



## Litter Prevention Program OVERVIEW

### *Why Do People Litter?*

Litter is misplaced, improperly handled waste. In a three year research project, Keep America Beautiful, Inc. found that people litter for one of three reasons. They feel it's OK to litter:

- ◆ Where they feel no sense of ownership for the property;
- ◆ Where someone else will clean up after them;
- ◆ Where litter has already accumulated.

### *Where Does Litter Come From?*

Keep America Beautiful, Inc. identified seven sources that contribute to the problem.

1. Commercial refuse sources, including dumpsters.
2. Household trash handling.
3. Construction / demolition sites.
4. Uncovered vehicles.
5. Loading docks.
6. Motorists.
7. Pedestrians.

From these sources, litter is carried in every direction by wind, water and traffic. It moves until trapped by a curb, wall, fence, a row of trees, or a building. Once trapped, litter becomes not only an eyesore, but an invitation for people to add more.

**Litter Survey** - Each year, the Public Works Solid Waste division conducts a litter survey of each section of the Village. Survey results help determine problem areas, allowing the Village to increase education and clean up efforts in those locations. Additionally, regular surveys are conducted to chart improvement and measure results. The objective of this program is to decrease litter, improve the overall appearance of the Village and reduce costs for litter control.



## **Community Litter Prevention Programs**

**Alley Clean Up Program** - KOPB provides assistance to residents who volunteer to organize an alley clean up event. Alley Clean Up Kits include trash bags, refuse stickers, yardwaste stickers, disposable vinyl gloves, invitations for neighbors and educational information. This program is sponsored by the Village of Oak Park and Waste Management-Metro, the Village's refuse contractor.

**Adopt A Block** - Adopt A Block clean up Kits and litter tongs will be provided to residents, groups or business associations wishing to Adopt A Block for regular litter clean up. Kits include trash bags, disposable vinyl gloves, safety vests and report forms used to track results. Adopters must commit to clean their block at least once each month. After the three-month report is filed with KOPB, signs will be posted in the adopted block to recognize the adopters' efforts and increase awareness about litter prevention. Adopters are welcome to serve as "Block Captains" and help distribute public education materials about litter prevention. This program is sponsored by Keep Illinois Beautiful through a grant from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency

**KOPB Partner Program** - Oak Park business owners who sign a simple pledge to keep their property litter-free and display a Keep Oak Park Beautiful poster act as "Partners" to promote public awareness and help reduce litter in Oak Park. The KOPB program manager is available to make presentations on recycling and waste reduction and litter prevention to schools, business district associations and community groups.

**Worm Ambassadors** - KOPB provides worm composting bins and educational materials to school classrooms and bring the "Worm Ambassadors" from Brooks Middle School to teach students about how to feed and care for the worms. This program is sponsored by Keep Illinois Beautiful through a grant from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency.

**GumBuster** - KOPB provides environmentally friendly solvent and brushes to the Downtown Oak Park business district to remove chewing gum from the Village's main shopping area. This program is sponsored by Keep Illinois Beautiful through a grant from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency.



## A Message from Barbara Ebner, Chair Keep Oak Park Beautiful Committee

Litter is a serious problem, it is an expensive problem and it is everybody's problem. Litter is interpreted as a sign of decay, gives people a feeling of not being safe, and may hamper economic growth and development by creating a negative image of the community.

Whether you live in, work in, or visit the Village of Oak Park, we ask you to take the litter laws of the community seriously. We need to make it clear that we are no longer willing to tolerate litter in our Village.

The Litter Law Digest booklet includes excerpts from the Village ordinances and policies that concern litter. In essence they state that:

- ◆ It is illegal for any pedestrian, any driver or passenger, or any uncovered vehicle to litter.
- ◆ It is illegal to permit garbage, bulk items, abandoned vehicles or litter to accumulate on your property.
- ◆ It is the responsibility of each property owner or occupant to maintain properties free of litter. Even if you are not the litterer, your premises must be kept clean.
- ◆ Pet owners are responsible for the removal of animal waste.
- ◆ Property owners are responsible for proper handling of garbage and maintaining refuse collection areas in a clean condition.
- ◆ Any defacing or destruction of public or private property is illegal - this includes graffiti.

Thank you for your support in clearing our Village of litter to Keep Oak Park Beautiful and "Litter Free".

### Important Telephone Numbers For Litter Control in the Village of Oak Park

Oak Park Police Department  
708.358.3800

Department of Public Works  
708.358.5700

Building and Property Standards  
708.358.5430

Keep Oak Park Beautiful Program Manager  
708.358.5700

### The KOPB Mission

To create programs to remind and educate the community about preventing litter, minimizing waste, and enhancing the appearance of the Village.