



Quarterly

A Publication of the 19th Ward Youth & Community Foundation
Matthew J. O'Shea

AUGUST 2022

Music ON THE green

Sunday, Sept. 11, 2022

Concert • Fireworks Show • Craft Beer Festival

Morgan Park Academy Grounds, 2153 W. 111th St.

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6:00 pm: Showtime (Gentlemen of Leisure)
After Dusk: Fabulous Fireworks Display

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Featuring:



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CPS Invests Over \$30 Million in 19th Ward Schools

Alderman Matt O'Shea and Chicago Public Schools (CPS) recently announced major investments in public school facilities in the 19th Ward. Significant improvements are planned for Barbara Vick Early Childhood & Family Center, Clissold Elementary School, Morgan Park High School, and Kellogg Elementary School. Much of this work revolves around the expansion of early childhood education.

From language skills to overall health, research consistently finds what happens in a child's earliest years is most important for development, growth and long term well-being. Allocation of resources to early childhood programs is crucial. Expansion at Barbara Vick is especially impactful because it offers a unique blended classroom environment providing services to both young children with development disabilities and their typically developing peers.

Barbara Vick Early Childhood Center:

CPS will construct a new four classroom addition that will also include a new multi-purpose room, two offices, a faculty work room, two storage rooms and updates to the existing main school building. The school will also receive a new parking lot with 47 parking spaces, landscaping improvements, and additional storm water management. Design is completed for this job, and a contract has been awarded to a general contractor. The budget for this project is approximately \$10 million with a fall 2023 projected opening date.

New Satellite Location – Barbara Vick Early Childhood Center:

In addition to the major investments at the original Barbara Vick campus, CPS has purchased the building at 9901 S. Western Ave.



Barbara Vick Early Childhood & Family Center Annex



Clissold Elementary Annex

to renovate into a satellite facility for Barbara Vick. This new facility will include six additional early childhood classrooms, an outdoor play area, and office space in the basement and on the second floor. Construction is currently ongoing and currently on schedule for a fall 2023 opening. The budget for this project is \$11.65 million.

Clissold Elementary School:

CPS will construct a new, stand-alone six classroom modular that will support expanded pre-k and early childhood opportunities for

local students. In addition, Clissold will receive a new play lot at the northwest corner of the campus. The existing four classroom modular will also be fully renovated as well as the kitchen in the main building. The main building will also receive a new lunchroom. The existing parking lot will be enlarged and include more landscaping and storm water management elements. Parking lot improvements have begun and are expected to continue into the fall. New classroom construction will begin this fall and is targeted for completion by the start of next school year. Improvements to the existing modular will begin next summer. The total project budget is estimated at \$8 million.

Kellogg Elementary School:

CPS will provide a total renovation of the existing four classroom, 4,550 square foot modular building. Improvements include a new brick exterior, new doors, energy efficient windows, and a new roof.

The interior space will be reconfigured to provide larger 2nd and 3rd grade homerooms and new finishes. Staff bathrooms and lockers will be replaced, and ADA upgrades will be made. In addition new HVAC systems, water heater, fire alarm, security system and emergency lighting will be installed. The parking lot is being fully repaved and striped. Construction work is underway and will be completed in the next several weeks.

Morgan Park High School:

CPS has invested heavily in Morgan Park High School over the past several years. Currently, exterior improvements are being made to the campus including a new football/soccer field, running track. In addition, the parking lot and drivers' education lot are being replaced. All improvements will also include landscaping improvements to impacted areas of the campus. Work was expected to be completed on these improvements this fall but was delayed because of the IUOE

Local 150 strike. Since the strike concluded, work has resumed. Football field construction is nearing completion as is work on the parking lots. Construction of the track will continue through the fall of 2022.

CPS visits Morgan Park High School Parking lot with Ald. O'Shea.



Ald. O'Shea visits the site of the new Barbara Vick Early Childhood & Family Center at 9901 S. Western Ave.



Traffic Calming Signs Available

Alderman Matt O’Shea is offering a limited number of free “Please Slow Down – Kids Play Here” yard signs for 19th Ward residents. Yard sign requests will be accepted between August 15th & September 1st with delivery expected in mid-September. The speed of traffic through our community is a major concern. All residents are asked to be mindful of their vehicle speed. Also, please refrain from texting while driving.



While there is no fee for the sign, there is a limit of two signs per block. Requests will be honored in the order they are received. To request a sign, please visit www.the19thward.com.

High School 101: A Seminar for Parents

Attention parents of 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students. Now is the time to start your search for the right high school. Alderman Matt O’Shea and the Beverly Area Planning Association will host High School 101, a zoom seminar designed to help guide parents through the High School selection process on Wednesday, September 21st at 7:00pm.

A representative from the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) will be present to explain the process for applying to selective enrollment high schools. In addition, the Principals from the Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences and Morgan Park High School will both present information about their schools and answer any questions.

19th Ward families have many choices when it comes to high school. Please join us to get information and tips to help you navigate the process. This free seminar will be conducted entirely via zoom; to sign up, please visit www.the19thward.com or www.bapa.org.

19TH WARD PRESCRIPTION DRUG DROP OFF & DOCUMENT SHREDDING EVENT

Saturday, Sept. 10th 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM

CrossWinds Church

10835 S. Pulaski Rd.

This event is free, but is open to 19th Ward residents only.



Documents are shredded onsite.

Only documents that are loose can be shredded; please remove any staples or binders before you arrive.



Turn in your unused or expired household prescription medication for safe disposal.

Medications should be in original container or a sealed plastic bag.

Unacceptable Items:

- ⓧ Needles, syringes, lancets, injection pens
- ⓧ Medical waste
- ⓧ Liquids
- ⓧ Chemo/cytotoxic drugs
- ⓧ Contaminated materials, such as gloves, tubing or IV bags
- ⓧ Batteries, aerosol spray cans
- ⓧ Trash or other hazardous material
- ⓧ Illicit drugs (Schedule I controlled substances) such as marijuana, cocaine, heroin & methamphetamine

Matt O'SHEA
19TH WARD ALDERMAN

Bill Cunningham
ILLINOIS STATE SENATOR 18TH DISTRICT

Fran Hurley
STATE REPRESENTATIVE 35TH DISTRICT

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Flooding Update

On Sunday, July 17th, the south-west side experienced a significant rain storm. As a result, thousands of homes in the 19th Ward, Oak Lawn, Evergreen Park, Hometown and Blue Island experienced flooding problems. Following the storm, Alderman O’Shea asked the Department of Water Management (DWM) and Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD) to conduct an investigation of the storm to identify factors that contributed to residential flooding. On Monday, August 29th, at 7pm both agencies will participate in a virtual community meeting to share what was learned from the investigation and take questions from residents; to register for this meeting, please visit www.the19thward.com.

The total rainfall for this storm is estimated at 3.47 inches in less than one hour with approximately 104 million gallons of water hitting the Mt. Greenwood community alone. When a storm occurs, rainwater flows into the City’s sewer system which carries the water into a MWRD reservoir. For this storm, MWRD has confirmed that their infrastructure had capacity. This means that the storm overwhelmed the local sewers with

water entering the system faster than it could travel into an MWRD site. When this happens, the water overflows the sewers causing residential flooding.

To reduce incidents of residential flooding, restrictors have been installed in all area sewers. Restrictors will hold water on the street during and after a storm, delaying its entry into the sewers. The DWM investigation into this incident found a number of restrictor valves that had been damaged or tampered with. Failing restrictor increase the risk of basement flooding.

The status of gutter downspouts can also contribute to flooding. If a downspout is connected to the sewer system, all of the rainwater that falls on the roof of a home will flow directly into the sewer system bypassing the restrictor all together. Engineers estimate that connected down spouts can contribute to as much as two thirds of the water that flows into the sewer system. During a heavy storm, those downspouts could create flooding problems for homeowners. To reduce the risk of flooding, residents are strongly encouraged to disconnect downspouts from the sewer system.

CUB Offers Virtual Presentations

Alderman Matt O’Shea and the Citizens Utility Board (CUB) will host two virtual presentations on Tuesday, September 20th from 1:00 - 2:00pm, and Thursday, September 22nd from 6:00 - 7:00pm. There is no cost for these webinars. To reserve your spot today, please visit the19thward.com.

Navigating Solar Options Webinar:
Tuesday, September 20th @ 1:00 pm
During the home solar options presentation, learn more about the benefits of Solar for All and community solar, how to access them, and consumer tips to know before diving in!

Understanding Cable Options & Reducing Robocalls Webinar:
Thursday, September 22nd @ 6:00 pm
During the cable and robocall presentation, a CUB representative will discuss the different choices in the TV market, ways to cut your cable costs, is it time to get rid of your cable, alternatives to satellite or cable, and streaming services available to consumers. In addition, CUB will discuss the different types of robocalls, how to avoid common robocall scams, call-blocking services and what they mean for your pocket, and new proposed federal legislation.

For money-saving advice and consumer tips, visit www.citizensutility-board.org.

Flu Shot Clinics

This year, Alderman Matt O’Shea will host two flu shot clinics at the 19th Ward Community Room, 10402 S. Western Ave.

On **Sunday, September 19, 2022**, representatives from Walgreen’s in Mount Greenwood will administer flu shots from 9:00am-12:00pm. All participants are asked to bring photo ID and insurance cards if available. Walgreen’s will bill your insurance but there will be no charge to patients; if your insurance does not cover the flu shot, you will not receive a bill.

On **Saturday, October 1, 2022**, the Chicago Department of Public Health will also offer flu shots from 10:00am-2:00pm. Please bring a photo ID.

Both events will include standard flu shots as well as a limited number of senior citizen flu vaccines. Reservations for both events are strongly encouraged and can be made online at www.the19thward.com.

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U.S. News & World Report (2022)



AMONG REGIONAL UNIVERSITIES IN THE MIDWEST

U.S. News & World Report (2022)



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111th Street Streetscape Coming Soon

The Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT), Alderman O'Shea, and the Mount Greenwood Community & Business Association are currently working to bring Streetscape Improvements to the 111th Street Commercial Corridor from Homan Avenue (3400 W) to Sacramento Avenue (3000 W). Streetscape projects improve the appearance of the area and attract new businesses and shoppers. This project will include widened sidewalks with new curb and gutter, full width roadway resurfacing, ornamental street lighting, pedestrian safety improvements, red

stamped crosswalks, trees, benches, bike racks, sidewalk medallions and planters, hanging flower baskets, and light pole identifiers. This phase of streetscape represents a \$6.9 million investment in our community, with all design costs coming from the 111th Street TIF and construction costs funded by the State of Illinois.

This construction project will be competitively bid by the Department of Procurement Services. All bids have been submitted and are being evaluated with a contract award expected in early September, 2022. Once awarded, some

work is expected to begin this year with project completion in 2023. Please note, this timeframe is tentative and largely dependent on the weather.

Last year, a community meeting was held to collect feedback about the design. A copy of the presentation from that meeting can be found online at <https://chicagocompletestreets.org/portfolio/111th-street-homan-to-sacramento/>. For more information about the streetscape project, please email mattoshea@the19thward.com.



Kedzie Avenue Improvements

- Bus stops moved to far side stops
- Designated right turn lanes added
- Signal timing optimized for proposed conditions
- Existing 7.5' sidewalk to be replaced at constant ADA compliant cross slope from back of walk to curb

These improvements will:

- Shorten evening queue approximately 30% on Kedzie and 50% on 111th
- Improve intersection "level of service" from an existing "D" grade to a "C" grade
- Reduce overall average delay at intersection by 25%



O'Shea Sponsors CPD Day of Rest Ordinance

At the July 20, 2022 City Council Meeting, Alderman Matt O'Shea introduced an ordinance requiring the Chicago Police Department to provide, at a minimum, one day off per week for officers. The ordinance does not impact an officer's ability to voluntarily work overtime. It also allows for cancellation of days off during a declared disaster situation, while stipulating that a disaster declaration can only last seven days without action from the Chicago City Council.

In the month of July, three Chicago Police Officers died by suicide. Mental health experts, police advocates, and officers themselves have been speaking out about the emotional burden that accompanies the repeated cancellation of days off. Despite countless alarm bells sounding for months now, this inhumane practice continues.

Cancelled days off separate officers from their loved ones, disrupt childcare arrangements, and place an unreasonable burden on too many families. “While I recognize that our streets seem safer when more police officers are on duty, no one should be okay with physically and emotionally exhausted officers working the streets. Large numbers of officers continue to leave the job, clearly telling us that their working

conditions are unreasonable” said Alderman O’Shea.

Officer wellness is a complicated issue, and providing one day off per week will not solve the problem. However, it is a step that can be taken now to ease the burden that police officers are carrying and show them that they are supported. O'Shea's ordinance, co-sponsored by 38 Aldermen, sends a strong message that the City Council overwhelmingly supports dedicated days off for officers.

Based on the level of support the ordinance has in the City Council, O'Shea has also called on Superintendent Brown to adjust officers' schedules accordingly. He's also called on the members of the City Council to work together to pass this ordinance. "While we may disagree about the best approach to public safety, we should all agree that officers deserve time off from work on a weekly basis" said O'Shea.

The cancellation of days off for officers is driven by CPD's larger staffing crisis. O'Shea has also introduced an ordinance establishing financial incentives for police hiring. Increasing CPD staffing levels is an important priority. This ordinance is currently in the Committee on Workforce Development. A hearing is expected in the coming weeks.





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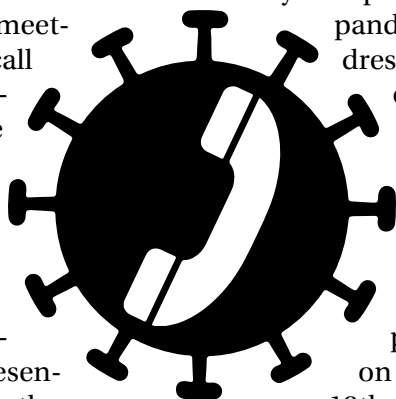
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Telephone Town Hall - September 13th

On Tuesday, September 13th, Alderman Matt O'Shea will host a telephone town hall meeting at 7:00pm. The call will feature Commander Sean Joyce from the 22nd District - Chicago Police Department, Dr. Jennifer Seo from the Chicago Department of Public Health and representatives from several other City Departments. We will provide an update of ongoing efforts



related to public safety and the City's response to the COVID-19 pandemic as well as address questions from residents.

To participate, please visit www.the19thward.com to register and look out for a phone call to the number you provided at 7:00pm on Tuesday, September 13th. If you have any questions, please email mattoshea@the19thward.com.

Burke Backs Assault Weapons Ban

As a measure to assist law enforcement in keeping their communities safe, state Rep. Kelly Burke, D-Evergreen Park, is putting her support behind a proposed assault weapons ban.

"Brave men and women in law enforcement are tasked with keeping our communities safe, and they have an extremely difficult job on their hands. As we saw during the tragic shooting on July 4th, with weapons of war capable of killing people very rapidly, this charge becomes even more challenging," Burke said. "Assisting law enforcement in doing their jobs is a priority for me, and, in pursuit of that goal, I support the proposed ban on assault weapons."

Burke is sponsoring House Bill 5522 in order to keep communities

safe and protect first responders from weapons of war. The measure will make it illegal to deliver,

sell or purchase a range of assault weapons, including semi-automatic firearms, rifles with belt feeds or detachable magazines capable of holding more than 10 rounds of ammunition, and other military-style weapons. People who have already purchased

these weapons will have 300 days to register their weapon with the Illinois State Police or sell or transfer it to an heir, federally-licensed dealer or legal out-of-state buyer.

Law enforcement officers and other trained professionals would still be permitted to carry these firearms in the line of duty as necessary.



Park Events

Over the Side Band at Munroe Park (2617 W. 105th St.)

Thursday, August 18, 2022, 7:00-9:00pm

Please join us for live entertainment provided by Over the Side Band. Residents are encouraged to bring their own chairs or blankets, bug spray and refreshments.

World Music Jazz and Rumba at Ridge Park

Tuesday, August 30, 2022, 6:00-7:00pm

Yves Francois Rocambu Jazz plays retro African Caribbean music with jazz horns, music as diverse as Congolese Rumba, Cuban and Puerto Rican dance band music Biguine and North African Rai as well as originals penned by trumpeter Yves François through the lens of NOLA Jazz swinging horns.

Concert Celebrating Matt Hooker

at Kennedy Park (11320 S. Western Ave.)

Thursday, September 1, 2022, 7:00-9:00pm

The 19th Ward is again partnering with various musicians who were also friends of Matt Hooker to host a concert event celebrating his life. Please join us to enjoy great memories of a great friend.

Astronomy in the Parks at Graver Park (1518 W. 102nd Pl.)

Friday, September 30, 2022, 7:00-9:30pm

The Chicago Astronomer, Joe Guzman, and his enthusiastic astro crew connects park visitors of all ages and cultures with the cosmos via telescopic viewing, instruction and guidance across urban skies.

Cunningham, Hurley Legislation Provides Days Off for CPD

State Senator Bill Cunningham and State Representative Fran Hurley introduced legislation to legally require the City of Chicago to give police officers a minimum of one day off each week. The proposal is designed to end the city's practice of routinely canceling officer's regularly-scheduled days off to make up for chronic staffing shortages.

"The Chicago Police Department has approximately 1,500 fewer officer than it is budgeted for," said Hurley. "The way to fix this problem is

to hire more officers, not cancel scheduled days off for existing officers and force them to work 12 or 13 days in a row without relief."

"Canceling days off might make sense on a temporary basis during an emergency situation, but it has become a routine staffing policy for CPD and part of misguided crime-fighting strategy," said Cunningham. "It is not only grossly unfair to officers and their families, it produces a fatigued and burned

out police force that is less effective at fighting crime."

The legislation, House Bill 5768 and Senate Bill 4218, amends the state's existing "One Day Rest in Seven Act," which requires employers to provide at least one period of 24 hours rest each calendar week. The act does not currently apply to law enforcement, but will

if either bill becomes law.

"Both the state and city of Chicago have enacted laws in recent years to extend worker rights by cracking down on em-

ployers who unfairly take advantage of their work force," Hurley said. "There's no reason why the city should be exempt from those laws."

The new legislation builds on work Cunningham and Hurley have previously done to address mental health concerns often faced by police officers, including the establishment of the Illinois First Responders Suicide Prevention Task Force.



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Debra Gawrys,
M.A. Ed
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Fentanyl Related Deaths On The Rise In Our Community

In 2021, 107, 000 people died of a drug overdose in the United States. It is the leading cause of death for anyone 15 - 45. More than car accidents, suicides and gunshot victims. It is up 28% from the year before and 2022 looks to exceed that number by a lot. At the time 62% of those deaths were due to Fentanyl being found in virtually all substances and now Fentanyl is even more prevalent. Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid, similar to mor-

phine, but 50-100 times more potent.

It affects every community, every ethnicity, every social and economic background, including the 19th Ward, where there has recently been too many drug and Fentanyl related deaths.

I lost my son Mike after he took a Xanax that was laced with Fentanyl. Mike had a girlfriend Mireya for 7 years and gave us a wonderful grandson, Alex. He worked hard and devoted a lot of time to his son. At 23 he ran his own business and lived downtown with a beautiful view of the lake. It was a lot of pressure which came with a lot of stress and anxiety.

Mike started to self-medicate. He bought Xanax off the street which he didn't know was laced with Fentanyl. He didn't get a chance to start the outpatient treatment scheduled for a couple days after his death. He didn't get a second chance.

HERO (Heroin Epidemic Relief Organization) founded

by John Roberts who lost his son Billy at 18 years old, is now devoted to helping others. He runs regular meetings for people who lost a loved one to an addiction. We all share our stories and what I've learned is that addiction can come in lot of ways. Whether it's the injured athlete prescribed pain killers and through no fault of their own, is now addicted and looking to his friends or the internet for something to ease the pain of withdraw. Or the person who suffers from very real anxiety or depression issues and wants some relief. Or the Adderall user, whose prescription runs out and then buys some off the internet or off the street, from someone who got them from someone else. It could just be the kid who characteristically is impulsive or a risk taker and makes a mistake. They don't deserve to die. Pills bought on the internet look exactly like the real pills except they are now completely made from Fentanyl or laced with Fentanyl.

With Fentanyl in the mix you will die. Fentanyl is everywhere, streaming into our country every day. 8000 lbs. of pure Fentanyl were seized at the border this year. It takes 3 grains to kill someone. Imagine what is getting through. The CDC's very accurate slogan is "1 PILL CAN KILL". I guarantee

it is in our neighborhood and it is very accessible. 1 person every 8 seconds dies from Fentanyl in this country and it is getting worse.

I never thought this could happen to our family, in this community. Addiction comes on very quickly and literally changes your brain and decision making process. Once you're addicted it is very difficult to stop.

We are a close family. Mike loved us and we continue to love him. It doesn't stop. Mike leaves behind his loving parents, 2 sisters Carolyn and Katie, his girlfriend Mireya and their son Alex, who is 4, and the rest of his family and friends.

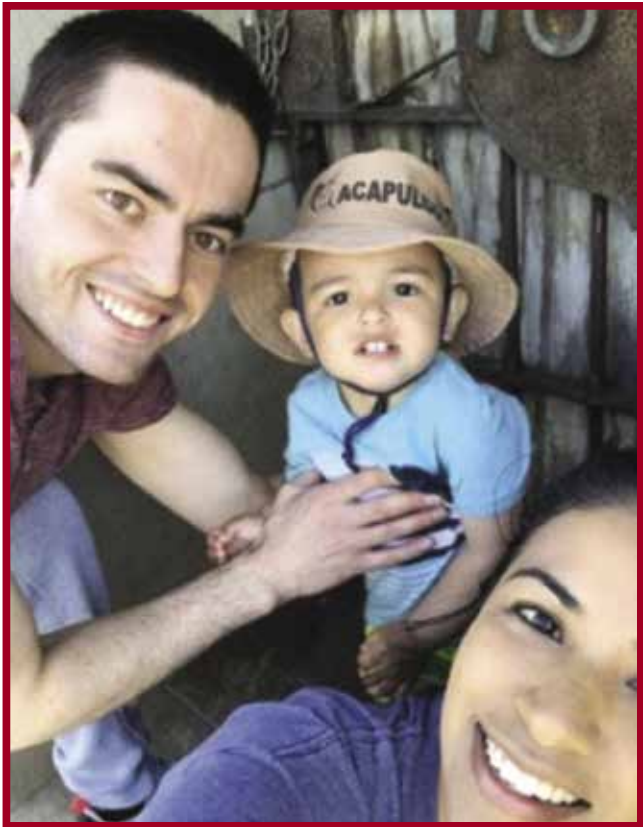
Thank you to Matt O'Shea and Marty Joyce from the 19th Ward, for recognizing this issue and for their support in getting the message out there.

For help with addiction:

SAMHSA's National Helpline is a free, confidential, 24/7, 365-day-a-year treatment referral and information service for individuals and families facing mental and/or substance use disorders. Call: 1-800-662-HELP (4357) or visit SAMHSA.gov

For those who lost a loved one to addiction:

H.E.R.O - theherofoundation.org



Mike Diana with his girlfriend Mireya and their son Alex

Maple Morgan Park Food Pantry

NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT

The Event is in Partnership with Saint Barnabas School
WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 28, 2022 • 12 P.M. - 3 P.M.

OUR SHELVES ARE IN NEED OF:

- Hot and cold cereals
- Bottled water
- Bottled juices
- Baby formula
- Baby diapers
- Adult diapers
- Canned tuna
- Canned chicken
- Canned salmon
- Condiments
- Corn muffin mix
- Cranberry sauce
- Cake mix
- Pancake mix
- Pancake syrup
- Spaghetti
- Spaghetti sauce
- Pasta
- Stove Top dressing
- Mac and Cheese
- Pork and beans
- Baked beans
- Hormel chili with beans
- Canned chili no beans
- Sloppy joe chili
- Manwich chili
- Spam
- Chef boyardee products
- Boxed sugar
- Boxed mashed potatoes
- Hot sauce
- Milk products
- Snack bars
- Tea bags
- Toothpaste
- Toothbrushes
- Dentures cleaners
- Bar soap
- Dish detergents
- Kleenex tissue
- Disposable latex gloves
- Wrapped frozen packaged meats

*Note: per food guidelines/regulations, non-perishable food items must be sealed, unopened and unused.

We are also in need of monetary donations
 to help out with discounted and tax-exempt bulk food purchases from local businesses.

You can now donate online at
www.maplemorganparkfoodpantry.org
 or checks, cashier checks and sealed cash envelopes are welcome.

Maple Morgan Park Food Pantry
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Feeding the Hungry Amongst Us!

Make checks payable to:
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19th Ward

YOUTH & COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

BLOOD DRIVE

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2022
8:00 AM - 12:30 PM
ST. CHRISTINA - PARISH CENTER
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 3333 W. 110th Street, Chicago

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ST. CHRISTINA

Matt O'SHEA
 19TH WARD ALDERMAN

www.communityblood.org

Special Education Art & Music Program to Expand

Dr. Femi Skanes, former principal of Morgan Park High School, has been hired by Special Olympics Chicago/Special Children's Charities (SOC/SCC) to expand art and music therapy programs for diverse learners within Chicago Public Schools. The art and music therapy program, which launched in March 2022, was piloted at Morgan Park and Al Raby High Schools and Mt Greenwood and Lara Elementary Schools.

During the 2022-23 school year, SOC/SCC hopes to expand the art and music therapy programs to another 150 schools throughout Chicago. The goal is to provide service to cluster programs at an additional 75 CPS schools in the first semester, and an additional 75 for the second semester. As an innovative educational leader with extensive experience in the CPS system, Dr. Skanes will spearhead efforts to recruit therapists and provide outreach to principals. Included in the initial expansion are several local elementary schools including Morgan Park High School, Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences, Clissold Elementary School, Mt. Greenwood Elementary School and Cassell Elementary School.

The therapeutic artmaking and music programs that are offered to diverse learners are adapted to meet the individualized needs of students at various stages of devel-

opment. Through the music therapy sessions, students are given opportunities to play instruments, make song choices and learn about different artists and genres. The therapeutic artmaking sessions allow students to explore their creativity and develop effective tools to communicate and socialize with their peers.

The art and music therapy program at CPS is funded by SOC/SCC, which provides year-round programming activities for people with intellectual disabilities. Throughout the year, Special Olympics Chicago athletes compete through more than 150 Chicago Public Schools throughout the city.

Dr. Skanes is an accomplished author, classroom teacher, literary coach, reading department chair, assistant principal, principal and the founder of Leadership EDGE, LLC. Dr. Skanes worked within CPS for approximately 13 years, most recently as the Principal of Al Raby High School six years, and Morgan Park High School for four years. In that time, she improved freshman and sophomore track rates, graduations rates and secured countless grants which created mentoring and extracurricular opportunities at both schools. Dr. Skanes was also awarded a 2016 Cahn Distin-



***Ald. O'Shea and Dr. Femi Skanes enjoy a visit at
Mt. Greenwood Park Special Recreation***

guished Principal Fellow.

She holds five college degrees including: Bachelor of Business Administration from Tennessee State University, Master of Art in Teaching from Chicago State University, Master of Art in Reading and Master of Art in Leadership from Concordia University, and Doctorate of Educational Leadership from Na-

tional Louis University.

"I have known and worked with Femi for years, and she is a passionate leader who believes that all students should have access to a quality and equitable education," said Matt O'Shea, Alderman of

the 19th Ward, and Vice President of the Board of Directors of SOC/SCC. “Femi has always been a tremendous advocate for the diverse learner population and is the perfect person to implement this program as we move forward to expand our reach in the Chicago Public Schools”

Mercy Circle Welcomes Kitty Ryan

Mercy Circle, the only faith-based retirement community in the 19th Ward, supports residents by keeping spiritual enrichment at the heart of every day. To enhance the liturgical offerings for residents and staff members, Frances Lachowicz, Mercy Circle’s executive director, announced Kitty Ryan will serve as coordinator of liturgical and spiritual enrichment.

Ryan, an alumna of both Mother McAuley High School and St. Xavier University, served previously as the pastoral associate and director of liturgy and music at St. Barnabas parish.

“I am deeply rooted in the Mercy tradition, and I love the opportunity to give back something of myself to the community at Mercy Circle,” she says. In fact, she first walked into the chapel at Mercy Circle 50 years ago as a 14-year-old music student at Mother McAuley. Performing in the beloved chapel was the start of a lifelong ministry in music and liturgy. Now, Ryan says her life in the church has wound its way full circle to the chapel where it all began. “It is a very sacred place to me,” adds Ryan.

Ryan shares her new role with Avis Clendenen, who is coordinator of liturgical and spiritual enrichment for Mercy Circle. “This new role for me is even more special because Avis is my mentor,” Ryan explains. Together, the two provide the residents and staff members of Mercy Circle with quality, vibrant and life-giving liturgical experiences to further enhance their understanding of God, faith and the spiritual life.

Since joining Mercy Circle, Ryan has created innovative pro-

grams including a unique Stations of the Cross experience using readings from Cardinal Joseph Bernardin’s homilies as points of reflection. She also shared a slideshow of images of Mary in the Holy Land accompanied by inspiring music. “I am gratified that residents have responded with a wonderful spirit to all of our new programs,” says Ryan.

Ryan’s role reflects Mercy Circle’s commitment to serving older adults as a faith-based community.

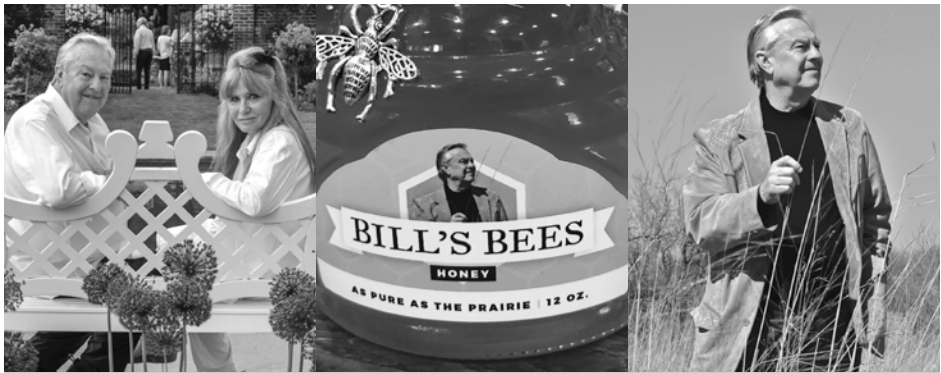
The spiritual focus of the community offers a number of benefits to residents.

“This faith community fosters residents’ faith and feeds their souls,” says Ryan. “Mercy Circle reflects their core values and is a continuation of the parishes where they have thrived throughout their lives.”

Additionally, the benefits of living at Mercy Circle extend beyond

nurturing the soul. It turns out that the scientific community agrees. According to the Merck Manual, religious beliefs offer psychological benefits including “a positive and hopeful attitude about life,” and “a sense of meaning and purpose.” Merck’s scientific research also links both of these factors to improved health outcomes. In addition, International Psychogeriatrics developed studies which show practicing a religion slows cognitive decline as well as provides comfort and support for those living with dementia. “I can’t even imagine how people manage life without faith,” says Ryan.

For more information or to schedule a private appointment, please call 773-253-3600 or visit MercyCircle.org.



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NOV 10, 11, 12 & 13

7:30PM
2:00PM NOV 12 & 13



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28th Annual Y-Me Softball Tournament

The astounding potential of the medical research field is now undeniable as we recently witnessed the production of multiple vaccines for a disease that was nonexistent less than two years prior. And yet, a deadly disease that has devastated sick persons and their families for tens of thousands of years remains uncured—largely and simply due to a gross lack of funds. No one should be dying of breast cancer in 2022. Former 19th Ward Alderman and breast cancer survivor Ginger Rugai resonates with this harsh truth, and in 1994, Kathy O’Shea founded Y-Me Softball on behalf of Rugai to spark change. The first tournament held eight total teams and aimed to raise funds and awareness for breast cancer research while celebrating the strength of women and the hope for a cure.

Twenty-eight years, one global pandemic, and more than one million dollars in proceeds later, the tournament will return to the St. Christina fields on Saturday, August 27th, 2022. Now, the event has multiplied in size but remains true to its original mission. Over 1200 women come together to play softball and make a difference, channeling their shared sorrow and frustration into a spirit of community and hope. With 68 total teams of players accompanied by their family, friends, and fans, the fields

will be filled with high-energy competition and good-hearted fun. At noon, people gather to watch what many consider to be the highlight of the day: the Survivors Game. Two competing teams are made up entirely of women and men who have battled breast cancer, including Rugai herself, and players range from those diagnosed within the past year to some who survived up to 37 years ago. Complete with animated play-by-play commentary, the game is a beautiful tribute to the strength of those who face this ruthless, non-discriminatory disease.

From the accolades for survivors, to the basket raffle, to the championship game, the tournament is inspirational but also immensely impactful; generous donors of money, time, and resources made it possible to raise over \$84,000 for breast cancer research in 2021 alone. Since 2014, all proceeds have directly funded research investigations by Dr. Kay Macleod and her lab team at University of Chicago Medicine. Macleod’s team discovered that

metastasis, the deadliest aspect of breast cancer in which the tumor moves to other parts of the body, is more likely to occur when mitochondria metabolize abnormally. Further, they were able to identify an influential gene in this mitochondrial process, called NIX, and show that knocking out NIX blocks tumor growth and prevents metastasis. The progression of this groundbreaking research is possible with the help of funds from Y-Me, as the research team now focuses on finding a way to inhibit NIX in tumor cells and thereby stop the spread of the cancer. Tournament



Executive Director Ginger Rugai hopes to see a record-breaking year of fundraising, aiming to raise \$100,000 for Macleod and her team. Sponsors to date who are helping to achieve our goal are: Grand Slam sponsors: Lowe Compass; BR Development; and Tom McGuire. Home Run: Chicago Firefighters Union Local 2; Rooney Family and R4 Services; Plumbers Local 130. Triple: Franconello’s Restaurant; Mid America Carpenters Regional Council; Brenden Patrick Burke Memorial Scholarship; Southtown Health Food; International Union of Operating Engineers Local 399. To donate, register to play, read survivor stories, or learn more, visit y-mesoftball.com. Join us on Saturday, August 27th, or make a financial contribution, big or small, to the collective effort to beat out breast cancer. Together we can change the future.



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Smith Village executive chef offers tips, recipes to enjoy farmstand's bounty

Smith Village experts offer tips on how to land a position that offers advancement opportunities and beats burnout

As we head into peak corn season in the Midwest, Smith Village's Executive Chef Diego Burgos is eager to share some of his creative ideas for enjoying the country's most popular vegetable.

How much do Americans love corn? According to Statista, the United States is the world's leading consumer of corn. Last year alone, U.S. consumers ate more than 11 billion bushels of corn.

Fortunately, all that corn we're gobbling down has a number of nutritional benefits. It is rich in fiber, which builds healthy bacteria in the digestive system, and packed with vitamin C, an antioxidant, which helps build healthy cells in the body. It also can help prevent colon cancer.

Burgos has plenty of ideas about how to get creative with this popular staple. "At Smith Village, residents enjoy a local twist on classic salad with the 19th Ward Chopped Salad. The recipe calls for the kernels from two ears of fresh sweet corn along with iceberg and romaine lettuce, topped with special flavors that taste like home. "The mustard vinaigrette dressing evokes a flavor like Chicago-style hot dogs, sharp Irish cheddar embraces one of our important neighborhood cultures, and nothing says Chicago's southside quite like crispy fried onions," says Burgos.

Another favorite at Smith Village is zesty street corn. This Mexican-inspired recipe blends lime juice, chili powder, cheese, mayonnaise and butter for a memorable and flavor-filled treat. "Corn is a very versatile vegetable," says Burgos. "It is fun to experiment with flavors that go beyond salt and butter."

Chef Burgos' tips for preparing corn and recipes accompany this article.

For more information about Smith Village, a life plan community located at 2320 West 113th Place in Chicago's 19th Ward, please visit SmithVillage.org or call 773-474-7300.

Tips for preparing corn

- Burgos says finding the freshest corn is more a matter of when than where. "Mid-August to early November is peak season for Midwestern corn," says Burgos. "During that time, it is delicious anywhere you buy it; from your local grocery store to your favorite farmer's market."
- To find the freshest ears of corn, Burgos makes sure the husk ranges from light green to white and it is firm to the touch.
- Because removing corn silk can be a challenge, start at the base of the ear and cut off the bottom of ear with a knife. Then, rinse the cob in water as hot as you can comfortably manage to remove the final strands of silk.

An ah-maize-ing recipe complements of Smith Village's Executive Chef, Diego Burgos

19th Ward Chopped Salad

Ingredients

- 2 ears of corn, shucked
- 1 head iceberg lettuce, chopped and rinsed
- 1 head romaine lettuce, chopped and rinsed
- ½ English cucumber, diced
- 10 grape tomatoes, quartered
- ½ C Irish cheddar cheese, shredded
- Salt and pepper to taste

See separate recipes for whole grain mustard vinaigrette and crispy fried onions

Directions

1. Spray corn with pan spray, and season with salt and pepper
2. Grill over medium-high heat, turning evenly, until corn starts to char black, and kernels are soft (approximately 15 minutes)
3. When cool enough to handle, cut kernels from the cob
4. Toss salad with dressing, let-

tuces, tomatoes and cucumbers. Then, season with salt and pepper

5. Top with cheese and crispy onions

Mustard Vinaigrette

Ingredients

- ½ C white balsamic vinegar
- 1 ½ C extra virgin olive oil (EVOO)
- 1 C fresh basil leaves
- ½ C whole grain mustard
- ¼ C honey
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions

1. Add all ingredients, except EVOO, in a blender or food processor
2. Blend all ingredients, then slowly add EVOO until emulsified

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Ask the right questions: Learn how prospective employers help nurses advance in their careers

Smith Village experts offer tips on how to land a position that offers advancement opportunities and beats burnout

The COVID-19 pandemic has shined a spotlight on the essential roles that nurses play in our society, yet after two years on the front-line, nurses are facing a new kind of crises. According to a survey by Nurse.org, 87 percent of nurses nationwide said that they've felt burnt out during the past year.

Smith Village in Chicago's Beverly neighborhood is now hiring registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, certified nursing assistants and nurse managers. To apply, visit SmithVillage.org.

"Nurses Week is an ideal time to put the spotlight on ways to support loyal employees. We provide career advancement resources to our employees," says Karen Jellema, director of human resources for Smith Senior Living, which sponsors Smith Village. "By promoting from within our organization, we foster career development and support that goal with tuition reimbursement benefits."

With the pressures of the last two years, many nurses may be considering reinvigorating their career with a job change. When seeking a new employer, consider asking these questions to determine the benefits an organization

offers by asking

- Are there career advancement opportunities with this position?
- Do you offer tuition reimbursement for additional college-level classes and certification programs?
- Can my work schedule be adjusted to accommodate my classes?
- What is a typical career path for a nurse at this organization?
- If this is an existing position, did the previous employee move up or change employers?

In fact, Ricardo Ramos, who now leads the nursing department at Smith Village was promoted from within. He took advantage of the tuition reimbursement program. While working full-time at Smith Village, he completed his associate's degree in nursing at Moraine Valley Community College in Palos Hills, Ill. and then earned his bachelor's degree in nursing at St. Xavier University in Chicago.

When he started at Smith Village, Ramos treasured the teamwork and the connections he built

with both residents and staff. Now in a leadership role, he works to create that spirit for his staff. "At Smith Village, it is my job to create a positive work environment along with a high sense of accountability. I like to remind my team how special a nursing career really is," he says.

"When we hire, we not only consider skill sets, but also look for is someone who is caring, personable and passionate about building relationships and serving as an advocate for patients. Unlike hospitals, nurses in senior living communities enjoy long-term relationships with residents," says Jellema.



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