

OLD IRVING PARK



NEWS



APRIL

VOLUME 40 | ISSUE 3 | 2026

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OLD IRVING PARK NEWS | Volume 40 ♦ Issue 3 ♦ April 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: Old Irving Park home on Tripp.
Photo by Kathleen Kearns

© Old Irving Park Association

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD



Join the Irving Park Spring Clean-Up and Green Space Adoption! —Adrienne Chan

Happy Spring OIP! It's time for some Spring cleaning...up of our green spaces! There are lots of opportunities to get involved.

Cleanslate* will continue the power washing of viaducts this Spring and Summer. There will be several opportunities throughout the warmer months to pick up trash and clean up along Irving Park Road and our viaducts, with the first Community Clean-Up scheduled for April 11. Meet outside Starbucks at Kostner and Irving Park Road at 9 a.m., and we will disperse to areas in need of cleanup. Bring your own gloves, etc.

It is also time to revisit our "Adopt A Green Space" Program.

OIPA has 16 in-ground planting beds on Irving Park Road that need to be maintained over the warmer months. For the past few years, we have asked neighborhood residents and businesses to "adopt" one or more of these plots and take care of plant upkeep and trash cleanup. Last year, we refreshed the plantings in the beds east of Kostner. This year, Christy Webber Landscapes will conduct a walk-through

to assess all in-ground beds, and we anticipate adding plantings with the remaining grant funds. In addition, we will have all beds cleaned and mulched on April 27. We are asking our community to step up again this year and adopt one of these green spaces to keep them free from overgrown weeds and trash over the summer months. All sponsors will be identified on Facebook and in the Newsletter.

This is a FUN opportunity for a family, group of neighbors, or local business to get out and improve our streetscape. You do not have to be a master gardener to take this on—no planting is needed this year, just maintenance and trash pick-up! You'll have a tangible impact on beautifying our stretch of Irving Park Road and enjoy a sense of pride and ownership whenever you walk, bike, or drive past "your" greenspace.

To sponsor an in-ground garden bed, contact Adrienne at adrienne.chan@oldirvingpark.com to find out what's available.

Lastly, you may have noticed the new stone planters lining Irving Park Road. OIPA will have them filled with perennial and seasonal plantings for summer and winter. The Irving Park Garden Club will also assist with maintaining seasonal plantings and the new planters.

By supporting *Keep OIP Clean* (<https://oldirvingpark.com/keep-oip-clean>) your efforts positively impact both our neighborhood and the broader community to promote inclusive economic opportunity for all.

*Learn more about Cleanslate at <https://caracollective.org/cleanslate>





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Summarized Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting on February 23, 2026

—Submitted by Nicholas Plagman-Frank, OIPA Secretary

Meeting Scheduled for 7: p.m. via Zoom

Meeting Started: 7:03 p.m.

Attendees: Lynn Ankney, Justin Antony, Jacob Berger, Colleen Kenny, Meredith O'Sullivan, Nicholas Plagman-Frank, Dan William

Communication

- **Website Redesign**

Jake Berger shared that he and Meredith O'Sullivan will schedule a meeting within the next week or two to discuss layout and content updates for the OIPA website redesign. During the discussion, ideas were shared about the possibility of engaging a student intern and exploring additional opportunities for community involvement in the redesign process. No formal decisions were made.

Ambassador/Zoning

- **39th Ward**

Dan William reported that he is following up with Alderperson Cruz regarding the removal of dead trees and the cleanup of landscaping on the pedestrian refuge island at Kilbourn.

Community Engagement

- **Premium Membership Swag**

The Board discussed the Mary Foster coasters, which have been received and are currently stored

at Colleen Kenny's residence. The Board discussed distribution planning, including the option of printing mailing labels with names and addresses to keep distribution organized. The final distribution plan has yet to be determined.

- **Mary Foster Art Prints**

The Board noted that the Mary Foster art prints are currently at Nicholas Plagman-Frank's residence. Lynn Ankney will send an eblast to members notifying them that the prints are available. Nicholas Plagman-Frank and Lynn Ankney will coordinate offline to plan pickup logistics and determine which email address will be used for member communication regarding pickup arrangements.

- **Century Plaque**

The Board noted that one Century Plaque remains available.

Upcoming Meetings

- **General Meeting – Wednesday, March 4**

The Board reviewed planning for the upcoming General Meeting scheduled for Wednesday, March 4. Jake Berger volunteered to confirm attendance from the 30th Ward office, and Justin Antony confirmed that a staff member from Alderperson Ruth Cruz's office (39th Ward) would be present as a representative. The Board engaged in general discussion regarding meeting logistics, including refreshments and the guest speakers.

Continued on page 6

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Summarized Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting on February 23, 2026—Nicholas Plagman-Frank, OIPA Secretary, *continued from 4*

Newsletter

- **March 4 Publication Deadline**

The Board reviewed the upcoming newsletter publication deadline of Wednesday, March 4. Jake Berger will add a checklist of deliverables to the reminder and will coordinate with Kathleen to submit items for publication. All submissions should be sent to Jake.

- **April Newsletter – Message from the Board**

The Board discussed the April message From the Board. Final confirmation is pending regarding Adrienne Chan's authorship of a message focused on the spring clean and green initiative.

work is scheduled for April 27. Adrienne Chan volunteered to inform the homeowners' association for the development south of Irving Park Road and west of Kilbourn Avenue that OIPA will include their in-ground garden beds in this mulching project as a gift.

- **Lighthouse Landscaping**

Lynn Ankney, Nicholas Plagman-Frank, and Adrienne Chan met on-site with Joshua from Christy Webber Landscapes on Friday, February 20, to discuss landscaping plans for the lighthouse. A proposal is forthcoming and will include climbing evergreen or ivy, ground cover, grasses, arborvitae, and large urns or planters for the two concrete pads on either side of the tower. Nicholas Plagman-Frank will reach out to a company to clean the "Old Irving Park" metal sign. Dan William inquired about lighting options for the tower. Lynn Ankney will follow up with Joshua regarding lighting options, either within the tower or on the ground, to improve visibility.

Beautification

- **Concrete Planters**

The Board discussed ongoing work on the new OIPA concrete planters along Irving Park Road. Christy Webber will return to level and adjust the planters to ensure they are properly aligned and symmetrical. Jake Berger continues to work on the permit application for the planters with the City of Chicago.

- **Christy Webber Projects and Invoices**

The Board reviewed active contracts and payment schedules with Christy Webber for 2026 beautification projects:

- Seasonal Displays in Planters: A 50% deposit was paid on February 11 for summer and winter 2026–2027 seasonal displays.
- Mulching in All In-Ground Beds: A 50% deposit was paid on February 11. Mulching

General Updates

- **Purple Neighborhood Signage**

The Board noted no update on the relocation of Disney II Magnet School banners, which will be moved to accommodate the placement of two additional purple Old Irving Park neighborhood identifier signs funded by DCEO grant dollars.

- **Neighborhood Signage – Mosaic Design**

Joshua from Christy Webber Landscapes is sharing contact information for a metal fabricator who can provide hanging brackets needed for the mosaic



OIPA BOARD MEETING REPORT

neighborhood sign design.

• Union Pacific Viaduct Letter

The Board noted that no response has been received from Union Pacific to the previously sent letter. Dan William suggested resending the letter to bring it to the top of their inbox. Jake Berger volunteered to resend the correspondence.

• Unhoused Individuals Under Keeler Viaduct

The Board noted that conditions under the Keeler viaduct appear to be better.

Parents Committee

The Parents Committee reported that five events are planned for 2026, with expectations for larger attendance. The committee is actively looking

for sponsorship for 2026. Three new volunteers have signed up to assist with Parents Committee activities and events.

Administration

• Treasurer's Report

Lynn Ankney presented the January OIPA financial report, which included income from newsletter advertising, membership dues, and Keep OIP Clean donations. Disbursements included printing costs for premium membership swag, website hosting, and charitable contributions. Colleen Kenny motioned to approve the Treasurer's report. Justin Antony seconded the motion, and the Board approved.

The Board of Directors meeting ended at 7:50 p.m.

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OIPA GENERAL MEETING REPORT



Summarized Minutes of the General Meeting on March 4, 2026 — Submitted by Nicholas Plagman-Frank, OIPA Secretary

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

Meeting Started: 7:04 p.m.

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

Community Members in Attendance: Approximately 20 neighbors

The Old Irving Park Association held its March General Meeting at St. John's Episcopal Church Hall, featuring comprehensive updates on neighborhood beautification initiatives and city infrastructure projects, as well as remarks from representatives of three aldermanic wards and the U.S. House of Representatives.

OIPA President Dan William opened the meeting and provided an extensive update on recent Board activities and ongoing neighborhood projects. President William highlighted the successful implementation of the State of Illinois DCEO grant, which has funded significant beautification efforts along Irving Park Road. He noted



OIPA President Dan William provided an update on recent Board activities and ongoing neighborhood projects to attendees of the OIPA General Meeting on March 4.

Photos by Laura Marie Sanchez.

the installation of new planters that enhance the commercial corridor and announced plans for additional cleanup, mulching, and plantings in the in-ground beds along the street. Signage upgrades are forthcoming, with a new decorative neighborhood identifier sign and additional purple Old Irving Park panels to be mounted on light poles along Irving Park Road.

President William also shared that OIPA's website would be redesigned, including modernization to improve user experience and accessibility for residents seeking information about businesses offering goods



OIPA GENERAL MEETING REPORT

and services in the neighborhood. He made a strong appeal for OIPA membership and encouraged residents to support local businesses, emphasizing that patronizing neighborhood shops and restaurants helps fill vacant storefronts and strengthens the commercial district.

Continuing with beautification updates, President William discussed the ongoing mural refreshment program, specifically mentioning the complete replacement of the mural at Kostner Avenue. He informed attendees that CleanSlate cleaning services continue on a monthly basis, conducting regular trash removal and power washing throughout the neighborhood corridors from Pulaski to Kostner, including all viaducts.

President William introduced a new Block Ambassador Program and issued a call for volunteers from the ten zones within Old Irving Park. These block ambassadors would serve as zone leaders to coordinate neighborhood cleanup efforts and act as liaisons to facilitate communication and responses from aldermanic offices and other elected officials. He announced that the Spring Volunteer Cleanup is scheduled for April 11, 2026, and encouraged broad participation.

Questions were taken regarding the CleanSlate program's funding and operations, with responses provided by President William and members of the OIPA Board.

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OIPA GENERAL MEETING REPORT

Summarized Minutes of the General Meeting on March, 2026

—Nicholas Plagman-Frank, OIPA Secretary, *continued from 9*

Following President William's remarks, elected officials and their representatives provided updates to the community.

Alderperson Jim Gardiner (45th Ward), joined by staffer **Brandon**, reminded residents to contact the ward office for city services, including cleanup assistance, even on private property for elderly residents. He provided an update on the Peoples Gas infrastructure project, noting that construction is expected to begin in August. The Peoples Gas main replacement project will affect a few streets north

of Irving Park Road, including Kilbourn, Kenneth, and Kostner Avenues in Old Irving Park. He shared that street restoration is to be handled by Peoples Gas following project completion.

Alderperson Gardiner announced several upcoming ward events and services, including a Real ID event scheduled at the ward office, shred events at Hoyne Bank, and a Business Networking Event scheduled in May. He promoted a Corned Beef Fundraiser at Eden United Church of Christ, co-hosted by Alderperson Gardiner, State Senator Rob Martwick, and State



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OIPA GENERAL MEETING REPORT

Representative Lindsay LaPointe. The ward office continues to provide veterans assistance services and hosts the Illinois State Treasurer's I-Cash unclaimed property program, with assistance available through Michael Frerichs' office. Movies in the Park events are also planned for the summer season.

Questions were taken regarding the city budget and its impact on the ward, transit security improvements, immigration enforcement concerns, the rat birth control pilot program, and the Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) ordinance. Responses were provided by Alderpersons Gardiner and Nugent. They noted that a coalition of alderpersons from the 30th, 39th, and 45th Wards worked together to pass an alternative budget resolution that restored the library collection budget

and funding for gender-based and domestic violence prevention programs.

Aldersperson Samantha Nugent (39th Ward) reminded residents that early voting has begun for the March 17th primary election and noted that training for election judges is underway. She encouraged those interested to serve as election judges. She also provided an update on the Keeler Viaduct, explaining that the ward office has partnered with family support services and the Department of Streets and Sanitation to address ongoing concerns. The ward superintendent is working diligently with unhoused residents to coordinate appropriate services and maintain cleanliness in the area.

Continued on page 12



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Summarized Minutes of the General Meeting on March, 2026

—Nicholas Plagman-Frank, OIPA Secretary, *continued from 11*

Alderson Nugent announced that street sweeping maps have been redrawn for 2026, resulting in one additional street sweeping pass this year, beginning April 1st. She also promoted upcoming ward events, including a shred event and a Clean and Green event in celebration of Earth Day.

Questions regarding immigration enforcement were directed to Alderson Nugent, who responded by explaining that the 39th Ward office has been in contact with neighbors, families, educators, and immigrant rights organizations to protect community members and is working through legal channels to address concerns.

Jason Liechty, Director of Policy and Zoning from Alderson Ruth Cruz's office (30th Ward), provided infrastructure and project updates for areas of Old



Jason Liechty, Director of Policy and Zoning from Alderson Ruth Cruz's office (30th Ward),

Photo by Lynn Ankney.

Irving Park within the 30th Ward. He announced the installation of pedestrian bump-outs at Keeler and Waveland, as well as Chicago flag-themed crosswalks planned near Disney II Magnet School. A butterfly garden is also planned for the Disney II school grounds, and the Tony Passero mural has been successfully restored.

Mr. Liechty shared results from the ward's Participatory Budget process, including updated traffic signals and crosswalks at Addison and Keeler. He noted that covered garbage cans to be placed along Irving Park Road were approved through the participatory budget, but the wrong models were initially ordered and have since been reordered for proper installation.

Regarding the city budget, Mr. Liechty conveyed Alderson Cruz's concerns about depleting TIF district funds. He noted that the Alderson has been vocal in her support for Medicare for All and has called for a national search to fill the leadership position at Chicago Animal Care and Control.

Mr. Liechty announced upcoming 30th Ward events, including Pictures with the Easter Bunny at Kilbourn Park, a Thrifting event at Kilbourn Park, and a shred event.

Questions were taken regarding pedestrian infrastructure, with responses provided by Mr. Liechty.

Cameron Cook from U.S. Congressman Mike Quigley's office provided updates on federal matters affecting the community. He reminded residents that tax filing information, including free filing options, is available on the Congressman's website. Mr. Cook discussed ongoing concerns regarding the tariffs that the Supreme Court ruled unconstitutional, noting that



OIPA GENERAL MEETING REPORT

the office is monitoring developments and providing updates to constituents.

Regarding immigration enforcement activities in Chicago, Mr. Cook announced that Congressman Quigley's office will host a town hall at Loyola University and encouraged residents to continue reporting incidents involving federal immigration officials to the appropriate federal office. He emphasized that the Congressman's office is available to assist constituents with immigration-related concerns.

Questions were taken regarding federal funding for the Irving Park Blue Line station improvements and assistance for U.S. citizens stranded overseas. Mr.

Cook responded that the Blue Line project remains on the priority list and the office is working through the earmark funding process. He noted that the office provides assistance to constituents traveling or living abroad and encouraged enrollment in the State Department's STEP (Smart Traveler Enrollment Program). He explained that assisted departure services are available from some international locations for those who need help returning to the United States.

The meeting concluded with closing remarks thanking all elected officials and their representatives for attending and providing updates to the community.

Meeting Ended: 8:12 p.m.

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Helping Create a More Peaceful World — Vicci Rodgers



April marks the anniversary of **AFS Intercultural Programs**, formerly known as American Field Service. The organization traces its roots to a group of 2,500 World War I ambulance drivers who believed that fostering international understanding could help prevent future conflicts. In 1946, volunteers who had served in both World Wars transformed that vision into a student exchange program. Today, AFS continues its mission: bringing people together to create a more peaceful world through cultural awareness and action.



Students from Egypt, Turkey, Italy, France, and Portugal gathered recently at the home of Vicci Rodgers in Old Irving Park to cook favorite treats, share presentations, and answer questions about their home countries and experiences in Chicago.

Photos courtesy of Vicci Rodgers.

This year in Chicago, 47 students from 20 countries are living with local families and attending 15 area high schools. These Global Ambassadors will return home in June, and a new group will arrive in August for the 2026–27 school year.

Community members can get involved in several ways:

- Host a casual gathering at your home or organization where students can share stories about their home countries and their experiences living in Chicago.
- Encourage high school students to apply for study abroad opportunities in one of 40 countries. Scholarships are available.
- Become a host family and welcome a student from another country into your home.
- If you studied abroad, consider paying it forward by getting involved.
- You can also meet some of these students at Home of Harmony on April 11 at 4 p.m.

To learn more about how you can help connect cultures and support global citizenship, contact Vicci Rodgers at viccirodgersafs@gmail.com

Follow AFS Greater Chicago on Instagram (@[afschicago](https://www.instagram.com/afschicago)) and Facebook (AFS Greater Chicago).



Intercultural
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Vicci Rodgers, an OIPA member and neighbor since 1988, went abroad in high school to the Philippines. Last year she was a host mom to David, from Germany, who studied at Whitney Young.

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Dont' Believe Everything You Hear — Claudia Hine

The Irving Park Garden Club wants to educate its members and bust a few gardening myths in the process. To that end, the club has invited **Mike Nowak**, formerly known as WGN Radio's "Garden Guy," to our April meeting. What mistakes have you been making all this time?

A funny and engaging speaker, Mike's presentation is called "Everything You Know about Gardening Is Wrong: Myths, Misinformation, and Well-Meant but Inaccurate Advice from Mom, the Intertubes, and Beyond." He will point out the difference between fact and fiction, and science and hearsay in the garden. He'll also tell us where to find factual answers to our garden and environment questions.

Want to learn more? This meeting takes place on Thursday, April 16, at 7 p.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 \$30.00/household, payable by cash, check, or Zelle.

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



Radio personality Mike Nowak will sort out fact from fiction at IPGC's April 16 meeting.

Photo courtesy Mike Nowak.



IRVING PARK GARDEN CLUB

Coming in May

IPGC's annual plant exchange and luncheon is scheduled for Saturday, May 16. Admittedly, this event gets a little rowdy as members vie for plants they've been coveting from their neighbors' gardens. It's amazing how crafty our mild-mannered gardeners can be as they slyly attempt to hide that special perennial or native plant from their "competitors."

But not to worry. It's all in good fun, and President Debbie Maher keeps everyone in line as she wrangles their contributions of tomato seedlings, herbs, divided perennials, and even small shrubs to the exchange.

The Garden Walk Is Moving

IPGC's popular Art and the Garden Walk event is being planned for Saturday, June 13. This is a week earlier than usual in hopes that we can avoid the super hot days we've faced the past two years. You don't have to be a member to attend the garden walk, so be sure to get us on your calendar now. You won't want to miss it.

Questions?

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



IPGC members check out the assortment of plants on offer at 2025's plant exchange.

Photo by Claudia Hine.

Artist Eileen Cole set up her easel to paint and tried to stay cool during the garden walk.

Photo by Claudia Hine.



OIPA | Anniversaries & Birthdays



April Birthdays

Bindu Alexander	Jorge Gomez	Paul Moran
James Barrett	Garrett Harabedian	Jaime Murray
Mike Blaha	Jim Hensel	Sheryl Nichin-Keith
Chris Boran	T. J. Hine	Dan O'Donohue
Steve Boudreau	Lauren Hurt	Erin O'Donohue
Sandra Broderick	Katie Jackson	Peter O'Mara
Meridith Cannon	Justin Johanson	Tatyana Ruderman
Virginia Cernak	Rhys Jones	Betty Scott
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Jo Ann Coli	Tracy Kennedy	Jason Sitko
Ivonne Contreras	Mary Kuhn	Frank Smith
Isabel Corona	Debra LaPenta	Nilda Soler
Michelle Daily	Daniel Lee	Marc Sussman
Elaine Euler	Nicholas Lilovich	Kevin Sweetland
Lauren Finch	Peter Lugten	Catherine Tataryn
Mary Foster	Kristen Lynch	Julie Tye
Elizabeth Fox	Anthony Mallerdino	Deanna Varagona
Kate Geisler	Bradley Marchese	Len Wanger
Andrew Gilmore	Lorraine McGuire	Julie Whittington-Cirton
Illeana Gomez	Marjorie Monaghan	

April Anniversaries

Kristin & Mario Arevalo
Sruti Balakrishnan & Nicholas Lilovich
Cheryl Flores & Jason Sitko
Elizabeth & Robert Fox
Valerie & Patrick Ginnan
Yasmine Goelzer & Daniel Alter
Claire & Kurt Imber
Joe & Christine Jamrosz
Robert & Kathryn Kleisch
Regina & Chris Mergenthaler
Connor & Sarah Meyer
Jessica & William Navin
Meredith & Tim O'Sullivan
Ewelina & Jan Pietraszek
Sheila & Shaun Quinn
Susan Strong-Dowd & John Dowd
Maria Vuolo-Milan & Allan Milan
Angela & Martin Yorath

KID BIRTHDAYS

Helena Cannon
Sophie Horvath
Ellie Lynch
Emmett Reagan
Imogen Sadlier
Rohan Sanders
Julia Simmons

PET BIRTHDAYS

Saluki
The Ankney Flock of Hens
Elle Belber
Lulu Boran
Otis Nguyen
Winston O'Mara
Smokey Sobota

Is your birthday or anniversary missing from this list? To confirm or edit your household information go to oldirvingpark.com, hover over Membership and then click on Membership Assistance. You will be asked to enter the email address associated with your membership account.



Save the Date



JOIN THE OIPA PARENTS COMMITTEE
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Friday,
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4419 W. Waveland.....\$785,000



Attached Single Family

4229 N. Keystone, 1C.....\$145,000

4326 N. Kedvale, A.....\$345,000

Prepared by Tom Brandt

(C) = Court Approved

(F) = Foreclosure Sale

(S) = Short Sale

Report as of Feb. 6, 2026

2-4 Units

3701 N. Lowell.....\$620,000



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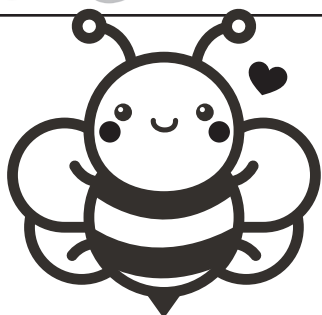
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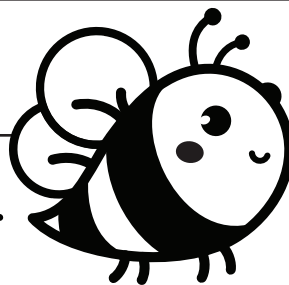
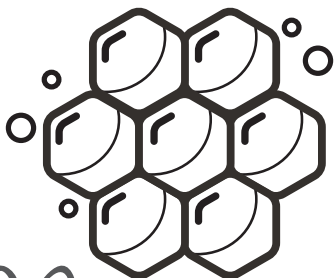
KIDS CORNER

CORNY JOKES



Q: How did the bee brush his hair?

A: With a honeycomb.

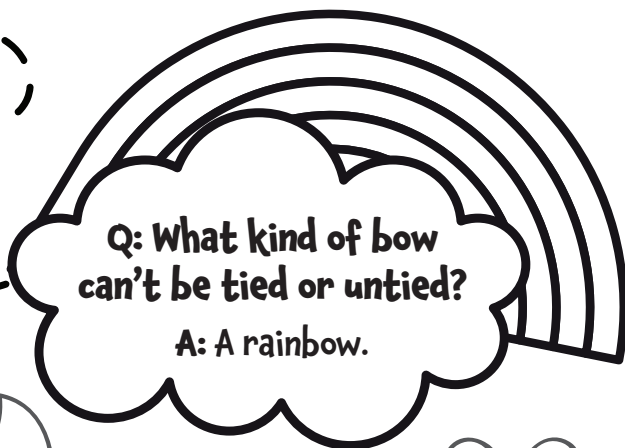


Q: Can bees fly in the rain?

A: Not without their yellow jackets!

Q: What kind of bow can't be tied or untied?

A: A rainbow.







Don't Miss Our Spring Fundraiser

On Saturday, May 2nd, Belding parents will don their Derby best for a Triple Crown Belding Bash at La Villa Banquet Hall. The Belding Bash is the Belding Parent Group's annual dinner party and silent auction to raise funds for capital improvements at our neighborhood school. Historically, the BPG has raised funds for a gymnasium, climbing wall, playground, shade, nature play space, a student wellness and reading room, a campus security camera system, and auditorium lights and sound system, just to name a few.

Spring Musical

Come out and see our 4th–7th graders perform *The Lion King Jr.* on Thursday, April 30th, and Friday, May 1st, at 6 p.m. Tickets are \$5. Students selected this show this year, with over 30 students participating.

Spelling Bee Champ

Congratulations to 8th grader Stella Petropoulos for advancing to the citywide spelling bee championship for two years in a row! She will compete against 50 of the top spellers in CPS in hopes of advancing to the regional competition. Way to go, Stella!



Dine and Donate

On April 14th, dine in or order out at Irving Park Pizza and Patio (2922 W. Irving Park Rd, Phone: 773- 866-2010, <https://www.irvingparkpizzaandpatio.com>) to support Belding's 3rd graders. Make sure you mention Belding, and a portion of the earnings will be donated to the school.

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 April 21st and the school year's final tour on May 19th. 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.



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Scammon is Celebrating 100 Years

— Dr. Madden, Principal, and Ms. Grimaldo, Assistant Principal

Did you know? Scammon turns 100, and we are celebrating our Centennial year with a special Gala on April 18th!. Our hallways were buzzing with a little extra magic as we hit a double milestone: the 100th day of our 100th year! To commemorate a century of learning and community, our students and staff captured amazing drone footage of the moment!

.....

Black History Month

Our Black History Month Assembly brought us all together to honor the incredible legacy and contributions of the Black community. We are so proud of all the students participating and leading to make this assembly memorable.

Thank You for the Support

A huge thank you to everyone who supported our McDonald's Dine-Out event—it was wonderful to see so many families enjoying a meal for a great cause!

Career Day Volunteers!

Do you have an interesting career you'd like to teach others about? Scammon welcomes community members to fill out the Career Day Interest Form or call us to learn more!

.....

Upcoming Events

- 4/8 Coffee with Admin
- 4/18 Centennial Gala at La Villa Banquets
- 4/29 Día del Niño Event



Contribute to the *OIPA News*

We welcome individual article submissions for the OIPA newsletter!

Here are a few ideas:

- Give a shout-out to a kind neighbor.
- Did you recently visit a local business or restaurant? Then share your experience.
- Write a fun story about our neighborhood or a fond memory.
- Share your knowledge on a topic.
- Attend an event? Share a photo (please include photo credit).

See submission Guidelines on page 40.



MOVING



PACKING

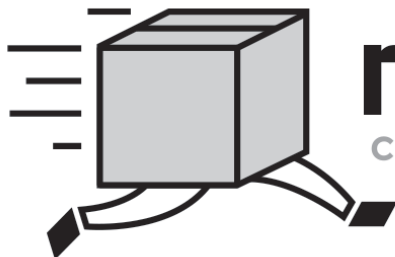


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Traditions Honored, New Partnerships Formed

— Vicci Rodgers

In May 2024, Renewed Hope United Methodist Church (RH) was created through the merger of Irving Park UMC and Berry UMC of Lincoln Square. The new congregation is now located at the Albany Park Ministry Center, 3100 W. Wilson (on the corner of Albany and Wilson), with a strong focus on community outreach.

One longstanding commitment that continues under Renewed Hope is the Irving Park Community Food Pantry, which began more than 40 years ago in the basement of the former Irving Park UMC. Supporting the pantry and serving the Irving Park neighborhood remain central to the church's mission.

The community is welcome to join us for our regular and Easter services:

- **Sunday Worship Service, 10 a.m.**
- **Lenten Book Study, Wednesday, April 1, 7 –8 p.m.**
- **Maundy Thursday Worship in the Sanctuary, Thursday, April 2, 7 –8 p.m.**
- **Good Friday, April 4, Stations in the Street from 5–7 p.m. followed by a joint worship with First Vietnamese UMC at 7 p.m. in the sanctuary**
- **Easter Sunday, April 6, is at 10 a.m.**
- **Free parking in rear.**

Renewed Hope UMC
3100 W. Wilson Avenue
Chicago, IL 60625

773-784-3273
office@renewedhopeumc.org



Sina Kraneis, president of Renewed Hope's United Women of Faith, was part of the original church group that launched the Spring Basket Program. The program continues to bring joy to children served by the food pantry. This year, the church prepared 50 baskets for distribution. The group also awards three \$1,500 scholarships each year to graduating seniors from Schurz High School who plan to pursue careers in health care.

Photo courtesy of Vicci Rodgers.

Stay Connected, Be Informed

There are a variety of ways for you to connect with OIPA and your neighbors.

OIPA Enews | Stay up to date with local neighborhood news and happenings. Request to join OIPA's news eblast email distribution group by emailing us at hello@oldirvingpark.com

Google Parent Group (not just for parents) | To join our interactive community google group visit: <https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/oipa-parents-discuss>

Facebook | Our Facebook page is a great way to learn about neighborhood events and issues
<https://www.facebook.com/oldirvingparkassoc>.

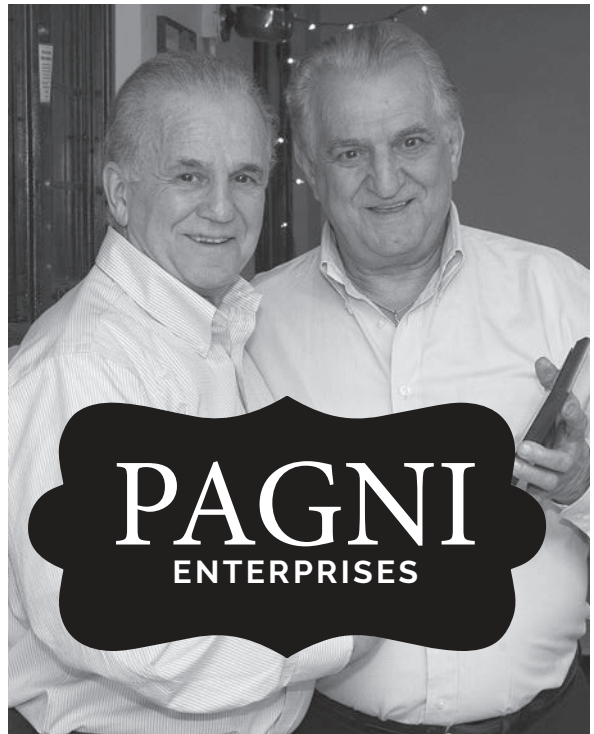
Visit our website
www.olderirvingpark.com
Questions? Contact us
Hello@olderirvingpark.com



Keep OIP Clean

<https://olderirvingpark.com/keep-oip-clean>

Your support —whether financial, in-kind, or through volunteering—is the lifeblood of Keep OIP Clean. Every contribution makes a tangible difference in our neighborhood. Together, we are doing more than just cleaning; we are fostering a sense of pride and community.





Growth and Gratitude: Carlson Community Services Announces New Grants and Leadership Change

— Sara Yoest, Executive Director, Carlson Community Services



Exciting News from Three Brothers Garden

Carlson is thrilled to announce that Three Brothers Garden was awarded two grants in the fourth quarter of 2025, which will fund much-needed infrastructure improvements and repairs in the garden this spring!

An infrastructure improvement grant from The CHIditarod Foundation and a Land, Health Community-Chicago grant from the Lumpkin Family Foundation will enable us to rebuild the aging garden beds, including redesigning some to improve accessibility. We will also explore innovative ways to increase garden yields, deter pests, and ensure a reliable water supply for the garden. We intend to have the work completed in early spring, so we are ready for the 2026 growing season. Since its founding in 2009, Three Brothers Garden has been providing fresh vegetables to our partners at the Irving Park Community Food Pantry, donating hundreds of pounds each year.

Photo of emerging radishes and carrots by Sara Yoest.

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.



Don't Miss the Fourth and Final Free Concert of Our 32nd Season!



Photo courtesy of the Apollo Chorus.

Irving Park Fine Arts Free Concert

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. Select members of the chorus will perform a thoughtful, diverse selection of music to mark America's 250th birthday.

Concert starts at 2 p.m., followed by a reception to celebrate the season at Irving Park Lutheran Church, 4100 N. Harding Avenue, Chicago.

This performance is made possible in part by a State of Illinois DECO B2B grant award.

Details on the complete Fine Arts Concert Season can be found on our website at <https://carlsoncommunityservices.org/programs/fine-arts/this-season>

Change in Carlson Leadership

I want to take this opportunity to share that I am stepping down from my role as Executive Director of Carlson Community Services.

This decision comes after much thoughtful consideration. Due to family responsibilities and other commitments, I feel that I cannot dedicate the level of focus and time this position, Carlson's mission, and programs deserve.

Serving the community in this capacity has been a privilege. The three programs Carlson operates truly strengthen connections among neighbors while also providing important resources to vulnerable families. It has been humbling to have the opportunity to lead and be a part of such meaningful work for the past two years.

Getting to know the network of dedicated volunteers and Carlson supporters has been a blessing. The opportunity to learn from and work with them has been personally impactful and rewarding. I am proud of our accomplishments over the past few years and grateful for the trust, collaboration, and support I have received.

The search for a new Executive Director is underway. Carlson's Board of Directors and the Carlson oversight committees know that I am committed to assisting with a smooth transition in the weeks ahead.



Sincerely,

Sara Yoest



Help Restock Essential Toiletries

The Irving Park Community Food Pantry strives to provide clients with essential personal-care items along with groceries. Some of the most in-demand items include toothpaste and toothbrushes, deodorant, shampoo, body wash, razors, and shaving cream. Even with limits on how many each client can receive, these supplies are often difficult to keep in stock.

To help meet this ongoing need, the pantry is asking for donations of basic toiletries. Especially helpful items include body lotion, conditioner, sunscreen, lip balm, larger-size diapers (#5 and #6), adult diapers, washcloths, and baby wipes.

Donations can be dropped off at Big Helpers, 4184 N. Elston Ave., from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. Items may also be left anytime on the front porches at 3912 N. Kenneth Ave. or 4242 N. Hamlin Ave.

Supporters can also donate through the pantry's Amazon registry by scanning the QR code on this page. Your generosity helps ensure neighbors in need have access to these everyday essentials.



Kathy Cudnowski shows off some of the items offered at the Toiletries station. We appreciate all donations of items to offer to our clients. *Photo by Craig Shutt.*

Unable to volunteer during our operating hours?

Contact Lynne on our Community Engagement team at community@irvingparkfoodpantry.org. We have a variety of options for conducting drives for key items we need at different times of the year that can be done with friends, neighbors, the community, or business groups. Drives can be organized in your own time and way to help us out when you're available.



Personal shopper, Mary Ann Ballard, welcomed PepsiCo employees: Melissa M., Chau, Maggie N., and Tyler H., who volunteered in February. *Photo by Craig Shutt.*



NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS | Irving Park Community Food Pantry

Photo by Corey Friedman



Volunteers Treated to a Night Out

Pantry volunteers attended a DePaul Blue Demons women's basketball game against Xavier University's team in February, thanks to DePaul Athletics and Rush University. The two organizations partner to sponsor the RUSH Community Zone, which provides free group tickets to non-profit social-service organizations. Board member Corey Friedman applied for the tickets, allowing volunteers to root the Blue Demons to victory.



Volunteers with 33rd Ward Alderwoman Rossana Rodriguez's "Sage Brigade" load up groceries to take to seniors in their ward. The group picks up 20 boxes of food each month. *Photo by Craig Shutt*

Thank You for the Support

Thank you to State Representative Lindsey LaPointe and her staff for running a hat and glove drive for us this month! We gave them out during February and March, when there was still plenty of demand!

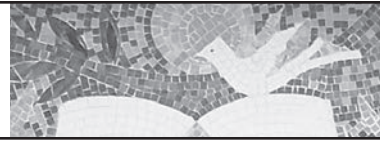
Owner and Head Teacher Frances Jochum Thuet and her crew at **Little Makers Home Day Care Center** put together Meal Kits for the Pantry in February and decorated the bags for Valentine's Day. The meal kits include items for recipe (in this case, Minestrone Soup or Creamy Chicken & Dumplings) purchased at the Dollar Store, bagged together with the printed recipe, to give clients. The kids put together 30 kits for us!



Little Makers Home Day Care Center put together Meals for the Pantry in decorated the bags for Valentine's Day. *Photo courtesy of Little Makers.*

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



Join us for a tour!

St. Viator enrollment is OPEN, and we are currently accepting applications from 3-year-old preschool through 8th grade. Start the Admissions process by contacting us and scheduling a school tour. There are Open House events and individual family tour options.

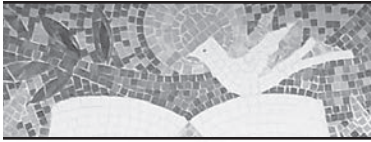
Contact William Teeple, Admissions Director, to schedule: 773-545-2173 or wteeple@stviatorchicago.org. Or visit the Tour Calendar at <https://bit.ly/Viator2026> to pick your day and time.

Our next Open House is on Wednesday, April 15, from 9 to 10:30 a.m. Or Choose the Open House that works best with your schedule, then RSVP at 773-545-2173!

All photos courtesy of St. Viator.

Strong Minds. Strong Faith. Strong Future.

Students are preparing for the spring iReady diagnostic to measure their Reading and Math growth and proficiency. We are pleased to share that 89% of St. Viator students demonstrate proficiency in reading, working at, or above, their grade level. And 77% are proficient in the MATH skills at or above their grade level. Growth in both subjects exceeds the expected average, showing that St. Viator students are not just learning but excelling! Our faith-centered learning environment, targeted instruction, and strong partnership with families ensure every child is challenged and supported to thrive.



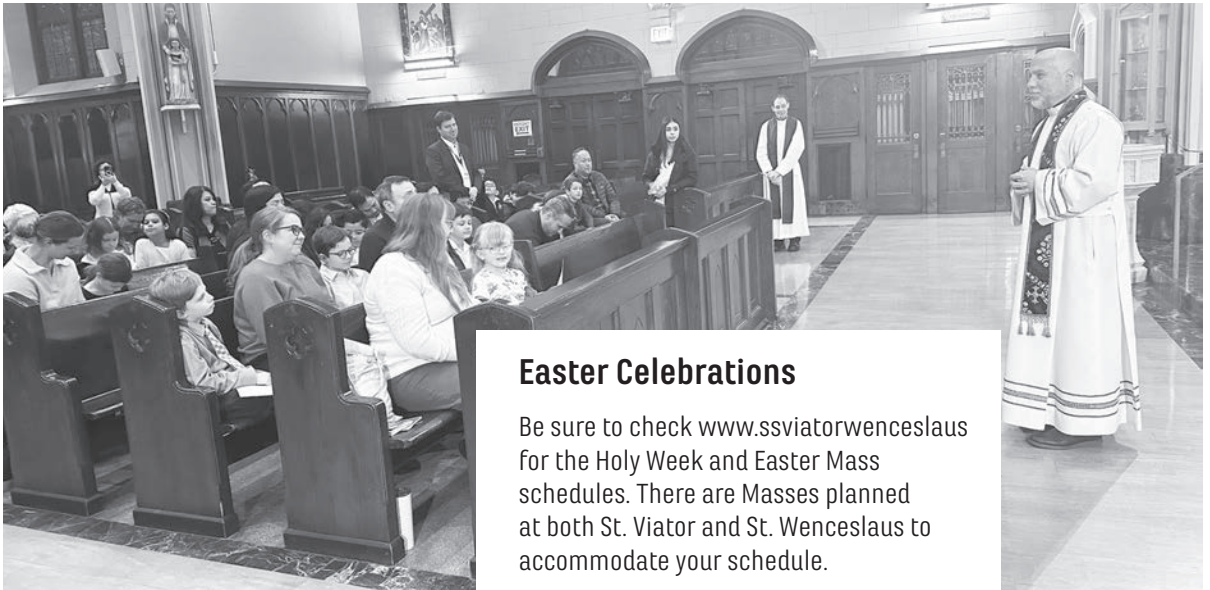
Wiggles & Giggles PLAYGROUP

The Wiggles & Giggles playgroup meets once in April, on Thursday, April 16, from 9 to 10:30 a.m., in our Rec Center Gym. We invite our community friends with newborns up to 4 years old to come and enjoy this complimentary program. Adults stay and socialize while children play with the toys, tunnels, and more! Join us for some fun!

SAVE THE DATE! ART ZONE OPEN HOUSE

**FRIDAY, APRIL 24,
FROM 5 TO 7 P.M.**

It's time to transform our halls with student artwork! We are hosting the annual **Art Zone Open House** on Friday, April 24, 5 to 7 p.m. Join us! It is a great way to see all that St. Viator has to offer. All are welcome.



Easter Celebrations

Be sure to check www.ssviatorwenceslaus for the Holy Week and Easter Mass schedules. There are Masses planned at both St. Viator and St. Wenceslaus to accommodate your schedule.

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.



Experience the Vibrant St. Edward Community—Firsthand!

Tour our school, meet teachers, talk to parents, and ask our principal about our award-winning programs. Register online for a March, April, or May tour. Enrollment for new PK3-8th-grade families for 2026-27 is now open. Visit www.stedwardchicago.com for details.

St. Edward is more than a classroom seat; it's an investment in your child's future. Building this foundation early helps ensure lifelong success.

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

Warm wishes,
Sara Lasica, Principal



Supporting Our Families

This winter, St. Edward School is partnering with parents to sign the Wait Until You Graduate Phone Pledge. We are supporting families who are choosing to wait until the end of 8th grade before giving their children a smartphone. Families who have signed the pledge have access to a list of other families who have signed to support one another, share resources, and help protect our children's childhoods.

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, www.stedwardchicago.com.

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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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		
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.**
To place an ad visit www.olderirvingpark.com/buy-a-newsletter-ad.

Advertising Specifications

- **Purchase ad space and upload your ad at:**
www.olderirvingpark.com/buy-a-newsletter-ad
- **AD SIZES:** Full Page: 6.25" w X 7.5" h
Half Page: 6.25" w X 3.75" h
Quarter Page: 3" w X 3.75" h
- **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.

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; \$30/year per household to join

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

May

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

- 16 Irving Park Garden Club** | Annual Plant Exchange | 11 a.m. | St. John's Episcopal Church, 3857 N. Kostner Ave. | Members Only | \$30/year per household to join.

June

- 5 End of School Year, Happy Hour**
5:30–7:30 p.m., Le Village CoWork, 3146 W. Irving Park Rd.
- 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**