



WEST WALKER WIRE

MAY 2025

www.westwalkercivic.org

STEPHEN ON THE STREET by Stephen Brown

Meet Furniture Maker and “Bernese” Dad Danny of Bernese Builder

I recently had the pleasure of meeting **Danny Sawyer**, the owner and operator of **Bernese Builder**, a handmade furniture brand designed with dog lovers in mind. Earlier this year, Danny opened a new storefront and workshop at **3830 W. Irving Park Road**, after outgrowing his original space in Roscoe Village.



Accompanied by his loyal Bernese Mountain Dog, **Ezio**, Danny’s new shop serves as both a woodworking facility and a welcoming showroom, where visitors can browse a wide selection of custom furniture and home décor. The new location offers expanded space and thoughtful accessibility features – including larger doorways – making it easier to move large furniture pieces and equipment.

When he’s not crafting beautiful pieces, Danny can often be found across the street at Indie Park, where he and Ezio have already met several other Bernese pups.

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WITHIN THE WIRE...

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Saturday, May 17 • 9 am - 3 pm
38th Annual West Walker Garage and Yard Sale
See information regarding participation, permits, and volunteering on page 2

Saturday, May 17 • 2:30 - 8 pm
The Sugar Hole Opening Day Celebration Color Club
4146 N. Elston Ave.
A grand opening parade, puppet show, and crafts kicking off another season of puppets serving ice cream in our neighborhood - open summertime Saturdays and Sundays from 3 - 8 pm

Sunday, May 18 • 8 am - 12 pm
Boy Scout Pancake Breakfast
Irving Park Lutheran Church Gym
4100 N. Harding Ave.
See more information on page 8

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 with reception to follow - see more information on page 8

Sunday, June 8 • 2 - 4 pm
Blazing Star School
Open house for summer camps, 2025-26 school year, and weekly art classes.
4042 N. Springfield Ave.
www.blazingstarschool.com

Wednesday, June 18 • 6:30 pm
17th District CAPS Meeting
17th District Station
4650 N. Pulaski Road
See more information on page 11.



KIDS - CAN YOU FIND ALL TEN (10) FLOWERS HIDDEN IN THIS ISSUE? LOOF FOR



Dear Neighbor,

I'm excited to be looking at buds on the trees and tulips in bloom as I write this letter. I hope the change of seasons is adding a little pep to your step!

West Walker hosted its first General Meeting in over five years in late April and we were thrilled with the turn out. Ald. **Samantha Nugent** spoke to neighbors about CAPS, the situation at Gompers Park, tree trimming / removal, and participatory budgeting. Following her remarks and Q&A, we moved on to West Walker's presentation where I covered changes to the Wire, payment systems, the website, events, and our logo that have taken place since this board took over. I also discussed how to get a yard sign and reminded everyone about the Garage Sale this month.

Lastly, our Treasurer **Stephen Brown** covered 2024 finances and plans for 2025. Neighbors stayed to hang out at the Color Club afterwards to socialize. Thanks again to **Abby Monroe and Josh Dihle** (owners of Color Club) for hosting us! We will plan to do another General Meeting next year.

As I mentioned, the Garage Sale is **May 17 from 9 am to 3 pm**. Please contact **Jenni Kus (jennikusbds@gmail.com)** if you are interested in participating so she can add you to the map. Remember to also get a permit from your Alderman, for more information please see the events page of our website (westwalkercivic.org/events/2025/garage-sale/). If you are interested in helping out with the Garage Sale, putting up signs or taking them down, spreading the word, etc., please reach out to me (jankow2003@gmail.com) for more information.

Until next month,
Erin Hunter
WWCA President

Continued from cover page:

Beyond running Bernese Builder, Danny also gives back to the community by serving as a board member for the **Rebuilding Exchange**, an organization dedicated to promoting the reuse of building materials and offering workforce training programs.

If you're searching for dog-friendly furniture for your home – or looking for the perfect gift for a fellow dog lover – be sure to visit Bernese Builder. You can also catch Danny and his furry companions at upcoming local festivals, including **Mayfest** in Lincoln Park (May 16-18) and the **Belmont-Sheffield Music Fest** (May 23-26).

Best,
Stephen

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

2023-2025 OFFICERS

President	Erin Hunter
Co-Vice Presidents	Laura Ell & Helen Lira
Secretary	Gayle Irvin
Treasurer	Stephen Brown

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER
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Sue Trudeau & Tom Williams

EDITOR
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

What's happening at St. Edward School

We may have just over a month left of school, but we're not slowing down yet!

Soon our Pre-Kindergarteners will begin their ABC countdown to their graduation celebrations! Toward the end of the school year, all of our students participate in a "Jump Up" Day where they visit the grade they will be entering in the Fall. Teachers will share expectations for the following school year and introduce some of the topics students will learn. We also have exciting field trips coming up like our first, second, and third graders visiting the **Lincoln Park Zoo**; second graders will visit with residents at a local nursing home; and our eighth graders will offer their service at **Feed My Starving Children** before graduating and heading to High School! Serving others is an expectation of our students as we teach them to not only be intelligent but also humble, self-sacrificial, disciples of Jesus.

Once the school year comes to an end on June 6, our doors re-open on **Monday, June 9**, for our **Big Red Summer Camp**! There's still space each week for your children if you're looking for an affordable and enjoyable summer camp. Sign up for the weeks you need - our camp is open to all children. It's a great way for new students to get to know our community and make new friends before the first day of school. There's still time to sign up - www.stedwardchicago.org.

If you're interested in a Faith based camp this summer, we will offer a one-week-only faith camp called **TOTUS TUUS**. This is a Latin phrase that translates to "Totally Yours" and was the motto of St. Pope John Paul II, referring to our Blessed Mother. This week-long camp is open to children entering grades 1 - 6 during the day from 9 am - 2:30 pm and for teens entering grades 7-12 in the evenings from 7 - 9 pm. Sign up for this camp by visiting our parish website, www.stedparish.org. If you're still looking for a school to send your child to this fall, consider our award-winning school! We will be offering tours all summer, but come visit us soon as some classes are almost at capacity. To tour our school, visit our website at www.stedwardchicago.org.

Continued on page 6

Is Now A Good Time to Sell?



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Dorie Westmeyer
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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.
May 5, 12, 19, and 26

Story Time For ages up to 5.
Wednesdays at 10:30 am
Talk, sing, read, write, and stay to play with us!
May 7

LEGO® Play For ages 5+.
Thursday, May 8 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, May 22 at 6 pm
Join us for stories before bed. Snack provided.

Make Your Mark: Magnificent Mosaic
Thursday, May 15 at 4:30 pm
Bean there, done that. Explore the beauty and texture of beans and create a bean-inspired mosaic.
Thursday, May 29 at 4:30 pm
Make an un-BEE-lievable mosaic greeting cards inspired by insects.

Community Cinema
Saturday, May 10
10 am: *Wicked*, 2024, PG
1 pm: *Wicked*, 2024, PG
Sunday, May 11
2 pm: *Wicked*, 2024, PG

Redwood Literacy For ages 5 - 8 years old.
Saturday, May 17 at 3 pm
Join us for an extra special visit from reading experts, Redwood Literacy, who will share tips and games to help our budding readers bloom!

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

Independence Parka

by erica dreisbach



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**Carlson
Community
Services**

News and Events

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

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

Call for Gardeners!

Interested in deepening your gardening knowledge, spending time outdoors, and meeting new neighbors while giving back to the community? Carlson Community Services' **Three Brothers Garden** needs you! We're looking for volunteers to help with garden harvests on **Tuesday evenings from 6 - 7 pm** throughout the 2025 growing season. The garden is located at 4107 N. Pulaski, next to the Irving Park Lutheran Church parking lot. Everything grown in the garden is donated to the **Irving Park Community Food Pantry** for distribution to its clients.

If you have a passion for gardening, feeding the hungry or spending time outdoors in your community, contact **Sara Yuest** at sarayoest@carlsoncommunityservices.org or 773-810-3230.

If you'd like to be notified of garden workdays and events, sign up for our newsletter at carlsoncommunityservices.org to be added to our mailing list.



IRVING PARK FINE ARTS COMMITTEE PRESENTS

THE FLANNAU DUO

FEATURING
Jonathan Hannau: piano
Kyle Flens: percussion

MAY 18

SUNDAY @ 2:00PM

Irving Park Lutheran Church
4100 N. Harding Avenue
Reception to follow | Donations Welcome
FREE ADMISSION

The Flannau Duo is a dynamic, new music loving, tour-de-force ensemble combining piano, percussion, electronics & improvisation.



Carlson Community Services
www.carlsoncommunityservices.org

Irving Park Fine Arts presents Flannau Duo on May 18

The fourth, and final, FREE concert of our 31st season will take place on **Sunday, May 18** at **2 pm** at Irving Park Lutheran Church, 4100 N. Harding Avenue, with a reception to follow. We will welcome **Flannau Duo**, a dynamic, new music loving, tour-de-force ensemble combining piano, percussion, electronics, improvisation, and absurdism! The duo members are **Jonathan Hannau**: piano, and **Kyle Flens**: percussion. The duo specializes in eclectic programming, not adhering to any specific musical aesthetic. Flannau Duo performs in the Chicago area and beyond, exploring a multitude of sounds, styles and moods from composers and artists from every musical corner. The duo is the recipient of a 2023 Chicago DCASE individual artist grant.

The Irving Park Fine Arts concert series was created by **Roger Bingaman**, Director of Music at Irving Park Lutheran Church. The intent of the series is to bring high quality, professional music to the northwest side of Chicago, free of charge.

Details on our complete Fine Arts Concert Series can be found on our website at <https://carlsoncommunityservices.org/programs/fine-arts/this-season/>

Spring Sale

20% off **April 14 - May 10** 20% off

One Item of Your Choice

"Flowers appear on the earth; The time of singing has come..." Song of Songs 2:12a



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Continued from page 3:

Blazing Star School News

As Blazing Star wraps up our third school year, it's amazing to look back on all that our students and campers have done this year!

At Blazing Star, we take full advantage of all the amazing learning opportunities the city of Chicago has to offer. This year, our students have taken many field trips to see theater productions and visited many museums including the Shedd, Field, MSI, and Peggy Notebaert Nature museums. We've played makeshift hockey in the forest preserves on frozen swamps with sticks and rocks found in the woods. We've had a very active Pokemon club.

We've cooked and baked, both on our own and with professional guest chefs. We've learned about navigating the city by bus and train. We've watched our neighborhood Cooper's Hawk devour rodents and yellow-shafted flickers outside our window. We've built snow forts and had epic snow fort battles. We've learned about currency and tooth fairies around the world. We've done countless messy art and science projects.

We've made our own books and board games. As spring starts springing, we've sampled edible flowers and started spending as much of our school day outdoors as indoors. 

As we approach summer, we're looking forward to welcoming back many of our summer camp regulars and meeting new summer campers. We look forward to raising and releasing butterflies, making our annual pilgrimage to the Insect Asylum, making our own puppets, making self propelled machines, building stick forts at Walking Stick Woods, painting each other's faces, making our own musical instruments, and more. Check out our school year program, summer and day-off camps, and weekly art classes for kids and adults at www.blazingstarschool.com or email blazingstarschool@gmail.com for more info.

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! Visit www.blazingstarschool.com or email blazingstarschool@gmail.com for more info on any of our programs.

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

Help Pantry Clients Shop with a Cart

For some time, the Irving Park Food Pantry has provided long-time clients with large families with shopping carts to get their family's groceries to their cars, the bus, or homes. Using grants, special donations and a small budget, Client Services Coordinator **Elvia Esparza** coordinates the program to help those in most need. But with increasing costs, we no longer have a budget to cover these purchases.

If you would like to donate a cart to help the Pantry's clients by using our Amazon registry, you can use the QR code on this page. If you would like to donate toward the purchase of these carts, please use the PayPal link at www.irvingparkfoodpantry.org or send a check to **Irving Park Food Pantry**, 4256 N. Ridgeway Ave., Chicago IL 60618 and mark it for "carts."

We were pleased to learn that the **Renewed Hope United Methodist Church** has designated the Pantry as one of the primary recipients of stewardship dollars and other donations this year. We received a **\$2,500** donation recently and appreciate their ongoing support!

Some of the recent donations received:

- A carload of food thanks to the efforts of Tuesday night volunteer **Rudina Shkemi**, a board member, along with **Father Ignatios** and the congregation at **Saint Nicholas Albanian Orthodox Church**.
- Several carts of food from **Conveo**, the country's largest envelope maker, whose employees donated to the drive.
- A cartload of Asian food from **Redeemer of Calvary United Methodist Church** donated by the congregation.
- Bags of food for our clients with pets from **Famous Fido Rescue Adoption, Wellness & Learning Center**.
- A variety of all-natural body-care products made by the members of the **Ruckus Teen Entrepreneurs** at **Concordia Place**. They donated the results from their annual Buy One, Give One program.
- Ten Birthday Bags, thanks to **Erica Johnston Rowlett**, youth development specialist with **Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana**, and her **Girl Scout** troop, who donated the bags through their "Birthday in a Bag" community project.

We appreciate so much support from so many groups so we can continue our mission of being "**Neighbors Helping Neighbors!**"

The Irving Park Community Food Pantry is open on **Wednesday** mornings from **9 am - 12 pm** and on the **second Tuesday** of each month from **6 - 7 pm**. The Pantry is located at **4256 N. Ridgeway Ave.**

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



*Pantry volunteers and others enjoy Bingo Night at **Templestowe Pub**, which donated proceeds and a portion of drink sales at the event. Photo by **John Psiharis***

Amazon registry for cart donation



***Mike Becker** (left) and **Brian Dietrich** of **Conveo** dropped off with **Executive Director John Psiharis** the results of a recent food drive the company held among its employees.*

***Ruckus Teen Entrepreneurs** at **Concordia Place** donated the results of their annual **Buy One, Give One** program, in which every purchase of all-natural body-care products resulted in a donation.*



Irving Park Lutheran Church News & Events

Celebrating the 1700th Anniversary of the Nicene Creed During Eastertide

A product of the ecumenical Council of Nicaea, which met from May through July in the year 325 AD, the Nicene Creed unifies Trinitarian Christians across the centuries and around the globe. The creed arose out of a need to articulate, amidst various controversies, Christianity's understanding of radical monotheism and the relationship between Jesus and God. We'll be reciting the Nicene Creed each Sunday of this Easter season, which culminates on the Eighth Sunday of Easter, which is the feast of Pentecost (June 8).

May Adult Bible Study:

Women Who Travelled with Jesus

9:15 - 10:15 am on Sundays in the Chapel

The Adult Bible study completes this year's theme "On the Road" discussing "Jesus Through the Eyes of Women" by Rebecca McLaughlin. Various women of IPLC will lead the sessions, people of any gender are welcome to the study and additional copies of the book are available. Join us as we grow in faith and community studying the Bible together.

Scout Pancake Breakfast

8 am - 12 pm on May 18 in the Gym

Stop by the gym before or after worship on Sunday, May 18 (which is also the last day of Sunday School and the last day of 10:30 worship!) to enjoy pancakes and sausages prepared by our very own Scout Troop. The all you can eat breakfast is a fundraiser for the troop. Pancakes are served as early as 8 am up until noon.

Summer Worship Hours

Worship at 9:30 am beginning May 25th

On Memorial Day weekend, we begin our summer schedule of worship at 9:30 am, which continues through Labor Day weekend. The Sunday after Labor Day (Sunday, September 7) is Rally Day, which includes special children's programming at 9:15 am and Worship at 10:30 am.



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Summer Fellowship & Fun

Burgers, Bags, & Bonding:

4th Sundays in the Summer from 5 - 7 pm

Join us for fellowship and an easy dinner in front of and inside of the Gym early evenings on the 4th Sundays of the month this summer: **June 22, July 27, and August 24th** from 5 - 7 pm. NOTE: these are not LAST Sundays of the month—there are five (5) Sundays in both June and August this year. We'll provide burgers and hot dogs and condiments. You bring a side and friends!

Outdoor Worship & Church Picnic Independence Park

June 29th 9:30 am - noon

What a great success our outdoor worship and potluck brunch was last year! Brunch begins at 9:30 am, followed by a 30-minute worship service, followed by more fellowship and games.



Spring Foraging for Kids (and Adults!) *by Claire Jakubiszyn*

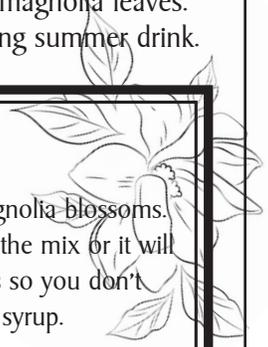
Did you know that several spring flowers are actually edible? Did you know you can find them right in our neighborhood? See if you can find all of these signs of spring around West Walker!

1. **Redbud tree** - this tree with deep pink flowers reminds me of something from Dr. Seuss in the spring! These trees are actually native to Chicago, and their early spring flowers are an important source of nectar and pollen for animals such as bees, moths, butterflies, and ruby-throated hummingbirds. Redbuds are actually in the legume family of plants- the same family as greenbeans and peas! Try eating a flower  straight from the tree with your eyes closed - does it taste like a green pea fresh from the pod?
2. **Dandelions** - pick the yellow petals off to make dandelion jelly or dandelion cookies! Just make sure they come from a pesticide-free area.
3. **Magnolia tree** - these flowers taste like ginger! You can pickle them, and their size and pink color will remind you of sushi ginger! But my favorite is making a

simple syrup out of sugar, water, and magnolia leaves. Add it to sparkling water for a refreshing summer drink.

Make Your Own Magnolia Syrup:

- a. Pull the petals off of 5 - 6 large magnolia blossoms. Don't put the middle part (stamen) in the mix or it will turn your syrup bitter. Wash the petals so you don't get any bugs (or squirrel pee) in your syrup.
- b. Mix one (1) cup of water with one (1) cup of white or cane sugar in a pot. Gently bring to a simmer - once you see tiny bubbles, turn the heat very low. Stir gently until the sugar dissolves.
- c. Sprinkle your magnolia blossoms in the pot and simmer for five (5) minutes.
- d. Strain out your petals and pour the liquid into a clean glass jar. The syrup can last up to one (1) year in the fridge or freeze in an ice cube tray for single servings throughout the year. Toss the petals out or eat them like candy since they're soaked in sugar. Try them on toast or mixed into yogurt.



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**Thank you to
renewing members:**

Rob & Heather Helfen
 Irving Park Community
 Food Pantry
 Steve & Beth Omans
 Jenni & Mike Kus
 Johanna Zorn & Family
 Alison True & Family
 Stompanato Family
 Aguirre Household
 Regan Murphy & Yaz Ebeid
 LaSota Family
 Charlene Greif
 J. Mendez



WWCA Members

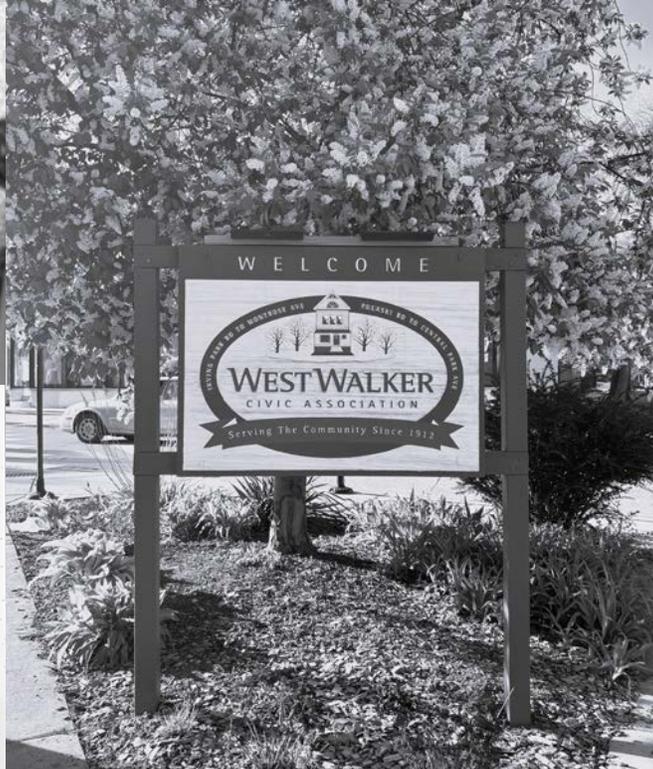
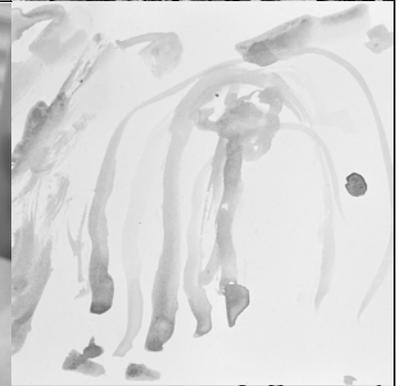
Have you renewed your membership yet for 2025?

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!

**Welcome
new members:**

Kristy Burlingame
 Lindsay McGaan
 Erin Mazzeffi
 Alissa Barks
 Julie Nam & Thomas Kim





CAPS REPORT

BEAT 1723 - April 16, 2025 Meeting

by Jenni and Michael Kus

In attendance: CAPS Officer Miro; John Campos, CPD Community Organizer; Beat Meeting Facilitator, Carla; 10 Community Members

CAPS Officer Miro welcomed everyone to the meeting and reviewed crime stats for Beat 1723 from March 15th through April 15th.

There were seventeen (17) incidents of Battery reported (domestic / simple batteries referring to an unlawful touching of another person without their consent); eight (8) incidents of Criminal Damage (vandalism to property and vehicles); eight (8) incidents of Motor Vehicle Theft (mostly cars left running by food delivery drivers); six (6) incidents of Assault (victim made to fear imminent harm even if no physical contact occurs); five (5) incidents of Deceptive Practice (primarily credit card related); and five (5) incidents of Theft (mostly retail thefts).

There were two (2) incidents of Robbery:
- April 1 | 3800 block of W. Leland Ave
The offender (dressed in all black, wearing ski mask) grabbed victim from behind by his throat, no weapon., while he was walking home.
- April 11 | 4700 block of N. Lawndale Ave (alley)
The offenders robbed victim with a knife.

There were two (2) incidents of Burglary:
- March 23 | 3800 block of W. Wilson Ave
Theft from a motor vehicle (construction van)
- April 5 | 4100 block of N. Drake Ave
Forced entry of a residence under construction.

There was one (1) Homicide incident (first degree murder) March 18th on the 3500 block of W. Sunnyside (stabbing) - the offender was arrested and charged accordingly. There was one (1) Sex Offense incident on April 9th on the 4000 block of N. Elston for Public Indecency.

CPD Community Organizer, **John Campos**, highlighted the recent CAPS events such as the Easter Egg Hunt on April 12th and the Prom Wear Drive.

The next **CAPS Meeting** is on **June 18, 2025 at 6:30 pm**, 17th District Station (4650 N. Pulaski Rd). These meetings are worth your time so please attend and bring a neighbor!

Compared to last year between the same time frame of January 1st – April 14th:

- Homicides are down 50%
- Shootings are down 66.7%
- Robberies are down 46.8%
- Burglaries are down 32.5%
- Motor Vehicle Thefts are down 34.6%.

Tips and Reminders

- **Call 9-1-1** to report emergent crimes, suspicious activity or individuals in your neighborhood, and provide detailed descriptions of the individuals and vehicles involved in any incident. **If you see something, say something**, even if you think another neighbor has already called. The police rely on the number of calls for service in determining the allocation of officers to a district.

- If you suspect drug trafficking in your area, please visit <https://webapps1.chicago.gov/eforms/drugTrafficking> and fill out the form with as many details as possible. What helps the police investigate reports of drug trafficking in your neighborhood are the detailed descriptions of patterns (what days of the week; time of day; location; people and vehicles involved, etc.). The form helps you know what details to note before making a report.

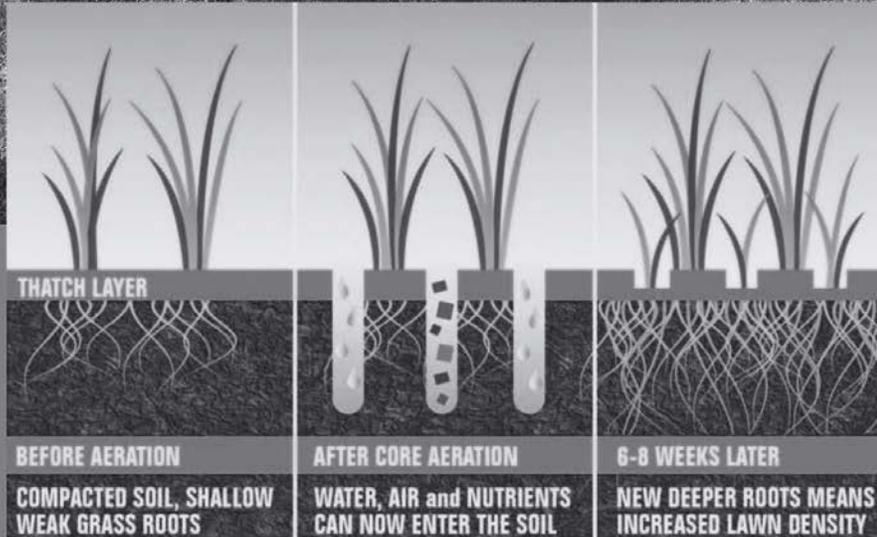
- To report incidents such as theft, criminal damage to property, lost property, and other non-emergency situations, you may call **3-1-1** to have a police officer complete a report or some reports can be completed online: <https://311.chicago.gov/s/service-request>

- Utilize the **CHI311** app (download from app store for free) to create and track service requests, and learn more about the city services available to residents. Access 311 online via <https://311.chicago.gov/>.

- Have you ever heard of **Smart911**? It's a free service available in the City of Chicago to help you when you call 9-1-1. Once you have signed up <https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/oem/provdrs/Smart911.html>, first responders will be aware of important information you have provided that will help them address your emergency. This information – including medical issues, current location, and even pets – can help Police, Fire, and EMS locate and help you. Please look into this for loved ones that don't have access to online services and help them register!

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