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## Responding to the COVID Crisis Locally

In the past few weeks, as the COVID-19 pandemic broke loose, we here at SWC have been hyper-aware of the situations many of our neighbors are suddenly in, whether it's sudden unemployment, no childcare, complications to elder care, interrupted studies...or some awful combination of these.

Our VP Enrique Mendoza spearheaded an ambitious and highly effective system to help us connect with those in need, supplying them with food rations, medical equipment and other necessities while housebound.

We are a small but scrappy and dedicated team of volunteers, powered by two Google docs - one filled with items needed; other with items for donation. (We fill in any gaps with our own funds as well as your generous donations.)

We have also been doing Mon-Wed-Fri CPS food pickup and drop off for neighbors in need. Please add your name to the list without shame! We are in this together.

If you'd like to help us with these and many other efforts, we'd greatly appreciate a small donation, which you can give digitally at [swcollective.org](http://swcollective.org). Stay safe out there!

## SWC In The News!

So far in 2020, our humble, grassroots organization has been featured on NPR's Reset with Jenn White, and on CBS-2 News...twice! We've been busy talking about graffiti, theft and the lack of community spaces in which to convene. All important topics that seem to be swept under the rug by many entrenched organizations on the SW side. Additionally, our Chamber president Eddie Guillen was speaking on Telemundo this week, regarding the effects COVID has on our local small businesses.

We believe it's imperative to not only advocate for the communities & businesses in the Midway area, but also position the city-wide spotlight on them, so we can begin to enjoy some of the benefits that the wealthier sides of the city regularly enjoy.

Now's the time to get involved with our group. We need volunteers across several exciting initiatives, which we'll share with you in the next few pages.



## Curie Park Update



We are still working diligently behind the scenes to get some improvements made to Curie Park. If you haven't yet signed our petition, please do so, and share it with your network of friends and neighbors. It can be found at [mailchi.mp/swcollective/curiepark](mailto:mailchi.mp/swcollective/curiepark)

After much researching, cold calling and generally asking around, we found that the park is not the responsibility of the park district or the Public Building Commission...but CPS. We are now trying to get Ald. Ed Burke's assistance in connecting to the right folks at CPS. Recently we spoke with David Espinoza regarding the park, but have not received any follow up. Curie administration has not been able to engage Ald Burke either. Our next move? Gain 1,000 petition signatures and gather up a crowd to pay the alderman an in-person visit to press for progress. Would you consider joining us? There's power in numbers, after all.

Meanwhile, we are hoping that someone out here in the community can put us in touch with these folks, as the park is in bad shape. You can assess the condition for yourself in this video that Curie students recently put together and shared with us: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nMPaUZ\\_bTT4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nMPaUZ_bTT4)

## Freebies for Families: Partnership Opportunities

Our popular Freebies event is about to get more popular. We are in talks with CityKey to potentially bring the machine to a Freebies event this fall – stay tuned for those details.

We're also interested in partnering with local pharmacies to provide free health screenings, and produce suppliers to bring farmers' markets to the area.

Freebies for Families often pulls in a large crowd of young families and we want to make these events as useful as possible, since most attendees have children in tow. And it is vitally important to us that the resources we provide stay completely free to them.

So, if you are part of an organization that provides necessary community outreach, our Parents Group leads Yomara and Nicole are interested in hearing from you. Please send an email to [info@swcollective.org](mailto:info@swcollective.org) with the subject line "Freebies Partnership" to get things rolling!





## Our First Candidate Forum

This inaugural forum was a success! Hosted by our friends at Zoe's Patio, the event boasted a cash bar, light snacks and fantastic company – all right here in our community.

Panelists included four MWRD candidates, as well as Froy Jimenez, Aarón Oriz, and Marie Newman, who all spoke very passionately about the issues specific to the Midway area.

Tons of great questions were asked and answered in this bi-lingual forum, moderated brilliantly and smoothly by Archer Heights's Jose Requena. We are thankful for his willingness to assist us with this initiative.

We're excited for the potential we can reach as a community, especially with organizations that are powered by its residents, who keep local politicians to their promises.

You can count on us for that.



## Celebrate our Little Libraries

We will break ground on our first two SWC-sponsored Little Free Libraries immediately after Easter.

The plan is to share donated books, non-perishable food items and other things as needed. In the winter months, we'll affix a Letters to Santa mailbox to each, and our volunteers will fulfill small wishes. In the warmer months, we will host yoga classes, local author readings and other events to engage our communities.

If you'd like to see one of these in your area, raise your hand to be our neighborhood contact. You just have to visit the box weekly and let us know when there's damage. That's it! Imagine the benefits of having one of these in your neighborhood playlot...more kids out and about, reading and playing an active part in their communities. The boxes can be decorated however you wish, too, so gather a group and let us know you want one.



## Community Bike Rides

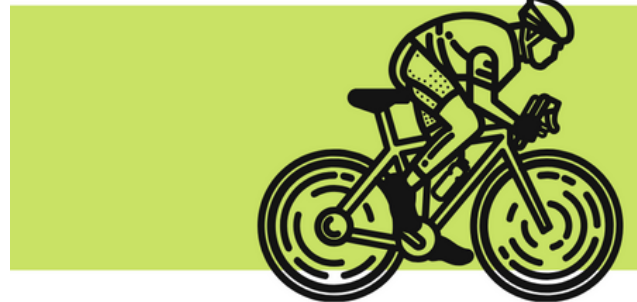
Starting in March, our monthly bike rides are open to all. Led by Dixon Galvez-Searle, the group meets at the Archer Park Fieldhouse and follows his pre-planned, kid-friendly route through Archer Heights.

These bike rides are scheduled to happen on the first Saturday of each month, as long as no shelter-in-place orders are in effect.

Check our Facebook page for updates!



**First Saturday of Every Month @ 11:15am  
Archer Park Fieldhouse**



## Miami Bowl Vacancy

In our January issue, we told you about how The Collective attended the October meeting of the Archer Heights Civic Association (AHCA) to discuss a potential development on the long vacant Miami Bowl lot across from the Pulaski Orange Line.

We are not waiting for anyone else to take charge of this important issue. So, Collective members Dixon Galvez-Searle and José Luis Torrez are working together to create a list of partner organizations and to write a proposal. With help from Abe Matthew, Enrique Mendoza and Eddie Guillen, we have a stellar team ready to jump into action this spring – starting with community outreach to learn what folks want to see in this vast space.

If you are interested in seeing that land finally being used by the community, and want to actually have your voice heard...raise your hand and introduce yourself at our next meeting. The details are on the last page of the newsletter.

## Join Us

Do you live in **Gage Park, West Elsdon, West Lawn, Chicago Lawn, Scottsdale, Ashburn, Archer Heights, Garfield Ridge, Clearing, Brighton Park or Back of the Yards**? Come represent your neighborhood and amplify the voices of your neighbors with us.

There is power in numbers, and The Southwest Collective uses that to the advantage of southwest side residents. Our groups work together to fight for school programs, provide resources for parents, support small businesses and so much more.

Come join us in making change in the Midway area.

## Next Meeting

**Our meetings are held on the second Saturday of each month, from 2-3pm, at De Colores Ice Cream & Coffee at 3838 W 49th Street.**

We also livestream our meetings on Facebook at @theswcollective, so you can still stay updated if you can't make the meeting in person.

*And yes, kids are welcome!*

## Next Newsletter: July 2020



 [swcollective.org](https://swcollective.org)

 [@theswcollective](https://www.facebook.com/theswcollective)

 [@swcollectivechi](https://www.instagram.com/swcollectivechi)

 [The Southwest Collective](https://www.youtube.com/TheSouthwestCollective)