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Local businesses pursuing best window display recognition

Equipped with the knowledge gained at a recent Village-sponsored window display workshop, local retailers are out to demonstrate their creativity and merchandising prowess. The goal? Generating excitement in the business districts, free advertising and higher sales from shoppers intrigued by the windows who then come inside and check out the merchandise.

Teams of retailers in five Oak Park business districts are creating what they hope will be exciting window displays based on *best practices* taught at the workshop hosted by the Village's [Business Services Division](#) and [Great Neighborhoods Oak Park](#), a public-private partnership organization that works to encourage residents to spend their dollars near home. The team with the best window will receive advertising on CTA trains or platforms.

Shoppers are urged to visit each of the businesses between June 21 – 30 and fill out a comment card that will help pick the best window display. The comment cards also will enter the shoppers into a drawing for prizes provided by the participating merchants.

More than 30 business owners and operators participated in the window display workshop, which featured Carol Zack, a visual merchandising professor from the [Illinois Institute of Art](#) in Schaumburg. Using a window dressed by the Village as a teaching tool, Zach helped retailers better understand the key elements of effective window displays.

The theme of the Village window, located in a commercial storefront on Lake Street in downtown Oak Park, is *Sweet on Oak Park* and it features the products of several local businesses that sell tasty products including popcorn, ice cream and even dog cookies.

"When customers look at a store window, they likely are judging what's inside the store," said Business Services' Ja'Net Defell, who organized the window display workshop and competition. "The Village arranged the seminar to help retailers learn useful tools to make their windows project the right message to prospective customers. The competition is intended to give retailers a chance to try some of the approaches discussed at the workshop."

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Window display competition

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The friendly competition is about more than just helping businesses better dress their windows, according to Defell. She said it also is an opportunity for Oak Parkers to experience the many opportunities to shop close to home, provide some feedback to the retailers and have a chance to win prizes provided by the merchants.

Merchants participating in the window display event include the following:

South Boulevard
2xcel Etc... Boutique
227 South Blvd.

Shear Perfection
225 South Blvd.

Pieritz Brothers
401 South Blvd.

Chicago Avenue
Amazing Space
1105 Chicago Ave.

H2 Go Scuba
262 Chicago Ave.

Sweet P's
801 N. Harlem

Downtown Oak Park
Barbara's Bookstore
1100 Lake St.

Bottega M
106 N. Marion St.

Competitive Foot
102 N. Marion St.

The UPS Store
159 N. Marion St.

Harrison Street (Arts District)
Baby Blend Tees
140 Harrison St.

Careful Peach Boutique
128 Harrison St.

Pamela Penney Textile
Arts 130 Harrison St.

Sirius Cooks
142 Harrison St.

The Avenue
Botanica
115 N. Oak Park Ave.

Filoni
131 N. Oak Park Ave.

Fly Bird
719 Lake St.

K9 Cookie Company
171 S. Oak Park Ave.

Magic Tree Bookstore
141 N. Oak Park Ave.

Each team's windows will be judged in several categories, including general exterior appearance, lighting, merchandising, props and staging elements.

For more information on the window display competition or support services available to local businesses, call 708.358.5400 or e-mail business@oak-park.us.

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