

Orland Park Homeowners' Association to Compete for "Green and Gorgeous Beautification Program"

ORLAND PARK, IL - Homeowners' associations in the Village of Orland Park are invited to compete in the village's "Green and Gorgeous Beautification Program." Part of the village's green initiative, Smart Living Orland Park, the selected homeowners' association will receive instruction from the Prairie Godmothers, located in Flossmoor, on how to transition landscapes into water conscious, soil nurturing, climate loving outdoor spaces.

"We're inviting all homeowners' groups in the village to be a part of this competition," said Trustee Pat Gira, chair of the village's Parks, Recreation and Environmental Initiatives Committee. "Associations are invited to tell us why a public space in their subdivision would benefit from the expertise of the Prairie Godmothers," Gira added.

The program was developed by the village's Recreation Department, in particular Director Nancy Flores, Program Supervisor Stephanie Simpson and Recreation Instructor Rebecca McDowell.

"This program focuses on sustainable gardening and landscape practices to protect the planet," Flores explained. "Choosing native plants over annual plants may reduce a homeowner's spending by 50 percent in the first year alone," she noted.

Single family and multi-family associations are encouraged to visit the village's Smart Living website at www.smartlivingop.com to complete an application to be considered.

"We're asking associations to submit photos showing existing common areas that they'd like transformed," Simpson said. "We've already heard from a few groups in town and we're hoping that many more come on board," she said.

"Associations must be willing to take a significant leap toward greener living by creating environmentally responsible garden spaces," McDowell explained. "The chosen neighborhood has to meet simple prerequisites and be willing to comply with practices that use native plants, improve soil and conserve water," she said.

Jackie Riffice is the founder of Prairie Godmothers. Explaining the organization, Riffice said, "Prairie Godmothers is not only about sustainable gardening but also about environmental stewardship. We demystify the whole 'going green' thing and demonstrate that it's not difficult, disruptive, expensive or uncomfortable. I believe it, I try to live it and I find it's contagious. Protecting the planet has become personal and everyone wants to be part of it."

“Prairie Godmothers designed a village beautification program with an environmental twist – long term sustainability that is good for the planet. Instead of the traditional curb appeal of annual flowers and manicured hedges, the program aims to improve landscapes and gardens with practices that use native plants, improve soil and conserve water,” Riffice explained, adding, “The resulting gardens are not only stunning but they provide never-ending visual interest, are less expensive over time and are better for the environment. “

Orland Park took it a step further and created a competition among homeowners’ associations. The chosen homeowners’ association will receive consulting services and a garden design from Prairie Godmothers. Homeowners will be able to transform an existing common area into an earth-friendly model that can be applied to their own residential landscapes. Single family and multi-family associations are encouraged to visit the village’s Smart Living website at www.smartlivingop.com to complete an application by December 1, 2009.

“This will require a nominal investment on the part of the homeowners’ association,” Gira explained. “The Prairie Godmothers will also demonstrate how the elements of a sustainable landscape in a common area can be applied to residential landscapes,” she said.

Applying associations are asked to describe the common area to be considered for recognition, describing its size and shape, existing plants, location within the subdivision and the current state of the area. Association officials are asked to describe what is good and bad about the plant selections in the area and to describe their vision for how the area should look. At least ten percent of a subdivision’s residents must be willing to help transform the area in order to be considered.

Applications are due at the Recreation Department no later than December 1, 2009. Questions may be directed to the department at 708/403-7275.