

## Village launches community biodiversity survey

Oak Park residents are encouraged to complete a community biodiversity survey to help the Village's Office of Sustainability & Resilience gather information on where there are existing projects in Oak Park that support biodiversity.

Examples of such projects include monarch gardens, rain gardens and lighting that is dark-sky approved. The survey also seeks to capture information about properties with green infrastructure such as permeable pavement, bioswales and rain barrels.

Information obtained from the survey will help the Village set goals and develop programs for increasing the amount of biodiversity and green infrastructure in the community.

The survey is available online at [www.oak-park.us/biodiversity](http://www.oak-park.us/biodiversity) and is for anyone with an outdoor space on their property, including at homes and other buildings.

The project stems from the Climate Ready Oak Park plan, which calls for the community to protect biodiversity — defined as the variety of life in a particular habitat — as a way of ensuring a well-functioning ecosystem.

For more information about sustainability efforts in Oak Park, visit [www.sustainoakpark.com](http://www.sustainoakpark.com) or email [sustainability@oak-park.us](mailto:sustainability@oak-park.us).

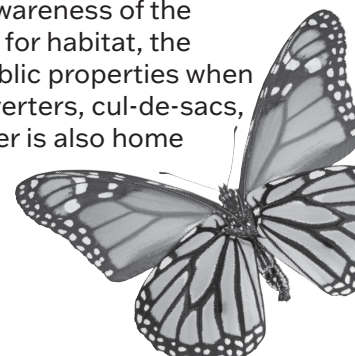


## Pledge to maintain a pesticide-free lawn and garden

Gardening and lawn care chemicals can be harmful to humans, pets, wildlife and waterways. The good news is there are many surprisingly easy ways to care for your lawn and garden that avoid putting your family and wildlife at risk. The Village's Office of Sustainability & Resilience is inviting Oak Park residents to pledge to eliminate synthetic chemical use on their lawn and garden. Complete the pledge by filling out the online form at [www.oak-park.us/PesticideFreePledge](http://www.oak-park.us/PesticideFreePledge). A limited number of pesticide-free yard signs are available upon request for residents who complete the pledge. Find more information about natural lawn care on the Village website at [www.oak-park.us/GoNatural](http://www.oak-park.us/GoNatural).

## Working to save the monarch butterfly

The Village of Oak Park is doing its part to help save the monarch butterfly, an iconic North American species whose populations have declined dramatically in recent years. Village officials have joined hundreds of communities across the country in signing the Mayors' Monarch Pledge to create a healthy habitat that will aid monarch butterflies on their annual migration across the continent. In addition to raising awareness of the decline of the monarch butterfly and the species' need for habitat, the Village plants native milkweed and nectar plants on public properties when appropriate across the community, including traffic diverters, cul-de-sacs, medians and planters. The Village's Public Works Center is also home to a certified Monarch butterfly waystation. Find more information, including tips on how to create a monarch garden, at [www.oak-park.us/monarchpledge](http://www.oak-park.us/monarchpledge).





## Farmers' Market news

**Corn roast...**The Oak Park Farmers' Market's annual corn roast is set for Aug. 12. Guests can enjoy fresh-picked corn sold by the ear hot off the roaster from about 9 a.m. to noon. Be sure to bring cash for this fundraising event, as credit cards are not accepted when purchasing roasted corn.

**Hot sandwiches...**For the first time in its history, the Farmers' Market is selling hot sandwiches for customers to enjoy while they shop. Baked Cheese Haus has been handcrafting small-batch artisanal cheese in southwest Wisconsin since the 1890s. This long-term Market vendor is selling Raclette, which is scraped off the wheel in the traditional Swiss format, on fresh bread to create hot cheese sandwiches available for purchase each Market day.

**SNAP/LINK among payment options...**Making fresh produce affordable for all patrons is a priority at the Oak Park Farmers' Market, which has been providing SNAP/LINK card processing since 2011. The Market also offers matching value coupons throughout the season. For each dollar SNAP/LINK participants spend, they receive a \$1 coupon up to a maximum of \$25 in coupons per cardholder per Market day. Many vendors also accept WIC and Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program coupons.

**Transportation available...**Curb-to-curb transportation to and from the Oak Park Farmers' Market is available every Saturday. Look for the Oak Park Township bus at the Market entrance during Market hours. The wheelchair-accessible bus will transport shoppers to locations within Oak Park and River Forest. Reservations for rides to the Market can be made by calling 708.383.4806 between 8:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. A \$1 donation is suggested.

**About the Market...**Visit [www.oak-park.us/farmersmarket](http://www.oak-park.us/farmersmarket) for updated information about what's coming up at the Market, including information about bake sales and special events. The webpage also features information about all of the Market's vendors. The Market is held from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. rain or shine every Saturday through October in the Pilgrim Congregational Church parking lot, 460 Lake St., one block west of Ridgeland Ave. For more information, call 708.358.5780 or email [farmersmarket@oak-park.us](mailto:farmersmarket@oak-park.us).

## Guidance for storm debris pickup varies

**S**ummer is an active period for storms in the Midwest, and severe storms often result in fallen tree branches. If a branch falls from a parkway tree located between the curb and sidewalk, please contact Public Works at 708.358.5700 or [publicworks@oak-park.us](mailto:publicworks@oak-park.us) so the Village is aware of the issue and can pick up the debris. Officials ask residents to not cut up branches from parkway trees as it is faster for crews to feed one large branch into the wood chipper than a lot of smaller pieces. The Village does not pick up brush from trees on private property. If you have a small amount of private brush to dispose of, you can bundle it, attach a green yard waste sticker and set it out for in the regular collection area for regular garbage and recycling pickup. Bundles should be no larger than two feet in diameter or four feet in length and not weigh more than 50 pounds. If you have a larger amount of private brush, contact a tree care or landscape maintenance contractor for assistance. For more information about parkway tree care and maintenance, visit [www.oak-park.us/trees](http://www.oak-park.us/trees).

## Open windows may invite burglars

**R**esidents who leave their windows and patio doors open overnight to catch a summer evening breeze could unwittingly become targets of burglars. Oak Park Police urge residents to use devices that prevent entry by limiting travel of the sash or door. Making sure patio furniture cannot be used as a makeshift ladder to reach higher windows also is important. Residential Beat Officers are available to provide security tips and even an assessment of one's home. To contact your RBO, visit [www.oak-park.us/rbo](http://www.oak-park.us/rbo).



## Health news

### Back-to-school immunization...

Local health officials are reminding parents and caregivers that all children attending Illinois schools, both public and private, need to show proof of required immunizations in order to attend class each fall. Parents and caregivers may contact the Oak Park Public Health Department at 708.358.5480 or [health@oak-park.us](mailto:health@oak-park.us) with questions about which immunizations are required or how to access them.

### Homebound services available...

If you or a loved one are unable to access COVID or flu vaccines because you are homebound, the Oak Public Health Department will come to your residence to provide these immunizations. Please contact the Village's public health nurse at 708.358.5480 or [health@oak-park.us](mailto:health@oak-park.us) to schedule an appointment.

**Bee allergy registry...**The Village allows residents to keep bees on their property, but will not issue a permit for an apiary on a property within 150 feet of a residence of a person with an anaphylactic reaction to bee stings. If you have been diagnosed with such an allergy by a licensed physician, please provide documentation to the Public Health Department at [health@oak-park.us](mailto:health@oak-park.us). More information about beekeeping in Oak Park is at [www.oak-park.us/health](http://www.oak-park.us/health).

## 7th Congressional District community meeting planned

**U.S.** Representative Danny K. Davis will host a town hall meeting with constituents from the 7th Congressional District, which includes Oak Park, at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Aug. 10 in the Council Chamber at Village Hall, 123 Madison St. The public forum will cover a variety of topics and include discussion of important issues affecting the community. For more information, call 773.533.7520.

## Fight the bite this West Nile season

**A**s temperatures rise, so does the threat of the mosquito-borne West Nile Virus. Last year, the Illinois Department of Public Health reported 32 human cases, 18 of which were in Cook County, and four deaths.

**Take precautions...**Avoid being bitten by mosquitoes by wearing long sleeves and pants, limiting time spent outdoors at dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active and using insect repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, IR3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus or para-menthane-diol. Residents also are urged to eliminate potential mosquito breeding sites by cleaning roof gutters, storing containers upside down, emptying birdbaths every few days and any other precautions to avoid standing water on their property. For more information, call 708.358.5694, visit [www.oak-park.us/fightthebite](http://www.oak-park.us/fightthebite) or email [health@oak-park.us](mailto:health@oak-park.us).

**Report dead birds...**If you see a dead bird call the West Nile Virus Hotline at 708.358.5694 or email [health@oak-park.us](mailto:health@oak-park.us). Depending on the bird's condition and species, a Health Department staff member may pick up the carcass for testing.

**Prevention efforts...**The Des Plaines Valley Mosquito Abatement District treats all street catch basins with larvicide every seven to 10 days during the mosquito-breeding season. The abatement district also will treat catch basins on private property by request and pick up old vehicle tires. Call 708.447.1765 or visit [www.desplainesvalleymad.com](http://www.desplainesvalleymad.com) for more information.

**Spraying notification...**Residents who wish to be notified when the Des Plaines Valley Mosquito Abatement District has scheduled spraying for adult mosquitoes can sign up at [www.oak-park.us/notifyme](http://www.oak-park.us/notifyme). Registrants will be notified by an automated telephone system, email or text message as soon as possible following a decision to spray in Oak Park. Individuals without computer access may call 708.358.5694 to leave their phone number for telephone notification only. Spraying is only conducted in response to elevated levels of West Nile Virus in an area. Visit [www.desplainesvalleymad.com](http://www.desplainesvalleymad.com) for information about spraying.



## Foam recycling event planned

**A**s part of its ongoing effort to expand recycling opportunities for Oak Park residents, the Public Works Department is making plans to include foam recycling at the Village's next paper shredding event in the fall. Foam products with the No. 6 symbol are not accepted as part of the Village's single-stream recycling program with waste hauler LRS. To fill the gap, the Village has scheduled Dart Container Corporation to collect foam products during the paper shredding event planned for 9 a.m. to noon on Sept. 23 at the Public Works Center, 201 South Blvd. In the meantime, residents can hang on to foam products with the No. 6 symbol rather than send them to the landfill. On the date of the recycling event, the foam products will need to be dropped off in a clear or translucent bag. Straws, lids and foam packaging peanuts will not be accepted, and any foodservice containers will need to be rinsed or wiped. For more information, visit [www.oak-park.us/foamrecycling23](http://www.oak-park.us/foamrecycling23) or email [publicworks@oak-park.us](mailto:publicworks@oak-park.us).

## Nominations sought for community awards

Nominations are being sought for the Village's 2023 Historic Preservation, Cavalcade of Pride and Sustainability Awards that recognize efforts made by organizations, individuals and businesses who have played roles in improving the community.

**Cavalcade of Pride...**These awards recognize property owners who have done an exceptional job of maintaining and improving the exteriors of their homes and businesses. Nomination categories include residential, multi-family, garden, commercial and sign. The deadline for nominations is Sept. 15. More details and an online nomination form are posted at [www.oak-park.us/cavalcadeofpride](http://www.oak-park.us/cavalcadeofpride).

**Historic Preservation...**Nomination categories include restoration, rehabilitation, adaptive use, additions/new construction, stewardship, detail and design. Nominations need not be in a historic district and interior work may be considered in conjunction with exterior work. The deadline for nominations is Sept. 29. More details and a link to the online nomination form are posted at [www.oak-park.us/preservationawards](http://www.oak-park.us/preservationawards).

**Sustainability...**Green Awards recognize community members and organizations, local businesses and nonprofits, institutions and collaborative projects and initiatives that demonstrate leadership in advancing equity-centered climate action, climate resilience and sustainability. There are dedicated awards in the categories of community organization, local business, and collaborative initiative for nominations that link with Oak Park's community climate and sustainability plan, Climate Ready Oak Park. The deadline for nominations is Oct. 15. More information and a nomination form are posted at [www.oak-park.us/greenawards](http://www.oak-park.us/greenawards).

## Public health award winners announced

The Village's Board of Health has selected the winners for the 2023 Fitzsimmons Public Health Award, which honors individuals, businesses and organizations that have gone above and beyond the call of duty in creating a healthier Oak Park. This award is named for William Fitzsimmons, a medical consultant for the Oak Park Public Health Department for more than 15 years. Nominees could be honored in three categories: leadership, community and equity. This year's winners are:

### Organizations:

- **Cheney Mansion staff**, community award winner
- **Collaboration for Early Childhood**, community award winner
- **Live4Lali**, community award winner
- **Oak Park River Forest Chamber of Commerce**, leadership award winner

### Individuals:

- **Alicia Chastain**, community award winner
- **Kelly O'Connor**, community award winner

More information about this year's winners is available at [www.oak-park.us/fitzsimmonsawards](http://www.oak-park.us/fitzsimmonsawards).

## Single-use plastic foodware available only by request

A new local ordinance went into effect in June requiring food establishments in Oak Park to only provide single-use plastic foodware upon request from a customer or at a self-service station in connection with any delivery or take-out order of food or beverage. The change is based on recent action taken by the Village Board to regulate the use of single-use plastics in an effort to reduce waste. Additional regulations related to the use of polystyrene foam packaging will also go into effect in 2024. More information about the single-use plastic foodware ordinance is available at [www.engageoakpark.com/single-use-plastics](http://www.engageoakpark.com/single-use-plastics).

## Water quality report available online

Oak Park residents interested in knowing about the quality of the water they drink can find the latest annual report at [www.oak-park.us/waterqualityreport](http://www.oak-park.us/waterqualityreport). Each year, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency requires communities to provide details on the quality of the local drinking water. In addition to analyses of substances in the water, the report also includes facts about the community's drinking water delivery system and source. An archive of past water quality reports is posted at [www.oak-park.us/waterquality](http://www.oak-park.us/waterquality). For more information about Oak Park's drinking water or to request a paper copy of the annual water report, call 708.358.5700 or email [publicworks@oak-park.us](mailto:publicworks@oak-park.us).

## Report graffiti

When the weather warms up, instances of graffiti in Oak Park typically increase. Graffiti can be reported online at [www.oak-park.us/graffiti](http://www.oak-park.us/graffiti) or by calling 708.358.5429. The Village's Public Works Department manages graffiti removal and has tools and resources to help quickly address reported issues and requests for assistance from property owners.





## Solar panel discounts available through Solar Switch Chicagoland

**O**ak Park residents have an opportunity to participate in Solar Switch Chicagoland, a program that combines volume purchasing with community education to make solar panel installation more accessible and affordable. Interested property owners are invited to attend a free informational Solar Power Hour presentation scheduled for 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, July 12 at the Oak Park Public Library's Dole Branch, 255 Augusta St. Attendees will learn about the basics of solar energy, its financial implications for a household and how the Solar Switch program works. After the session, interested attendees can sign up for an estimate and connect with the program's vetted solar installers. The event is organized by the Village's Office of Sustainability & Resiliency, the Oak Park Public Library and the Citizens Utility Board. More information about Solar Switch Chicagoland is available at [www.solarswitch.com/cookcounty](http://www.solarswitch.com/cookcounty).

### More solar resources available...

Illinois Solar for All is a state-funded solar energy program that allows income-qualified homeowners, renters and nonprofits to take advantage of the benefits of solar. This program supports installing panels on rooftops and also subscribing to community solar, with no panels required. Learn more and find out if you qualify on the Illinois Solar for All website at [www.illinoisfsa.com](http://www.illinoisfsa.com).

## Vehicle license deadline nears

**E**very Oak Park resident is required to purchase a license for each owned or leased motor vehicle before July 15. Purchase and renew vehicle licenses online at [www.oak-park.us/vehiclelicense](http://www.oak-park.us/vehiclelicense). Vehicle license rates vary by type of vehicle. Persons age 65 and older, and anyone who has a state-issued handicapped license plate or placard, can apply for a discount. Disabled and active-duty veterans with proper documentation can apply for free vehicle licenses. The rate increases by \$20 after the deadline. Failure to purchase a license also could result in a ticket. For more information, call 708.358.7275, email [parking@oak-park.us](mailto:parking@oak-park.us) or visit [www.oak-park.us/parking](http://www.oak-park.us/parking).

## Village conducting racial equity assessment

**T**his summer the Village is conducting a community-wide racial equity assessment aimed at collecting data that will inform the Village's racial equity plan. The assessment will involve gathering feedback from members of the community around a range of topics and explore how institutional racism impacts the community. A particular focus of the project will entail examining the racial equity impact of the Village's programs, policies and practices. The Great Cities Institute from the University of Illinois Chicago was selected to partner in the assessment. Visit [www.engageoakpark.com/racial-equity-assessment](http://www.engageoakpark.com/racial-equity-assessment) for more information and to sign up to receive updates about the project and participate in the assessment.

## Home Decarbonization 101

**C**itizens Utility Board (CUB) will lead a presentation titled Home Decarbonization 101: Smart Home Energy Improvements and Programs at 6:30 p.m. on Aug. 17 at the Oak Park Public Library Maze Branch, 845 Gunderson Ave. The presentation will include information about building decarbonization, the benefits of building electrification, new tax credits and rebates for home energy improvements available through the Inflation Reduction Act, heat pumps and induction stoves and free programs designed to save energy and money. The event is organized by the Village's Office of Sustainability and Resilience and the Oak Park Public Library. For more information, contact [sustainability@oak-park.us](mailto:sustainability@oak-park.us).

## Pet ownership comes with responsibilities

**P**ets are an important part of many households in Oak Park. Along with the companionship they provide come responsibilities for the owner to ensure the health and safety of the pet and the community.

**Leashes required...** Dog owners are reminded that all dogs that use any street, sidewalk, parkway or public area within Oak Park must be on a leash no longer than 8 feet controlled by the owner. The Park District of Oak Park offers two areas where dogs can run off leash in Maple Park and Ridgeland Common. Both dog parks are free to Oak Park residents who have obtained a dog park pass. Find more information on the Park District website [www.pdop.org/dogparks](http://www.pdop.org/dogparks).

**Picking up...** It is the responsibility of all pet owners to pick up after their pets in order to avoid fines and keep public spaces clean. Pet owners are also urged to put their pet's waste in their own refuse container rather than a neighbor's.

More information about Animal Control is available on the Village website at [www.oak-park.us/animalcontrol](http://www.oak-park.us/animalcontrol).



View with a smartphone camera.



Village of Oak Park

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## Outdoor sculpture walk underway

The Oak Park Sculpture Walk is back with 12 sculptures on display in an outdoor exhibit in the Downtown Oak Park business district in the vicinity of Lake Street and Marion Street. This year's Sculpture Walk will be on display until spring 2024 and features the work of artists from throughout the Midwest. The sculptures were chosen through a juried competition and vary in materials. Visitors will be able to download the free Otocast app onto their smartphones to access information about the sculptures and hear descriptions of the work by the artists. The Sculpture Walk is organized by the Oak Park Area Arts Council. For more information, email [sculpturewalk@oakpark-areaartscouncil.org](mailto:sculpturewalk@oakpark-areaartscouncil.org).

## Tips for planning a great block party

The Village encourages block parties as a way to build community spirit, meet neighbors and have fun. Each block may sponsor two block parties per year, but since some weekends fill quickly, plan early to get preferred dates. A petition signed by at least 10 separate addresses on the block is required to schedule a block party. Approved petitions allow the neighborhood to close off a street to vehicle traffic for the entire day. Block party organizers are urged to remember the following rules:

- **Include everyone on the block** — especially renters in multifamily buildings.
- **Use a north-south block.** Due to public safety and traffic considerations, block parties are not allowed on east-west streets.
- **Make sure emergency vehicles can get through if needed.** Tables, chairs or other items should not project more than six feet from the curb. And don't stretch wires, ropes, nets, lights, banners or other items across the street.
- **Supervise children at all times.** Even though the street may be closed, accidents can happen.
- **Use only street barricades provided by the Village.** Cars parked in a street as a barricade may impede emergency vehicles, and could be ticketed.
- **Keep sidewalks clear.** Sidewalks are public ways that may not be obstructed even during a block party.
- **Use only chalk for street and sidewalk art.** Latex paint or other more permanent materials applied to public property including streets require prior approval — email [village@oak-park.us](mailto:village@oak-park.us) for more information on the process.
- **If alcohol is present, keep it on private property.** Alcohol may not be sold.

For more information, call 708.358.5700 or email [publicworks@oak-park.us](mailto:publicworks@oak-park.us) or visit [www.oak-park.us/blockparties](http://www.oak-park.us/blockparties).

**Make it green...** Oak Parkers are invited to go green at their next block party. Residents who sign up for a green block party receive a kit that includes compostable bags and pop-up waste sorting boxes with signage indicating what waste goes where. Fun, interactive and kid-friendly activities are also available via local non-profit Green Community Connections. Find more information and an online sign-up form at [www.oak-park.us/greenblockparties](http://www.oak-park.us/greenblockparties).