

Fall 2010

# 5th WARD REPORT

Alderman Leslie Hairston • 2325 E. 71st Street • Chicago, Illinois 60649 • 773-324-5555



Dear 5th Ward Residents:

We had an outstanding summer this year, in terms of wholesome ward events. But before getting to that, I want to report on progress toward resolving some of the "nitty gritty" issues involving safety and security.

In September I met with Chicago Police Superintendent Jody Weis and his staff. I provided a detailed list of problem businesses and target areas for the ward. While there is no "acceptable" rate of crime, we have experienced a decline in homicides and burglaries compared to this time last year. Anonymous tips and undercover missions indicated a small group of

individuals responsible for most recent incidents.

As a result of three hearings so far, the owners of One Stop Liquor on 67th Street are complying with orders to reduce loitering in and around the store. They have increased armed security, installed security cameras, attended CAPS beat meetings, and halted the sale of cheaper single serving liquor. I urge you to call the Ward Service Office if you can attend the next hearing scheduled for 11:00 a.m. Thursday, October 28.

Now, on to the fun part. I was so proud the ward hosted the 14th Annual Chicago Half Marathon, which began and ended in Jackson Park. One of the largest in the country, it sold out with 20,500 entrants. Jackson Heights resident Valerie Tyler, whom we featured in the summer newsletter, was chosen to lead runners through the racecourse, and ward businesses provided catering.

September also featured the 4th Annual Hyde Park Jazz Festival, which drew more than 14,000 fans and musicians during 13 hours of non-stop performances, as well as over 300 volunteers. Over 5,000 attended the 24th Annual 57th St. Children's Book Fair. In addition, both the South Shore and Hyde Park Chambers of Commerce spearheaded festivals, sidewalk sales and music events—one featuring the legendary group War.

Finally, Chicago and Illinois are in the midst of much political change and turmoil. I urge all registered voters to exercise their right and duty to vote in the general election on Tuesday, November 2.

Sincerely,

Leslie A. Hairston  
5th Ward Alderman

## COMMUNITY INTEREST

### Projects Benefit 5th Ward Brains, Beauty

Gary Comer College Prep celebrated the official opening this September of its much anticipated new home at 71st & S. South Chicago Ave. The school bears the name of its benefactor, the late founder of Land's End clothing, as well as the fruits of his commitment to the childhood neighborhood referred to on the "Grand Crossing" sign he requested be posted nearby.



STUDENTS AT THE NEW GARY COMER COLLEGE PREP LOOK FORWARD TO USING THE GYM, CAFETERIA, MUSIC ROOMS, ART ROOMS AND COMPUTER LABS OF THE DESIGN-AWARD WINNING COMER YOUTH CENTER AT 72ND & INGLESIDE.

The \$20 million construction reflects the limitless possibilities of the horizon, from the bright, lime green stainless steel outer shell, to the soaring windows, skylights and glass-lined hallways. It forms a campus with the Gary Comer Youth Center, where the first Comer College Prep enrollees began taking classes in 2008.

One of the Noble Network of Charter Schools, Comer College Prep currently serves over 500 predominately South Side freshmen, sophomores and juniors, with plans to add a new class of freshmen until it reaches 600 students in grades 9-12.

Also on the education front, the Chicago Plan Commission approved the University of **Chicago Laboratory Schools**

plan to build an Early Childhood Center for nursery to 2nd grade students on the old Doctors Hospital site at 58th & Stony Island Ave. The next step is approval for a zoning change to acquire permits.

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### New Woofs Over Their Heads

With the redevelopment of Harper Court, Hyde Park Animal Clinic lost its old home but gained two better ones. The first, already open at 1363 E. 53rd St., will become a satellite facility for the full-service 6,000 square foot two-story hospital being built at 6937 S. Stony Island Ave. The latter will offer more room for boarding, including suites for cats, space for a 30-dog run, and plans for grooming and canine day care. Ground has already been broken, with completion expected early next year.



THE HYDE PARK ANIMAL CLINIC'S NEW PET HOSPITAL, BEING BUILT AT 69TH & STONY ISLAND AVE., WILL EXTEND SERVICES THE BUSINESS HAS PROVIDED THE COMMUNITY FOR 45 YEARS. SENIOR VETERINARIAN TOM WAKE, ONE OF THE CO-OWNERS WHO BOUGHT HPAC IN 1981, SAYS ALD. LESLIE HAIRSTON "WAS A BIG HELP GETTING THIS LATEST PROJECT OFF THE GROUND."

### A "Fresh" Look At Walgreens

Walgreens recently launched a pilot program to sell 750 new food items at several South and West Side stores, with emphasis on such healthy fare as fresh produce and whole grain cereals. They kicked it off in the 5th Ward with a ceremony at their 67th & Stony Island Ave. location. The event included cooking demonstrations, health screenings, food sampling, and fitness activities with the South Shore YMCA. Ald. Leslie Hairston lauded the company as a "good neighbor that gives back to our community."



ALD. LESLIE HAIRSTON REVIEWS LITERATURE AT THE RECENT JOB FAIR HER OFFICE CO-SPONSORED AND SAYS SHE WILL SUPPORT FUTURE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY EVENTS IN THE 5TH WARD.

### Job Fair Attracts Big Names, Large Crowd

In October, the 5th Ward Service Office sponsored a job fair at ABJ Community Services in conjunction with the Thompson Group. Among several organizations represented were Home Depot, Frito-Lay, Goodwill Industries, Pace Bus, the Chicago Police Department, and Universal Secretarial Services. Ald. Leslie Hairston reports that, "at one point, the line of potential applicants almost went out the door of the building."

### Chamber of Fun



THE HYDE PARK CHAMBER'S OKTOBER FESTIVAL DREW LARGE CROWDS TO THE 53RD ST. BUSINESS CORRIDOR

The December 4 Festival of Lights caps a series the Hyde Park Chamber of Commerce initiated this year to celebrate the immediate and broader South Side community. As with the summer music and Oktoberfest festivals, 53rd Street between Lake Park and Blackstone Avenues will be closed to auto traffic. The University of Chicago and South East Chicago Commission co-sponsored the events.

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The **Midway Crossings Project** between 59th & 60th Streets involves creating safer, more pleasant pedestrian passageways at South Ellis and South Woodlawn Avenues, in addition to beautification between Ellis and Dorchester Avenues. The construction phase began in July and is expected to end by December 31, with the landscaping element completed in the spring of 2011.

The \$6 million upgrade of Midway Plaisance features an eight-foot sidewalk and grass buffer zone to protect pedestrians from car traffic, streetscapes, new lighting to enhance visibility, emergency call stations, security cameras, and the planting of nearly 20 trees. Though primarily funded by the University of Chicago, the plan incorporates an 18-month review by community members and input from three public meetings held by Ald. Leslie Hairston.

## Century-Old Neighborhood Club Young At Heart

Founded in 1909 to serve South Side neglected youth, the Hyde Park Neighborhood Club now located at 5480 S. Kenwood Ave. evolved into a center of enrichment for diverse families and individuals of all ages. Its "Strategy for A Second Century" will continue that tradition through focusing on infants to 18 year olds.

Current pre, before and after school programs will be enriched and expanded, including an increase in licensed childcare to accommodate up to 100 tots. Plans also call for the addition of a youth literacy center, computer lab, and instruction in entrepreneurship, financial management, health, robotics, and photography. A \$200,000 state capital grant is funding facility repairs and such upgrades as a professional-quality kitchen for cooking classes.

Surges in youth violence, high school drop out rates and childhood obesity convinced HPNC's board "our kids need us now more than ever." Executive Director Jennifer Bosch acknowledged this means the club could no longer maintain its senior programs, particularly given declining enrollments. However, interested parties can call the club at 773-643-4062 for recommendations to local alternatives.

## "Si" To Ray School Spanish Program

Last spring, William H. Ray Elementary discovered Chicago Public School budget cuts threatened to mute its popular Spanish language program. Parents protested, and 5th Ward Ald. Leslie Hairston defended the program before the City Council and CPS head Ron Huberman.

Ray, at 5631 S. Kimbark Ave., marked their victory October 26 during assemblies that featured students in costume performing Spanish songs and dances. The school also honored Hairston as "one of the forces who enabled us to get our program back."

Noted principal Bernadette Butler, "Ray is a magnet cluster school, which means we have a focus. That focus is language. Ald. Hairston let it be known we were achieving what we were supposed to. She provided a forum for principals to let her know our needs and gave a sense there was somebody out there who could help."

Hairston said she "raised the issue of disparity in terms of communities being affected" with CPS officials and that her inquiries revealed "no discernible criteria for decisions" about what to cut, how much, when or where. Over 620 K-6 students at Ray receive Spanish instruction.

## Be In The Know



The Circuit Court of Cook County has initiated a **Mortgage Foreclosure Mediation Program** to provide free, timely and courteous service to homeowners. Recipients must reside in the county and live in a building under foreclosure. Qualified individuals should call the toll free number 877-895-2444 to schedule a meeting with the housing counselor. Literature on the program is available at the 5th Ward Service Office.

**The Jackson Park Advisory Council** has two open seats. Anyone interested in volunteering can contact the Ward Service Office for more information.



## LEGISLATIVE FRONT

### Security Deposits

The Chicago City Council passed an ordinance regarding landlords' treatment of interest on security deposits and allows for payment of security deposits through electronic funds transfer receipt.

### Property Owner's Responsibility for Nuisance Abatement

An ordinance passed increasing the fines for owners who do not take measures to abate any nuisance on their property, including lots. A strong supporter of the ordinance, Ald. Leslie Hairston is successfully using it to force businesses to address loitering and other problem behavior outside their establishments.

### Registration of Vacant Buildings

Ald. Hairston was among those voting in favor of an ordinance that passed requiring property owners to register with the city within five days after a building becomes vacant or five days after assuming ownership of a vacant building, whichever is last.

### Firearms

The City Council voted unanimously to enact an ordinance restricting the sale and possession of firearms in Chicago.

## Environmental Protection

Ald. Leslie Hairston signed on to a resolution asking for a moratorium on all permits and licenses granted to British Petroleum to operate oil refineries on or near the Great Lakes and to drill for oil. "BP has failed to be a good steward of the nation's natural resources and betrayed the trust of the American people," she said. She put her name to another resolution calling for the clean-up of the Chicago River.

## Summer Highlights



ALD. LESLIE HAIRSTON STANDS WITH A RUNNER WHO FINISHED THE CHICAGO HALF MARATHON— ANOTHER OF THE EVENTS SHE WORKED TO SECURE AS A FEATHER IN THE 5TH WARD'S CAP.



THE MIDWAY PLAISANCE SKATING RINK SERVED AS ONE OF SEVERAL LOCAL VENUES FOR THE HYDE PARK JAZZ FESTIVAL, WHICH FEATURED MANY AREA MUSICIANS.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Office Hours:

Monday, Wednesday and Thursday  
10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.  
Tuesday 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.  
(Residents can meet privately with the alderman from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.)  
Friday 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

### Ward Office Closed:

**Veteran's Day**  
Thursday, November 11

**Thanksgiving**  
Wednesday-Friday, November 24-26

**Christmas Eve**  
Friday, December 24

**New Year's Eve**  
Friday, December 31

**Upcoming Ward Meetings:**  
(All meetings begin at 6:00 p.m.)

**Note: No ward meetings in November or December**

**Tuesday, January 25**  
Paul Revere Elementary School  
1010 E. 72nd St.

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## Don't forget to vote in the general election November 2!

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**For Further Information**  
Contact the 5th Ward Service Office  
773-324-5555 or visit the Web site at  
<http://cityofchicago.org/ward5/>

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