

ALEBRIJES

CREATURES OF A DREAM WORLD COMING TO DUPAGE IN 2022

...A CELEBRATION OF MEXICAN ARTISANSHIP AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

“We are excited to share this work with the community,” said Fernando Ramirez, President and Founder of the Mexican Cultural Center DuPage, based in the City of West Chicago. “It’s gratifying to see our collaboration and partnership with Mexican artists lead to a major installation like this. People are going to love it, and they’re going to learn some fascinating things about Mexico’s cultural traditions.”



AN EXCITING PROJECT HAS BEEN BREWING SINCE LAST SUMMER when Mayor Pineda met with representatives of the DuPage Convention & Visitors Bureau and the Mexican Cultural Center DuPage to learn about an epic artistic collaboration with Cantigny Park which will promote West Chicago as a host community for a number of the included artists who will be working locally at Gallery 200, and bolsters West Chicago’s reputation as an arts forward community. The following information has been provided about *Creatures of a Dream World*, a celebration of Mexican artisanship and cultural diversity.

When Mexican artist Pedro Linares dreamed of the mythical creatures he would call *alebrijes*, he created a phenomenon that incorporates a variety of Mexican and world folktale themes and melds traditional Mexican artisanship into beautifully creative sculptures.

The artistic form he made popular came to him in a dream where he was healed from an illness by the natural forest scenes and the mythical creatures he encountered on paths where the range of life forms and emotions melded together to create captivating alebrijes.

In the Mexico City style of *La Noche de los Alebrijes*, Cantigny Park will fall under the mythical veil of artistic creation springing from nature’s beauty in 2022. Visiting Mexican artisans will construct over 40 alebrijes for site specific installations throughout the beautiful garden settings that have made Cantigny Park a destination for over 50 years. Most recently, the artistry of this vivid craftsmanship that is married with this extraordinary artistic tradition,

was featured in the Pixar movie *Coco*.

“*Creatures of a Dream World* will be a park-wide celebration of Mexican culture, and a must-see for families throughout the region,” said Timothy P. Knight, President and CEO of the Robert R. McCormick Foundation and Cantigny Park.

The Chicago-based McCormick Foundation, Cantigny’s parent organization, awarded a grant to the Mexican Cultural Center DuPage to help make the exhibit possible, along with sponsorship funding from the National Museum of Mexican Art in Pilsen.

In collaboration with the Mexican Cultural Center DuPage, Cantigny Park and the DuPage Convention and Visitors Bureau will host six Mexican artisans for three months leading up to the exhibition, creating programming to raise awareness and celebrate DuPage County’s cultural diversity through art while strategically connecting DuPage County residents, stake holders and visitors.

Thirty smaller creatures (about 5 feet long) will be crafted in Mexico and shipped to DuPage County. However, 18 larger ones—up to 13 feet tall and 8 feet wide—are to be constructed and painted in local studios. The artists will live and work in DuPage County for three months leading up to the exhibition opening.

Before and during the exhibit, public and educational programming throughout DuPage County will be extensive, from studio demonstrations and talks by the artists to lectures about Mexican heritage and culture. In addition, Cantigny itself anticipates numerous special events, such as themed garden tours and dinners, concerts by Mexican musicians, and artistic workshops for children.



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WEST CHICAGO HAS A LONGSTANDING APPRECIATION FOR ITS NATURAL RESOURCES

and recognizes the need to be proactive to ensure they will endure and thrive for future generations. We have an active volunteer Environmental Commission, and its members look for opportunities to collaborate on programs and initiatives with community partners like The Conservation Foundation, SCARCE, the Green Disciples of the First United Methodist Church, the DuPage Monarch Project, the National Wildlife Federation and others. For those interested in joining the Environmental Commission, please submit an online application which may be found under Residents/Forms and Applications at westchicago.org.

Through successful collaborations, countless residents have purchased rain barrels, composted pumpkins, recycled holiday lights, and gained an appreciation for pollinators. So many people in our community recognize the need to conserve and embrace environmental stewardship.

Our urban forestry and prairie restoration programs, and our emphasis on native planting, so pollinators have abundant nourishment when passing through our community, have been extremely successful. These practices are spilling over to all neighborhoods throughout the community.

Recently, the City launched a dedicated web section for Environmental Stewardship to educate, inform and inspire our community and beyond about how West Chicago is making a difference through recycling programs, water conservation, and much more. We want to share the ways in which West Chicagoans are making everyday choices with greater care to sustain a healthier life and a cleaner environment for themselves, their families, and their community. They are environmental champions making a difference and setting an example, and their efforts are appreciated and celebrated. I hope you will take some time and feel some pride in what you and your neighbors are doing by exploring the Environmental Stewardship web pages found at westchicago.org under About West Chicago.

✓ TAKENOTE

Winter Season Reminders

■ CHRISTMAS TREE COLLECTION -

The dates of collection are January 3 – 14, 2022. Trees need to be free of lights, garland, tinsel, etc. otherwise drivers will tag the tree and leave it for the following week. If tree decorations are not removed by the second week's collection, the customer will have to put a sticker on it and it would be picked up the following week as trash. Please do not put trees in plastic bags.



■ HOLIDAY LIGHTS REMOVAL -

Please remember to remove your holiday lighting no later than March 25, 2022.

■ COMMERCIAL EQUIPMENT -

The storing of any commercial equipment or vehicles used in winter weather, such as snow plows, salt spreaders or snow blades, is not allowed and will

result in a ticket being issued without any prior notice.

■ SNOW REMOVAL & PARKING -

Residents should be aware that the City Ordinance imposes a parking ban on all streets after a two-inch snowfall until such time as the street has been completely plowed curb-to-curb. It is illegal to plow or shovel snow from driveways or sidewalks into the street. While staff tries their best to plow snow and keep it out of residents' driveways, inevitably some gets onto the driveway aprons at times, and it is the homeowner's responsibility to clear it.

Police Matters

THE WEST CHICAGO POLICE DEPARTMENT has recently purchased an APEX officer training system. This system offers a new way for officers to practice de-escalation techniques, traffic stops, use of force applications and more through virtual reality based scenarios. APEX has thousands of different scenarios that our trainers can use with our officers. This allows our officers to learn more effectively and in a safer environment.

Another way the City's Police Department personnel are moving forward is through the Explorers Program. Police Officers are training and working with young residents who have an interest in law enforcement. This is an amazing pro-

gram that teaches the Explorers about police duties such as traffic stops, first aid, investigations, etc., as well as important life lessons such as communication, relationships, etc. The Explorers meet twice a month for training as well as assist at various special events throughout the City. To be an Explorer you must: be at least 14 years old (and completed 8th grade) or 15 years old through 20 years old, live within West Chicago School Districts' 33 or 94 boundaries, and have a genuine interest in law enforcement. The City is always accepting new applications for this program. For more information, or to obtain an application, please contact Officer Nielsen at (630) 293-2222 or rnielsen@westchicago.org.





ARTS & CULTURE

Gallery 200

103 West Washington Street

Hours: Thursdays & Fridays - 2:00 to 6:00 p.m.

Saturdays & Sundays - 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Visit the online store anytime at Gallery200.net.

AT GALLERY 200

S MALL GIFTS OF ART WILL CONTINUE IN JANUARY WITH THE ADDITION OF MORE participating artists. The continuation of the sale will provide an opportunity to more leisurely browse the unique artwork after the rush of holiday gift buying and perhaps treat oneself to a “small gift of art”.

A funding grant from the Illinois State Board of Education led to a new partnership last year between West Chicago School District 33 and the Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE) for after-school arts programming in four schools until 2025. Teachers and teaching artists have developed a curriculum that is engaging students in explorations of themselves and their community. Gallery 200 organizers are hopeful that a display of art from the after-school program will be available for the public’s viewing pleasure.

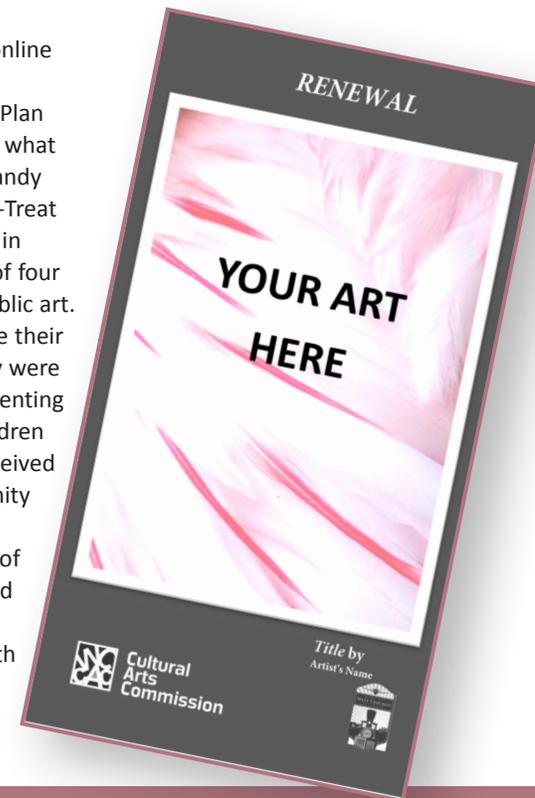
Student artwork spills into the month of March with the annual District 33 exhibit *Art is the Heart of the City*. Art teachers will host a reception for the month-long exhibit on Thursday, March 3, 2022 from 4:00 – 7:00 p.m.

COMMISSION NEWS

A S WE TURN THE CORNER ON A NEW AND HOPEFUL YEAR, the West Chicago Cultural Arts Commission has chosen *Renewal* as the theme for the 2022 Art Banner Exhibit, and a call for art inspired by the concept has been released to local and regional artists. The theme is broad enough for a wide range of interpretations, and Commission members anticipate it will spark an exciting collection of curated art for the juried

exhibit. For all the details, and a link to the online submission form, visit westchicago.org/arts.

Work continues on the Public Art Master Plan with youth in the community weighing in on what kind of art they’d like to see in the City. A “candy wrapper poll” taken at the Library’s Trunk-or-Treat event, surveyed 241 kids through an activity in which they placed a candy wrapper on one of four picture boards depicting various forms of public art. Participating children were excited to provide their opinions, and parents were thrilled that they were being asked, expressing gratitude and commenting positively on the creative way to engage children with the art planning process. Sculptures received 66 votes, Murals received 49 votes, Community Art received 73 votes, and Interactive Art received 53 votes. As a result of the success of the outreach, Commission members gathered to offer a Community Art Project at Frosty Fest, where a giant snowball was created with pipe cleaners, and hung in the window of Republic Bank on Main Street.



Saying goodbye...

“The best is yet to come for this wonderful community.” —Rosemary Mackey



IT’S HARD TO IMAGINE ALMOST 16 YEARS HAVE PASSED since being hired by the City of West Chicago as Marketing and Communication Coordinator. Retirement is bittersweet when you love what you do, and departing without personally saying goodbye and sharing my gratitude for the opportunity, is unthinkable. The relationships formed with so many warm and caring community members and City colleagues, the meaningful projects on which we collaborated, and the overwhelming support I have received over the years from our City elected officials and senior management, will stay with me always. I am deeply grateful for all of it and extend my sincere wish for West Chicago’s continued prosperity. I know the best is yet to come for this wonderful community.

THE FORECAST LOOKS BRIGHT FOR 2022, with the following special events lined up for the community's enjoyment. Make sure to save the dates.



Banners honor veterans

A PILOT PROGRAM TO HONOR WEST CHICAGO VETERANS has become a touchpoint for the gratitude and esteem the community feels for its local heroes this past Veterans' Day. Nineteen custom designed street banners, bearing the images of West Chicago veterans past and present were installed on Main Street for much of November 2021.

The red, white and blue banners contain the veteran's branch of military, years of service, and any honors or awards received, as well as a statement of thanks for their service. Veterans of World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and Operation Iraqi Freedom were included.

An interactive map featuring each banner and its location was created and, even though the banners have since come down, the map remains available online in the Maps Portal located on westchicago.org. The banners will be installed for patriotic display each year.

Mayor Pineda hopes the program will grow in the coming years so more veterans can be recognized. "We hope to add to the display in the years ahead and continue the tradition of remembering the brave men and women who have served our country over the years and secured the freedom we enjoy today."



West Chicago Forward

AS THE CITY BEGINS TO CONCLUDE ITS WORK on drafting *West Chicago Forward*, the City's new Comprehensive Plan, the City wishes to extend its sincere appreciation to all residents, business representatives, not-for-profit staff, and community leaders who participated in the creation of this document. This process could not have happened without the significant amount of community participation that occurred over the last year. The City and its planning consultant, Muse Community + Design, conducted several stakeholder interviews, community conversations, online workshops, youth engagement events, and open houses to ensure all voices in the community had an opportunity to be heard. Nearly 700 residents and over 30 business representatives participated in a survey last spring that provided a wide range of insight as to what priorities should be included in the Plan.

The draft Plan was received by the Plan Commission in December for review and the final version of the Plan is expected to be completed in early 2022. Final copies of the adopted Plan will be available at the West Chicago Library as well as on the City's website. Please continue to visit the project's website at www.westchicagoforward.com for more information on the completion of the Plan.

Dates TO REMEMBER

- January 3 – 14 Christmas Tree Collection
- Through January 21 Holiday Lights Recycling
- February 1 Deadline for Art Banner Submission
- March 3 Gallery 200 Art Reception
- March 13 Daylight Saving Time Begins
- March 25 Deadline for Removal of Holiday Lights

Visit westchicago.org under Residents for full details on services and under Community Calendar for additional community events.