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NEWS

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WEST SIDE TIMES



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# Illinois Communities Receive Total of \$200,000 in Environmental Grants from ComEd, Openlands

As part of an ongoing commitment to sustainability and the enhancement of natural environments, ComEd and Openlands, a nationally recognized leader in environmental conservation, announced the 23 recipients of their 2024 Green Region Grant Program. This year, grants totaling \$200,000—up to \$10,000 each—were awarded to support the preservation of nature, combat climate change and create safe habitats for pollinators and wildlife in communities across northern Illinois. Since the inception of the Green Region Grant Program in 2012, ComEd and Openlands have invested more than \$2.3 million to more than 280 green space improvement projects that have benefited nearly 1.6 million people across northern Illinois. This initiative has supported the development of more than 85,000 feet of ADA-accessible trails, the planting of more than 38,600 trees, and the enhancement of more than 590 acres of land. The program is funded by ComEd and administered by Openlands. Details



of the Green Region Grant Program can be found at [Openlands.org/GreenRegion](https://Openlands.org/GreenRegion). The 23 recipients and their funded

projects of the 2024 Green Region Grant Program, which include: **Academy for Global Citizenship (Chicago)** will

add pollinator gardens, bees and hives as part of their urban farm and community garden implementation on a new six-acre campus in

Southwest Chicago with its grant. This essential project will create a proper pollinator habitat and innovative stormwater

management systems in an industrial neighborhood on land that has been vacant since 2011.

*Continued on page 2*

## Illinois Communities Receive Total of \$200,000 in Environmental Grants...

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**Eckhart Park Advisory Council (Chicago)** will support the restoration of Jens Jensen Gardens at Eckhart Park by rebuilding native ecosystems through pollinator gardens and providing raised garden beds for youth conservation programs. This project pays homage to prairie-style architect Jens Jensen and revitalizes the park's historical landscape.

**Foundation (Chicago)** will partner with the Forest Preserves of Cook County to install native seed beds and a wild seed garden, increasing region-specific plant seed stock critical for successful restoration projects with its grant. Volunteers will help care for and maintain these essential resources.

**Young Men's Educational Network (Chicago)** will advance the second phase

of its Garden to Table Pipeline by enhancing its community garden hub with a greenhouse, native plant landscaping, rain garden and fruit tree orchard. This work supports local food systems and community nourishment.

**Photo Credit: ComEd**



## Las Comunidades de Illinois Reciben un Total de \$200,000 en Subsidios Ambientales de ComEd y Openlands

Como parte de un compromiso continuo con la sustentabilidad y la mejora de los entornos naturales, ComEd y Openlands, líder reconocido a nivel nacional en conservación ambiental, anunciaron los 23 beneficiarios de su Programa de Subsidios para la Región Verde 2024. Este año, los subsidios con un total de \$200,000 – de hasta \$10,000 cada uno – fueron otorgados para apoyar la preservación de la naturaleza, combatir el cambio climático y crear hábitats seguros para los polinizadores y la vida silvestre en las comunidades del norte de Illinois. Desde el inicio del Programa de Subsidios Región Verde en el 2012, ComEd y Openlands han invertido más de \$2.3 millones a más de 280 proyectos de mejora de espacios verdes que han



beneficiado a cerca de 1.6 millones de personas en el norte de Illinois. Esta iniciativa ha apoyado el desarrollo de más de 85,000 pies de senderos accesibles para personas con discapacidades, la plantación de más de 38,600 árboles y la mejora de más de 590 acres de tierra. El pro-

grama es patrocinado por ComEd y administrado por Openlands. Detalles del Programa de Subsidios Región Verde pueden encontrarse en [Openlands.org/GreenRegion](https://openlands.org/GreenRegion). Los 23 recipientes y sus proyectos patrocinados del Programa de Subsidios de la Región

*Pase a la página 4*

## REBOZOS & GUAYABERAS

Join Us to Celebrate  
Little Village Rotary Club's  
12th Year Anniversary

**Installation of LEO RIOS-President**  
Celebration of Little Village Youth  
Organizations  
Mexican Culture and Cuisine  
Grant Awards

Thursday, September 12th, 2024  
5:30 PM - 10 PM

**Mi Tierra Restaurant**  
2528 South Kedzie Avenue  
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Tickets \$70.00  
Open Bar  
Dinner & Cocktails  
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Rotary



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## THE OAKS



Apartment living with congregate services  
114 South Humphrey  
Oak Park, IL, 60302



This property with its architecturally award winning atrium provides seniors and disabled individuals with parking, library, laundry room, Wellness Center and other conveniences.

A service coordinator is on staff to assist tenants who may need additional services. The units are studio and one bedroom, each with electric appliances, tile bath, and wall to wall carpeting. Modern fire and safety systems are installed in each apartment and common areas of the building. There are also 8 accessible one bedroom units for the mobility impaired. The Oaks is owned and operated by The Oak Park Residence Corporation and is funded by the Department of Housing and Urban Development through the 202/section 8 Program. Residents pay approximately 30% of their monthly income for rent. For additional information please visit our website at [www.oakparkha.org](http://www.oakparkha.org) or contact us at 708-386-5812.



# Chicago Park District Beach Season Sunsets as Fall Indoor Swimming Prepares to Start

As summer sunsets and the end of the beach season nears, Park District is transitioning into indoor pool programming. In Chicago, beach season runs from Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day, September 2<sup>nd</sup>. This summer, the Chicago Park District succeeded in hiring over 700 lifeguards to open all beaches, and indoor and outdoor pools in neighborhoods across the city and to ensure Chicago residents had access to safe options for swimming. The Chicago Park District will prepare for the start of the Fall programming session. Chicago Park District indoor pools will open the week of Tuesday, September 3<sup>rd</sup> for lap swim and open swim. Days of operation vary by park. Patrons should visit the District's website or contact the park for pool hours, and Fall programming



options. All indoor park pools will begin Fall programming aquatics classes for park patrons of all ages and abilities the week of September 16<sup>th</sup>. Swim memberships will be available to purchase online and in-person at parks, starting September 3<sup>rd</sup>. Fall pool schedules for these activities will be

posted prior to the start of the Fall session. Fall programs such as Learn to Swim, Aquatics Exercise Classes, Swim Club and more will begin the week of September 16<sup>th</sup>. For current pool schedules, visit [www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/pools](http://www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/pools).





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ComEd...

Viene de la página 2

Verde 2024 incluyen: La Academia para la Ciudadanía Global (Chicago) incorporará jardines de polinizadores, abejas y colmenas como parte de la implementación de su granja urbana y jardín comunitario en un nuevo campus de seis acres en el suroeste de Chicago gracias a su subvención. Este proyecto esencial creará un hábitat adecuado para los polinizadores y sistemas innovadores de gestión de aguas pluviales en un barrio industrial en un terreno que ha estado vacío desde 2011. El Consejo Asesor del Parque Eckhart (Chicago) apoyará la restauración de los jardines Jens Jensen en el Parque Eckhart mediante la reconstrucción de ecosistemas nativos a través de jardines para polinizadores y la provisión de canchales elevados para programas de conservación para jóvenes. Este proyecto rinde homenaje al arquitecto de estilo pradera

Jens Jensen y revitaliza el paisaje histórico del parque. La Fundación Forest Preserve (Chicago) se asociará con las Reservas Forestales del Condado de Cook para instalar semilleros nativos y un jardín de semillas silvestres, aumentando así las reservas de semillas de plantas específicas de la región, fundamentales para el éxito de los proyectos de restauración gracias a su subvención. Los voluntarios ayudarán a cuidar y mantener estos recursos esenciales. La Red Educativa de Hombres Jóvenes (Chicago) avanzará en la segunda fase de su proyecto "De la Huerta a la Mesa" mejorando su centro de huertas comunitarias con un invernadero, un paisaje con plantas autóctonas, un jardín de lluvia y un huerto de árboles frutales. Este trabajo apoya los sistemas alimentarios locales y la nutrición de la comunidad. **Crédito Fotográfico: ComEd**

# CTU Launches 'Underfunded and Understaffed' Tracker

The Chicago Teachers Union launched the #UnderFunded UnderStaffed Tracker, designed to monitor the impact of understaffing and underfunding on Chicago students. With frontline testimony and up-to-date data from CPS' own reporting on understaffing, the tracker shows that vacancy issues in Chicago Public Schools are systemic and persistent, especially for roles like clinicians, school social workers, and school psychologists. Vacancy data doesn't even account for the additional staff needed to provide a high-quality school day for our students -- for example, ensuring that the 80 percent of schools currently without a library are properly staffed. The district's inability to address these problems highlights the urgent



need for a transformative contract that can truly meet the needs of our students

and educators. "Imagine the stress a parent must feel when they drop off their

child for their first day of kindergarten to a room with 35 children and one adult," said CTU President Stacy Davis Gates. "Looking at this data, it's clear that CEO Martinez has misled families, students, educators, and the Board of Education. The staffing levels that he touts in his PR campaign are different from the staffing levels actual people are experiencing in our school communities. That's not OK, and the actual experience in our schools cannot be swept under the rug." CTU members across the district will continue to report on the real-life consequences of these critical staff shortages in Chicago Public Schools, brought on by the district's lack of a plan to fully fund our schools. You can access the tracker, at [tracker.ctulocal1.org](http://tracker.ctulocal1.org)

**Triton College**

## Fall Family Fun Fest

**Saturday, Sept. 28, 2024**  
**10 a.m.-2 p.m.**  
**Triton College Botanical Gardens**  
**(East Campus)**

Enjoy a variety of autumn-themed activities and games designed for all ages! Families are welcome to take home a free pumpkin (while supplies last). The event is **free** and open to the public.

Visit [triton.edu/fallfest](http://triton.edu/fallfest) for continued updates.

## U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona Announces Back to School Bus Tour

On Tuesday, Sept. 3<sup>rd</sup>, U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona launched the 2024 Back to School Bus Tour from Sept. 3<sup>rd</sup> to Sept. 6<sup>th</sup>. The week-long, multi-state road trip showcased the many ways schools, families, and communities are doubling down on accelerating student achievement and raising the bar in public education with investments. The Back to School Bus Tour featured stops in Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Pennsylvania. The 2024 bus tour celebrated public education as the American system that opened the door for so many of our nation's success stories: from astronauts to astrophysicists, writers to engineers, musicians to mathematicians, innovative entrepreneurs in the private sector to great leaders in the public



sector. Secretary Cardona kicked off the tour in Wisconsin, where he uplifted the tools the Biden-Harris Administration has used — including accountability, grants, and technical assistance — to accelerate academic recovery, preserve and support native languages,

and ensure high-quality public education in our underserved communities, including our rural and urban communities, for the whole child. On day two, Secretary Cardona continued in Wisconsin and then traveled to Illinois and Indiana where he highlighted the

Administration's efforts to promote the critical importance of regular student attendance in partnership with the United Way of Greater Milwaukee, expand Career and Technical Education for adult learners, and expand access to local community colleges.

## El Secretario de Educación de EE.UU., Miguel Cárdena, Anuncia Gira de Regreso a Clases en Autobús

El martes, 3 de septiembre, el Secretario de Educación de E.U. Miguel Cardona, lanzó la Gira de Regreso a Clases en Autobús, del 3 al 6 de septiembre. El viaje por carretera de una semana de duración y por varios estados mostró las diversas formas en que las escuelas, las familias y las comunidades están redoblando sus esfuerzos para acelerar el rendimiento estudiantil y elevar el nivel de la educación pública con inversiones. La Gira de Regreso a Clases en Autobús se detiene en Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan y Pennsylvania. La gira de autobús del 2024 celebró la educación pública como el sistema estadounidense que abre la puerta para tantas historias de éxito de nuestra nación: desde astronautas a astrofísicos, escritores a ingenieros, músicos a matemáticos, innovadores empresarios en el sector privado a grandes líderes en el sector público. El secretario Cardona lanzó la gira en Wisconsin, donde destacó las herramientas que la Administración Biden-Harris ha utilizado, incluida la rendición de cuentas, las subvenciones y la asistencia técnica, para acelerar la recuperación académica, preservar y apoyar las lenguas nativas y garantizar una educación pública de alta calidad en nuestras comunidades marginadas, incluidas nuestras comunidades rurales y urbanas, para todo niño. El segundo día, el Secretario Cardona continuó en Wisconsin y luego viajó a Illinois e Indiana, donde destacó los esfuerzos de la Administración para promover la importancia crítica de la asistencia regular de los estudiantes en asociación con United Way of Greater Milwaukee, expandir la educación profesional y técnica para estudiantes adultos y ampliar el acceso a colegios comunitarios locales.

Obtén el apoyo que necesitas en el colegio universitario de tu comunidad.

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[ccc.edu/aplica](http://ccc.edu/aplica)





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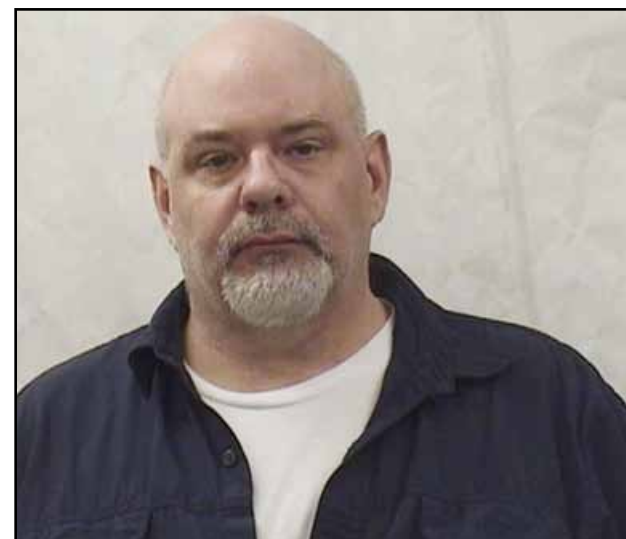
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## Barrington Man Sentenced to Eight Years in Prison for Child Pornography Conviction

A Barrington man pleaded guilty to child pornography charges following a Sheriff's Police Internet Crimes Against Children Unit (ICAC) investigation last year, Cook County Sheriff Thomas J. Dart announced. In June of 2023, ICAC Investigators arrested 50-year-old Anthony Demonte after they found he downloaded and shared sexually explicit videos and images of children under the age of 13 via social media. At the time, search warrants executed for a social media account belonging to Demonte confirmed it contained files of child pornography. Additionally, a completed forensic analysis on his cell phone revealed he solicited several pornographic videos of underage boys and girls engaging in sexual conduct with other children and adults. Demonte appeared at the Rolling Meadows Courthouse and pleaded guilty to Solicitation of Child Pornography. He



was ordered to serve his 8 year sentence in the Illinois Department of Corrections. Demonte will be required to serve three years of mandatory supervised release and must register as a sex offender for the

rest of his life. Since 2020, investigations by the Sheriff's ICAC Unit have led to charges against 49 individuals for cases involving the victimization of children and child pornography.

## Verizon Launches Textspañol for Hispanic Heritage Month

Verizon is announcing the launch of Textspañol, a unique crowd-sourced online resource dedicated to the growing lexicon of Spanish textspeak. According to a recent Nielsen study, Latinos spend more time on almost all social media and messaging services, with those aged 18-34 being twice as likely to use apps like WhatsApp. This heavy usage has fostered a diverse range of digital Spanish dialogue that varies across ages, regions, and cultures, reflecting the nuances of local communities. To celebrate and capture this unique fusion of lifestyle, technology, and Latinidad, Verizon is introducing two ways for users to share their favorite Textspañol terms throughout Hispanic Heritage Month: the toll-free number for texting, (833) XQ-DICEN/973-4236 and the website, Textspañol.com. Additionally, Verizon has partnered with Humberto

Cruz, the renowned Mexican-American illustrator behind Karol G's vibrant "Manaña Sera Bonito" album cover, to infuse the site with his signature collage-like style and create assets that will remain accessible beyond October 15. Marking his first Spanish language brand collaboration, Cruz's culturally rich artwork is showcased on Textspañol.com, where visitors can also find downloadable sticker packs and an interactive quiz. Starting today, consumers can simply:

1-Text "Hola" (Spanish) or "Hello" (English) to (833) XQ-DICEN/973-4236 and follow the prompts.  
2-On mobile, visit Textspañol.com to connect to (833) XQ-DICEN/973-4236 via your messaging app.  
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