reproduce as early as two months of age.

The presentation outlined an alternative strategy centered on fertility control rather than poisoning. The pilot program uses rat-only feeding stations stocked with a grain- and peanut butter-based pellet containing a small amount of contraceptive. The



Speaker Cherie Travis is a Chicago attorney who teaches Animal Law at the DePaul College of Law. She educated us about rat birth control pilot programs underway in Lincoln Park and Bucktown.

*All photos by
Lynn Ankney.*



OIPA GENERAL MEETING REPORT

contraceptive temporarily renders both male and female rats infertile for a period of approximately one to three months. Ms. Travis noted that pilot programs are underway in North Side neighborhoods, with activity monitored through consumption tracking and motion-activated cameras. Because rats tend to remain close to their birthplaces, these targeted interventions are designed to reduce populations over time within defined geographic areas.

Ms. Travis also emphasized the ecological benefits of reducing rodenticide use, referencing the broader concern that poisons intended for rats can harm birds of prey and other wildlife. She discussed the importance of public education as part of the pilot program, including helping residents understand that seeing rats at feeding stations is an expected part of the process and may lead to fewer rats during subsequent breeding cycles.

During the question-and-answer portion of the presentation, attendees asked about product availability, safety, cost, and implementation. Ms. Travis shared that in some neighborhoods, local organizations have made the contraceptive product available for homeowners to purchase. She explained that while other animals could potentially access the feeders, the product is not harmful to non-target species. Pilot costs were described as comparable to traditional poisoning programs, with expectations that labor and material needs would decrease over time. Residents were encouraged to contact their Alderpersons and advocate for inclusion of this approach in the City's 2026 budget.



Cameron Cook from U.S. Rep Quigley's office provided updates and answered questions.

Community Updates

- Following the guest presentation, **Cameron Cook** provided brief, generalized updates from Congressman Quigley's office. He shared remarks on recent federal activity, discussed the office's engagement with constituent concerns, and responded to questions related to federal presence in Chicago and immigration enforcement, emphasizing oversight, legal processes, and the evolving nature of federal policy discussions.
- **George Witcheck**, Advocacy Lead with Friends of the Crosstown Trail, then addressed the group. He shared updates on the organization's work and promoted an upcoming virtual town hall scheduled for Thursday, November 13, 2025, at 6 p.m. via Zoom. Mr. Witcheck noted a strong interest in the event (650 registrants), which is sponsored by twelve elected officials.

The meeting concluded with closing remarks from Lynn Ankney, who thanked the evening's speakers and attendees for their participation. Lynn also reminded members of upcoming OIPA events, including the OIPA Kids Holiday Lights Walk and the OIPA Holiday Party scheduled for Sunday, December 14.

Meeting Ended: 8:09 p.m.

**OIPA
GENERAL MEETING**

Join your neighbors for the March OIPA General Meeting—a chance to connect, catch up, and stay in the loop on what's happening in Old Irving Park.
March 4 | 7 p.m. | St. John's Episcopal Church, 3857 N. Kostner Avenue



What Is Rat Birth Control (and How It Works)

Rat birth control (rat abatement) refers to humane fertility-control products designed to reduce rodent populations by limiting reproduction, not by killing the animals.

The most widely used product in Chicago pilot programs is Evolve® Rat Birth Control, made by SenesTech. It's a soft bait that rats eat because it's palatable. Once consumed regularly over several breeding cycles, it reduces fertility in both males and females, leading to fewer pups being born over time.

Unlike poison, these contraceptives are considered low-risk to other animals: pets, birds, wildlife, and people, because the active ingredients only affect rat reproduction and are regarded by the EPA as a reduced-risk pest control option.

Key benefits:

- **Humane:** doesn't injure or kill the rat.
- **Wildlife-friendly:** doesn't poison predators that might eat a treated rat.
- **Habitat-friendly:** safer for urban ecosystems when compared to toxic rodenticides.

It must be consumed consistently by rats for effectiveness—it doesn't provide permanent sterilization with a single dose.

Chicago Pilot Programs: Wicker Park, Bucktown & Lincoln Park

• Wicker Park & Bucktown

A pilot birth control program was launched by the Wicker Park Chamber of Commerce and Special Service Area No. 33.



Bait stations placed in alleys and other high-rat-activity areas are stocked with the Evolve product. The initiative is designed as a humane alternative to traditional poison baiting (which has raised concerns about risks to wildlife, pets, and water sources).

The program has seen strong community interest, with residents and business owners also able to purchase product at reduced cost for residential use.

• Lincoln Park

A similar rat contraceptive pilot began later in 2025 in the Lincoln Park neighborhood through a partnership that includes **Alderman Timmy Knudsen**, **Lincoln Park Zoo**, and the **Chicago Bird Alliance**.

This initiative is supported by neighborhood groups specifically due to concerns that rodenticide poisons can harm non-target wildlife like owls and raptors.



PEST FREE NEIGHBORHOODS

Current plans involve monitoring treated blocks versus untreated blocks to evaluate the program's effectiveness for future citywide expansion.

Why Are People Supporting This Approach?

- **More humane & ecologically responsible**

Birth control doesn't cause the painful deaths associated with anticoagulant rat poisons, and it avoids harming birds and pets that might scavenge poisoned rodents.

- **Potentially more effective long-term**

Rats reproduce rapidly. A female rat can have approximately 4 to 7 litters in its lifetime, with some estimates ranging up to 12 in ideal, high-fertility scenarios. With a short gestation period of 21–23 days and the ability to become pregnant again within 48 hours of giving birth, they can produce 5–10 pups (sometimes up to 12–18) per litter, potentially resulting in over 80 offspring per year. So slowing reproduction can more sustainably reduce population levels than lethal control alone. (<https://www.wakepest.com/the-life-cycle-of-rats-and-mice-why-quick-action-matters>).

Community Buy-in

- In pilots like Wicker Park/Bucktown, community participation has been high (both in support and in purchasing product for use in residential areas).
- Local organizations (e.g., Chicago Bird Alliance) are hosting informational events and championing alternatives to poisons.

Important Considerations

- **Not a standalone solution**

Rat birth control works best as part of a broad integrated pest management (IPM) strategy, including:

- Reducing food sources (covered trash bins, regular alley cleaning)
- Eliminating clutter and hiding places
- Community education on sanitation and waste management

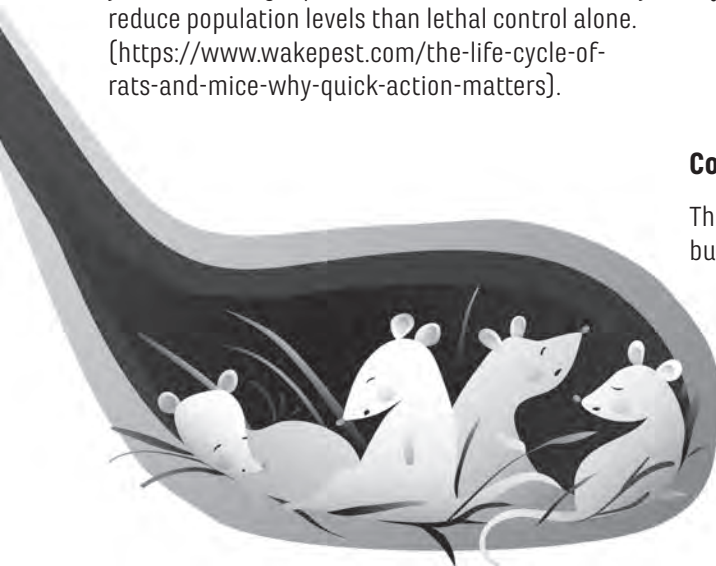
- **Requires ongoing use**

Because the product must be eaten over multiple cycles to impact fertility, the strategy is ongoing, not a one-time fix.

Cost & Logistics

The product isn't free, but programs can purchase in bulk for community use, as in Wicker Park.

See Resources on page 10.



PEST FREE NEIGHBORHOODS



Resource Links and Citations

Resource links and citations about rat abatement using rat birth control are listed below, especially focusing on the Chicago pilot programs, the method (Evolve), outcomes, and advocacy groups.

Rat Birth Control Products & Info

SenesTech Evolve™ Rat Birth Control products:

Evolve Rat Birth Control Product Overview –

Manufacturer info on how Evolve works to reduce rat reproduction humanely and safely (non-toxic, no poison). (<https://senestech.com/pages/evolve-rodent-birth-control>)

SenesTech Humane Rodent Control (Evolve™ soft bait)

– Information on how this non-toxic rat birth control safely works. (<https://senestech.com/pages/humane-rodent-control>)

SenesTech: Official press announcement about Evolve being deployed in Chicago's pilot as a humane rodent control method. (<https://senestech.investorroom.com/2025-04-17-SenesTechs-Evolve-TM-Deployed-in-Chicago-Neighborhoods>)

Chicago Local Pilot Program Resources

Wicker Park & Bucktown Pilot Program – Wicker Park & Bucktown Chamber of Commerce Residential Rat Birth Control Program). *Official page describing their community-based program and how residents can participate with Evolve rat birth control.* (<https://business.wickerparkbucktown.com/Residential-Rat-Birth-Control>)

Local Pilot Program Media Coverage

WBEZ Chicago story on rat birth control in Wicker Park & Bucktown. *Rat Birth Control as Humane Method* (<https://www.wbez.org/animals-wildlife/2025/04/13/rat-birth-chicago-wicker-park-bucktown-alternative-pest-management>)

Chicago Sun-Times – News story: *Rat Birth Control in Wicker Park & Bucktown* (<https://chicago.suntimes.com/health/2025/04/13/rat-birth-chicago-wicker-park-bucktown-alternative-pest-management>)

Block Club Chicago – *Rat Birth Control Availability to Neighbors.* Article about the pilot opening up for neighbors to install themselves. (<https://blockclubchicago.org/2025/05/05/rat-birth-control-open-to-wicker-park-bucktown-neighbors-who-want-to-install-it-themselves>)

Axios – *Chicago Rat Birth Control Pilot Update* (Lincoln Park), (www.axios.com/local/chicago/2026/02/05/chicago-rat-control-birth-control-pilot-city-council-lincoln-park)

Advocacy & Community Engagement

Chicago Bird Alliance – Rat Contraceptive Pilot Program. *Details about the Lincoln Park contraceptive pilot, partners, and volunteer involvement and blog on the rat contraceptive pilot program and how it relates to wildlife safety.* (<https://chicagobirdalliance.org/rat-contraceptive-pilot-program>)

Chicago Bird Alliance Webinar – A webinar covering Chicago's Rat Contraceptive Pilot Program with details and Q & A. (<https://chicagobirdalliance.org/webinar>)

City Services

Chicago Department of Streets and Sanitation provides traditional rodent abatement services (311 requests), which can be used in tandem with local humane approaches.

Has Estate Planning Been on Your Mind?

Join us for a relaxed and informative evening with Attorney Meghan Stokes as she walks Old Irving Park families through the essentials of estate planning.

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A Tune-Up for You & Your Tools — Claudia Hine

While our gardens have been sleeping over this long, cold winter, and we, ourselves, have been in hibernation waiting for spring, the Irving Park Garden Club board has been busy planning another season of programming that we hope will connect with you. Now is the time to consider the many ways you can learn more about eco-friendly gardening practices and help beautify Old Irving Park along the way.

IPGC meets monthly from March to November. Our first meeting of the new season takes place on Saturday, March 21, at 10 a.m. at St. John's Episcopal Church, 3857 N. Kostner Ave., Chicago. We invite you to join the club or renew your membership at the door. The cost to join is \$30/household, payable by cash, check, or Zelle.

BodySmart Gardening

To kick off our new season, the club has invited two master gardeners from University of Illinois Extension to talk about "BodySmart Gardening." What new ergonomic tools are available to us? Are we using our tools correctly? How can we protect ourselves from injury? This presentation also addresses other things within our control, such as skin health and the prevention of muscle aches and strains.

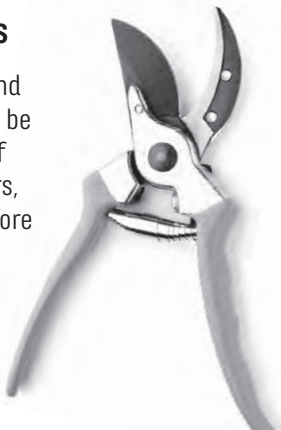


BodySmart Gardening, including the tools we use, is the topic of Irving Park Garden Club's March meeting. It will be presented by master gardeners from University of Illinois Extension.

Photo courtesy Maria Kray.

And Speaking of Tools

Parked outside the church and back by popular demand will be **Sharpening By Dave**. Drop off your garden clippers, pruners, shovels, etc. at his truck before you come into the meeting. Pick them up on your way out, and they'll be all ready to go when you need them. Charges apply.



Looking Ahead

In April, our speaker will be the former WGN "garden guy" **Mike Nowak**. Always entertaining, Mike's topic is "Everything You Know About Gardening Is Wrong." It's been a few years since Mike has been with us, and it should be a fun evening. The meeting date for this program is Thursday, April 16, 7 p.m.

Also on the 2026 schedule: Our popular plant exchange, garden walk, Midsummer Night's Stroll, Ask the Experts panel discussion, and more.

Questions? Contact irvingparkgardenclub@gmail.com. You can find us on Facebook at [Facebook.com/IrvingParkGardenClub](https://www.facebook.com/IrvingParkGardenClub).

Sharpening By Dave

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SPOTLIGHT ON LOCAL BUSINESS



Keeping It Local: IP Dry Cleaner Opens in Old Irving Park — Terry McGuire

Eight years after Pert Cleaners closed its doors, Old Irving Park once again has a neighborhood dry cleaner to call its own. Please join us in welcoming **IP Dry Cleaner**, now open at 4217 West Irving Park Road, right next to Chicago Taco Authority.

No more trips to Jefferson Park for fresh-pressed shirts or special garment care; quality service is now right here in our community. IP Dry Cleaner offers full-service dry cleaning, expert alterations, fur and leather care, as well as cleaning for blankets and comforters.

The shop is owned and operated by **Chuck and Michelle In**, who bring more than 30 years of industry experience and a strong commitment to customer service. Their arrival marks a wonderful new chapter for Old Irving Park—supporting local, strengthening our neighborhood, and making everyday life just a little more convenient.

Be sure to stop in, say hello, and help us give IP Dry Cleaner a warm neighborhood welcome!



IP Dry Cleaner, a full service dry cleaner, owned by Chuck and Michelle In (pictured at left), is now open at 4217 West Irving Park Road.

Photos by Terry McGuire





MOVING



PACKING

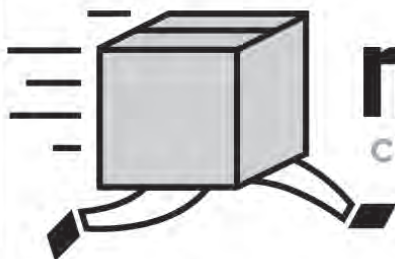


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OIPA | Anniversaries & Birthdays



March Birthdays

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
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| Vilmar Arias | Ryun Ivory |
| Barry Bebart | Damian Jackson |
| Emily Bulger | Dan Jacobs |
| Felix Chan | Thomas Jezuit |
| Shashank Churukanti | Katie Johannigman |
| Steven Clay | Matt Knutson |
| James Coakley | Olivier Lopez |
| Phoebe Craig | Robert Lopez |
| Kim Danahy | Susan McCallan |
| Bruce Dean | Amanda McKasson |
| Alisun DeKock | Samantha Mortensen |
| Thomas Denio | John Mueller |
| Jayne Deno | Nathan Musgrove |
| Cheryl Flores | Frank W Nagorka |
| Valerie Ginnan | Joseph Naudziunas |
| Dipeshwar Grewal | Liam O'Connor |

March Anniversaries

- Charles & Rebecca Calloway
Denise & Curtis Giszczynski
Patricia & Scott Gustafson
Jen & Shane Knox
Christy & Jonathan Levy
Tracy & Markisan Naso
Nicholas & Emily Plagman-Frank
Michelle Sekiya & George Unzueta
Kim & Rob Starmann
Casey & Kelly Williams March



KID BIRTHDAYS

- Eloise Kick
Miles McKasson
Ben O'Mara
Adam Pietraszek
Anna Reuter
Eleanor Reuter Child
Scout Ryan Child
Daphne Simmons Child
Blake Toth Child

PET BIRTHDAYS

- Scout Cannon
Dunkin Jones
Beau Klich
Aegamemnon Nguyen



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- Commission
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- Buyer Representation
- Estimated Closing Costs
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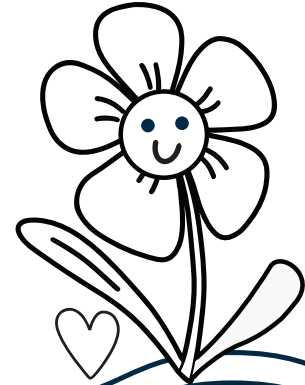
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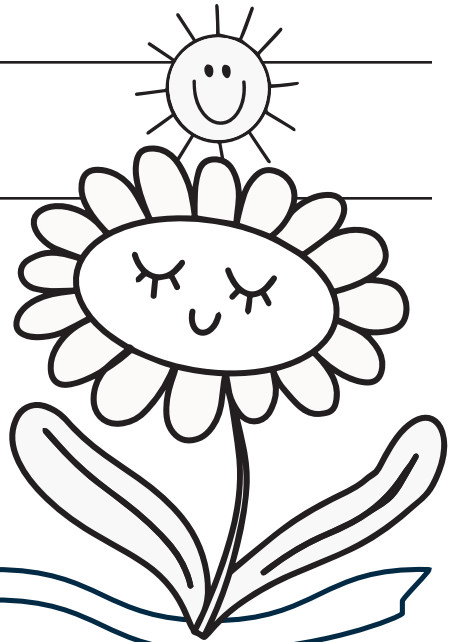
KIDS CORNER

CORNY JOKES



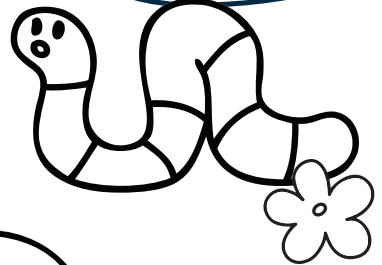
Q: What did the big flower say to the little one?

A: You're really growing, bud!



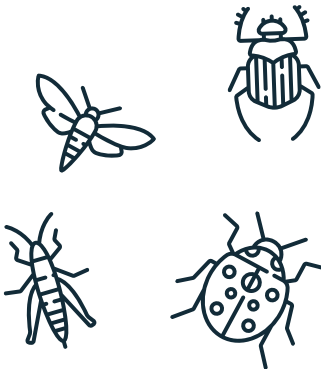
Q: What did the mother worm say to the little worm who was late?

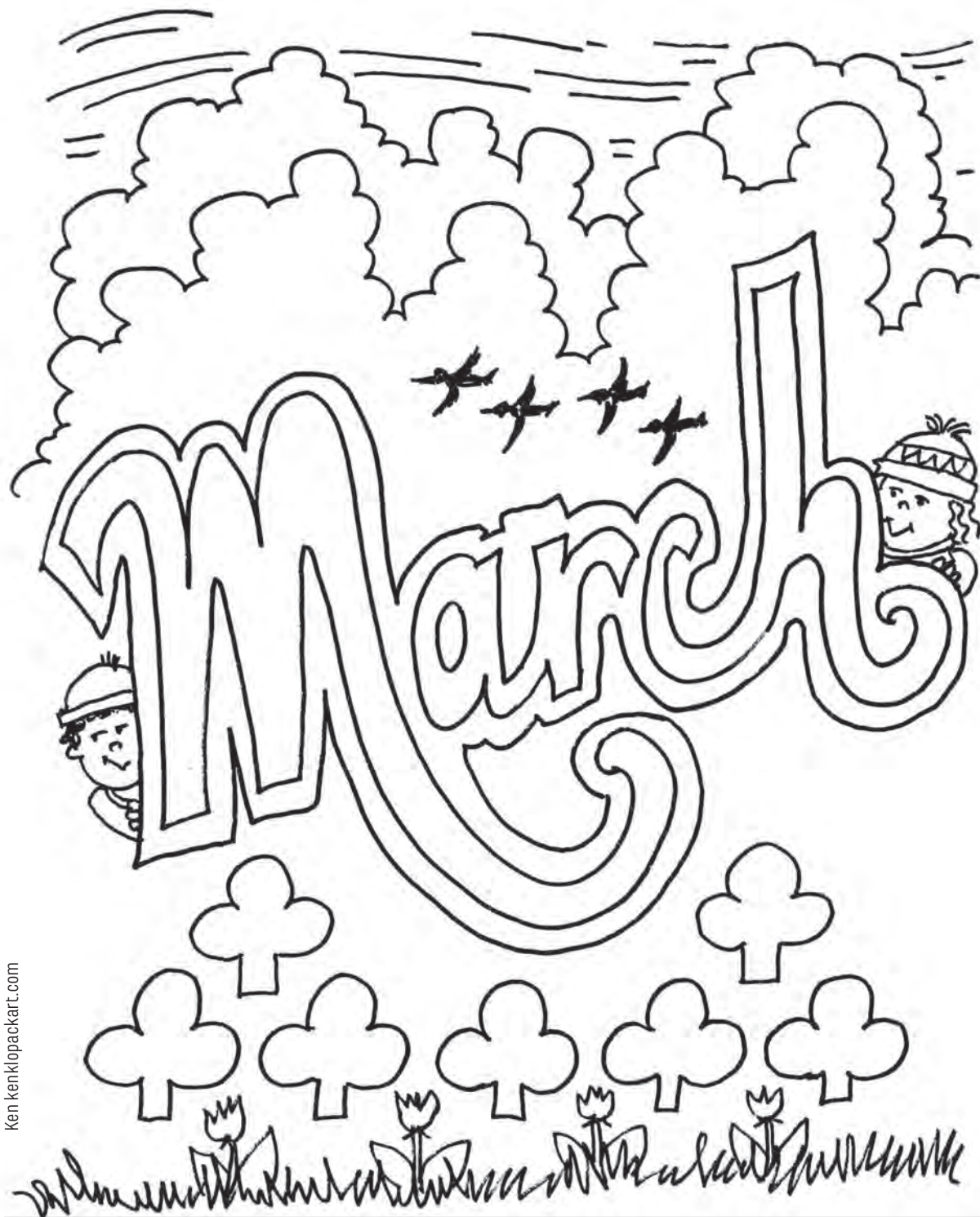
A: Where in earth have you been?



Q: Why are frogs so happy?

A: They eat whatever bugs them.





OIP REAL ESTATE ACTIVITY



Single Family

3915 N. Kenneth.....\$635,000
4033 W. Waveland.....\$880,000



Attached Single Family

3707 N. Kenneth, 216\$187,000

Prepared by Tom Brandt

(C) = Court Approved

(F)= Foreclosure Sale

(S) = Short Sale

Report as of Feb. 6, 2026

2-4 Units

None

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Spring Fundraiser: Triple Crown Belding Bash

On Saturday, May 2nd, Belding parents will don their Derby best for a Triple Crown Belding Bash at La Villa Banquet Hall. This beloved event is the Belding Parent Group's (BPG) annual dinner party and silent auction, where we come together to support exciting capital improvements for our neighborhood school.

Driven by a spirit of dedication and generosity, the BPG has worked tirelessly to enrich our school community—making possible a gymnasium, climbing wall, playground, shaded nature play space, a student wellness and reading room, a campus security camera system, and enhanced auditorium lights and sound, among many other impactful projects.

Would your business be interested in donating to this year's silent auction, in-person raffle, or Plinko party game? Email HelpBelding@gmail.com and be sure to follow us on Instagram @beldingparentgroup or visit www.beldingparentgroup.com.

Are you curious to see what Belding Elementary has to offer your child?

Principal Durkin sets aside one morning each month to give tours to interested parents. Tours are geared toward adults; if children are present, please ensure they can attend safely and quietly. Tours begin at 8 a.m. in the main office. There is no need to RSVP. Please arrive by 7:55 a.m. and check in with security.

Upcoming tour dates include March 16th and April 21st. This is a great opportunity to learn more about the school and the Belding community! You can also check out the Belding website www.beldingelementary.com for more information.

Dine and Donate

On March 10th and April 14th, dine in or order out at Irving Park Pizza and Patio to support Belding's 4th and 3rd graders. Make sure you mention Belding, and a portion of the earnings will be donated to the school.

Address: 2922 W Irving Park Rd, Chicago, IL 60618

Phone: (773) 866-2010

Kitchen: Closes 10 p.m.





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Unlock Summer: Where Creativity Takes Center Stage at Filament Theater Camp

— Julia Stemper, Associate Director of Advancement

Filament thanks all the neighbors who joined us for RAIN for babies and their caregivers. We loved sharing that joyful, sensory experience with your families—and we're excited to welcome even more young creatives through our upcoming programs!

Join Our WorldBuilders Afterschool Program (Ages 8–14)

As we prepare for our next production in May, we invite young people ages 8–14 to take part in WorldBuilders, an imaginative, hands-on afterschool class designed to spark creativity and collaboration.

- Tuesdays, 5–6:30 p.m.
- March 31–May 5
- Free of charge, thanks to generous community donors

In WorldBuilders, participants work together to dream up new worlds, create characters, and bring their ideas to life through storytelling and performance. It's a welcoming space where imagination leads the way and every voice matters.

Register at <https://ci.ovationtix.com/35466/production/1252720?performanceId=11699165> or use the QR code for easy access.



Filament Theatre
WorldBuilders Registration



Summer Camp Registration Is Now Open! (Ages 5–16)

Looking for a summer experience that's creative, playful, and anything but ordinary?

Filament's summer camps invite young artists to explore big ideas—animals, outer space, magic, and more—through theatre-making and collaborative storytelling. Campers build community, discover their unique talents, and create original performances to share with family and friends.

From puppets to bike rides to cardboard castles, Filament productions are imaginative, hands-on, and full of heart. Every camper is encouraged to tell their story in ways that build confidence, creativity, and connection.

- Camp runs July 13–August 14
- Early bird rates available through April 30
- Sibling discounts offered

Spots fill quickly—register now and join us for a summer of creativity, friendship, and fun! **Register** at <https://filamenttheatre.org/camp>.

Filament Theatre—Where families come to play.
4041 N. Milwaukee Ave. Chicago, IL 60641 | info@filamenttheatre.org | 773.270.1660*



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Friday – Saturday: 10am – 12am

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March Events with Carlson Community

— Sara Yoest, Executive Director, Carlson Community Services

Irving Park Fine Arts Free Concert

APRIL 19, 2026



Mark your calendar! You won't want to miss the final concert in the 32nd season of the Irving Park Fine Arts Concert Series. On Sunday, April 19, 2026, we will welcome Apollo Chorus, Chicago's premier choral ensemble and one of the oldest musical organizations in the United States.

Founded in 1872, just after the Chicago Fire, the Apollo Chorus of Chicago is one of the oldest auditioned volunteer choral societies in the United States, and the oldest musical organization in Chicago. Under the direction of Music Director and Conductor Stephen Alltop, the Chorus regularly presents choral masterworks in illustrious Chicago venues, including Symphony Center and the Harris Theater.

Chorus membership includes people from many professions united by a love of choral music and dedication to excellence. The Apollo Chorus has collaborated with outstanding artists and organizations, including the Oprah Winfrey Show, Josh Groban on Tour, Chicago Philharmonic, the London Symphony Orchestra, and Louis the Child at Lollapalooza. Since 2002, the Chorus has appeared numerous times with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra at the Ravinia Festival.

Concert starts at 2 p.m. followed by a reception to celebrate our season. 4100 N. Harding Avenue, Chicago

Photo courtesy of the Apollo Chorus.



NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS | Carlson Community Services



OIP Residents: Leading, Supporting Volunteering

Above: Sara Yoest, Executive Director of Carlson Community Services welcomes guest to the evening.

Circle: Renee Linnemeyer stepped up to volunteer for the event.

All event photos by Kaitlyn Keely.



Stand-Up Comedy Event Success!

Thanks to everyone who joined us to *Laugh Your Winter Blues Away* on February 6 and helped raise funds for Carlson Community Services' three programs: the Magic After-School Place, Three Brothers Garden, and the free fine arts concert series. The evening was a success thanks to all who attended and our generous event sponsors. Thanks also to the dedicated Carlson volunteers who helped to plan the event and to the comics who kept us laughing!



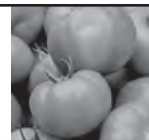
L to R: Laura Marie Sanchez, Kathleen Kearns, Claudia Hine, Anna Sobor, and Kaitlyn Keely enjoy the evening while waiting for the show to start.

Volunteer With Carlson Community Services in 2026: Make a Difference in Irving Park

Are you resolving to make a difference in your community in 2026? Carlson Community Services is looking for volunteers to help fulfill its mission of connecting the Irving Park community with programs that enrich lives through education, culture and service. If you are interested in learning about volunteer opportunities in any of our three programs, fundraising or on the Board of Directors, **please contact Executive Director Sara Yoest at sarayoest@carlsoncommunityservices.org or 312-819-3230.** It is a great way to give back to the community you live in!



Carlson Community Services connects the Irving Park community with programs that enrich lives through education, culture, and service. For more information, visit www.carlsoncommunityservices.org and scroll to the bottom of the home page. You can opt-in to receive our email newsletter or direct inquiries to Sara Yoest, Executive Director, at sarayoest@carlsoncommunityservices.org or 312-810-3230.



Spring Into Kindness—Brighten a Child's Day!

Spring is a season of hope and generosity—and our annual program is a wonderful way to make a difference! Join us as we bring joy to children 12 years and younger by filling their Easter baskets with toys and goodies. Your support ensures that every child experiences the delight of the season. Let's make this spring unforgettable together!

Contributions of items for the baskets needed include: 6-inch plush animals, 24-count crayons, party-favor-like toys, filled (with candy or toys) plastic eggs, wrapped candies, and other small treats of any kind.

Organization Participation

We also encourage organizations to do their own collections or create assembled baskets. If interested, contact the Pantry's Special Programs Manager Craig Shutt at craigshutt@gmail.com for details or to arrange a special delivery.



Donations can be made:

- Locally purchased donations can be taken to the Big Helpers store at 4184 N. Elston Ave. from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Monday through Friday **or** to the enclosed front porches at 3833 N. Tripp Ave. or 4242 N. Hamlin at any time.
- Direct pay donations can be made via PayPal at www.irvingparkfoodpantry.org, or through your Zelle app to treasurer@irvingparkfoodpantry.org.
- By check to Irving Park Food Pantry, 4256 N. Ridgeway Ave., Chicago, IL 60618. You can mark your donation as "baskets" to ensure it applies to that program.
- Baskets (Jumbo Easter-Themed Plastic Footed Baskets) can be purchased in bulk on the Dollar Tree website or in-store. <https://www.dollartree.com/easter-shop/easter-baskets-buckets-pails>
- Purchase items through our Amazon registry by using the QR code on this page.



*Spring baskets photo by
Craig Shutt.*



NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS | Irving Park Community Food Pantry

Thank You to Our Supporters

We are pleased to announce that the board of directors of the FDC Foundation, a long-time supporter, has voted to award the Pantry a \$42,000 grant for 2026!

A portion of the grant will be used to pay the part-time salary of **Client Services Manager Elvia Esparza**, who helps clients with a variety of issues, including applying for SNAP benefits and other available government and organizational aid. We also use it to purchase produce from suppliers throughout the year to supplement what we can receive from other sources.

We greatly appreciate their continued support, as well as that of all our donors, to help ensure we can continue to be "Neighbors Helping Neighbors!"



Kirsten Hair, Candace Wayne, and Dickie Nichols, all members of the Murphy Mutual Aid group, sort out a recent donation from the Pantry. The group receives donations for the school, including its food closet, which benefits students. *Photo by Liz Drew.*



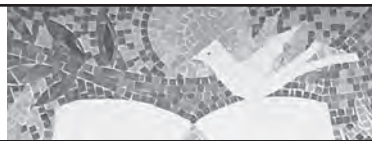
The folks at Mayfair Animal Clinic donated nonperishable food as well as dog coats and blankets for our clients' furry family members. *Photo by Lynne Anderson.*



The Schoolhouse Kitchen+Studio in Portage Park recently held a Bread & Soup fundraising event for the Pantry. *Photo by Lynne Anderson.*

Article submitted by Craig Shutt, craigshutt@ameritech.net.

John Psiharis, Executive Director, Irving Park Community Food Pantry, 4256 N. Ridgeway Ave.,
Chicago IL 60618 | 773-283-6296 | Email: info@irvingparkfoodpantry.org, | www.irvingparkfoodpantry.org.



Viator Voice — William Teeple, Admissions Director

While there's still a little chill in the air, we're excited for Spring and all the energy it brings! St. Viator is buzzing with activities, and our students are always on the move. We love welcoming interested families to campus and showing them what makes St. Viator such a special place!

Ready, Set, Explore! Check Out St. Viator's Open House for Preschool–8th Grade!

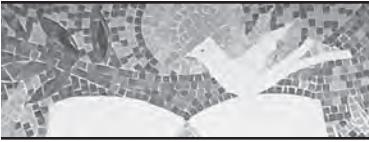
Imagine the possibilities—now's your chance to join our vibrant community! We're excited to welcome new students in every grade, from curious 3-year-old preschoolers to our thriving 8th graders.

Our March Open House is on Wednesday, March 18, 2026, from 9–10:30 a.m. We will pair you with a Parent Ambassador who will give you a guided tour of the school and add their "Parent Perspective." Now is a great time to learn about St. Viator Elementary School!

If the Open House date doesn't work for you, please contact William Teeple, Admissions Director, to schedule an individual family tour: (773) 545-2173 or wteeple@stviatorchicago.org.



Photos courtesy of Will Teeple, St. Viator School.



It's Showtime!

Community Performance Held on March 22

Be dazzled at our annual spring performing arts show, *Spotlight on Broadway*. For this extracurricular arts program, Parent Volunteers lead students in performances, drawing inspiration from Broadway hits. There are shows for the community and for the student body. This year's community performance is on Sunday, March 22nd, at 3 p.m. in our Rec Center Gym (3644 N Kedvale Ave).



PLAYGROUPS CONTINUE TO MEET

Wiggles & Giggles continues to meet in our Rec Center Gym as we brave the last of the cold weather. This month we meet on Thursday, 3/5 and 3/19, from 9 to 10:30 a.m.. We invite all our community friends with newborns up to 4 years old to join us! Wiggle & Giggles is a complimentary program where adults stay and socialize while children enjoy playing with the mats, hula hoops, tunnels, and more! Join us!



Connect with us! | Subscribe to our socials to stay up to date on St. Viator Elementary School happenings! Find us on Facebook: St. Viator Elementary School and Parish, Chicago, and Instagram: stvschoolchi, or visit the school website at www.stviatorchicago.org. Direct your school questions to William Teeple, Admissions Director, at (773) 545-2173.



Come See the St. Edward Community in Action!

We invite all families to tour our school, meet teachers, talk to parents, and ask our principal about our award-winning school. Register online for an upcoming tour date in February, March, April, or May. Enrollment for the 2026-27 school year is now open for new families with students in PK3-8th grade.

While St. Edward School is known for having a strong, stable, and safe community, we are also nationally recognized for our academic accomplishments. Graduates from our school are admitted to their first-choice high school among competitive Catholic High Schools and selective CPS High Schools. St. Edward is more than a seat in the classroom; it's an investment in your child's future that will set them up for success the rest of their lives. The sooner we can start that foundation, the better!

For more information, visit our school website, www.stedwardchicago.com

Warm wishes,
Sara Lasica, Principal

Miss the Chili Cook-Off? The Fun Doesn't Stop There

If you missed our Chili Cook-Off on January 31, mark your calendars for our annual McNulty/Kelly Corned Beef and Cabbage Dinner on Sunday, March 1. This beloved St. Edward Community tradition is held annually in Buckley Hall, 4447 N. Lowell, and raises funds for scholarships for soon-to-be graduates of St. Edward School as they move into high school.

Big Red Auction

Save the date for our Big Red Auction on April 18, 2026. St. Ed's is going western for this annual event supporting our school. Join us for a boot-scootin' good time! Tickets will be available on the school website closer to the event.

Summer Camp Fun

Don't forget, St. Edward School offers our Big Red Summer Camp for children entering grades PK4-8th. Camp is open to all children in the neighborhood. More information can be found on our website.

2026 OIPA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL FORM

Joining or renewing your membership is easy with our online membership form at www.olderirvingpark.com/join-us. If you don't have access to our online membership form, please complete the form below.

We like to celebrate our members in our newsletter. Birthday and anniversary information is optional. If you wish to be included on the birthday and anniversary page in the newsletter, **you must provide the information annually** to be included (adults members and spouses/partners only).

This is a: ☐ New Membership ☐ Renewal ☐ Gift Membership

NAME (FIRST/LAST)BIRTH MONTH

SPOUSE/PARTNER NAME (FIRST/LAST)BIRTH MONTH

ANNIVERSARY MONTH

CHILD OR PET NAME (FIRST), BIRTHDAY MONTH (LAST NAME OPTIONAL)

CHILD OR PET NAME (FIRST), BIRTHDAY MONTH (LAST NAME OPTIONAL)

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is up for
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Membership Level (per household)	In area DUES	Out of area DUES*	Benefits
Standard	\$35	\$60	Monthly meetings, newsletter delivery, member/ spouse and anniversary published in newsletter, ice cream social event, holiday event
Senior (Age 65+)	\$20	\$45	Same as Standard membership
Good Neighbor	\$95	\$120	Standard + kid/pet birthdays in newsletter and OIPA tote bag
Neighborhood All-Star	\$195	\$220	Good Neighbor + admission for two to an exclusive OIPA cocktail party

* Dues + postage for mailed newsletter

GIFT MEMBERSHIP: Simply complete the form above or the online form with your neighbor's name(s) and address. You may not know their birthday/anniversary info. That's okay—we'll follow up with them. **If purchasing a gift membership online:** Please indicate "this is a gift subscription" in the final box titled, "Special Instructions."

SEND FORM & PAYMENT TO: Old Irving Park Association, c/o Lynn Ankney, OIPA Treasurer, 4313 N Keeler Ave, Chicago, IL 60641.
MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE: Old Irving Park Association **OR** join/renew online: olderirvingpark.com/join-us

Contribute to the OIPA News

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES
for Advertising and Content

All Old Irving Park Association members are invited to submit letters, photos, and articles for publication. We publish ten newsletters each year—please note that no issues are released in January or July. Thank you to everyone who contributes content or purchases ad space. Your support keeps our community connected and informed. We look forward to hearing from you!

General Submission Guidelines

Community Calendar, Articles & Photos

- Please send articles and calendar items as a Word document, Google Doc, or in the body of an email.
- Include the author’s name, company or organization (if applicable), and contact information within the document.
- If your article includes an event that should appear in the Community Calendar, please clearly note it, even if the event is already mentioned in the article.

Word Count

- Up to 400 words without photos
- 300–325 words with photos and captions

Content Standards

- Articles should be informational, not advertorial.
- Bylined articles are written in third person, unless they are opinion pieces or personal stories.
- A byline includes the author’s name, business name, and contact information.
- Please include your name in the document file.
- Links to websites or Facebook posts will not be accepted as full submissions.

Editorial Notes

- The editor reserves the right to edit all submissions.
- Content may be reproduced with the Old Irving Park Association cited as the source.
- Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the official stance of the Association.

Images

- Submit photos or images as separate original files—not embedded in Word documents.
- Include photo captions and photographer credit in the same document as your article.
- If your files are too large to email, please use

WeTransfer or Dropbox Transfer.

- The newsletter is printed in black and white, and all images will be converted to grayscale. Please keep this in mind when selecting and submitting photos.

Submission Deadlines

- **Advertising:** First Tuesday of the month by 5 p.m. See calendar below for due date exceptions.
- **General Submissions:** First Thursday of the month by 5 p.m.
- **Materials SUBMITTED AFTER** the deadline date will be held over to the next month’s issue.

Where to Send Your Submission

- Email contributions to Kathleen Kearns at k.kearns@kearnsdesign.com. Include “OIPA Submission” in the subject line and specify the category (advertisement, article, or community calendar).
- For large files, please use WeTransfer or another file-transfer method.

2026 SUBMISSION DATES

*Due date later or early due to holiday

Publication Month	Advertising	Content/Articles
January No issue		
April	Tuesday, 3/3	Thursday, 3/5
May*	Tuesday, 3/31	Thursday, 4/2
June	Tuesday, 4/28	Thursday, 5/7
July No issue		
August*	Tuesday, 6/30	Thursday, 7/2
September	Tuesday, 8/4	Thursday, 8/6
October	Tuesday, 9/1	Thursday, 9/3
November	Tuesday, 9/29	Thursday, 10/1
December	Tuesday, 11/3	Thursday, 11/5



Advertise with Us!

Share your business with neighbors! *OIPA News* reaches more than 630 local households, elected city officials and community groups—join us and connect with your neighborhood!

- **10 ISSUES PER YEAR** | We publish ten issues per calendar year (omitting January and July).
- **SPECIAL PERKS** | Also, if you are a newsletter advertiser, you will be prioritized on our email blasts and Facebook and Instagram posts. We have over 8.2K online followers. Our monthly post can reach up to 24K, and our post engagement is usually 15K. That means consumers see and engage with our Facebook posts!
- **THE ADVERTISING RATES ARE AMAZINGLY REASONABLE.**
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Advertising Specifications

- **Purchase ad space and upload your ad at:**
www.olderirvingpark.com/buy-a-newsletter-ad
- **AD SIZES:** Full Page: 6.25" X 7.5"
Half Page: 6.25" X 3.75"
Quarter Page: 3" X 3.75"
- **ACCEPTABLE AD FILES:** High Resolution (minimum 300 dpi) gray scale; jpg, PDF, or eps. **Microsoft Word files are NOT acceptable.**

Submission Deadlines

- **Advertising:** First Tuesday of the month by 5 p.m., with exceptions when holidays conflict with dates. Please see the submission dates calendar on page 40.
- **Materials SUBMITTED AFTER** the deadline date will be held over to the next month's issue.

OIPA & COMMUNITY CALENDAR *of* EVENTS



www.olderirvingpark.com
hello@olderirvingpark.com
FB: olderirvingparkassoc

Submit your event for our calendar.

Submissions are due the first Thursday of the month. Send your contributions to: Kathleen Kearns at k.kearns@kearnsdesign.com. Please include "OIPA submission" in the subject line of the email.

March

- 4 **OIPA Quarterly Meeting** | 7 p.m.
St. John's Episcopal Church,
3857 N. Kostner Avenue, Chicago
- 21 **Irving Park Garden Club** | *Body Smart Gardening* | University of Illinois Extension | 10 a.m. | St. John's Episcopal Church, 3857 N. Kostner Ave. | New and renewing members welcome; \$30/year per household to join

- 28 **OIPA Spring Egg Hunt** | 10 a.m. | Belding Elementary School Field, 4257 N. Tripp

APRIL

- 16 **Irving Park Garden Club** | *Everything You Know About Gardening Is Wrong* | Mike Nowak | 7 p.m. | St. John's Episcopal Church, 3857 N. Kostner Ave. | New and renewing members welcome.

- 19 **Irving Park Fine Arts Concert** | 2 p.m. Apollo Chorus | Irving Park Lutheran Church, 4100 N. Harding Avenue. Free!

May

- 1 **OIPA All-Star Member Cocktail Party.** Annual event for the All-Star membership level.

June

- 5 **End of School Year, Happy Hour**
- 7 **Ice Cream Social/Quarterly Meeting** 3 p.m. | St. John's Episcopal Church, 3857 N. Kostner Avenue, Chicago

August

- 21 **OIPA Back to School Party**

September

- 9 **OIPA Quarterly Meeting** | 7 p.m. St. John's Episcopal Church, 3857 N. Kostner Avenue, Chicago

October

- 24 **OIPA Halloween Parade & Party**

November

- 4 **OIPA Quarterly Meeting** | 7 p.m. St. John's Episcopal Church, 3857 N. Kostner Avenue, Chicago

December

- 13 **OIPA Holiday Lights Stroll, Festivities & Dinner**

On the Cover

The long awaited Old Irving Park Planters been have installed along Irving Park Road complete with winter plantings by Christy Webber Landscapes. They are gorgeous and a big improvement over the old concrete planters which were crumbling and falling apart.

