

# INDEPENDENCE PARK COMMUNITY

# VOICE



## COMMUNITY

### GIPNA 2021 Membership Drive

*Kevin Haight*

Like many of you, I found GIPNA at the Independence Park Farmers Market. My first summer living in the neighborhood, my husband and I went to every market. We loved it and quickly realized one of the best things about it was seeing our friends and neighbors. These friends encouraged us to support the community by joining GIPNA. I am now the current president of GIPNA and have been a proud member since 2012. In 2018, we both renewed with lifetime memberships.

September is Membership Month and during this month, we encourage our neighbors and local businesses to act now to join or renew! If you are not a member and would like to become one, please go to our website <https://gipna.org> and join today. For current members who haven't yet renewed this year, please renew today. And if you are in a position to do so, please consider a Lifetime Membership. We have almost 150 lifetime members. For those of you who are already proud lifetime members and are still looking for additional ways to support us, we



encourage you to give more by donating at [gipna.org](http://gipna.org) or by scanning the QR code on this page.

*Cont'd on pg 2*



SCAN ME

## COMMUNITY

### Mema's is More Than "Meats" the Eye!

*Roberta Wilk*

No one walking around the Independence Park Farmers Market can miss the beautiful Labrador retriever service dogs, Annie and Cara, who accompany their owners, Diane and Ken Klein, who have a passion for selling Mema's Jams and high-quality meats. Their other passion is working with the non-profit Canines 4 Comfort, providers of dogs for comfort, companionship, and support for

those in need of service dogs.

Ken, educated in the physics field, had a stroke fourteen years ago which impaired his ability to do simple math. But that didn't stop him from maintaining his business because as Diane says, revealing this couples' rich sense of humor, "we just have them add up their bills themselves."

The Kleins have made a true difference in the lives of so many. Their good friend, Sue Schreier, was diagnosed with MS about 20 years ago and after having lost her service dog, the Kleins came to the rescue. They worked with Shamie for ten months to get him to pass the service dog test, and he became Sue's perfect companion. Sue proclaims, "this was truly a life changing and lifesaving gift."

The Kleins are proud of their comfort dog work but also enjoy their other passion: selling their Mema Jams and quality meats for the last twelve years at the market. The name "Mema" for the jam evolved from Diane's daughter, Julie, saying to her toddler, Tiegien, "that's my mom." Tiegien responded by calling her Mema and what better name for the jam than Mema's Jam. The Kleins' grandchildren, Tiegien and Reid, now teens, enjoy helping out at the market which pleases



their grandparents.

Next time you are at the market, say hello to the dogs and get some of the delicious low sugar and savory homemade Mema Jams, and the grass-fed beef and pork. The Kleins are proud that their quality sausages are nitrate free and have no fillers.

And the Farmers Market is proud to have the Kleins share their passions every Farmers Market.

The regular GIPNA board meeting is Tues., Sept. 7, 7:00 p.m.  
Join us online via Zoom. Meeting I.D.: 819 2958 6855, Password: GIPNA.

# COMMUNITY EVENTS

## SEPTEMBER

**TUES, SEPT. 7—GIPNA Board Meeting**, 7 p.m., online Zoom Meeting ID: 819 2958 6855, Password: GIPNA.

**WED., SEPT. 8—CAPS Beat 1732 Meeting**, 6:45 p.m. via Zoom. Register in advance: [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_WO\\_NQCMDSi2ue0G3K0IW\\_A](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_WO_NQCMDSi2ue0G3K0IW_A). After registering, you will receive a confirmation email about joining the webinar. This is a hybrid meeting, which allows attendees to continue to attend virtually or in-person at Athletic Park Field House.

**SUN., SEPT. 12—Independence Park Farmers Market**, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**MON., SEPT. 13—AFAC Meeting**, 6:30 p.m., ([athleticfieldpark.com](http://athleticfieldpark.com) for location)

**TUES., SEPT. 14—FOM Meeting**, 7 p.m., ([friendsofmurphy.org](http://friendsofmurphy.org) for location/link)

**TUES., SEPT. 21—IPAC Monthly Meeting**, 7 p.m., Independence Park.

**SAT., SEPT. 25—Concert in the Park with the Lunar Ticks**, 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. Two hour long sets with a break in between, Independence Park.

**SUN., SEPT. 26—Independence Park Farmers Market**, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

## OCTOBER

**SAT., OCT. 2—AFAC Fall Fest**, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Athletic Field Park.

**TUES., OCT. 5—GIPNA Board Meeting**, 7 p.m., online Zoom Meeting ID: 819 2958 6855, Password: GIPNA.

**SUN., OCT. 10—Independence Park Farmers Market**, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**TUES., OCT. 12—FOM Meeting**, 7 p.m., ([friendsofmurphy.org](http://friendsofmurphy.org) of location/link)

**WED., OCT. 13—CAPS Beat 1732 Meeting**, 6:45 p.m. via Zoom. Register in advance: [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_WO\\_NQCMDSi2ue0G3K0IW\\_A](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_WO_NQCMDSi2ue0G3K0IW_A). After registering, you will receive a confirmation email about joining the webinar. This is a hybrid meeting, which allows attendees to continue to attend virtually or in-person at Athletic Park Field House.

**FRI., OCT. 15—FOM Fall Block Party**, time and location TBD.

**TUES., OCT. 19—IPAC Monthly Meeting**, 7 p.m., Independence Park.

**SUN., OCT. 24—Independence Park Farmers Market**, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

## SEPTIEMBRE

**MARTES, SEPT. 7—Reunión de la Junta Directiva de GIPNA**, 7 p.m., en línea ID de la reunión de Zoom: 819 2958 6855, Contraseña: GIPNA.

**MIÉ, SEPT. 8—Reunión de CAPS Beat 1732**, 6:45 p.m. a través de Zoom. Regístrese con anticipación: [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_WO\\_NQCMDSi2ue0G3K0IW\\_A](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_WO_NQCMDSi2ue0G3K0IW_A). Después de registrarse, recibirá un correo electrónico de confirmación sobre cómo unirse al seminario web. Esta es una reunión híbrida, que permite a los asistentes continuar asistiendo virtualmente o en persona en Athletic Park Field House.

**DOM., SEPT. 12—Mercado de agricultores de Independence Park**, de 9 a.m. a 1 p.m.

**LUNES, SEPT. 13—Reunión de AFAC**, 6:30 p.m., ([athleticfieldpark.com](http://athleticfieldpark.com) para conocer la ubicación)

**MARTES, SEPT. 14—Reunión de la FOM**, 7 p.m., ([friendsofmurphy.org](http://friendsofmurphy.org) para ubicación / enlace)

**MARTES, SEPT. 21—Reunión mensual de IPAC**, 7 p.m., Independence Park.

**SABADO., SEPT. 25—Concierto en el parque con las garrapatas lunares**, 4 p.m. a las 7 p.m. Series de dos horas con un descanso entre ellas, Independence Park.

**DOM., SEPT. 26—Mercado de agricultores de Independence Park**, de 9 a.m. a 1 p.m.

## OCTUBRE

**SAB., OCT. 2—AFAC Fall Fest**, de 10 a.m. a 3 p.m., Athletic Field Park.

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**VIERNES, OCT. 15—FOM Fall Block Party**, hora y lugar por determinar.

**MARTES, OCT. 19—Reunión mensual de IPAC**, 7 p.m., Independence Park.

**DOM., OCT. 24—Mercado de agricultores de Independence Park**, de 9 a.m. a 1 p.m.

*Cont'd from pg 1*

It's been an amazing summer here in Independence Park. We are emerging from the pandemic, and like you, are working hard at getting back to normal. Our hope is that you as members and neighbors will see what we do for the community and see the value in supporting us today. While we are grateful that so many of you have contributed your time throughout the year, we still need your membership fees and donations to help us bring you the news and events you've come to enjoy. Membership fees help us pay for web services, graphic design, marketing materials, advertising, printing, community parkway landscape and lawn care services, and much more. All this supports the community we love so much.

Our signature event, the Farmers Market, is back this year and it's my personal favorite. We typically sign up or renew the majority of our memberships at this market, but if we didn't see you this summer, we need you now. Thank you for your support and I look forward to seeing you in the neighborhood soon.

## INDEPENDENCE PARK COMMUNITY

# VOICE

The Independence Park Community Voice is published by the Greater Independence Park Neighborhood Association (GIPNA), a 501(C)3 corporation.

**This newsletter is for the Independence Park community. Please consider renewing your membership or joining GIPNA now. We need your support. Thank you.**

Editorial: Sue Ryan  
Photographers: Robin Hochstatter and Cindy Schuch  
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**For submissions for November/December 2021 Issue:**

Editorial Deadline:  
October 10, 2021

Advertising Deadline:  
October 10, 2021

The editorial board reserves the right to edit all submissions. Errors in advertisements are the sole responsibility of the advertiser.

**E-MAIL:** INFO@GIPNA.ORG

**MAIL:** GIPNA, P.O. BOX 18184  
CHICAGO IL 60618

**WEBSITE:** WWW.GIPNA.ORG

The Greater Independence Park Neighborhood Association (GIPNA) is dedicated to maintaining and enhancing the quality of life in the Independence Park community by involving, informing, and encouraging people to participate in matters relating to the community, and by protecting the historical, social, cultural, and architectural character of the neighborhood.

This all-volunteer publication is made possible by the creative voices of our community and the generous support of area advertisers.

## Join GIPNA on Facebook

Check out the GIPNA Facebook page for news, alerts, and conversation with your neighbors. Post your own comments to get the word out on your activities and announcements. To find the page and like it, search for GIPNA: Greater Independence Park Neighborhood Association.

### GIPNA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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3900 Dakin - Joel Contreras  
3600 Grace - Alison Benjamin  
3700, 3800 Hamlin - Sharon Nichols  
3900 Hamlin - Linda Lehman  
3700 Irving Park Road - John Kuczura  
3800 Irving Park Road - Linda Lehman  
3700 Lawndale - Dorene Jordan  
3800 Lawndale - Mark and Casey Watkins  
3900 Lawndale - Cy Clausen  
3600, 3700 Monticello - Pat Clark  
3800 Monticello - Barbara Shaw  
3900 Monticello - Cindy Schuch  
3700 Ridgeway - Dawn and John Urban  
3800 Ridgeway - Karen Fontanetta  
3900 Ridgeway - John & Sang Kuczura  
3800 Springfield - Roseann Seablom

### COMMUNICATION

## E-Blasts to GIPNA Members

All GIPNA members who have access to email should be receiving e-blasts twice a month. The emails are compiled by GIPNA and feature such news as announcements of events in the community, crime reports, and notices of meetings.

If you're a member in good standing and are not receiving the blasts, send an email to us at [membership@gipna.org](mailto:membership@gipna.org). We'll sign you up so that you don't miss any more neighborhood announcements.

### COMMUNITY

## July 4th in Indy Park

Sue Ryan

The July 4th celebration brought some much needed normalcy after events were canceled in 2020. I love that our park's festivities resemble those of a small town nestled in a big city. The bright red fire truck led off the parade followed by a sea of people young and old waving flags, decked out in patriotic garb and an assemblage of strollers, bikes, and scooters festooned in red, white, and blue crepe paper. I am guessing this is the only parade in the country where participants far outnumber the spectators who cheer us on.

After the parade wound its way around the park, volunteers passed out ice cream and snow cones to the delight of all on a steamy July day. Gunny sack races and egg toss contests crowned new victors. A huge thanks to the Independence Park Advisory Council for coordinating the events amid ever shifting COVID guidelines.

July 4th was capped off by more than a few caps, sparklers, and fireworks in the park and the surrounding neighborhood into the wee hours of the night. I doubt that the intent was to re-enact the haze and acrid smell from gun



smoke during Revolutionary War battles, but it likely came quite close.

It was good to gather again and celebrate not only our nation's founding, but also to give hugs to neighbors and friends after a long year of social distancing. Fingers are crossed that we will be able to do it again next year.

### COMMUNITY

## Have an Idea for the Newsletter?

If you want to see something in the neighborhood highlighted or just want to provide feedback, reach out to us at [newsletter@gipna.org](mailto:newsletter@gipna.org).

## News From Carlson Community Services

Liz Mills

Carlson Community Services is delighted that the Magic After-School Place will reopen this fall after more than a year off! We will be serving as many as 40 students from Belding and Murphy schools and following COVID protocols. Rebecca Haneberg, who was a member of our staff during the 2019-2020 school year, will be taking on the role of program director. Welcome Ms. Rebecca! If your child attends Murphy or Belding School and you'd like to learn more about our after-school program, visit [carlsoncommunityservices.org](http://carlsoncommunityservices.org). We can't wait to see how the kids have grown and changed!

### Three Brothers Garden News

Our Garden Coordinator Hannah Negray is keeping busy with garden harvests! As of early August, we've harvested cucumbers, beets, lettuce, carrots, tomatoes, green beans and radishes for the Irving Park Food Pantry. We'll be harvesting in the garden every Tuesday through October from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at 4107 N. Pulaski, next to the IPLC parking lot. Please join us! If you'd like to be added to our email notices,



sign up for our newsletters at [carlsoncommunityservices.org](http://carlsoncommunityservices.org).

### Plant a Row for the Hungry

If you've ever found yourself with an overabundance of homegrown veggies, Three Brothers Garden has the solution! We're inviting home gardeners to participate in a program called Plant a Row for the Hungry. You can dedicate a row in your garden for donation to the Irving Park Food Pantry or simply donate what you don't need. Drop off your donation on Tuesdays before 6 p.m. at Three Brothers Garden. (Leave your donation on the table in the garden.) Your donation will be brought to the Food Pantry Wednesday morning for immediate distribution to Food Pantry clients. Thanks to the neighbors who have dropped off cucumbers, tomatoes and zucchini!

### Fall Events

We're planning fall events and a Fine Arts concert, but the ever-evolving nature of COVID-19 makes it a bit premature to announce details for this newsletter. Follow us on Facebook or sign up for our newsletters at [carlsoncommunityservices.org](http://carlsoncommunityservices.org) if you'd like to stay informed about all that is happening!

- Carlson Golf Outing, Friday, October 1
- Irving Park Fine Arts Percussion Concert, Sunday, October 17
- Carlson Trivia Night, Saturday, October 23

Carlson Community Services connects the Irving Park community with programs that enrich lives through education, culture and service. For more information, visit [carlsoncommunityservices.org](http://carlsoncommunityservices.org) or contact Liz Mills at 773.398.6766 or [lizmills@carlsoncommunityservices.org](mailto:lizmills@carlsoncommunityservices.org).



## Big Beautiful Blue Bulletin Board

Pat Clark

You have no doubt seen the big beautiful blue bulletin board near the playground at Independence Park by now. We have Malissa Schmalz to thank for truly transforming the old tired brown bulletin board into a wonderful visual delight. Malissa, who has been an IPAC member for 5 years and has lived in West Walker for 10 years, decided that she wanted the community to be able to have a place to know what is going on at the park. The bulletin board was extremely damaged and needed a lot of love. She has a lot of love to give and her love touches everyone who looks at the board. She feels that if our community can meet up more often, we can be closer.

Malissa explained how she chose the colors, "At first, I went to Home Depot for greens to match the playground, but after I put on the primer, I saw that it would just blend in and not be seen. I looked up and saw the sky and it was truly my inspiration for the blue. I wanted to bring life to the board, which is why I brought in the flowers. The

heart flower I made up while at a graffiti artist's friend's house and I thought it would be a great addition. The butterflies represent the transformation the board went through. And it did take some time!" Even before she could start painting, she had quite a bit of work to do on the dilapidated bulletin board: she replaced the rotten backing boards, put in new screws as the old ones were so rusted they weren't holding the thing together, put new rivets in the frame and new Plexiglas, and sealed the entire thing to prevent water damage to the inside. The new flower pushpins are a fun addition too. In all, Malissa worked on the huge project for about a month!

When asked what kind of comments she received while working the bulletin board, she said she received lots of "thank you," "it's beautiful," "it's amazing," and "wow"! Malissa said people told her that they had not even noticed the bulletin board before and thought she had built it. She said her favorite part was that children sat around and watched her paint all those butterflies and flowers. And we all benefit from her years in honors art classes.

You can visit the following links for more info: [bit.ly/IPACboard](http://bit.ly/IPACboard) or <https://bit.ly/IPACBOARD> and watch the transformation.

## From Bag to Storefront

*Lourdes S. Guerrero*

For more than 45 years, my “studio” has been a red, handmade crocheted bag. But now I have a real studio.

To most people in the GIPNA area, I’m known as Sue, the wife of avid gardener, Pat Reynolds, but my real name is Lourdes S. Guerrero, artist and former CPS teacher. In 1988, we moved into the neighborhood after discovering that the house across the street from KidWatch, our day care center, was for sale. It couldn’t have been a better time. Our son Owen was 3 ½, and our daughter Lena was 6 months old. We used KidWatch for many years, eventually sending our kids to Murphy Elementary.

For years, the red bag had been the perfect “studio.” My art medium, crocheted wool tapestries, could be stuffed into the bag and taken around to PTA meetings, gymnastics meets, Irish step-dancing feisannas, and Irish music competitions. As the kids got older, my “studio” still served me well when I traveled with Pat for business trips or on vacations across the country.

By the time we were empty nesters, we took over the kids’ rooms. Pat finally had an office. And I had a studio, though the little bedroom lacked adequate light and space to spread out much. I ached for more. And I had a secret.

In the basement, among the bins of yarn, fabric, art supplies, and books, and wrapped carefully in heavy plastic, I had hidden a 60-inch 4-harness treadle floor loom. This Norwood loom, made of fine cherrywood in Fremont,



Michigan, in the ‘80s, was calling out to be used.

Before the children were born, I’d used it a few times, but when we moved to our current home some 33 years ago, the loom got stashed away until the time came when I could bring it out again. But as the years went on, the time for it to resurface just never seemed to come around.

Then good luck came our way. After years of contentious lawsuits, my younger siblings and I inherited our mother’s house. It was sold this past April. I decided this was the time to bring up the loom.

I found a small bright storefront on Irving Park Road, just a 20-minute walk from home. Pat and I dug my loom out of the basement and found a variety of other forgotten items that now have a new home in my studio. I can now expand on my painting, photography, and crocheted tapestries in addition to finally being able to weave.

But I’m only one of many artists occupying several creative spaces here in the GIPNA community. I’m joining individual artists like Mike Barret Kolasinski and George C. Clark, not to mention galleries like Stola Contemporary and the Wayback at the Chicago Weaving School. So I’m in some great company. And thanks, by the way, to the many neighbors and friends who helped me celebrate my new working studio. Yeah, it’s great to be a creative in this neighborhood.

## Best Ever Annual Community Block Sale

*Pat Clark*

We have five individuals in particular to thank for pulling off the best ever block sale (over 100 participants) on August 14: Athletic Field Advisory Council (AFAC) members Dennis Puhr, Jessica Ferrari, and Angel Arzet, GIPNA President Kevin Haight and GIPNA Board Member Dickie Nichols. They all shared the tasks: soliciting neighbors, handling publicity, answering questions and supporting neighbors through the process, writing press releases, producing the digital

map, creating and sorting data, communicating with aldermanic staff and so much more. And a special thanks to 35th Ward Alderman Carlos Rosa for sponsoring the live band, School of Rock, and making map copies. You’ve heard the phrase, “Consider volunteering because great neighborhoods don’t just happen.” Volunteering is the absolute best way to be involved with your neighborhood. Yes, there’s work, but you get to know your neighbors who quickly become friends and also get a warm fuzzy feeling knowing that you’ve contributed to making this area the best neighborhood in all of Chicago. Consider getting involved with AFAC, <https://www.athleticfieldpark.com>, or GIPNA, <https://gipna.org>.

## St. Edward School News

*Jenny Dreyer*

St. Edward School welcomed our students and staff back for the 2021-2022 school year. Several new staff members have joined the school community and we wish them a successful first year at St. Edward! Additionally, with the recent investment of a new STEM lab, students can collaborate with each other to create some awesome projects this school year! The school also invested in new flexible furniture for three more classrooms and the front entrance has a new accessible cement ramp.

The safety and well-being of our students and school employees continues to be a priority so everyone in our school feels safe. Our large classroom spaces, small class sizes, multiple entrances and hand washing provide optimum safety for our students and staff.

The campus is sanitized daily through extra intensive cleanings.

Our July Neighborhood Movie Night brought out many families to enjoy an evening under the stars! Thanks to all who attended!

### Save the date:

St. Edward Parish’s Harvest Bash & Pig Roast on Saturday, October 2!

St. Edward School celebrates 112 years of providing a Catholic education to children in grades PK3 – 8th grade. Registration continues to be open for the 2021-2022 school year. You can contact [office@stedwardschool.com](mailto:office@stedwardschool.com) to schedule an in-person tour or individual Zoom tour with our principal. St. Edward School is a 2017 National Blue Ribbon Exemplary High Performing School. For more information, please visit our website at [www.stedwardschool.com](http://www.stedwardschool.com) or call the office at 773-736-9133 to learn more about our outstanding academic programs and extended care.

## Coming to America Via Austria and Poland: Pawel Prymski

Ellen Ryan



Chicago was recently named the most immigrant friendly city in the U.S. My neighbor up-the-block, Pawel

Prymski, could not agree more. Pawel was born in 1977 in Grodkow, a town in southeast communist Poland. Although Poland's economic engine was strong, the majority of food and goods it produced were shipped to Russia, leaving the country mired in food shortages and rationing. When Pawel was 3, the family moved to Vienna.

At that time, Polish citizens living outside of Poland who denounced communism were eligible for a refugee visa to resettle in the United States. Pawel's father did just that and, in 1980, he moved to Chicago. He initially provided financial help for Pawel, his mom and his older sister Adriana, but eventually stopped and basically abandoned his family. Pawel's mom, a nurse, provided for Pawel and his sister. It was her love and compassion that kept the family together.

In 1992 Adriana secured a visa to visit the U.S. The visa expired two

months before she graduated from high school in Poland. Worried she'd never have the opportunity again, she agonizingly made the decision to drop out of school and make the move. She hoped she might find her father in Chicago despite her paternal grandparents' insistence that they had no contact information for him. After she boarded the plane, her grandfather relented and gave the family the dad's phone number. Pawel's family contacted a family friend in Chicago. It was that friend who phoned Pawel's dad from a pay phone two blocks away from his house and told him, "I'm coming over. Your daughter is arriving at O'Hare and we are going to get her now." Needless to say, Pawel's dad was shocked and dumbfounded the entire ride to the airport. When exiting the international terminal, Adriana saw her father for the first time in 12 years. She thought she was dreaming. Despite settling

in, Adriana desperately missed the rest of her family. She continually asked her father to bring Pawel over to the U.S. Her dad's status as a political refugee made it easier to obtain a visa for Pawel. On Saturday, September 30, 1993, 16-year-old Pawel Prymski arrived in Chicago with permanent resident status. It's a day he'll never forget. His mom arrived three years later.

Just two days after arriving in the U.S., not knowing a word of English, Pawel started school at Foreman High School. Thrilled at the opportunity to work, Pawel and a friend took the train to O'Hare where they worked 30 hours a week for a wheelchair service, all the while attending school full time. After graduation, Pawel attended university to study art but stopped two years later as he could not afford the tuition. He found work in heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC), then moved into the telecom business. First doing groundwork, he then became a tower technician climber in 2012. On the personal side, he met his lovely wife Bridget at the Abbey Pub in 2010. He was attracted to her sense of humor and energy. They married in 2014. For eight years, Pawel performed in a rock band that performed in venues around the city and in the suburbs.

Pawel was estranged from his father for years. They were beginning to mend their relationship when his father passed away in 2019. Sadly, Pawel's mom, with whom he was extremely close, recently died of COVID-19. Her passing devastated the family.

Despite these sad events, Pawel says he is living the American dream. He works for a global corporation with full benefits and a 401k and has an amazing wife and a beautiful home. He truly believes that anyone in this country who wants to work hard can get ahead. There are so many opportunities here that were unavailable to him in Poland. Pawel is grateful to be in the U.S. and is looking forward to becoming a U.S. citizen.

## Irving Park Community Food Pantry News

Craig Shutt

With the start of our modified Client Choice program, the Irving Park Food Pantry has added Take-One tables outside. These allow us to provide clients with items needed by only some people.

The tables are popular, leading us to ask supporters to donate items. Among the most requested items are baby wipes, laundry detergent, child and adult diapers, sunscreen, washcloths, men's white crew socks, lip balm, children's books and toiletries (deodorant, toothpaste and brushes, razors and shaving cream and body wash).

Donations can be dropped off at the Big Helpers store at 4184 N. Elston Ave. from 10 a.m. to



4 p.m. Monday through Friday or the enclosed front porch at 3833 N. Tripp Ave. anytime. A wish list has been created at Amazon to provide contact-free donations. You can access it here ([www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/2B5WTUIOWJAZT?ref\\_=wl\\_share](http://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/2B5WTUIOWJAZT?ref_=wl_share)) or through links at our Facebook page.

The Pantry is looking for

candidates interested in joining the board of directors. The board meets six times per year for about 1 1/2 hours and takes part in various programs and initiatives to improve the Pantry's work. If you are interested, contact Board President Mike Mette at [mimster2000@aol.com](mailto:mimster2000@aol.com).

The Pantry will have volunteers working a booth at GIPNA's Independence Park Farmers Market this fall. The semimonthly event lets supporters make donations of food, supplies or money and ask questions. The remaining dates are September 12 and 26 and October 10 and 24. Thank you to Greg Shea, market manager, for inviting us back and helping us with our setup. Thanks also to J.T.'s Genuine Sandwiches, which is donating a portion of its booth proceeds this season.

We appreciate everyone's support in helping us meet our mission of being Neighbors Helping Neighbors!

## Farmers Market Goes Global

Greg Shea

If you've been to the Independence Park Farmers Market this summer, you may have noticed a new vendor selling produce you wouldn't normally stumble on at the grocery store. And if you've tried any, you may have asked, "How can I get more?"

They are members of the Global Garden Refugee Training Farm, an organization based out of the Albany Park neighborhood that provides farming opportunities for refugee families as well as supplemental income. (See their website at [www.globalgardenfarm.org](http://www.globalgardenfarm.org))

The farmers at the Farmers Market are refugees from Burma (now referred to by the non-English name of Myanmar) and have joined the market this year to share their unique products with our neighborhood.

At the next market, be sure to say hi to Pak Suan, Than Nye Oo and Pah Ka Tee.

### Unique Produce with Burmese Roots

Products sold at the Farmers Market by the Global Garden Refugee Farm can open new avenues of cooking inspiration. A quick sample of products that may be new to you.

**Water Spinach** – Water spinach is great in a stir fry, but not actually related to spinach. It is from the Morning Glory family of vegetables.

**Amaranth** – Amaranth has a similar flavor to spinach and is a leafy vegetable. You can use it in stir fry, salads or in soups or curries.

**Long Beans** – They are a little sweeter than regular green beans and can be eaten raw or cooked like normal green beans.

**Bittermelon** – This is a warty fruit that is related to cucumbers. Like the name says, it is bitter and a bit of an acquired taste, but you can reduce the bitter taste by draining and salting it. It is used in curries.

## Leonardo and Catalina's Secret Garden

Ellen Ryan

Next time you are walking down Central Park towards Addison, take a peek at the flower wonderland at 3624 N. Central Park. Leonardo and Catalina Salas started planting annual flowers in pots when they moved into their home 25 years ago. It began slowly, but now they have more than 250 pots of flowers that their son Luis waters and Catalina prunes. It's a beautiful,



peaceful place for them and their family to hang out, relax and envelope themselves in the beauty of nature.

Their side yard, which contains most of the flowers, is separated from the sidewalk by bushes that block a view of it. People walking by often see the flowers and peer into his yard, hoping to see more. Leonardo will often motion for

## Our Neighborhood Is a Foodie Destination! (Not Kidding), So Let's Support our Restaurants

Sue Ryan

The food critics have spoken (or eaten) and agree that new restaurants are putting our neighborhood on the culinary map.

- **JT's Genuine Sandwich Shop**, 3970 N. Elston Ave., has racked up numerous accolades for its sandwiches. Last month, *The Chicago Tribune* named its Darn Good Burger in the top 20 of all burgers in Chicago. For Chris Cunningham, JT's owner, the honor comes on top of WGN proclaiming that "JT's Genuine Sandwich Shop is worth the trip from any corner of the world you call home. Experiencing the Breaded Pork Tenderloin Sandwich ranks up there with some of the best sandwich experiences in Chicago." *Time Out Chicago*

them to come in, so they can see the entire side yard – replete with colorful flowers. That's what happened when my sister and I were on a walk. She commented about his lovely flowers and then next thing you know, we were in Leonardo's side yard marveling at the setting. He said that even if he is not in the backyard, anyone who wishes to walk into the side yard to see all of the flowers is free to do so. Though he is literally just a long stone's throw away from the Blue Line and Addison Avenue, it's a fabulous respite from the hustle and bustle of our city. Check it out. You won't be disappointed.

chimed in that "the Italian Pork and Greens Sub is satisfyingly juicy, the Grinder is stacked with tasty cuts from Paulina Meat Market, the Foot Long Hot Dog lives up to its name, and the Beans and Greens Melt is a solid vegetarian option." And the Chicago Eater ranks the Italian Roasted Pork Sandwich among the top ten sandwiches in Chicago.

- **Mis Moles**, 3661 N. Elston Ave., was named as one of the top 21 Mexican Restaurants in Chicago by *Time Out* magazine. Chef Geno Bahena, who refined his culinary skills at Rick Bayless's Topolobampo, finds his inspiration from the Ixcapuzalco, Chilpancingo region in Mexico and mole is his specialty. According to *Time Out*, "Seven different varieties of the sauce—one for each day of the week—are offered on the menu, lending smoky complexity to duck breast, shrimp, pork chop and other signature dishes."
- **Big League Burgers**, 3734 W. Irving Park Ave., was named among the top ten best new burgers by the Chicago Tribune.

These new restaurants join The Alps Original Pancake House, 3637 W. Irving Park Rd., Hearth and Crust, 3608 W. Irving Park Rd., Hot Woks, Cool Sushi, 3930 N. Pulaski Rd., and Mirabella, 3454 W. Addison St. in making our neighborhood a great place to dine. They give us a break when we are too tired to cook or just want to celebrate the end of a work week. They provide a space where we can gather with friends and family and share a meal and a few laughs. They remained open for pickups and deliveries during the pandemic shut down. Let's thank them by dining in or ordering take out.

## Excitement on Elston

*Patti Kimbel*

We want to highlight three new businesses in our little corner of the world. It's amazing that some of these businesses were able to open during the pandemic and create a thriving business. Avvio, an Italian restaurant, opened September 2020 at 4358 N. Elston Ave. Chef Joel Piedra, from the former Sabatino's, opened this stylish restaurant bravely in the height of the pandemic and has established a steady following. Many regular patrons from Sabatino's, including the brothers themselves, frequent this place. In addition to an extensive menu of pasta, seafood, chicken and meat dishes, there are also nightly specials. The food was really delicious and service was impeccable. The ravioli and

gnocchi are homemade and so is the tiramisu if you miraculously still have room for dessert. Currently, it is BYOB with a \$10 corkage fee. A secret I stumbled upon was finding a cozy patio behind the restaurant. The patio is certainly a gem in our neighborhood, especially on a comfortable night.

Emy's Hair Salon, 3966 N. Elston, is open everyday except Mondays. The owners are Frank and Mila and both have over ten years of experience each in prior hair salons. Frank reported feeling fortunate that many of his clients from Berwyn have followed him to his new location and that speaks highly of his skills. It is a full service salon and advertises haircuts for only \$7 on their window. The couple is excited about their new business which is named after their daughter, Emy. They also hope to make our neighborhood their new home. Mila comes highly recommended and one local neighbor said Mila gives, "the

best haircuts I've ever had and at such a bargain price of \$7."

Finally, Proper Bonkers, a home goods store, opened up this past May at 4003 N. Elston. Owners Irena and Ron Terman have lived in the area for close to twenty years. They specialize in eclectic and unique home furnishings along with furniture and original artwork. Irena's family is originally from Sarajevo and her grandmother passed on the passion and love for quality furniture and Irena hopes

to honor that tradition in her new business. They are open everyday, except Wednesday, from 11-7. You can also find them through their Instagram or Facebook page or at [www.properbonkers.com](http://www.properbonkers.com). You might just go bonkers for them if you do!

Our new businesses can provide a fantastic and economical haircut, eclectic furnishings for your home, and a fabulous Italian dinner. Please consider supporting our new businesses and neighbors.

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# How to Go Paperless in Your Household

*Kristen Holub*

Have you ever thought about ditching paper towels/napkins but aren't sure where to start? Our family made the shift over a decade ago and it was a lot easier than you might think!

When our son was born, I felt a little wasteful. Tear, wipe, toss. Tear, wipe, toss. We went through paper towels and paper napkins at an alarming speed and it felt like we were always either running out of paper products, or running out to the store to get more! Then I read that if every household in the U.S. used just one less 70-sheet roll of paper towels, we would spare 544,000 trees each year. And that's not to mention all the water used in their production, the plastic they are packaged in, and the gas used to ship them. As a new mom, I was shocked by the statistics and motivated to make a move that would help make the world a better place for my new little guy, so I pitched the idea of switching to cloth for our paper towel and paper napkin needs, and we've

never looked back. Here's some Q & A to help you decide if now is the time for you or your family to make the switch:

**Q:** Why?

Trees are good for the world, so reducing our paper product usage helps the world. Plus, cloth can look and feel nicer, and you will save some money over time!

**Q:** What if you have a really gross spill?

**A:** Most things can be washed out of a rag (think about cloth diapers!) so you can usually clean up just fine with your stash. But we do have a hierarchy of towels and rags, so if there was something like a large amount of oil or grease that I wouldn't want to put in my washing machine, we can stand to part with a rag if it's that bad.

**Q:** How does your hierarchy work?

**A:** Each household can come up with a system that works for them, but here's what I have:

1. Hand towels in the kitchen for drying anything clean (like dishes and hands of course).
2. Dish rags for washing dishes, wiping the counter/table, etc.
3. Cloth napkins to use at meals.
4. Cleaning rags for dusting, cleaning the house, wiping up

messes, and other dirty jobs.

Whenever 1, 2, or 3 (or even an old t-shirt) gets stained, ripped or holey, they turn into a 4 if needed. This is why we can usually spare an old rag if there's a problem.

**Q:** Isn't it expensive to buy all those hand towels and cloth napkins?

**A:** It could be, if you were to run out to a fancy store and buy it all at once, but it doesn't need to be. We started small, and added to our collection when things went on sale. Once you start making the switch, you will probably mention it to others, or they will notice when they come over and make comments like, "Wow, we get to use real napkins?" So sometimes you might even get a new set as a gift! You can also shop thrift stores, flea markets, estate sales, or even make your own! Flour sack towels can be bought in bulk and make great absorbent hand towels as well as wonderful dust rags.

**Q:** What about draining things like bacon?

**A:** We like to make sure we always have a couple paper bags on hand. These can be from carryout or fast food orders, grocery bags from when you forgot to bring the reusables, or

we have even used cardboard in a pinch!

**Q:** How often do you need to switch everything out/do laundry?

**A:** I use a new dish rag and hand towel every day and move them to a little basket in the kitchen I use as the cloth hamper. Each family member has their own designated napkin ring, so we just change the napkins out as needed. . . more often if we eat ribs or pizza! I probably do 2 loads a week, one hot (sometimes with bleach) for the cleaning rags, dish rags, and white hand towels, and one cold load for the colored fabrics and napkins. Folding is super fast and easy!

**Q:** How did you get everyone to stop using the paper towels/napkins?

**A:** That's the easiest part: we stopped buying them!

I hope you might be inspired to move in the paperless direction, making a positive change for your home and our world. Change takes time, so don't get discouraged. Every roll or package you don't buy this year will make a difference, whether it's one or 100, so save a tree and enjoy your real napkins!

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## Discover the Magic of Mulch

Robyn Hurtig

### What is mulch and why do I need mulch in my garden?

Mulch is usually shredded hardwood. My garden goes from dowdy to dressed for Saturday night after I install mulch.

Basically, it naturally suppresses weeds while preventing soil and nutrient erosion. Typically, mulch is added in the spring and fall.

### Six immediate benefits of mulch

Mulch serves a crucial role in maintaining a healthy garden next spring by helping prevent weeds from growing when the temperatures start to rise. Mulch is especially effective for helping stabilize new plants.

### Here's why mulch is so great in the fall:

- Increases the aesthetic value of your property
- Suppresses weeds
- Retains moisture
- Improves the soil structure
- Adds organic matter and nutrients to the soil
- Insulates the soil against winter's frigid temperatures

### Where should I get my mulch?

The magic of mulch starts in its selection. You want to install premium, shredded hardwood mulch or leaf mulch. Choose mulch that won't damage delicate perennials or pull naturally occurring nitrogen away from your plants.

Big box stores might have great deals, but knowing where your mulch comes from matters. Your safest bet is to use locally sourced mulch as it's more sustainable,



decreases your carbon footprint, and vastly reduces the spread of disease.

### What does good mulch look like?

The finer and darker the mulch, the better. The finer the grind, the more decomposed it is and will return more nutrition to the landscape. Two great choices are triple ground hardwood and leaf mulch.

### How much mulch do I need?

Less is more when it comes to mulch, so avoid over applying it. A two-inch layer is enough. Consider adding organic composts and garden fertilizers to maximize the mulch's effectiveness. Over mulching is bad and can suppress plant material. If you have mulched in the past season, you can simply refresh your mulch by adding an inch or two. Volcano mulching around shrubs and tree trunks can lead to basal decay and encircling roots.

### Did you know there's a right and a wrong way to mulch around trees?

A ring of mulch right out to the drip line is better for a tree than ground cover or even grass, which competes for moisture and nutrients. Never mulch against the trunk, where it can harm the bark and invite decline. If you have mulch or ground cover around a tree, cut it back to 6-12" away from the trunk. Rodents love to dig in and gnaw on bark, especially in winter.

Questions? Send me an email at [robyn@iamgreenwise.com](mailto:robyn@iamgreenwise.com)

## Novel Inspiration

Jennifer Worrell

Everything that follows is Mrs. Davenport's fault.

I gave preschool a shot and left unimpressed. I still tell horror stories about prescribed naptime and an awful gruel of Chex, peas, and unidentifiable white sauce. My parents taught me how to read and write; I had my colors down pat; I'm pretty sure I knew how to add. Subtraction was tricky, but then again, it still is. What else was there?

Unconvinced, my parents sent me to kindergarten. I refused to forgive them—until the day Mrs. Davenport handed me my first mimeographed story worksheet. When I'm ninety and reliving my earliest memories, they will smell like hot purple ink.

Making up stories was better than a milk-and-cookie break. Five years old and I experienced my first high. Then lovely Mrs. Davenport dropped a bombshell: grown-ups get paid to write stories. Maybe I should be an author when I grow up?

I believe I responded with a look of wide-eyed gaping wonder. From then on, I made up stories constantly: on road trips, touring model homes with my parents, testing my mettle in Safety Town at Harlem Irving Plaza.

When adulthood finally showed up, forcing me to give up six-hour school days and summer vacations

for the ol' 9-to-5, I'd slip away during lunch to get some words down. I'd pull a lawn chair up to a retaining wall to use as a desk or tuck under a weeping willow and try not to incur the wrath of swans. Outside, I could slow time and ignore the real world, allowing me to create a number of short stories (that found homes in such publications as *Write City Magazine*, *Writing Disorder*, *Raconteur*, and *Little Old Lady Comedy*) and my first novel, *Edge of Sundown*, a crime/suspense story about aging and loss that takes place in and around Chicago.

Since working from home, I've missed the spark of inspiration that accompanied a change of venue and fresh air. We don't have much space in the yard behind our apartment, and our particular area is especially noisy. Parks are frequently overcrowded or reserved for sports. Coffee shops and restaurants didn't allow seating in the early days of the pandemic; Independence Library was closed entirely; even now, public spaces don't appreciate lingering patrons. How could I reconstruct my escape?

Then during a long walk one evening, a tiny house in the middle of a serene intersection caught my eye. Tucked into the lush greenery beside a wooden bench, it reminded me of an idyllic Safety Town reboot. A community garden! Huzzah! Though I wasn't a resident, the leaders of GIPNA graciously invited me to pretend that this tool shed was a cabin on a private wooded island, the encircling streets a moat. The perfect writer's utopia to bring back my spark.

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**2021-2022**

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*I-Ready data from the current school year has shown promising growth for students, despite the pandemic.*

Please feel free to contact Marge Tiritilli with any questions or to schedule a personal tour.

4140 W. Addison St., Chicago, IL 60641 • 773-545-2173 • [mtiritilli@stviatorchicago.org](mailto:mtiritilli@stviatorchicago.org)

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## September is GIPNA Membership Month

### What do your dollars go toward?

- The Voice GIPNA newsletter delivered to your door
- Independence Park Farmers Markets
- Community garden maintenance
- Email, social media and website communications
- Fundraising events to support our local schools and charities
- Connecting neighbors for a stronger community



**Join** as a new member  
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Stop by our table at the Independence Park Farmers Market, go online to **[gipna.org](http://gipna.org)**, or **scan QR code above** to pay for your membership.

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