



## Fire Department hosting Open House

**O**ak Parkers of all ages with an interest in modern firefighting and emergency medical services should mark their calendars for Saturday, Oct. 12. That's when the Oak Park Fire Department will open its doors to the public for its annual open house. The event, held in conjunction with Fire Safety Month, is set for 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Central Fire Station, 100 N. Euclid Ave. In addition to touching the cool equipment essential to the mission of a modern fire department, the event also will include tours of the fire house, presentations about safety and fun handouts.

**About the Fire Department...** Always on call, the Fire Department maintains three shifts of 22 trained professionals ready to provide around-the-clock protection to residents. All Village firefighters also are paramedics, since delivering emergency medical services is an integral part of the Fire Department mission. In fact, about 60% of calls to the Fire Department are for medical emergencies. In 2023, Oak Park's firefighter/paramedics responded to more than 8,600 calls for fire and emergency medical services. For more information, visit [www.oak-park.us/fire](http://www.oak-park.us/fire) or email [fire@oak-park.us](mailto:fire@oak-park.us).

## Village accepting Housing Trust Fund applications

**T**he Village recently established a Housing Trust Fund for the sole purpose of providing and preserving affordable housing opportunities in Oak Park. Village staff is available to discuss potential project ideas with applicants and answer questions about applying for these funds. Visit [www.oak-park.us/HTF](http://www.oak-park.us/HTF) for more information and a link to the online application form. Questions can also be directed to the Neighborhood Services Department at [housing@oak-park.us](mailto:housing@oak-park.us).

## Village Hall to host early voting

**S**uburban Cook County voters can cast an early ballot for the 2024 Presidential Election seven days a week starting Oct. 21 through Nov. 4 at Village Hall, 123 Madison St. Hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. from Monday through Saturday and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sundays. Village Hall also will offer grace-period registration during early voting hours for those individuals who missed the registration deadline. Valid identification is required to register during the grace period and a vote must be cast immediately after registration. A driver's license or picture ID is preferred, along with an additional item such as a lease or utility bill with the current address. Village Hall is not a polling place on Election Day, Nov. 5. More information is available by calling 708.358.5672 or emailing [clerk@oak-park.us](mailto:clerk@oak-park.us). Information such as Election Day polling sites by address is available at [www.cookcountyclerk.com/elections](http://www.cookcountyclerk.com/elections). Additionally, the Oak Park Public Library has helpful information about civic engagement available at [www.oppl.org/about/civic-engagement](http://www.oppl.org/about/civic-engagement).

INSIDE:

LEAVE.  
BIN.  
BAG.



Comprehensive information  
about Fall Leaf Collection  
Program changes

# LEAVE. BIN. BAG.

It's your choice.  
Fall Leaf Collection Program



## LEAF COLLECTION MAP

NORTH AVE	
<b>WEDNESDAY</b> Nov. 6 Nov. 13 Nov. 20 Nov. 27 Dec. 4 Dec. 11	<b>THURSDAY</b> Nov. 7 Nov. 14 Nov. 21 Nov. 29* Dec. 5 Dec. 12
<b>SOUTH BLVD</b>	
<b>TUESDAY</b> Nov. 5 Nov. 12 Nov. 19 Nov. 26 Dec. 3 Dec. 10	<b>MONDAY</b> Nov. 4 Nov. 11 Nov. 18 Nov. 25 Dec. 2 Dec. 9

*\*delayed one day by Thanksgiving holiday*

# Choose how to manage leaves during revamped Fall Leaf Collection Program

The Village is updating its Fall Leaf Collection Program this year, with the changes intended to improve safety, help the environment and amplify choices available to Oak Parkers for managing leaves. Residents will no longer place leaves directly into the street. Instead, they can choose from a variety of leaf collection options:

- **Mulch the leaves...** Oak Park residents are encouraged to consider mulching leaves with a mower and/or leaving them on the lawn or in garden beds to promote soil health. This option offers an opportunity to support regional biodiversity and save money on fertilizer by allowing leaf litter to decompose naturally. It also aligns with the Village's Climate Ready Oak Park plan.
- **Compost leaves...** Residents who participate in the Village's CompostAble program can discard leaves in their 96-gallon gray organics cart along with food scraps and other yard waste throughout the year. Find more information about the program and sign up to participate at [www.oak-park.us/compost](http://www.oak-park.us/compost).
- **Place leaves in a bag or bin...** Fallen leaves can be placed in yard waste bags and/or rigid containers and left in the parkway as close to the curb as possible for pickup. Six pickups are planned for each section of the Village on the scheduled pickup dates indicated on the map. Green yard waste stickers are NOT required during the six-week Fall Leaf Collection Program and residents may put out an unlimited number of bags and/or rigid containers in the parkway on their designated collection day. The Village's waste hauler Lakeshore Recycling Systems (LRS) will transport the leaves to a compost facility.

As has always been the case, commercial properties and large multifamily buildings with six or more units do not participate in the Village's refuse program and have always been responsible for their own leaf collection and disposal. This remains in effect.

The Village conducted case studies of 150 Illinois municipalities to identify best practices for leaf collection. Village officials say the updates, which mark the first major changes to the program since 1994, will streamline the leaf collection process and address potential safety hazards created by large leaf piles. The changes are also intended to minimize confusion over parking restrictions and provide environmental benefits from mulching and reduced greenhouse gas emissions due to decreased truck traffic.

For more information about the Village's Leaf Collection Program, visit [www.oak-park.us/leafcollection](http://www.oak-park.us/leafcollection), call 708.358.5700 or email [publicworks@oak-park.us](mailto:publicworks@oak-park.us).

## LEAF COLLECTION INFO



Visit [www.oak-park.us/leafcollection](http://www.oak-park.us/leafcollection) for the latest information

## See leaf collection insert for more:

**Be sure to inform landscapers...** Residents who utilize landscape services are asked to make sure their landscaper understands that starting this fall leaves should no longer be placed in the street. See the insert included in this newsletter for a handout with information about the changes in both English and Spanish.

**Yard waste bag coupon...** See the insert included in this newsletter for a coupon for \$5 off a \$25 purchase at Oak Park's two Ace Hardware locations.

## Leaf collection assistance available

Whether it is time to rake leaves in the fall or shovel snow in the winter, Oak Parkers are encouraged to look for opportunities to help neighbors who may need assistance. Leaves will no longer be raked directly into the street this fall under changes coming to the Village's leaf collection program. With one option for discarding leaves being to place them in the parkway in yard waste bags and/or rigid containers, property owners can tap into their neighborly instincts by helping those in need of support.

The Village is also coordinating an online portal where Oak Parkers who are willing to volunteer to help rake leaves can be connected with residents who are seeking assistance. Visit the leaf collection assistance section at [www.oak-park.us/leafcollection](http://www.oak-park.us/leafcollection) to sign up to volunteer and to request assistance.

A Village program to assist income-eligible residents who physically cannot shovel snow nor afford to hire a shoveling service is being expanded to include leaf services this fall. More information is available in the leaf collection assistance section at [www.oak-park.us/leafcollection](http://www.oak-park.us/leafcollection) or by contacting 708.358.5700 or [publicworks@oak-park.us](mailto:publicworks@oak-park.us).

### Leaf collection block parties...

To support the community-minded spirit of assisting neighbors, the Village is allowing each block to host an extra leaf collection block party during weekends in November. Visit [www.oak-park.us/leafcollection](http://www.oak-park.us/leafcollection) to request a leaf collection block party. All the rules for traditional block parties apply, including the requirement to include a petition signed by at least 10 separate addresses on the block. The Village will provide leaf collection supplies for block parties upon request. This initiative is intended to give neighbors an extra chance to gather while also making it easier to collect fallen leaves.

## Electric vehicle charging station fee takes effect

The Village recently implemented a user fee of 25 cents per kilowatt hour (kWh) for electric vehicle charging stations owned and operated by the Village. Officials say the fee will help ensure the long-term financial viability of the Village's charging station network while also providing a sustainable path forward in the effort to expand access to charging station infrastructure, particularly for residents without access to private parking facilities. Electric vehicle owners interested in using the Village's 13 publicly accessible EV charging stations are encouraged to download the ChargePoint mobile app via the App Store or Google Play. Drivers can search the app for and navigate to available stations, monitor charging activity and pay for their charging session with their preferred payment method. Increasing access to electric vehicle charging station infrastructure is one of the goals outlined in the Climate Ready Oak Park plan, which points to greenhouse gas emissions from conventional cars and trucks as being the second largest contributor toward climate change in Oak Park. For more information, visit [www.oak-park.us/EVuserfee](http://www.oak-park.us/EVuserfee) or contact [parking@oak-park.us](mailto:parking@oak-park.us) or 708.358.7275.



## Vaccinations encouraged as flu season approaches

With students returning to the classroom, indoor gatherings increasing and respiratory illness season approaching, local public health officials remind residents that consistent handwashing, staying home when sick and annual immunizations can help keep the community as healthy as possible.

**Flu shots...** Flu shots are recommended for everyone older than six months. In addition to your health care provider, the flu vaccine is offered at numerous commercial pharmacies, grocery stores and other retail sites in the Oak Park area. Most of these sites accept private insurance and Medicare Part B to help cover the cost of the flu shot. Many sites will vaccinate children as young as 18 months. Residents can email [health@oak-park.us](mailto:health@oak-park.us) or call 708.358.5480 with questions about access to an affordable flu shot. For more information from the CDC about the flu vaccine and preventing seasonal flu, visit [www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent).

**COVID-19...** Health officials encourage community members to add the COVID-19 vaccine to their annual vaccine schedule, much like the flu shot. COVID-19 shots will be offered at most of the same locations as the flu shot, along with your local health care provider. It is also recommended that you test for COVID when experiencing any flu-like symptoms, such as fatigue, sore throat, fever or sinus congestion. In addition, COVID symptoms can also include nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. The Public Health Department has free rapid COVID tests available to the public while supplies last. To check on the availability of free tests or to locate a vaccine provider, contact the Public Health Department at [health@oak-park.us](mailto:health@oak-park.us) or 708.358.5480.

**Back-to-school vaccines...** If your child or children have fallen off their routine immunization schedule required for school, now is the time to get back on track. Routine immunizations are a great tool to keep kids healthy, in school and ready to learn. For information about which immunizations are required for your child or assistance accessing affordable vaccines, email [health@oak-park.us](mailto:health@oak-park.us) or call 708.358.5480.

## Village fills key leadership positions



**New Neighborhood Services Director...**The Village recently welcomed Jonathan Burch, an Oak Park resident with extensive knowledge of federal, state and local housing policy and planning approaches, to the position of Assistant Village Manager/Neighborhood Services Director. His arrival comes after the Village Board approved a reorganization that included the creation of a standalone Neighborhood Services Department to oversee and elevate housing programs, code compliance and grants management, while placing a renewed focus on

neighborhood and community engagement, as well as civic education and participation. More information is on the Village website at [www.oak-park.us/NSDirector](http://www.oak-park.us/NSDirector).



**New Chief Sustainability Officer...**Lindsey Roland Nieratka was hired as the Village's new Chief Sustainability Officer earlier this summer. Roland Nieratka is a leader in developing and implementing climate-focused sustainability programs. A native of Peoria, Ill., she spent much of her professional career in Florida prior to arrival in Oak Park, including her most recent position as Sustainability Manager for the City of Boca Raton, Fla. Her role includes helping the Village continue to implement the Climate Ready Oak Park plan adopted in 2022. More

information is on the Village website at [www.oak-park.us/cso24](http://www.oak-park.us/cso24).

## Paper shredding and foam recycling event planned

**O**ak Parkers are invited to safely dispose of sensitive documents and foam products with the No. 6 symbol at a free paper shredding and foam recycling event scheduled for 9 a.m. to noon, Saturday, Sept. 21 at the Public Works Center, 201 South Blvd.

**Paper shredding...**Each household is limited to two bags or small boxes of paper items with personal information such as canceled checks, documents containing credit card numbers, social security numbers and medical information. Paper materials that can be placed in the recycling cart or bin, such as newspaper, magazines, chipboard or junk mail, will not be accepted.

**Foam recycling...**Foam products with the No. 6 symbol are not accepted as part of the Village's single-stream recycling program with waste hauler LRS. To fill the gap, the Village has scheduled Dart Container Corporation to collect foam products. Please follow these guidelines:

- Deposit foam products in a clear or translucent bag.
- Make sure foam has the No. 6 recycling symbol on it.
- Rinse or wipe foodservice containers.
- No straws or lids.
- No foam packaging peanuts.

For more information, contact [publicworks@oak-park.us](mailto:publicworks@oak-park.us) or 708.358.5700.



## Tips for rodent proofing your property

**O**ak Parkers may notice increased rodent activity outdoors during the summer and fall. Oak Park Public Health Department officials remind residents that the community can work together to control the rodent population, though it will never be entirely eliminated. There are many steps homeowners, renters and businesses can take to prevent rodent infestations, including managing refuse containers by keeping lids closed, not overfilling containers and ensuring bags of refuse are not ripped open when placing them in containers. Other steps residents can take to prevent rodent infestations include removing exterior clutter where rats like to burrow by keeping fence lines clear, removing pet feces and storing firewood away from exterior walls and off the ground. Find more ways to rodent proof your property on the Village website at [www.oak-park.us/rodentproofing](http://www.oak-park.us/rodentproofing).

**West Nile Virus threat continues...**While mosquitoes are likely to become less active as summer heat diminishes, the threat of West Nile Virus could continue as late as mid-October. Public health officials urge residents not to become complacent and to continue taking precautions to prevent being bitten by mosquitoes. The most effective precautions include wearing long sleeves and pants, limiting time spent outdoors at dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active and wearing insect repellent containing DEET, Picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus. Residents can also eliminate mosquito breeding grounds on their property by getting rid of standing water in places like birdbaths, buckets and gutters. Rain barrels should have a mesh screen on top. Visit [www.oak-park.us/fightthebite](http://www.oak-park.us/fightthebite) or email [health@oak-park.us](mailto:health@oak-park.us) for more information.



## Harvest season at the Farmers' Market

**W**ith fall comes a changing variety of produce at the Oak Park Farmers' Market. Plums, nectarines, pears, squash, pumpkins, apples and cider are just some of the seasonal favorites now available along with meats, eggs, honey and cheese from the more than two dozen regular Market vendors.

**Stone Soup marks ends of season...**The Oak Park Farmers' Market season concludes with stone soup served to patrons at the final Market on Oct. 26. The tradition of serving stone soup at the last market of the season was inspired by a European folk tale that has, for hundreds of years, called on people to live generously, even in times of need. Residents are invited to read a popular version of the stone soup tale at [www.oak-park.us/stonesoup](http://www.oak-park.us/stonesoup).

**When and where...**The Oak Park Farmers' Market is held from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. every Saturday through October in the Pilgrim Church parking lot at 460 Lake St., just west of Ridgeland Avenue. For more information, visit [www.oak-park.us/farmersmarket](http://www.oak-park.us/farmersmarket).

## Village adjusting how it responds to some emergency calls

**T**he Village is launching an Alternative Response to Calls for Service Pilot Program this fall with the goal of enhancing overall community well-being and offering a compassionate alternative to emergency calls related to mental health. Earlier this year the Village Board approved Phase 1 of the plan, which will focus on two critical components: Providing an unarmed response to low-risk calls and implementing a Community Care Navigation model.

**Unarmed response to low-risk calls...**Phase 1 introduces an unarmed response to low-risk calls through the employment of non-sworn Community Service Officers (CSOs). This approach addresses calls unrelated to mental health crises that don't necessitate a traditional police response. By hiring three additional CSOs, the Village aims to handle calls related to issues such as property damage, minor thefts, motor vehicle accidents and falls occurring on public property more efficiently and effectively. The CSOs will be civilian members of the Police Department, trained to manage these specific situations without carrying firearms.

**Community Care Navigation...**The second component of Phase 1 involves the implementation of the Community Care Navigation model. This model will be supported by the Village hiring one program manager and two mental health clinicians. These professionals will provide essential follow-up care and connect community members to additional services after emergency interactions. This care model emphasizes continued support and linkage to services, addressing needs that may not be met through a conventional emergency response. Community Care Navigators will follow up with individuals and their families, offering a warm introduction to various community service providers. Their role also includes rapid response to direct calls to the Village related to unhoused individuals and traumatic community events.

The implementation of the Alternative Response to Calls for Service Pilot Program marks the culmination of extensive efforts to assess how the Village responds to emergency calls. This included community advocacy for reimagining public safety, state legislation such as the Community Emergency Services and Support Act (CESSA), and insights from the BerryDunn Community Safety Study. Collaboration with internal and external public safety partners also shaped the proposed model, aligning with the Village Board's goals. For more background about the project, visit [www.oak-park.us/communitysafety](http://www.oak-park.us/communitysafety) or contact [communitysafety@oak-park.us](mailto:communitysafety@oak-park.us).

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## Spotlight on suicide prevention

**S**eptember is Suicide Prevention Month, and the Village is partnering with the Oak Park Community Mental Health Board and Thrive Counseling Center to share resources and increase the conversation on this topic. Throughout the month of September, Oak Park residents are invited to pick up a *You Matter* sign at Village Hall, 123 Madison St., or the Community Recreation Center, 229 Madison St., and display it in their yards. By posting a picture of their yard signs, residents can participate in a social media contest. Find more information at [www.oak-park.us/SPMcontest](http://www.oak-park.us/SPMcontest). The yard sign highlights 988, the national suicide and crisis lifeline, which people can text or call at any time to talk to a mental health professional. If you notice a friend or family member is not acting like themselves, is excessively worried or anxious, or has mentioned thoughts of suicide, reaching out to them could make all the difference. Ask if they would like to talk, and check out [www.oak-park.us/MentalHealth](http://www.oak-park.us/MentalHealth) for more resources.

View with a smartphone camera.



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



Village President Vicki Scaman

Trustees  
Susan Buchanan  
Lucia Robinson  
Chibuike Enyia  
Brian D. Straw  
Cory J. Wesley

Village Clerk Christina M. Waters  
Village Manager Kevin J. Jackson

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Oak Park, Illinois

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Postal Carrier  
Pre-Sort



## Celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month at ¡Viva! Festival

Fun for the entire family awaits at Oak Park's second annual ¡Viva! Festival planned for Sept. 28. The outdoor celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month will be held from noon to 3 p.m. on the south lawn at Village Hall, 123 Madison St., and will feature food, entertainment, activities for kids and much more. For more information about the Village's Hispanic Heritage Month celebration, visit [www.oak-park.us/HispanicHeritage](http://www.oak-park.us/HispanicHeritage).

### Celebre el Mes de la Herencia Hispana en ¡Viva! Festival

Diversión para toda la familia espera en el segundo evento anual ¡Viva! de Oak Park. Festival previsto para el 28 de septiembre. La celebración al aire libre del Mes de la Herencia Hispana se llevará a cabo en el jardín sur de Village Hall, 123 Madison St., y contará con comida, entretenimiento, actividades para niños y mucho más. Para obtener más información sobre la celebración del Mes de la Herencia Hispana en el Village, visite [www.oak-park.us/HispanicHeritage](http://www.oak-park.us/HispanicHeritage).

## News you can use

**Frank Lloyd Wright races to close streets temporarily...**The Park District of Oak Park's 48th Frank Lloyd Wright Races are planned for the morning of Sunday, Oct. 20. Several streets will be closed and traffic flow on others restricted to one way from about 6 to 11 a.m. the day of the race. The event features a 10K, 5K and youth mile and typically welcomes more than 2,000 participants along the tree-lined streets of Oak Park. Find more information and a map of the race route at [www.pdop.org/flw](http://www.pdop.org/flw).

**Community forum to focus on preventing homelessness...**The Village is hosting a community forum on Oct. 23 to discuss policies, programming and strategies designed to prevent homelessness for individuals and families. The forum will take place from 6 to 8 p.m. in the Veterans Room at the Oak Park Public Library, 834 Lake St. More information is at [www.oak-park.us/1023forum](http://www.oak-park.us/1023forum).

**Municipal job openings posted online...**Residents interested in working for the Village of Oak Park can keep track of job openings at [www.oak-park.us/jobs](http://www.oak-park.us/jobs), where descriptions and qualifications are posted for specific positions. Most open positions require applicants to fill out an employment application and equal employment opportunity form, which can be submitted digitally. Separate forms must be submitted for each position since applications are not retained once a job is filled. For more information on Village hiring policies and procedures, email [hr@oak-park.us](mailto:hr@oak-park.us).

## Trick-or-treat hours

Each year, the Village Board sets the official hours for Halloween trick or treating. Typically, the hours are 4 to 8 p.m., Oct. 31. Parents are urged to accompany young children, especially after dark, and inspect all treats. Other safety tips include:

- Use make-up instead of masks.
- Choose flame-retardant costumes.
- Wear light-colored clothing or add reflective tape to dark colored costumes.
- Give and accept only wrapped and packaged candy.
- Go out in daylight and carry a flashlight in case of delay.
- Stay within your neighborhood and visit only homes you know.

For more information on Halloween safety, visit [www.oak-park.us/halloween](http://www.oak-park.us/halloween).