

Oak Parkers challenged to give up single-use plastics in July

Oak Park has joined the international movement to challenge citizens to reduce their impact on the environment by giving up single-use plastics such as bags and straws during the month of July.

Called *Plastic Free July*, this annual global effort aims to raise awareness of the amount of single-use disposable plastic items in everyone's life and challenges individual citizens to do something about it.

Oak Parkers willing to accept the challenge to avoid single-use plastic in July are urged to visit www.plasticfreejuly.org and sign a pledge to choose what they will give up, urge others in the community and workplace to follow their lead and keep a tally of their successes for an August survey to tally the worldwide effort.

The longer-term goal, officials say, is to demonstrate to individuals that if they can reduce their consumption of single-use plastics for a single month, they may realize it would not be that difficult to change their behavior for a lifetime.

An estimated 22 million pounds of plastic enter the Great Lakes and 19 billion pounds of plastic enter the oceans each year, experts say. These discarded items can last for decades,

littering shorelines and beaches, affecting wildlife health and habitats, and as they break down into smaller pieces, enter the drinking water supply with unknown, long-term consequences.

The local *Plastic Free July* effort is two-pronged — get residents to refuse single-use plastics like straws and bags, and get merchants to stop automatically offering them to their customers.

The members of the Village's Environment & Energy Commission who initiated the local *Plastic Free July* effort say they know that Oak Parkers avoiding single-use plastic for a single month isn't likely to change the world, but it is a start. And if every community would get involved, it will become a movement that can bring change, they say.

In addition to urging residents to sign the pledge, the Village also will be working through the various Oak Park business associations to do their part. A step as simple as not automatically giving out plastic straws unless asked could prove to be a small, but effective step, officials say.

For more information on the Oak Park approach, visit www.oak-park.us/plasticfreejuly.

Plastic bags contaminate recycling

Oak Parkers are among the best at diverting materials into recycling and away from landfills. But many of us also are guilty of a common practice that is driving up costs and driving down the value of the community's curbside recycling program — putting single-use plastic bags into the blue carts. Single-use plastic bags can be recycled into new materials, but most curbside recycling programs lack the collection system and processing equipment to handle them. Clean plastic bags should be returned to grocery stores and big-box retailers for proper recycling. So what happens to those plastic bags tossed into the recycling bin when they make it to the processing plant? Most likely they will end up wrapped around equipment, bringing the processing line to a halt and requiring workers to remove the bags by hand in a harrowing experience that sometimes occurs multiple times a day. The bags that don't jam up the equipment tend to be caught within the neatly bound bundles of cardboard, bringing down their value for reuse. Proper recycling can be a challenge, given the vast range of materials that comprise modern product packaging. But just keeping those single-use plastic bags out the blue carts is a major step in the right direction. For more information on refuse and recycling collection in Oak Park, visit www.oak-park.us/recycling.

What You Can Do

- **Stop buying plastic water bottles** – Use a stainless steel or glass reusable bottle. Steel and glass are infinitely recyclable with a robust market.
- **Bring what you need with you** – Pack to-go containers for restaurants and Farmers' Market berries. At first it may be awkward but can become fun with practice and be a great conversation starter.
- **Keep reusable bags handy** – Single-use shopping bags — both paper and plastic — consume enormous amounts of natural resources in their manufacture, create damaging, unsightly pollution when improperly disposed of and add to the administrative costs of a retail business. Free reusable bags are available at multiple places in Oak Park, including Village Hall, 123 Madison St., and the Public Works Center, 201 South Blvd.
- **Share your opinion and get involved** – *Change.org* is one of a number of organizations available to people who want to make their voices heard by policy makers. Dozens of petitions are posted concerning plastic pollution and many other important issues. *The Plastic Free Challenge* does not focus on politics, but personal responsibility and each person's ability and responsibility to lead by example. Take action and get involved in whatever way suits you the best.



Police offer tips to deter bicycle thieves

Bicycle thefts tend to increase during warmer weather. Following these steps, police say, can help deter bicycle thieves:

- Register your bike with the Village. Should your bike be stolen and later recovered the registration provides information about its rightful owner.
- Don't leave your bike unlocked or unattended. Police recommend a U lock.
- Lock your bike even when it is stored in a closed garage, enclosed porch or basement common area.
- Never let anyone you do not know take your bike for a ride.
- Be cautious of two people on one bike. Bicycle thieves often travel in pairs this way.
- Trust your instincts. If you feel someone is going to take your bicycle, shout for help.
- Stay in the company of friends — there usually is safety in numbers.
- Think twice about resisting — your bike can be replaced.
- Call 911 immediately if you see anyone suspicious hanging around a bike rack, in a neighbor's yard or near a garage.

Police urge parents to share these tips with their children. For more information, call 708.386.3800, email police@oak-park.us or talk to your resident or neighborhood beat officer. Contact information is posted at www.oak-park.us/rbo.

Bicycles and sidewalks...Riding on a sidewalk by anyone of any age is not allowed in the business districts, including downtown. And only those under 15 years of age may ride on a sidewalk anywhere else in the community. Youngsters riding on sidewalks always must yield to pedestrians. For more information on bicycle rules and safety, call 708.386.3800 or email police@oak-park.us.

How to properly dispose of storm debris

When severe weather brings down branches and even entire trees, property owners are urged not to bring any debris from trees on private property to the parkway or street, which can lead to clogged sewer inlets and localized flooding during heavy rains. Public Works crews only pick up debris from parkway trees — a big job with nearly 19,000 trees on public property throughout the Village. However, brush from private property will be treated as yard waste at single-family homes and residential buildings of five or fewer units served by the municipal contract hauler. The brush must be tied into bundles, each tagged with a green yard waste sticker and placed in the regular refuse pick-up area. Each bundle should be no larger than two feet in diameter, four feet in length and not exceed 50 pounds. Yard waste stickers are \$3 each and are available at most Village grocery and hardware stores, as well as in the cashier's office at Village Hall, 123 Madison St. The Village's contract refuse hauler also will come to a home and estimate the cost for removing larger, unbundled quantities of yard waste — call 888.656.5350 to request an estimate. Refuse collection is funded by user fees billed quarterly with the water bill, rather than property taxes, an approach that means only those properties that require the service pay. About half of Oak Park's 26,000 residential addresses are in multifamily buildings, many of which have contracts with private haulers that may have different rules about disposing of debris. For more information on yard waste, recycling and refuse hauling, call 708.358.5700 or email publicworks@oak-park.us.

Downed power lines pose real risks

When severe weather brings down power lines, public safety personnel urge residents to be aware of the danger. Their advice — always assume power lines are live, since even momentary contact with a live power line can injure or kill. If a power line comes down, ideally, a firefighter or police officer will stand by the site until utility workers arrive. But when emergency conditions are widespread, personnel may not be available for this level of service. In those instances, affected streets or alleys are blocked and the area around the downed wire isolated by yellow warning tape. Residents who see a downed power line should call 911 right away and report the location. For more information, call 708.358.5600 or email fire@oak-park.us.

Be cautious of electricity scams

If someone calls or knocks on your door promising a better deal on electricity, be cautious — you could be misled into switching to a supplier that will cost more. Salespeople who offer to save you money may ask for your account number or to see your bill. Most likely they are selling a low introductory rate or trying to get your account number so they can switch you to a different provider without your permission. Each year the Village bundles residential and small business electric accounts and seeks competitive bids from electricity suppliers. The state law that gave the Village this authority also allows to companies to market their programs directly to consumers. While these companies may be approved by the state, high-pressure salespeople often are accused of misleading consumers about the costs and risks of signing up. ComEd, which owns the wires and poles, continues to distribute the power and is responsible for outages and billing, regardless of the power supplier. The costs of power generation and distribution appear as separate line items on your bill. Enrollment for Oak Park's municipal electricity aggregation program typically opens in the fall and eligible customers are enrolled automatically unless they have opted out previously through a very specific process. Representatives from the Village or its supplier never solicit door-to-door or by telephone. Following these basic guidelines may help avoid scams:

- Never share your account number in person or over the telephone
- Never allow a solicitor to see your bill
- Never make a payment to a door-to-door solicitor or over the telephone
- Never share your credit card number, social security number or other personal information

Residents who feel threatened by an aggressive solicitor are urged to call 911. Anyone with concerns about the status of an electricity account can call ComEd at 1.800.334.7661. You will need to provide your account number for this service. For more information on the Village's electricity aggregation program, call 708.358.5778 or email sustainability@oak-park.us.

Oak Park Police promote four veterans to top posts



Deputy Chief Joe Moran and Commanders Shatonya Johnson, Donicio Silva and Dave Jacobson (from left).

Four veterans from within the Police Department's ranks have been promoted to high level command posts. Joseph Moran, a detective commander with more than 25 years of experience with the Oak Park Police Department, was sworn in as deputy chief, joining Deputy Chief Frank Limon on the Department's senior command staff. Three veteran sergeants were promoted to the rank of commander – Donicio Silva, who joined the Police Department in 1994, Dave Jacobson who joined in 1995 and Shatonya Johnson, who has served here since 2000. As Deputy Chief, Moran will oversee the Patrol Division, which includes all of the men and women in uniform who police the community day to day. Jacobson is Patrol Commander, Silva the Operations Commander and Johnson the Detective Commander. Information on the Oak Park Police Department and its community policing programs are posted online at www.oak-park.us/police.

Block parties more than just fun

The Village encourages block parties as a way to build community spirit, meet neighbors and have fun. Each block may sponsor two block parties per year, but the number of block parties on any given day must be regulated to ensure traffic flow. Since some weekends fill quickly, neighborhoods are urged plan early to get preferred dates. A petition signed by at least 10 separate addresses on the block is required to schedule a block party. Approved petitions allow the neighborhood to close off a street to vehicle traffic for the entire day. Petitions must be returned two weeks before the date of the block party. For more information, call 708.358.5700 or email publicworks@oak-park.us. An information packet is posted at www.oak-park.us/blockparties.

Make it green... Oak Parkers are invited to go green at their next block party. Residents who sign up for a green block party receive a kit that includes compostable bags and pop-up waste sorting boxes with signage indicating what waste goes where. Blocks hosting a green block party also can sign up for free demonstrations on butterfly gardening, organic lawn care and reducing food waste, as well as host a self-guided tree walk with supplies provided by the Village's Forestry Division. More information and an online sign-up form are posted www.oak-park.us/greenblockparties.

Free seminars offered for aspiring first-time homebuyers

Anyone interested in learning more about securing a mortgage and buying that first home is invited to attend a free seminar held at 6 p.m. the fourth Tuesday of each month at Village Hall, 123 Madison St. A wide range of related topics is addressed, including the steps in the home-buying process and financing options. The seminars are made possible through the Village's partnership with the HUD-certified counseling agency West Cook Homeownership Center. For more information, call 773.887.5187 or email info@westcookhomeownership.org.

Open windows may invite burglars

Residents who leave their windows and patio doors open overnight to catch a summer evening breeze could unwittingly become targets of burglars who cruise neighborhoods looking for just such opportunities. Oak Park Police urge residents to use devices that prevent entry by limiting travel of the sash or door. Making sure patio furniture cannot be used as a makeshift ladder to reach higher windows also is important, police say. For more security tips and even an assessment of one's home, residents should contact their residential beat officer, who will examine the property and offer practical suggestions for improving security. To contact your RBO, visit www.oak-park.us/rbo.

Social services referrals now online

Online referral network *The HUB* connects individuals with a broad network of local and regional agencies and institutions that offer free and reduced-cost social services, including senior and youth services, developmental disabilities, medical health care and behavioral/mental health services. The service is available around the clock at www.healthconnectionhub.org.

Farmers' Market News

Transportation available – Curb-to-curb transportation to and from the Oak Park Farmers' Market is available. Look for the Oak Park Township bus at the Market entrance during Market hours. The wheelchair-accessible bus will transport shoppers of all ages to locations within Oak Park and River Forest. Reservations are encouraged and can be made by calling 708.383.4806 between 8:30 a.m. and 2 p.m. Monday through Friday. Walk-ons are welcome. A \$1 donation is suggested.



Corn roast – The Farmers' Market's annual corn roast is set for Aug. 10. Guests can enjoy fresh-picked corn sold by the ear hot off the roaster from about 9 a.m. to noon. Be sure to bring cash as credit cards are not accepted when purchasing roasted corn, which is sold for \$2 per ear.

Pie Bake-Off – The third annual Farmers' Market Pie Bake-Off will take place Sept. 7. The pie-baking contest is open to professional and amateur bakers age 16 and older. This year's contest will be limited to 12 entries. Find the contest rules and registration form at www.oak-park.us/2019piebakeoff. Entry forms may be submitted July 13 through Aug. 24 at the Farmers' Market information tent or by emailing farmersmarket@oak-park.us.

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

About the Market – Visit www.oak-park.us/farmersmarket for updated information about what's coming up from week to week at the Market, including information about guest vendors, activities for kids and cooking demonstrations. The webpage also features information about all of the Market's vendors. The Market is held from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. rain or shine every Saturday through October in the Pilgrim Congregational Church parking lot, 460 Lake St., one block west of Ridgeland Ave. For more information, call 708.358.5780 or email farmersmarket@oak-park.us.

Seek relief when temperatures soar

With the highest temperatures of the season typically coming in July and August, public health officials urge residents to protect themselves and their loved ones from the sometimes severe consequences of extreme heat. While everyone is susceptible to heat-related illnesses, the elderly and individuals with chronic diseases are at greater risk. On excessively hot days, avoid strenuous activity and stay inside whenever possible. And be sure to check on relatives, neighbors and friends. For more information on dealing with the heat, email health@oak-park.us.

Cooling centers open...Residents who don't have access to air conditioning are encouraged to take advantage of local free cooling centers at Rush Oak Park Hospital, 520 S. Maple Ave., and West Suburban Medical Center, 3 Erie Court. When triggered by extreme temperatures, the centers are open seven days a week – 5:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. at West Suburban and 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Rush. Hours may be extended when weather conditions warrant. To find out if a cooling center is open after hours, call West Suburban Medical Center at 708.763.6747 or Rush Oak Park Hospital at 708.660.6000. If transportation is needed, call the Oak Park Police Department's non-emergency number 708.386.3800. Village Hall, 123 Madison St., also is a cooling center from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Residents 60 years old and older also can visit Oak Park Township Senior Services, 130 S. Oak Park Ave., from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., Monday through Friday – call 708.383.8060 if transportation is needed.

Clip and Save

Who to Call

Dial Direct (area code 708)

Village Hall	oak-park.us
TTY	711
Adjudication	358.5630
Development Customer Services	358.5420
Business Services	358.5425
Neighborhood Services	358.5410
Housing	option 1
CDBG	option 2
Property complaints	option 3
Permits & Inspections	358.5430
Planning	358.5440
General questions	option 1
Historic Preservation	option 2
Zoning	option 3
Finance	358.5460
Utility Billing Inquiries	358.5478
Fire (nonemergency)	358.5600
Human Resources	358.5650
Job Hotline	358.5650
Mayor & Trustees	358.5784
Police (nonemergency)	386.3800
Crime Tip Hotline	434.1636
Public Health	358.5480
Animal Control	358.5680
Public Works	358.5700
Parking	358.7275
Village Clerk	358.5670
Village Manager's Office	358.5770

EMERGENCIES 911

Park District	www.pdop.org
Administration	725.2017
Customer Service	725.2000
Building & Grounds	725.2050
Business Operations	725.2015

Public Library	www.oppl.org
Main Library	383.8200
Maze Branch	386.4751
Dole Branch	386.9032

School District 97	www.op97.org
Administration	524.3000

School District 200	www.oprfhs.org
Administration	383.0700

Township	www.oakparktownship.org
Senior Services	383.8060
Youth Services	445.2727
General Assistance	383.8005
Assessor Services	383.8005
Mental Health Board	358.8855
Transportation	383.4806

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pinterest.com/oakparkil

twitter.com/vopnews

youtube.com/vopnews

Inspection scores earn restaurants special recognition

Eleven Oak Park restaurants received awards from the Oak Park Department of Public Health and Board of Health in recognition for having the highest two-year average inspection scores. Each of the restaurants' food service sanitation efforts earned them a *Johnson Award*, named for Oak Park's first lunchroom operated in the 1890s at 124 Lake St. The award is presented to the 10 top-scoring restaurants, and this year there was a tie for 10th place. This is the 33rd time the Johnson Restaurant Awards have been presented. Recipients receive a door decal and a recognition certificate from the Health Department.

This year's Johnson Award winners were chosen from 85 eligible restaurants. The awards are based on scores from a 45-point inspection survey and averaged over a two-year period. These restaurants are responsible for some of the most complex aspects of food service and meal preparation including cooking, cooling, reheating and serving. Each of these processes must be

carried out to the exacting standards mandated by the Illinois State Food Service Sanitation Code. All licensed food establishments in Oak Park receive detailed inspections and education from the Health Department, as the Village works with all commercial food handlers to help make sure they meet state safety standards.

The Health Department inspects more than 200 food service establishments in the Village every year, from day care centers to senior living facilities and traditional restaurants to cafes. These businesses are divided into three broad categories based on the complexity of their operations. The Johnson Award winners are all restaurants that have fairly complex food service processes and are required to maintain competent management and continuous supervision of every step of their food service operations. For more information about the awards, call 708.358.5480 or email health@oak-park.us.

The 2019 Johnson Award winners

- **Chipotle Mexican Grill**, 1128 Lake St.
- **Boss Burrito**, 1110 W. Westgate St.
- **Sagano Sushi**, 731 Lake St.
- **Lou Malnati's Pizzeria**, 1038 Lake St.
- **New Pot**, 727 Lake St.
- **Penny's Noodle Shop**, 1130 Chicago Ave.
- **Buzz Cafe**, 905 Lombard Ave.
- **Na Siam Thai**, 6851 North Ave.
- **Munch**, 104 N. Marion St.
- **Maya Del Sol**, 144 S. Oak Park Ave.
- **Sen Sushi**, 814 S. Oak Park Ave.

This marks the sixth straight time Buzz Cafe earned recognition, making it the longest running Johnson Award honoree. Boss Burrito, Chipotle Mexican Grill, Lou Malnati's Pizzeria, Na Siam Thai, New Pot, Penny's Noodle Shop and Sagano Sushi, also were honored in 2018.

Public health contributors honored

Two individuals and one local non-profit organization have been honored with the **Dr. William Fitzsimmons Public Health Award** for contributions to the health and well-being of Oak Parkers. The award is named in honor of the Oak Park Health Department's Medical Consultant from 1976-1992. Dr. Fitzsimmons was an Oak Park physician and humanitarian who volunteered his services to the Village. The annual awards are presented by the Board of Health and the Department of Public Health. This year's winners are:

- **Ginger Colamussi**, Oak Park and River Forest High School social worker and prevention wellness coordinator.
- **Dr. Carlos Reynes**, leader of Walk with a Doc, a free walking program through the Park District of Oak Park.
- **New Moms**, a provider of health-focused support for new mothers and parents.

Read more about the program and award winners at www.oak-park.us/2019healthawardwinners.

West Nile Virus threat returns

As temperatures rise, so does the threat of the mosquito-borne West Nile Virus. Illinois reported 176 human cases and 16 deaths last year.



containing water. For more information, call 708.358.5694, visit www.oak-park.us/fightthebite or email health@oak-park.us.

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

Spraying notification...Residents who wish to be notified when the Des Plaines Valley Mosquito Abatement District has scheduled spraying for adult mosquitoes can sign up at www.oak-park.us/notifyme. Registrants will be notified by an automated telephone system, email or text message as soon as possible following a decision to spray in Oak Park. Individuals without computer access may call 708.358.5694 to leave their phone number for telephone notification only. Visit www.desplainesvalleymad.com for information on spraying.

Take precautions...Avoid being bitten by mosquitoes by wearing long sleeves and pants, limiting time spent outdoors at dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active and using insect repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, IR3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus or para-methane-diol. Residents also are urged to eliminate potential mosquito breeding sites by cleaning roof gutters, storing



Village of Oak Park
Village Hall
123 Madison Street
Oak Park, Illinois 60302-4272



Mayor Anan Abu-Taleb

Trustees

Deno J. Andrews
Dan Moroney
Simone M. Boutet
Jim Taglia
Susan Buchanan
Arti Walker-Peddakotla

Village Clerk Vicki Scaman
Village Manager Cara Pavlicek

Residential Customer Local
Oak Park, Illinois

Postal Carrier
Pre-Sort

Permit No. 26
Oak Park, IL
PAID
U.S. Postage
Standard
Presort

Residents urged to update emergency notification information

The Village has launched an upgraded alert system to notify residents when emergency situations occur. The new system requires residents to register annually to receive notifications, a best-practices approach that helps ensure the system has the most up-to-date contact information. To sign up, just go to www.oak-park.us/notifyme, click on the green *Sign Up for Alerts* button and follow the instructions. The registration process allows citizens to choose how they wish to be notified — by text, email and/or voice message. Registrants also can indicate the types of alerts they wish to receive and can add an address to receive geographically targeted alerts. Residents who had signed up for the previous system will need to re-register. Anyone who would like to sign up, but lacks access to a computer can call 708.358.5489 to be added to the voice message alert list. The Village distributes messages only when deemed important, such as alerts about severe weather, snow emergency parking and mosquito spraying. For more information, email prepare@oak-park.us.

Volunteers needed...



The Village is seeking volunteers for its Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) and Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). The MRC unit needs both medical and non-medical volunteers ready to help with logistical planning, records keeping, health awareness campaigns, staffing first-aid stations, providing emergency care, distributing medication and vaccinating residents in emergency situations. CERT volunteers are trained

and equipped to play a vital role in local disaster response and recovery activities. Prospective CERT volunteers must complete a three-day training course on first aid, basic firefighting, search and rescue, and other emergency response techniques. Both units meet together bimonthly. Multiple training opportunities are offered, some with continuing education credits. To learn more, or to apply for either unit, call 708.358.5489 or email prepare@oak-park.us.

Special needs registry... Oak Parkers with special needs that should be considered in an emergency situation can register confidentially with the Village to ensure first responders are aware when dispatched via a 911 call. Knowing that they are being dispatched to a home where someone may have a hearing or visual impairment, mobility limitation, cognitive impairment or uses an electrically powered medical device could prove vital to emergency medical personnel. Residents or their caregivers can register online at www.oak-park.us/911registry. A form also is available via email to prepare@oak-park.us or by calling 708.358.5489.

Vehicle license required

Every Oak Park resident who owns or leases a motor vehicle is required to purchase a license for each vehicle before July 15 to get the lowest rate, which increases by \$20 after the deadline. Failure to purchase a license also could result in a \$78 ticket. A current vehicle license is needed to purchase a parking permit. New this year, the licenses are in a database at Village Hall, with nothing to apply to the windshield. The new stickerless vehicle licenses are part of a broader effort to eliminate all physical vehicle-related decals, including those for parking permits and passes, a move that improves operational efficiencies and supports the community's environmental sustainability goals. Parking enforcement officers now use electronic license plate recognition technology to scan a plate and know if the owner is in compliance. Vehicles owners also can help the Village reduce its impact on the environment by opting out of all paper correspondence in favor of electronic communications. Vehicle license rates vary by type of vehicle. Persons age 65 and older, and anyone who has a state-issued handicapped license plate or placard, can apply for a discount. Disabled and active-duty veterans with the proper documentation can apply for free vehicle licenses. Vehicle license fees help support a wide range of critical public services, including street and alley improvements. Purchase and renew online at www.oak-park.us/onlineservices.