

FROM VICTORY GARDENS  
TO CRISIS GARDENS,

IT'S **GARDENING**  
**REIMAGINED**

“MORE INDIVIDUALS ARE REACHING OUT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT FOOD GROWING AS A RESULT OF THE COVID-19 CRISIS.” —Jeannie Iseman, The Gardenworks Project

**I**N TIMES OF CRISIS, history has shown that communities often band together to reach more localized self-reliance. Victory gardens, a war-time campaign during World War II to increase the local food supply within the country, supplemented nearly 40% of all produce consumed by 1944. Present-day “crisis gardens” are a result of challenged economic conditions, shortages in food as a result of a complex national supply chain and panic buying, and a general desire to spend more time outdoors.

The GardenWorks Project, a local non-profit organization that promotes organic suburban agriculture to improve the well-being of the community, the environment, and people facing food insecurity, has supported this recent influx of interest within the region. It has responded to the increase in those wanting to grow for themselves this year by continuing to provide educational events and resources, as well as access to seeds and seedlings during its spring and fall seedling sales. Plus, The GardenWorks Project offers access to community garden spaces and additional opportunities for gardeners of all skill levels to participate in the gardening season this year.

“More individuals are reaching out to learn more about food growing as a result of the COVID-19 crisis,” says Jeannie Iseman, Executive Director of The GardenWorks Project. Seed hoarding is one

of the unique results of this pandemic, as seen by the organization’s staff, with seed companies selling out of their stock and even websites shutting down due to high traffic.

“It’s estimated that 20 million ‘new gardeners’ were created during 2020, and studies show they’ll be back for more in 2021,” says Katie Rotella, spokesperson for Ball Horticultural Company, a West Chicago business with a global family of breeding, research and distribution companies that span six continents and 20 countries. “With demand and competition for products high going into spring, learning to start some vegetables and flowers from seed will be helpful to kick-start your garden.”

But, there is no cause for worry according to Rotella. As mail-order seed catalogs sell out, she suggests watching for garden stores to supply the rising demand with plants. “Our industry is aware of how excited folks are for spring, and greenhouses are at capacity now to provide flowers, vegetables and herbs to shoppers once the weather breaks and it’s safe to plant,” Rotella says.

For more information on the movement to grow food to nourish your family and your neighbors in need, visit [gardenworksproject.org](http://gardenworksproject.org).

*\*Information contained in this community partner spotlight is courtesy of The GardenWorks Project, with contributions from Ball Horticultural Company.*



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## FROM THE *mayor*

**I T IS MY HOPE** that by now you have heard about the strategic process that is underway to create a 20-year Comprehensive Plan appropriately named *West Chicago Forward*, which will map the future of our great community. The Plan will address important issues such as land use, economic development, housing, transportation, parks, community health, and more.

Perhaps you have seen our outreach efforts on our website, social media channels, resident e-newsletters or LED message board soliciting your feedback through a survey. If you have already taken the time to respond, thank you. If you have not, I encourage you to do so immediately.

The survey is linked on the project website, [westchicagoforward.com](http://westchicagoforward.com), which also contains frequent updates on the Plan's progress including upcoming meetings to discuss the Plan. One such meeting is a visioning workshop scheduled for Tuesday, April 20, 2021 held by the West Chicago Plan Commission.

Our goal is to hear from every resident and business owner and to learn from your collective experiences and insights of how we can improve our City. As the name suggests, *West Chicago Forward* implies action, and we need you take action if you haven't already done so for this Plan to be successful.

The results of the surveys and workshops will help the City understand what is important to you, the challenges you face, concerns you have, and your ideas for community/lifestyle enhancements.

Those who complete the survey, which will remain active through the end of May, can register to receive e-mail updates about the project and enter for a chance to win a \$25 gift card to Kindred Coffee.

We will strive to complete *West Chicago Forward* by late 2021 or early 2022.

## RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PERMIT FAQs

### Q: How do I obtain a permit for a fence?

New fences or even replacements of existing fences (longer than ten linear feet) require you to obtain a permit. To apply, please complete a fence permit application and provide us with a copy of your plat of survey. You will need to tell the City the fence location, style and height. Please allow for three to five business days for permits for fences to be processed. The fee for a fence permit is \$55.

### Q: Do I need a permit to tear down my shed and put up a new one in the same place?

Yes. You will need to submit a completed permit application and a copy of your plat of survey. Also, please draw the proposed location of your shed on the copy of your plat and indicate the shed size (L x W x H) and distance from property lines. The permit fee is \$80.

### Q: I want to replace my asphalt driveway with concrete. Is a permit needed?

Whether you choose blacktop, concrete or brick pavers, new or replacement driveways always require a permit. Remember that work in the public right-of-way (apron area) requires the homeowner to hire a contractor registered with the City or to make a deposit that will be refunded once the work is approved. The fee for a driveway permit is \$80.

### Q: Is a permit needed to add a new service walk?

The addition or replacement of walkways on private property does not require a permit. Keep in mind that sidewalks cannot be located alongside a driveway, as this

would be considered driveway widening. Permits are needed, however, if you are adding or replacing a stoop, stairs or steps to ensure step dimensions are code compliant. The fee for a stoop, stairs or steps permit is \$80.

### Q: We plan to purchase an above-ground swimming pool for our family. Do we still need a permit for a small, inflatable pool?

Sometimes. A permit is required for any above-ground pool with a water depth of two feet (24 inches) or more. In-ground pools, on the other hand, always require a permit. To apply for a permit, please provide the City with a completed application, plat of survey with proposed location and manufacturer's product specifications. The permit fee is \$135 for above-ground pools and \$315 for in-ground pools. Please allow ten working days for your permit to be reviewed.

### Q: Do I need to submit architectural plans if I want to build a new porch or deck?

No. If you are adding or replacing a deck, porch, pergola, canopy, or three-season room, please provide us with a completed building permit application, plat of survey to indicate the proposed location and drawings to include foundation, footings, construction type and any electrical or mechanical work planned, if applicable. We will evaluate your project and ensure it meets Building Code. Plan review time takes ten working days and the permit fees range from \$105 to \$135.



**DUPAGE HABITAT FOR HUMANITY (DHH)** has created a new program called *Community Cares Week*. DHH volunteers assist income-qualifying

residents with exterior home repair projects. DHH has chosen the West Chicago community to launch the first such event the week of May 25 – 29, 2021. Applications

and more details are available at [westchicago.org](http://westchicago.org), or by contacting Jill Sobie at [jsobie@dupagehabitat.org](mailto:jsobie@dupagehabitat.org) or (630) 510-3737 x315. The deadline to apply is April 9, 2021.



# IMPROVE OUR COMMUNITY WITH **TREES**

**A**CCORDING TO THE NEW PHYTOLOGIST FOUNDATION'S *PLANTS, PEOPLE, PLANET*, trees play a critical role for people and the planet. Numerous studies have demonstrated that the presence of trees and urban nature can improve people's mental and physical health, children's attention and test scores, the property values in a neighborhood, and beyond. They cool our urban centers and are essential for healthy communities and people.

The City of West Chicago understands the importance and benefits of trees in the community and plans for the addition of approximately 100 parkway trees annually. Typically, ten different tree species recommended for City parkways in Northern Illinois are used and planted mainly to replace dead, dying, diseased, or damaged trees previously removed from the City's rights-of-way. Watering bags are placed with each new tree and residents are provided instructions and asked to water them. The first year, City staff will monitor and water new trees as they establish. Restrictions are

placed on where trees may be planted to help ensure long-term survivability, and budget constraints limit the number of trees planted annually. Residents may request a parkway tree, and will be placed on a list to receive a tree if their parkway meets requirements to allow for a new tree. If a tree is removed from a residential parkway and the parkway meets requirements to allow for a tree replacement, a letter will be sent prior to the next available planting program and a homeowner's tree preferences may be made based on the list of available trees.

## *Dates* TO REMEMBER

- April 5 – 9** Free Leaf Collection
- April 5** Yard Waste Collection Begins
- April 6** Consolidated Election
- April 5 – 30** Spring Hydrant Flushing
- April 19** State of the City Address (Online)
- May 3** Brush Pickup Begins
- May 3 – 7** Citywide Collection
- May 31** City Hall Closed
- June 5** Paper Shredding Event

Visit [westchicago.org](http://westchicago.org) under Residents for full details on services.



# MAXIMIZE THE CRITICAL LEARNING PERIOD OF **BIRTH TO THREE**

**A**N INNOVATIVE PROGRAM offered by West Chicago School District 33, the Birth to Three Program, helps parents maximize this critical period of learning for their child. According to educators, these early years see children learning more and at a faster pace than at any other time in life. In fact, according to some researchers, 85% of brain development happens before

age five, and the experiences parents provide to their child helps to shape their future. The program focuses on:

- Parent-child interactions and the parent-child relationship
- Parenting topics such as behavior, potty-training, and sleep
- Family well-being and connections to resources

Families who are expecting a baby or who have children under age three may apply. Developmental, vision, and hearing screenings are available for any children in the community beginning at three months of age. Due to the pandemic, screenings are virtual via phone or video calls. For more information visit [wego33.org/domain/15](http://wego33.org/domain/15) or call (630) 473-0778.



**G**ALLERY 200 IS READY to reawaken spring with refreshing works of art created in the spirit of the season. Artists will celebrate in April and May with an exhibit of *Art in Full Bloom*, bringing the full spectrum of work created to stir the imagination. Painting, photography, glasswork and jewelry are just some of the media on exhibit. Artists throw the doors wide open and invite the community to enjoy browsing and shopping again.

Gallery 200 and People Made Visible will be hosting the exhibit *Frida Inspired* at 103 W. Washington Street during the

months of June and July to showcase the work of local artists inspired by influential Mexican artist Frida Kahlo. Those interested in participating should visit gallery200.net for all the details. Entries must be received no later than May 15, 2021, and notification of inclusion will be sent no later than May 20, 2021.



**T**HE CULTURAL ARTS COMMISSION is preparing its upcoming outdoor art exhibit, which will be installed on street banners throughout the downtown this spring and summer. *Take Flight* will bring a wide and varied collection of artwork for residents and visitors to enjoy through September. A companion project, which will involve youth and senior citizens, will be installed at Gallery 200 and will add a delightful, elevating and inspired element to the Gallery's front window at the corner of Main Street and Fremont Street. More details will be released soon.



## BEES TAKE FLIGHT AT KRUSE HOUSE

**W**HILE THE NATIVE BEES SNOOZED under the leaf litter or in their underground tunnels, and the honeybees hibernated in their hives, garden art bees were taking shape in the garage workshops of West Chicago Garden Club (GC) members. From paper pattern and plywood, bee bodies and wings were assembled, then primed with a double coat of paint before taking flight into the arms of 12 GC artists. These unique 48" bees will land in the Kruse House Garden, at 527 Main Street, the first week of May. While the primary focus of the project is artistic, the GC will also use the opportunity to "bee responsible" and share how everyone can help protect these endangered super pollinators.

Each magnificent bee will have a bee fact as part of the display. Imagine the rich opportunity the Kruse House Museum and Garden has to offer visitors of all ages this year - the lovely gardens, the art, the education, and a tour of the century old house filled with historic artifacts.

*Photograph taken at Kruse House Garden by Kerry Perry.*



## OVERNIGHT PARKING REMINDER

Parking on City streets is prohibited between the hours of 2:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m. - violators will be ticketed. If you need to park your vehicle overnight you must contact the Police Department by phone at (630) 293-2222 or submit your request using the online form. Requests must be received prior to 2:00 a.m. There is a limit of three requests within a thirty day period and overnight parking cannot be granted for residents of multi-family (apartment) buildings. Please also note that overnight parking will not be granted when there are two inches or more of snowfall.