

Vaccinations key driver

Community life returning to normal

With summer in full swing, community life in Oak Park is steadily returning to normal as thousands of residents quickly stepped up to get vaccinated, helping send the number of new positive COVID-19 cases dramatically downward.

Capacity limits and most restrictions that had been in place for more than a year to help limit the spread of COVID-19 were lifted in June, essentially reopening the community for those who are vaccinated and no longer likely to contract or spread the highly contagious virus.

The risks of COVID-19 remain real for those who have not chosen to take advantage of easy access to the vaccine, a choice many public health officials find baffling given the vaccines' proven effectiveness against the virus and its more contagious variants.

A vaccine has not yet been approved for those under 12 years old, which officials say lends urgency to the call for all eligible adults to get vaccinated as soon as possible to shield the vulnerable youth who have no medical protection choice.

Local public health officials continue to recommend that



Dancing on Marion Street in pre-pandemic times.

children under 12 and anyone not vaccinated remain masked indoors beyond their own households and in crowded outdoor settings.

Everyone, regardless of vaccination status, still is required to be masked in nursing homes, long-term care facilities, shelters, congregate settings and in Village municipal buildings, as well as on planes, buses, trains and other forms of public transportation,

including stations and hubs.

Should a surge in COVID-19 cases lead to more hospital admissions or more deaths, Oak Park and the rest of the region could revert to a previous phase, officials caution, adding that as vaccination rates climb, so does the likelihood that all restrictions can be lifted permanently.

For more information about Oak Park's COVID-19 response, visit www.oak-park.us/covid19.



Free concerts, movies return to Scoville Park

After last summer's hiatus due to the pandemic, the Park District of Oak Park's free, family-friendly concerts and movies return in July to Scoville Park on Lake Street at Oak Park Avenue. Concerts are scheduled for 6 to 7:30 p.m. every Sunday through August and a movie will be screened beginning at dusk once each month in July, August and September. Visit pdop.org for the current concert and movie schedule.

COVID-19 News You Can Use

Information and guidance related to COVID-19 is changing rapidly. Residents are urged to monitor www.oak-park.us/covid19 for the latest news and developments. In the meantime, officials continue to stress the following:

Get vaccinated...With COVID-19 vaccines widely available, public health officials encourage anyone who is eligible, but not yet vaccinated to make it a priority to get vaccinated as soon as possible. Vaccines are safe, highly effective and an important tool in the fight against the disease. They also are free, regardless of insurance or immigration status.

Vaccinations protect everyone...Getting vaccinated helps protect you, those around you and the entire community. COVID-19 vaccines work with your immune system if you are exposed. The vaccine will not give you COVID-19,

create an infection or make you contagious. You might experience some side effects within the 24 hours after receiving a shot, including headache, muscle pain, chills, fever and pain at the site of injection, but these side effects are normal and mean your body is building protection. Vaccination also is a safer way to build protection than getting sick with COVID-19, which can have serious, life-threatening complications.

Be ready when school resumes...Eligible students are urged to get vaccinated before the start of the school year. In addition to being protected against COVID-19, students who are fully vaccinated are not required to quarantine if they are exposed to someone who tests positive.

Get all required doses...Some vaccines require two doses while other vaccines may require only

one dose. For the two-dose vaccines, the first dose primes your immune system to respond to the virus. The second dose makes the effects of the vaccine last longer. People are considered fully vaccinated two weeks after receiving the required number of doses.

Ways to get vaccinated...

COVID-19 vaccines are available through a number of vaccine providers in and around Oak Park, including Walgreens, CVS and Jewel-Osco pharmacies. Many providers offer vaccines with or without an appointment. Find a COVID-19 vaccine at www.vaccines.gov, by texting your ZIP code to 438829 or calling 1.800.232.0233. Many healthcare providers also may provide COVID-19 vaccines to their patients. Residents who need assistance getting a vaccine locally can email to covid19vaccine@oak-park.us or call 708.358.5499.

Township News

Supplies for students in need...

Oak Park Township is collecting school supplies to help students in need be prepared for the 2021–2022 school year. New supplies may be placed in a donation box from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays through Aug. 6 at the Township Office, 105 S. Oak Park Ave. or shipped directly if purchased through the Amazon wish list www.oak-park.us/supplies. Needed supplies include new paper, notebooks, pens, pencils, crayons, markers and folders. For more information on the back-to-school supply drive, call 708.445.2727 or email mgale@oakparktownship.org.

Memory café...Individuals living with memory loss and their caregivers have a safe online space to connect, and enjoy recreational and educational opportunities at The Memory Café. Online gatherings are set for 2 p.m., Tuesdays, July 20 and Aug. 17. Call 708.383.8060 or email memorycafe@oakparktownship.org for more information or to register. Volunteer opportunities are also available.

News for seniors...Information, activity descriptions and event announcements targeted to older adults are available in the Township's quarterly News & Views newsletter. To sign up to receive a printed copy in the mail or an electronic copy via email, call 708.383.8060 or email seniors@oakparktownship.org.

Caregiver support...Those caring for individuals age 60 and older or with disabilities can find help via a Caregiver Support Group. The group meets online from 10 a.m. to noon twice each month on

the second and fourth Friday. Call 708.383.8060 or email ssmith@oakparktownship.org for more information.

Youth scholarships...Financial scholarships are available for local youth in low-income families. Funds may be used towards registration and participation fees in local activities and programs. For more information, including guidelines and qualifying programs, call 708.445.2727 or visit oakpark-township.org/youth-services.

Vehicle license deadline nears

Every resident is required to purchase a license for each owned or leased motor vehicle before July 15. The rate increases by \$20 after the deadline. Failure to purchase a license also could result in a \$78 ticket. A current vehicle license is needed to purchase a parking permit. Vehicle license rates vary by type of vehicle. Persons age 65 and older, and anyone who has a state-issued handicapped license plate or placard, can apply for a discount. Disabled and active-duty veterans with the proper documentation can apply for free vehicle licenses. Purchase and renew online at www.oak-park.us/online-services.

West Nile Virus threat returns

As temperatures rise, so does the threat of the mosquito-borne West Nile Virus. Illinois reported 39 human cases and four deaths last year.

Take precautions... Avoid being bitten by mosquitoes by wearing long sleeves and pants, limiting time spent outdoors at dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active and using insect repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, IR3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus or para-menthane-diol. Residents also are urged to eliminate potential mosquito breeding sites by cleaning roof gutters, storing containers upside down and emptying birdbaths every few days. For more information, call 708.358.5694, visit www.oak-park.us/fightthebite or email health@oak-park.us.



Report dead birds... If you see a dead bird call the West Nile Virus Hotline 708.358.5694 or email health@oak-park.us. Depending on the bird's condition and species, a Health Department staff member may pick up the carcass for testing.

Prevention efforts... The Des Plaines Valley Mosquito Abatement District treats all street catch basins with larvicide every seven to 10 days during the mosquito-breeding season. The abatement district also will treat catch basins on private property by request and pick up old vehicle tires. Call 708.447.1765 or visit www.desplainesvalleymad.com for more information.

Spraying notification... Residents who wish to be notified when the Des Plaines Valley Mosquito Abatement District has scheduled spraying for adult mosquitoes can sign up at www.oak-park.us/notifyme. Registrants will be notified by an automated telephone system, email or text message as soon as possible following a decision to spray in Oak Park. Individuals without computer access may call 708.358.5694 to leave their phone number for telephone notification only. Visit www.desplainesvalleymad.com for information on spraying.

Farmers' Market News

Transportation available... Curb-to-curb transportation to and from the Oak Park Farmers' Market is available. Look for the Oak Park Township bus at the Market entrance during Market hours each Saturday. The wheelchair-accessible bus will transport shoppers to locations within Oak Park and River Forest. Reservations are encouraged and can be made by calling 708.383.4806 between 8:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. A \$1 donation is suggested.

SNAP/LINK among payment options... Making fresh produce affordable for all patrons is a priority at the Oak Park Farmers' Market, which has been providing SNAP/LINK card processing since 2011. The Market also offers matching value coupons throughout the season. For each dollar SNAP/LINK participants spend, they receive a \$1 coupon up to a maximum of \$25 in coupons per cardholder per Market day. Many vendors also accept WIC and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program coupons.

About the Market... Visit www.oak-park.us/farmersmarket for the latest information about the Market, including details about all of the vendors. The Market is held from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. rain or shine every Saturday through October in the Pilgrim Congregational Church parking lot, 460 Lake St., one block west of Ridgeland Ave. For more information, call 708.358.5780 or email farmersmarket@oak-park.us.



Fire Department offers grilling safety tips

Summertime represents the prime of grilling season, but fire officials caution that this time of year is also the peak month for grilling fires. A grill should be placed well away from a home, deck railings and out from under eaves and overhanging branches. Grease and food debris can cause flare-ups that could be dangerous. Keep grills clean by removing grease or fat buildup from grills and in trays below the grill. When using a propane-powered gas grill, check for leaks using a light soap and water solution along the hose. Bubbles will form if there's a leak. If you smell gas while cooking, immediately get away from the grill and call 911. If using charcoal for fuel, make sure coals are completely cool before disposing in a metal container. For more information, call 708.358.5600 or email fireprevention@oak-park.us.

Food handling... How food is handled for outdoor cooking is important, too, public health officials say. They urge washing hands thoroughly between and after handling each different food item; cleaning utensils, cutting boards and countertops after preparing each food item; storing meat products in separate containers or bags that seal; using a food thermometer to check the final cooking temperature of meat and poultry; and placing cooked meat on a clean plate. Roasts and steaks should be cooked to an internal temperature of at least 150°F, ground beef and pork to 160°F, fish to 145°F and whole poultry to 180°F. Cooked foods should be refrigerated promptly to prevent growth of harmful bacteria. Email health@oak-park.us for food handling guidance.

Oak Park Avenue project moves to resurfacing phase

Street resurfacing is underway along Oak Park Avenue as part of an ongoing improvement project along the vital north/south roadway that stretches the length of the Village from North Avenue to Roosevelt Road. Construction crews have largely completed underground water and sewer improvements, with affected portions of the street temporarily paved to allow for two-way traffic. The project remains on schedule to be completed in November. Visit the project's dedicated website at www.OPAveAnew.com for construction details and schedules. The website also offers an option to sign up for construction updates via email.

Be cautious of electricity scams

If someone calls or knocks on your door promising a better deal on electricity, be cautious — you could be misled into switching to a supplier that will cost more. Salespeople who offer to save you money may ask for your account number or to see your bill. Most likely they are selling a low introductory rate or trying to get your account number so they can switch you to a different provider without your permission. Each year the Village bundles residential and small business electric accounts and seeks competitive bids from electricity suppliers. The state law that gave the Village this authority also allows companies to market their programs directly to consumers. While these companies may be approved by the state, high-pressure salespeople often are accused of misleading consumers about the costs and risks of signing up. ComEd, which owns the wires and poles, continues to distribute the power and is responsible for outages and billing, regardless of the power supplier. The costs of power generation and distribution appear as separate line items on your bill. Enrollment for Oak Park's municipal electricity aggregation program typically opens in the fall and eligible customers are enrolled automatically unless they have opted out previously through a very specific process. Representatives from the Village or its supplier never solicit door-to-door or by telephone. Following these basic guidelines may help avoid scams:

- Never share your account number in person or over the telephone
- Never allow a solicitor to see your bill
- Never make a payment to a door-to-door solicitor or over the telephone
- Never share your credit card number, social security number or other personal information

Residents who feel threatened by an aggressive solicitor are urged to call 911. Anyone with concerns about the status of an electricity account can call ComEd at 1.800.334.7661. You will need to provide your account number for this service. For more information on the Village's electricity aggregation program, call 708.358.5778 or email sustainability@oak-park.us.

Downed power lines pose risks

When severe weather brings down power lines, public safety personnel urge residents to be aware of the danger. Their advice — always assume power lines are live, since even momentary contact with a live power line can injure or kill. If a power line comes down, ideally, a firefighter or police officer will stand by the site until utility workers arrive. But when emergency conditions are widespread, personnel may not be available for this level of service. In those instances, affected streets or alleys are blocked and the area around the downed wire isolated by yellow warning tape. Residents who see a downed power line should call 911 right away and report the location. For more information, call 708.358.5600 or email fire@oak-park.us.

Clip and Save

Who to Call

Dial Direct (area code 708)

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| Village Hall | oak-park.us |
| TTY | 711 |
| Adjudication | 358.5630 |
| Development Customer Services | 358.5420 |
| Business Services | 358.5425 |
| Neighborhood Services | 358.5410 |
| Housing | option 1 |
| CDBG | option 2 |
| Property complaints | option 3 |
| Permits & Inspections | 358.5430 |
| Planning | 358.5440 |
| General questions | option 1 |
| Historic Preservation | option 2 |
| Zoning | option 3 |
| Finance | 358.5460 |
| Utility Billing Inquiries | 358.5478 |
| Fire (nonemergency) | 358.5600 |
| Human Resources | 358.5650 |
| Job Hotline | 358.5650 |
| Mayor & Trustees | 358.5784 |
| Police (nonemergency) | 386.3800 |
| Crime Tip Hotline | 434.1636 |
| Public Health | 358.5480 |
| Animal Control | 358.5680 |
| Public Works | 358.5700 |
| Parking | 358.7275 |
| Village Clerk | 358.5670 |
| Village Manager's Office | 358.5770 |

EMERGENCIES 911

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| Park District | www.pdop.org |
| Administration | 725.2017 |
| Customer Service | 725.2000 |
| Building & Grounds | 725.2050 |
| Business Operations | 725.2015 |

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| Public Library | www.oppl.org |
| Main Library | 383.8200 |
| Maze Branch | 386.4751 |
| Dole Branch | 386.9032 |

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| School District 97 | www.op97.org |
| Administration | 524.3000 |

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| School District 200 | www.oprfhs.org |
| Administration | 383.0700 |

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|---------------------|--------------------------------|
| Township | www.oakparktownship.org |
| Senior Services | 383.8060 |
| Youth Services | 445.2727 |
| General Assistance | 383.8005 |
| Assessor Services | 383.8005 |
| Mental Health Board | 358.8855 |
| Transportation | 383.4806 |

 oak-park.us/enews

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 instagram.com/oakparkil

 twitter.com/vopnews

 youtube.com/vopnews

Nominations sought for community awards

Nominations are now being sought for the 2021 accessibility, aging in place, historic preservation and sustainability awards that recognize efforts made by organizations, individuals and businesses who have played roles in improving the community. Winners will be announced and recognized at a ceremony during the Village Board meeting December 15.

Accessibility...Businesses, organizations and other entities that provide extraordinary accessibility for patrons with disabilities and their families may be nominated for efforts to provide easy access to people with disabilities, create an inviting physical space and offer a welcoming, helpful, service-oriented attitude. The deadline for nominations is Sept. 1. More details and an online nomination form are posted at www.oak-park.us/accessawards.

Aging in Place...Oak Park businesses, organizations and other entities that provide extraordinary accessibility for older residents and their families may be nominated for efforts to provide easy access to older residents, create an inviting physical space and offer a welcoming, helpful, service-oriented attitude. The deadline for nominations is Oct. 15. More details and an online nomination form are posted at www.oak-park.us/aginginplaceawards.

Historic Preservation...Nomination categories include restoration, rehabilitation, adaptive use, additions/new construction, stewardship, detail and design. Nominations need not be in a historic district and interior work may be considered in conjunction with exterior work. The deadline for nominations is Oct. 15. More details and a link to the online nomination form are posted at www.oak-park.us/preservationawards.

Sustainability...Green Awards recognize individuals, groups, green installations and organizations that have demonstrated leadership as stewards of the Oak Park environment. Each award recognizes a particular project that had an impact on life in Oak Park. Nominations may be submitted on behalf of any person, organization, group or business. The deadline for nominations is Oct. 15. More information and a nomination form are posted at www.oak-park.us/greenawards.

Open windows may invite burglars

Residents who leave their windows and patio doors open overnight to catch a summer evening breeze could unwittingly become targets of burglars who cruise neighborhoods looking for just such opportunities. Oak Park Police urge residents to use devices that prevent entry by limiting travel of the sash or door. Making sure patio furniture cannot be used as a makeshift ladder to reach higher windows also is important, police say. For more security tips and even an assessment of one's home, residents should contact their residential beat officer, who will examine the property and offer practical suggestions for improving security. To contact your RBO, visit www.oak-park.us/rbo.

Proper pruning helps ensure safe passage

Property owners are urged to keep their shrubs and trees along sidewalks and alleys properly trimmed to ensure safe passage by pedestrians and motorists. Blocking the public way not only creates hazards, it also is a local ordinance violation. Residents whose plantings create issues are asked to prune them back, but may be ticketed if they don't comply. For more information or to report an issue, call 708.358.5700 or email publicworks@oak-park.us.

Simplifying recycling

When it comes to recycling, trying to figure out what goes where can sometimes be confusing. Following these three simple rules may help:

- Recycle all empty plastic bottles, cans, paper and cardboard
- Keep food and liquids out of recycling
- Don't bag recyclables — empty them directly into the cart

Common contaminants...For recycling to work, limiting contaminants at the collection point is essential. The most common recycling contaminants are the following:

- Plastic bags
- Food and liquids
- Electronics and small appliances
- Textiles, bedding, rugs and carpet
- Hoses, holiday lights, hangers and extension cords
- Paper napkins, plates, cups and tissues
- Polystyrene foam (also known as Styrofoam)
- Tires, auto parts and scrap metal
- Concrete, wood and construction debris
- Yard waste
- Inflatable pools and toys

For more information on recycling, visit www.oak-park.us/recycling, call 708.358.5700 or email sustainability@oak-park.us.

Posted address numbers could save a life

Accurate addresses can save precious seconds when police or firefighters respond to an emergency call. That's why property owners are required by local law to have street numbers visible from both the street and the alley. Address numbers at least three inches high should be posted on the front of each building, and on a garage or rear of the structure. Rear numbers are not required for houses that do not abut an alley. For more information, email publicworks@oak-park.us.

View with a smartphone camera.



Village of Oak Park
Village Hall
123 Madison Street
Oak Park, Illinois 60302-4272



Village President Vicki Scaman

Trustees

Susan Buchanan Lucia Robinson
Chibuike Enyia Jim Taglia
Ravi Parakkat Arti Walker-Peddakotla
Village Clerk Christina M. Waters
Village Manager Cara Pavlicek

Residential Customer Local
Oak Park, Illinois

Postal Carrier
Pre-Sort

Presort
Standard
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 26
Oak Park, IL

Police offer tips to deter bicycle thieves

Bicycle thefts tend to increase during warmer weather. Following these steps, police say, can help deter bicycle thieves:

- Register your bike with the Village. Should your bike be stolen and later recovered the registration provides information about its rightful owner.
- Don't leave your bike unlocked or unattended. Police recommend a U lock.
- Lock your bike even when it is stored in a closed garage, enclosed porch or basement common area.
- Never let anyone you do not know take your bike for a ride.
- Trust your instincts. If you feel someone is going to take your bicycle, shout for help.
- Stay in the company of friends — there usually is safety in numbers.
- Think twice about resisting — your bike can be replaced.

Police urge parents to share these tips with their children. For more information, call 708.386.3800, email police@oak-park.us or talk to your residential beat officer. Contact information is posted at www.oak-park.us/rbo.

Bicycles and sidewalks...Riding on a sidewalk by anyone of any age is not allowed in the business districts, including downtown. And only those under 15 years of age may ride on a sidewalk anywhere else in the community. Youngsters riding on sidewalks always must yield to pedestrians. For more information on bicycle rules and safety, call 708.386.3800 or email police@oak-park.us.

Helmets required...Bicyclists under age 17 are required to wear a helmet in Oak Park. Enforcement focuses on education rather than punishment, but parents of repeat offenders could face a \$25 fine or be required to do community service. The local law is based on information from the American Academy of Pediatrics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration about injuries and deaths caused by bicyclists who have accidents while riding without a helmet. For more information on the helmet requirement, call 708.358.5480 or email health@oak-park.us.



Protect your vehicle from catalytic converter theft

With catalytic converter thefts on the rise throughout the region, Oak Park Police urge residents to take steps to protect their vehicles. Catalytic converters are part of vehicle's exhaust systems. Precious metals used in the devices make them appealing to thieves who sell the converters to unscrupulous vendors who extract the valuable metals. A thief can remove a catalytic converter in minutes, leaving vehicle owners with a costly repair bill. Officials suggest the following tips to help prevent catalytic converter thefts:

- Park in a garage or well-lit area when possible.
- If you park in a personal garage, keep the overhead door closed and lock any service doors.
- If you hear what sounds like an electric saw noise, especially at night, call 911 immediately.
- If you have a vehicle that is high up from the ground, consider having a mechanic install a security device that makes the converter harder to steal.

For more information, call 708.386.3800 or email police@oak-park.us.