



WEST WALKER WIRE

MARCH 2025

www.westwalkercivic.org

Beyond Resolutions: Spring's Call to Renew Your Health Journey *by Jenna Zaffino*

As the days lengthen and we wait for those first spring blossoms, we are presented with mother nature's invitation to renew and reflect. This energy of growth mirrors our own potential for positive change. But as we move further into the year, it's also easy for the wellness intentions we set just a few months ago to fade into the background. No shame here, it happens to the best of us.

The first quarter of the year can be a whirlwind, and sometimes our best-laid plans get derailed. Perhaps you set a goal to exercise more, eat healthier, or prioritize stress management only to find yourself without the time or desire to stay on course. The good news is that this season brings with it a chance to revisit those intentions with renewed purpose.

You don't need to start from scratch, but rather acknowledge where you are now to take the next step forward. Perhaps your initial goals were too ambitious, or maybe life threw you a curveball. That's okay. The journey to wellness isn't a straight line; it's a winding path with twists and turns.

The key is to reconnect with why you set those intentions in the first place. What are the deeper reasons behind your desire to improve your health and well-being? Perhaps it's about having more energy to enjoy life, feeling more confident in your body, or simply living a longer, healthier life.

Once you've reconnected with your motivation, it's time to make your intentions actionable. Break down those larger goals into smaller, more manageable steps. Instead of aiming for a complete diet overhaul, perhaps focus on adding one serving of vegetables to each meal.

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WITHIN THE WIRE...

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Saturday, March 15 • 10 am - 12 pm

Blazing Star School Open House
4042 N. Springfield Ave.
Open house for summer camps, 2025-26 school year, and weekly art classes.
www.blazingstarschool.com

Saturday, March 15 -

Sunday, March 16
Great Lakes Operetta presents
Operetta Around the World
Irving Park Lutheran Church
4057 N. Harding Ave.
Tickets: greatlakesoperetta.com

Friday, March 21 • 6 pm

Fish Fry at St. Edward Parish
Springfield Dominican Learning Center
4350 W. Sunnyside

Ongoing through March 22

Treewhispers Exhibition
Artists Book House
4207 W. Irving Park Rd.
Free exhibition

Tuesday, April 22 • 6:30 pm

West Walker Civic Association
General Meeting
Tavern at the Color Club
4146 N. Elston Ave.

Saturday, May 17

38th Annual West Walker Garage Sale

Sunday, May 18 • 2 pm

Irving Park Fine Arts Concert Series
presents the Flannau Duo, featuring
Jonathan Hannau: piano and Kyle Flens:
percussion
Irving Park Lutheran Church
4100 N. Harding Ave.
Free event



Dear Neighbor,

Hope you are all staying warm as we finish out winter in West Walker. This month I want to share information about two events, as well as ask for volunteers for a new committee we are forming.

Our new Wire Editor, Kim Pecka, will be forming a committee to gather ideas on improvements we can make to the Wire. If you have always wanted to get recipes from neighbors, see more cartoons, or something else - this committee maybe for you! Kim can be reached at west_walker_wire@yahoo.com if you want to volunteer.

As I mentioned last month, we are going to bring back the **General Meeting** which hasn't taken place since 2019. The meeting will be held on **Tuesday, April 22nd at 6:30 pm** in the Tavern at the **Color Club (4146 N. Elston Avenue)**. We will start with a presentation about the Association's work over the last two years since the Board turned over, feature a guest speaker, and leave time to socialize with neighbors. More details to follow!

It's also getting close to that time for the **38th Annual West Walker Garage Sale**. This year's sale will take place **May 17th** and we need volunteers for this year's committee. If you are interested in creating a flyer, making a map of homes participating, or hanging up signs the night before or taking them down after, please reach out to me at jankow2003@gmail.com

Until next month,
Erin Hunter
WWCA President



Follow West Walker Civic Association on Facebook!

Continued from page 1 - Beyond Resolutions

Instead of committing to daily gym workouts, maybe start with a brisk walk a few times a week.

Remember, progress is progress, no matter how small. Every healthy choice you make is a step in the right direction. And as you begin to see positive changes, you'll feel more motivated to keep going.

Spring is a time of renewal, a reminder that we all have the capacity for growth and transformation. Let this season inspire you to re-ignite your wellness intentions, embrace the journey, and create a vision of health that truly aligns with your values and aspirations.

WEST WALKER CIVIC ASSOCIATION

West Walker Mission Statement

"The pursuit of the West Walker Civic Association is to make our diverse neighborhood the best it can be by securing the services, safeguards and improvements the West Walker community is entitled to have."

Celebrating over 100 years of service to the West Walker Community

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Kim Pecka

WEST WALKER EMAIL BLASTS

Brian Hunter

The West Walker Wire is published monthly September through June by the West Walker Civic Association.

All story ideas, articles and ads are due 7 days prior to the 1st of each month. Submit ideas and articles to the editor at **west_walker_wire@yahoo.com**.

Please include a phone number in case we need to follow up with you.

We reserve the right to edit all submissions for space and content.

For information on advertising, please contact Shannan Bunting at shannan@solsticepr.com.



St. Edward School Events

Experience our St. Edward Community!

Join us at any of our upcoming events this month and experience

our community firsthand! We will host our first ever Fish Fry on **Friday, March 21**, in our Springfield Dominican Learning Center. BINGO Night is scheduled for the next day, **March 22**, at **6:00pm** in our church basement (AKA: Unity Hall). Finally, our annual Big Red Auction is taking place on **Saturday, April 5**, starting at **7:00pm** in Unity Hall. Any families interested in our award-winning school can meet many of our current families and alumni at the Big Red Auction, which supports our school students. Many people are still seeking community outside of the internet and we have a vibrant, loving, strong community built on 126 years of following Jesus Christ in our One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. Join us at any of these events to experience our community for yourself and hopefully make St. Edward home for your family. To tour our school, families are welcome to attend a Welcome Wednesday Tour on **March 19**

or **May 7** starting at **8:30am**. These tours are given by our principal and members of our school board. You can always schedule a tour that is more convenient for you by visiting our website, www.stedwardchicago.org. Registration is open for our 2025-2026 school year! Contact the school anytime at 773-736-9133.

Blazing Star School News

Blazing Star School is a self-directed learning center located right here in West Walker. Our school-year and summer programming focuses on exploration-based art, science, nature, and adventure, for ages 4-12!

We are looking forward to our 3rd year of summer camps, with themes this year including "Fortastic!," "Nature Ninjas," and "Things That Go!"

We have also started weekly adult and kids art classes this winter. Our next session starts on **March 12**. We have offerings such as Adult Studio Art, Art Explorers (ages 3-5), and Art Adventures (ages 6-10).

Join us for our upcoming open house on **March 15!** Visit www.blazingstarschool.com or email blazingstarschool@gmail.com for more info on any of our programs.

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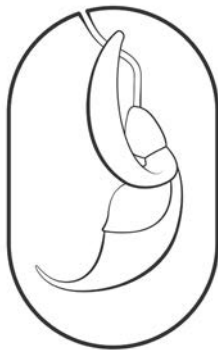


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Chicago Public Library, Independence Branch

Play Day For ages up to 5.

Mondays at 10:30 am

Bring a friend or meet a new one during our open and unstructured play group time.

March 10, 17, 24, and 31

Story Time For ages up to 5.

Wednesdays at 10:30 am

Talk, sing, read, write, and stay to play with us!

March 12 and 19

Make Your Mark: It's Per(ler)fect!

Thursday, March 20 at 4:30 pm

Use the library's beads and boards to create a special take home mosaic.

LEGO® Play For ages 5+.

Thursday, March 13 at 4:30 pm

Build and inspire others with your creations. All builds will be displayed with a juice box reception to follow.

Pajama Stories For ages up to 6 years old.

Thursday, March 13 at 6 pm

Join us for stories before bed. Snack provided

Community Cinema

Tuesday, March 11

6 pm: *Small Things Like These*, 2024, PG-13

Saturday, March 15

11 am: *Migration*, 2023, PG

1 pm: *Ghostbusters: Frozen Empire*, 2024, PG-13

Chicago Mini Musicians

Wednesday, March 26

10:15 am: Ages 2 - 4 years

11:15 am: Ages 0 - 23 months

Join Chicago Mini Musicians for a fun and engaging morning of songs and rhymes celebrating women's history month. Spots are limited - register online!

Blood Drive with the American Red Cross

Tuesday, March 25 from 1 - 6 pm

Register to secure your preferred donation time.

Register at RedCrossBloodDrive.org.

Silent Book Club For adults

Sunday, March 30 at 6 pm

Join us for 45 minutes of independent reading of whatever you like. Light refreshments will be provided.

Questions? Contact Jessica Kimpel, Children's Librarian, at 312-744-1135 or jmccarney@chipublib.org, or visit the library at 4024 N. Elston Ave.



News and Events

A 501(c)(3) non-profit connecting

the Irving Park community with programs that enrich lives through education, culture and service.

Think Spring! The Three Brothers Garden Prepares to Grow

As we slowly start to enjoy warmer weather and more sunshine during March, the Three Brothers Garden Committee will begin to plan for another season in the garden. In 2024, the garden harvested 529 pounds of fresh vegetables and herbs. Combined with 103 pounds of vegetables donated by neighborhood gardeners through our Plant A Row initiative, Carlson and the Three Brothers Garden delivered 632 pounds of fresh vegetables and herbs to the Irving Park Community Food Pantry in 2024.

The Three Brothers Garden helps Carlson to fulfill its mission of connecting the Irving Park Community with programs that enrich lives through education, culture, and service. If you have an interest in urban gardening or giving back to the community, spending time outdoors, and gathering with your neighbors for a common purpose, we encourage you to volunteer with the Three Brothers Garden in 2025. For more information, email Sara Yoest at sarayoest@carlsoncommunityservices.org or visit our website carlsoncommunityservices.org. Scroll to the bottom of our home page where you can sign up for email updates and be notified of workdays and harvest days in the garden. This is a great opportunity for neighbors of all ages.

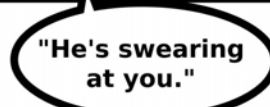
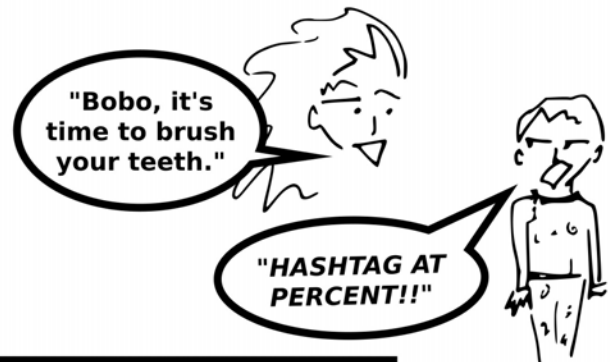


Three Brothers Garden Committee and some of the 2024 harvest donated to the Irving Park Food Pantry.



Independence Parka

by erica dreisbach



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Wild West Walker Hootenanny



Thanks to all who came out to the WWCA Wild Wild West Walker Hootenanny on February 22! Over 70 neighbors got together to eat, drink, line dance, and have some fun. Thanks to donors **The Cabin at Old Irving** and **Fat Cat Restaurant** for their generosity. Thanks to Committee members **Jenni Kus, Tara Carroll McKee, Tarin Kendrick, Laura Ell, Jane Nagle, Genevieve Morelli, and Gayle Irvin** for planning such a fun event. Thanks to volunteers **Patrick McKee, Holly Ferris, Doug Irvin, and Paul Morelli.**



Irving Park Community Food Pantry News *text and photos by Craig Shutt, Publicity & Special Events Coordinator, unless noted*

Basket Donations Needed

The Irving Park Food Pantry's annual spring program, providing our eligible clients' children 12 years and younger with baskets of toys and goodies, begins on **March 26** and runs through **April 16** (prior to Easter on April 20). We now are collecting donations for the program so we're ready for our first week, which is always popular.

The Pantry is in need of contributions of dollar-store plastic bucket-style Easter baskets (please don't donate other types to aid consistency), along with 6-inch plush animals, small cars and toys, filled (with candy or toys) plastic eggs, wrapped candies, and other small treats of any kind.

Contactless donations of items can be made using our Amazon registry using the QR code on this page. Baskets (Jumbo Easter-Themed Plastic Footed Baskets) can be purchased in bulk through the Dollar Tree website or in the store (or using the QR code below).

Locally purchased donations can be taken to the Big Helpers store at 4184 N. Elston Ave. from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Monday through Friday or the enclosed front porch at 3833 N. Tripp Ave. at any time.

We also encourage organizations to do their own collections or create assembled baskets. If interested, contact the Pantry's Special Programs Coordinator Craig Shutt at craigshutt@gmail.com for details and arrange delivery.

Thank you to Katherine Duncan, of Katherine Anne Confections, who donated 150 pieces of chocolate to the Pantry in February. We appreciate their continued support!

Thank you to Pet Supplies Plus, which donates pet food every week to the Pantry's Pet Food Corner. We make regular pickups at three (3) stores of all types of food and accessories, which are used by about half of our clients. We are always seeking pet food, especially wet and dry cat food, and we appreciate their regular donations.

For more info about the pantry, contact John Psiharis, Executive Director, at info@irvingparkfoodpantry.org or visit www.irvingparkfoodpantry.org.



The Pantry's program to provide eligible clients' children 12 or younger with a basket of goodies begins March 26th.



Sarah from Katherine Anne Confections shows off the boxes of candy the company donated to the Pantry in February.



Lisa Hendricks unloads her car of a week's worth of pickups she made at several Pet Supplies Plus stores in the area, which regularly donate pet food and accessories to the Pantry.

Scan for the Pantry's Amazon registry for the Spring Basket Program



Scan for the Dollar Tree baskets for the Spring Basket Program



Irving Park Lutheran Church News & Events

Wednesdays in Lent: Laughter & Lament

6 - 7 pm Food & Fellowship | 7 - 7:30 pm Worship

Lent is a season of self-reflection, repentance, and recommitment. As we journey through these forty days, we can grow closer to God and to one another. At IPLC, we mark the season of Lent and encourage reflection and reconnection with Wednesday evening gatherings that include food and fellowship and contemplative worship.

As has become a tradition, during the latter half of the dinner hour, we'll play games together. Past favorites include "Name that Tune," "Family Feud," "Celebrity," and more. You can participate or observe but you can count on smiling at the antics of some players.

It's also important to offer a sacred place where one can be sad, and scripture offers many invitations to and outlets for this. After the dinner hour, we move into the sanctuary for a thirty (30) minute worship service that explores various kinds of lament found in the Bible and in our lives. Each week we will consider what it means to sit with grief rather than try to push it aside. In scripture and in song, we will hear how many faithful believers have wrestled with sadness, grief, and questions about why the innocent suffer.

Lament is an element and expression of faith. When we approach God with honesty and humility, admitting, even crying out, that some things are too much for our hearts to bear, we find not a disapproving God, but one who weeps with us. God is with us in times of laughter and in times and sadness. Lent leads us not just to the cross, but to the joy of the resurrection.

Emotions, Justice, & the Church

After Worship Forums 3/2, 3/16, & 3/30

Join seminarian Hannah after worship the 1st, 3rd, and 5th Sundays in March for this three-part conversation. We will center the intersection of our own emotions, the world we live in now, the just world we are called into as Christians, and where our church community fits into this. We'll tap into many ways of knowing and expressing, including story, scripture, art-making, and tradition. Some questions we'll process together are: what is the relationship between feelings and knowledge? What is the need of my heart and of my community for which only God can fill?

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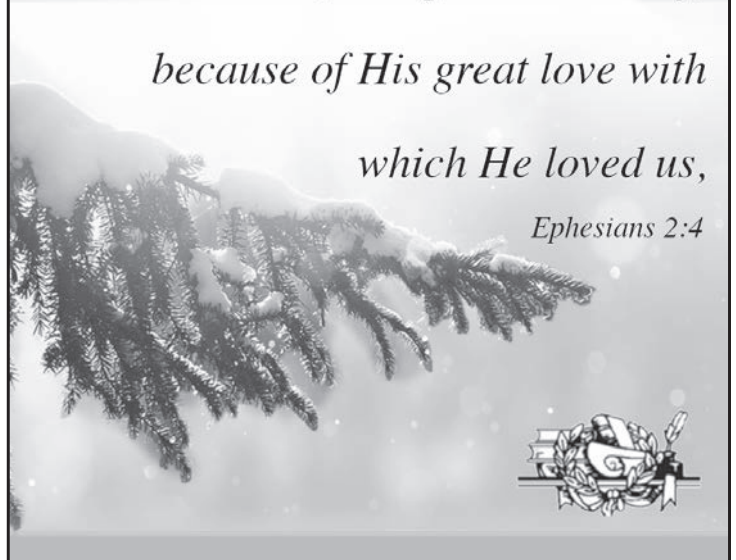
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because of His great love with

which He loved us,

Ephesians 2:4



Town Hall in the IPLC Gym

Sunday March 9th | 3-6 pm

State Rep Lindsay LaPointe, other elected officials, and advocacy groups will be holding a Town Hall in the Gym on Sunday March 9th from 3 - 6 pm. The focus is state-level bills on how to protect Healthcare/Medicaid on the federal level, as well as, how to address the state's shortage of therapists and making mental health care available to all. All are welcome.

Community Mental Health Resource Fair

Wednesday March 12 | 10-11:30 am

Hosted by LSSI In IPLC Gym

Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI) invites community leaders, clergy, and others who work in the community to learn about the mental health services in our area and how to help individuals' access to these resources. The event is free but registration by March 7 is appreciated. Email Kelly.Nieman-Anderson@LSSI.org for more information. The goal is to share more about LSSI's mental health programs in NW Chicago and how to access these services.



Chicago Park District Spring Classes Registration

Spring into healthy habits and new hobbies!

The Chicago Park District Spring Program session will be available to view on **Monday, March 3, 2025**. Online registration will open on **Monday, March 10, 2025 at 9:00 a.m.** for parks **west of California Ave.** and, on **Tuesday, March 11, 2025, at 9:00 a.m.**, for parks **east of California Ave.** In-person registration will begin at most parks on **Saturday, March 15, 2025**, or **Monday, March 17, 2025**; in-person registration times and dates vary by park. Visit the Chicago Park District website to view the registration checklist and to view programs for people of all ages and abilities - www.chicagoparkdistrict.com.

Tips for Successful Spring Program Signups:

- Sign up for an account with the Chicago Park District Active Communities site ahead of the registration date.
- Utilize the 'Park Finder' feature on the Park District site to identify all local parks with programming this spring.
- Add classes for your family to your 'Wishlist' by clicking on the heart by the activity title during the preview week.
- Log on a few minutes before registration opens, navigate to your Wishlist, wait for the countdown, and click!

Independence Park Advisory Council News

The Independence Park Advisory Council (IPAC) is looking for feedback and ideas for upcoming park programming.

If you visit the park or attend classes and events, they want to hear from you!

Please complete the brief survey using the link/code below.

<https://forms.gle/nv2y8M1eD8aE7FXK8>

Upcoming IPAC meetings are:

- **Wednesday, March 19**
- **Wednesday, April 16**



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WWCA Members

Have you renewed your membership yet for 2025?

WWCA Membership runs January 1 through December 31 annually. Your dues help fund a variety of items:

- Ten (10) issues per year of the *West Walker Wire*, delivered free to residences and businesses in West Walker
- The annual community garage sale
- Area non-profit groups like the Irving Park Community Food Pantry, Independence Park, and Independence Library
- Free email updates on neighborhood events, area crime, and a LOT MORE!

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Payment options:

- ZELLE (preferred): westwalker.2010@gmail.com or scan the QR code at left
- VENMO: @westwalkercivic
- PAYPAL: paypal.me/westwalkercivic
- Check payable to: WEST WALKER CIVIC ASSOCIATION

Mail or drop off your application and dues to: Stephen Brown, 4048 N. Harding Ave., Chicago, IL 60618



Port of Entry - Albany Park Theater Project Review

Contributed by Kim Pecka

Located just a few steps north east of the West Walker neighborhood borders on Montrose Ave, an old warehouse from the 1920s has been thoroughly and thoughtfully transformed to recreate a Chicago courtyard apartment building.

This building is home to an immersive theatre experience, created by the Albany Park Theatre Project (AFTP), in partnership with Third Rail Projects, called **Port of Entry**, led by their youth and young adult theatre ensemble. After passing this building for years, I was intrigued to see what this show, starting its sixth season of performances this February, was all about.

As described on the AFTP website, "**Port of Entry** invites you to step inside the real-life stories of immigrants and refugees from all parts of the world living side by side in a single apartment building in one of the country's most diverse immigrant communities: Chicago's Albany Park."

Tickets sold out quickly upon release last month. In addition to the popularity of this experience, one of the main reasons for selling out quickly is the fact that this intimate show has been created to allow a group of only twenty eight (28) individuals into the three (3) story building at each performance.

The magical storytelling of 'Port of Entry' began as the ensemble entered the courtyard and continued as we were led through the building, in and out of the apartments, moving as small groups, pairs, or sometimes individually, leaving no two (2) audience members with the same experience. The two (2) hour run time flew by as we experienced family life, celebrations, strife, and more through direct engagement with the talented performers. This experience was captivating, engaging, and inspiring - a truly unique and mesmerizing performance only a short walk from our neighborhood.

Though tickets are sold out for their current shows through May, last minute cancellations happen and AFTP has a sign up list available for text alerts when tickets become available:

<https://mailchi.mp/portofentrychicago/ticket-alert>

If you do get an opportunity to go, I would encourage you to take it. Leave your inhibitions at the door, engage in the experience, and let yourself be inspired by and woven into the important stories being told in this building.



FREE Things to Do in Chicago in March

Smell the flowers...

- Spectrum of Spring Flower Show at the Lincoln Park Conservatory
- Rooted in Mystery Flower Show at the Garfield Park Conservatory (Free for Chicago residents, advance registration online is encouraged!)

Celebrate St. Patrick's Day...

- Chicago River Dyeing - Saturday, March 15 at 10 am from Columbus Drive to Orleans Street
- St Patrick's Parade - Saturday, March 15 at 12:15 pm from Balbo and Columbus, proceeding north to Monroe Street

Visit an old favorite or learn something new...

- Chicago Art Institute: Mondays, Thursdays, and Fridays through March 14
- Field Museum: Wednesdays through March 31
- Shedd Aquarium: March 11, 18, and 25 from 5-9 pm
- Adler Planetarium: Wednesdays from 4 - 10 pm
- DuSable Museum: Every Wednesday
- MCA Chicago: Every Tuesday
- Chicago Botanic Gardens: March 17 - 20
- Chicago History Museum: March 4, 12, and 27
- Nature Museum: Every Thursday
- Giving Her Her Flowers Exhibit at Navy Pier

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