

Conservatories Offer Winter Flower Shows



Photo provided by the Chicago Park District

The Garfield Park Conservatory, 300 N. Central Park ave. is featuring "Snow Day" through January 8th. Thursday through Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Guests will enjoy poinsettias, Snows of Kilimanjaro, Snowbush, "Snowball" Cabbage, and "Snow Crystals" Sweet Allysum. Timed-reservations are required at garfieldconservatory.org. Lincoln Park Conservatory, 2391 N. Stockton dr. will feature "Sugar Plum" through Jan. 8th, Thursday to Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Guests will enjoy "Sparkling Punch Pink" and Christmas Feelings Pink poinsettias, "Purple Heart" Spiderwort, "Rosea Picta" Snowbush, "Pure Violet Premium" Pansy, and "Velvet Elvis" Plectranthus. Enhancing the show will be recorded music from The Nutcracker Ballet. Timed-reservations are required at lincolnparkconservatory.org.

Archer Heights Library Schedules Programs

The Archer Heights Branch Library, 5055 S. Archer has scheduled limited programs due to staff shortages. The Adult Book Discussion Club meets on the 4th Wednesday of the month from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Compete in new and fun challenges every week. STEAM sessions (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) for ages 6 & up will feature fun activities, experiments and crafts on Mondays, Jan. 9th & 23rd, Feb. 27th, March 13th to 27th from 4 to 5 p.m.

The Polish Book Discussion Club meets on the 3rd Wednesday of the month from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. The topic is Listonosz by Charles Bukowski on Jan. 18th and Porot z gwiazd by Stanislaw Lem on Feb. 15th.

Story Time with the Mad Hatters for ages 3 to 13 will be featured Saturday, Jan. 21st from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. Bring the whole family for a fun-filled program of books, poems and songs. Hear some all-time favorite books performed using hats and props.

Storytime for Toddlers ages 0 to 5 is available on Thursdays, through Jan. 26th from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. The active story time is filled with books, songs and play. Stay afterwards for open play time with blocks, puzzles and more.

Library Hours are Monday and Wednesday 12 to 8 p.m., Tuesday and Thursday 10 to 6 p.m., Friday and Saturday 9 to 5 p.m. and Sunday 1 to 5 p.m. For more information, visit chipublib.org.

LEGO Club for ages 7 to 12 will be offered on Wednesdays, through Jan. 25th from 5 to 6 p.m.

Metra Sponsors Safety Contest

Since 2006, Metra has been bringing safety lessons into classrooms across northeast Illinois through its Safety Poster and Essay Contest. Over the past decade, more than 37,000 students have had the opportunity to show what they've learned about the importance of safe behaviors around trains and railroad tracks. The contest is open to all students in grades K through 12 living or attending school. The deadline for all entries is Friday, Jan. 20, 2023.

In 2021, 666 people were injured and 236 lost their lives in collisions at railroad crossings, according to the Federal Railroad Administration. In Illinois, 20 people died when they were struck by trains while trespassing on railroad property, and 21 people died when they were struck by trains at a highway-rail grade crossing. Each one of these incidents was preventable. That's why Metra feels it's so important to reach out and educate people, especially children, about how to be smart and stay safe around the railroad tracks and crossings.

Contest information to schools, libraries, and government centers. Printable versions of the contest poster in English and Spanish are also available through the contest website metracontest.com. One first-, second- and third-place winner will be selected from each grade, K through 12 and awarded the following gift cards: First Place: \$500, Second Place: \$250 and Third Place: \$100.

The winning designs will be featured in Metra's safety calendar, website, and on weekend passes.

The school that submits the most entries in the 2022-23 Safety Poster Contest will be awarded a new computer compatible with the current system.

Students are also encouraged to enter the 2022-23 Metra Safety Essay Contest. Participants are asked to describe in 300 words or less why you should "Stay Safe, Stay Off Train Tracks" when near railroad tracks, platforms, and crossings. Students will compete in three divisions: Elementary, Middle and High School. First-place winners in each division of the essay contest will also receive a \$500 gift card.

For more information about the contest rules and guidelines, as well as downloadable forms, visit metracontest.com, where you can submit your completed contest entry. Questions about the contest or materials can be directed to metracontest@metra.com. Metra has a long history of being extremely active in railroad safety education efforts through its participation in Operation Lifesaver. Operation Lifesaver presenters provide nearly 1,000 safety blitzes and safety presentations each year that stress the message "Look, Listen and Live" to schools, driver education programs and community organizations.

For more information about Metra's overall railroad safety outreach and programs, please visit metra.com. Printable versions of the contest poster are available in English and Spanish at metracontest.com.

Chicago Scholars Accepting Applications



Photo courtesy of Chicago Scholars

Youth nonprofit, Chicago Scholars is accepting applications to join their 2023 college graduating class program. The organization encourages all high school juniors to apply by Feb. 8th, 2023. The organization's seven-year college access, success, and leadership development program provides the resources, training, and opportunities to transition into a professional career.

The newest class of Scholars will receive support throughout the application process, including the opportunity to attend the Onsite College and Leadership Forum, a one-day event that results in offers of admission and merit aid.

Once enrolled in a four-year college, Scholars will receive leadership development and supportive relationships towards their individual needs. For more information, visit: https://chicagoscholars.org/apply. Professional Chicagoans to serve as mentors to this incoming class may visit: https://chicagoscholars.org.

Housing Assistance For Homeowners

The Illinois Housing Development Authority announced the Illinois Homeowner Assistance Fund is now open to support qualified homeowners who need help with past-due mortgage payments and related expenses due to financial hardships associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Eligible households may apply for grants of up to \$60,000 for past-due mortgage payments, property taxes, property insurance and homeowner and/or condo association fees. Applications will be accepted at www.illinoishousinghelp.org until 11:59 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 31, 2023.

Assistance is designed to help homeowners avoid mortgage default and foreclosure after experiencing a financial hardship related to the pandemic. Payments will be made directly to the mortgage servicer, taxing body or other eligible entity once the application has been approved. Homeowners must meet the following criteria:

- Be at least 30 days late on one or more of mortgage loan, property tax, property insurance and/or HOA/condo association fee payments.
- Have a household income at or below 150% Area Median Income.
- Own and occupy a home in Illinois as a primary residence.

Experienced a financial hardship after Jan. 21, 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic (including a hardship that began before Jan. 21, 2020 but continued after that date).

More information on the application process, including videos on how to apply, list of required documents and other housing help can be found at www.illinoishousinghelp.org. When applying, homeowners should have the following documentation on-hand:

- Proof of identification, including but not limited to a driver's license, state ID, permanent residency card or other form of ID.
- Proof of household income, including but not limited to tax returns, pay stubs, or other documentation.
- Proof of occupancy, including but not limited to a bank statement, cell phone bill, credit/debit card statement or other documentation.
- Proof of ownership, including but not limited to a property tax bill, property deed or other documentation.
- Delinquency statement, including but not limited to a mortgage statement, property tax statement, insurance statement or HOA/Condo Association statement.

Illinois EPA Plans Contests

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency is inviting fifth and sixth grade writers and artists from to participate in this year's Poster, Poetry, and Prose Contest. The contest theme for the 2023 awards is "Environmental Justice: A Healthy Environment for All!"

Illinois EPA has launched its first annual High School Poster, Poetry, and Essay Contest. The theme for the 2023 high school program is "Environmental Justice: A Healthy Community for All - Uplifting Community Voices!"

Educators are encouraged to introduce Environmental Justice, how some communities are impacted by pollution, and why it is important that their voices are heard. Informational resources have been shared by the Illinois EPA on the contest pages. Students are asked to create posters or written works for the contests related to the theme's focus.

Teachers may then display the submissions for

voting and submit final entries to the Illinois EPA for further judging. Teachers may submit up to eight entries per school by February 1, 2023. Awards for both programs will be announced in April 2023.

Additional information for elementary students can be found at: https://www2.illinois.gov/epa/topics/education/contest/elementary/Pages/default.aspx. Information for the High School Contest can be found at: https://www2.illinois.gov/epa/topics/education/contest/high-school/Pages/default.aspx.

Other questions can be directed to Kristi Morris, Environmental Education Coordinator for the EPA, at (217) 558-7198, or by email at Kristi.Morris@illinois.gov.

Civic Meeting In Archer Heights

The Archer Heights Civic Association will conduct a general membership meeting at the St. Richard Church Hall on Wednesday, Jan 11th at 7:30 p.m. Enter from the 50th & Kenneth parking lot.

Status reports will be given on a proposed liquor store at 5033-37 S. Cicero, Pisans Restaurant at Cicero & Archer, and Taco Bell at 47th & Cicero plus Condos at 5312-18 S. Kenneth and Duck's Car Wash at Archer & Kolmar.

Cake and coffee will follow. For more information, visit AHCivic.org.

Water Polo Clinic



The Chicago Park District will conduct a Water Polo Clinic for ages 15 & up at Ping Tom Memorial Park, 1700 S. Wentworth on Fridays, Jan. 13th, Jan. 20th and Feb. 3rd from 7:15 to 8 p.m. Participants must be able to tread water and be a confident swimmer. Athletes will have the ability to compete at local parks. Registration is required at (312) 742-PLAY (7529).

Medication For Opioid Disorder

The Chicago Department of Public Health and Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Substance Use Prevention and Recovery are partnering with the Cook County Sheriff's Office to expand distribution of harm reduction kits to everyone leaving Cook County Jail. Narcan nasal spray will be offered universally, and fentanyl test strips will be available. The program will offer direct referrals to medication treatment for opioid use disorder and add three care coordinators to work in the re-entry center.

The partnership comes as the city, state and nation continue to see record-breaking opioid overdose deaths, due in large part to the presence of fentanyl, in more substances. The U.S. surpassed 107,000 deaths from drug overdoses in 2021, an all-time high. Overdose also remains one of the leading causes

Silver Skates Meet At McKinley Park

The Chicago Park District will conduct Silver Skates Competition for ages 6 & up at McKinley Park, 2210 W. Pershing rd. on Wed., Jan. 11th from 5:15 to 7:15 p.m. Participants must wear gloves, long sleeves, and a bicycle or hockey helmet. Figure skates, hockey skates, or speed skates must be worn at all times. Skates will be available free of charge.

Registration will be taken on a first-come, first-served basis to the first 20 participants from each age group and gender. Register online at https://endurancecui.active.com/event-reg/select-race?e=83814433

Akpabio Honored

Midwestern State University of Wichita Falls, Texas recognized 1,115 honor students for the Fall 2022 semester. Anne Akpabio, of Chicago, an Accounting major attained the Provost's Honor Roll, which requires a grade point average of 3.75 to 3.99.

7426 W. 115th Street, Worth IL - Spacious entry into this home and what a view inside, plus looking out across the street to Waters Edge Golf course. In the last 3 years the kitchen was remodeled, bath, windows, newer electric and copper plumbing, central air and roof. Crown molding in the kitchen and living room. Separate laundry and utility room in the kitchen area. There was 1 car detached garage and the owner raised the floor to have more room for entertaining; they left the overhead door working. There is a new wooden fence in the yard. Close to Metra, shopping, hospital, schools and a large community building 1 block away. Make your appointment today. (773) 582-9300.

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