

COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

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Magnet School to Relocate

INTER-AMERICAN MAGNET SCHOOL SEEKS TO RELOCATE NEAR RAVENSWOOD MANOR

The RMIA has learned that the esteemed Inter-American Magnet School (IAMS) hopes to relocate its school building from the current Lincoln Park site to a vacant area at the southwest corner of Addison and Kimball, and has just begun working with Alderman Mell to help accomplish this goal.

Community residents who support the plan are eager to see it happen, because they believe a magnet school near Ravenswood Manor would benefit families with young children and the community as a whole for many reasons. The RMIA strongly supports this idea and hopes to build support throughout our community. For this reason, the RMIA asks you to consider helping the IAMS obtain a commitment from the Board of Education and the City of Chicago for building the new school at Addison and Kimball.

IAMS is the oldest and most comprehensive dual-language program in the country. The school promotes academic excellence through bilingual, multicultural education. Students achieve proficiency levels in Spanish and English that enable them not only to carry on bilingual conversations, but also to continue their studies and work in English or Spanish-speaking environments. The school currently serves students in preschool through eighth grade, and has received numerous awards, including four Golden Apple teacher recipients.

Currently located at 919 W. Barry, the IAMS building needs to be re-

placed. It was originally built as a temporary structure in the early 1970s, intended to last a maximum of twenty years. Four years ago, the Chicago Public School Board allocated funds to build a new school, and plans were drawn to rebuild on the current site. However, the 44th Ward Alderman Bernie Hansen effectively stopped the school from proceeding, because he felt that too few of his constituents attended the school. Inter-America is now in the process of trying to find a new location on which to build.

A magnet school close to the Manor can provide our children with greater chances to attend this award-winning school and could help protect our property values.

A new Chicago Public School (CPS) policy stipulates that 30 percent of all new students admitted to lottery magnet schools live within a 1.5 mile radius of a magnet school. Each magnet school enrolls between 30 to 90 new students per year. On average, more than 1,000 students apply for those spots at the most popular schools. In the case of Inter-America, this means that 30 percent of their 65 new students must reside in the neighborhood.

Because Ravenswood Manor falls within the 1.5 mile requirement of the IAMS proposed site, children from our neighborhood would have a greater chance of getting into this school, which in turn would help retain families. (Continued on page 2)

RMIA Annual Meeting Held

The RMIA met on October 27th for its Annual Meeting. This meeting was a first of sorts as it was held at the newly built Ravenswood Manor Senior Suites. The surroundings were comfortable and gave Board members a chance to meet many of the neighborhoods' new neighbors.

Several guest speakers were in attendance at the meeting.

Ruth Walker, the President of the Ravenswood Manor Garden Club, reported that all area residents are encouraged to join the club, regardless of the color of their thumbs. The Garden Club meets at Horner Park on the 3rd Monday of every month.

Anne Rozman, from the Horner Park Advisory Council, reported that the equipment for the Manor Park enhancements has arrived. She said that construction will begin before the end of the year, weather permitting.

Laurene von Klan, from the Friends of the Chicago River, reported that her organization is looking forward to working on the bank of the River that borders Horner Park.

Finally, Marissa Hewling, a local resident, informed the Board that the Inter-American Magnet School is looking for a new location – hopefully at the corner of Kimball and Addison. For more details, see this newsletters' lead article.

Traffic issues continued to be a hot topic at the meeting. Issues discussed included traffic calming and the posting of senior citizen traffic signs. (Continued on page 3)

Magnet School Relocates (cont'd)

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lies with young children and promote neighborhood stability.

In addition, our property values may be enhanced and better protected if IAMS were in our ward, as it is now more desirable to have a magnet school within the immediate area given the new CPS policies.

Today, Ravenswood Manor has no lottery magnet schools within a 1.5 radius of the neighborhood. Compare this to the fact that communities to the south and east, including Lincoln Park, Old Town and DePaul, are home to many excellent lottery magnet schools including LaSalle, Hawthorn, Franklin, Newberry and even Inter-American (for now). With IAMS here, our neighborhood would likely become even more desirable -- or at least more competitive.

Why Kimball and Addison?

City real estate is at a premium today. Just finding the acreage needed can be a challenge. This site, which has been an eyesore for more than seven years, is actually ideal. For IAMS and the CPS, our community's surrounding area is perceived as a desirable site for the new school because this is where the greatest density of the IAMS student body resides. With the Chicago Public School Board policy that students who live within a 1.5 mile radius of the school are not eligible for busing, moving IAMS to this site would save the CPS significant amounts of money. Current calculations show an estimated 30 percent savings in busing, or approximately \$140,000 per year.

From Alderman Mell's perspective, and hopefully the City's, the Kimball and Addison site is large enough to accommodate a new school and still have room left over for other uses, including residential and light industrial. The Chicago City Planning Department is strongly in favor of this type of land usage. Converting this former industrial site to "mixed use" would add aesthetic value to the

overall area and keep work opportunities close to home. During off-hours the school might be able to be used by the surrounding community for meetings or cultural events.

Currently the Kimball/Addison lot is zoned for industrial use. However, Alderman Mell is checking to see if it can be turned into a mixed-use site. He supports the opportunity to bring IAMS to the 33rd Ward and is actively working with the school administration, parents, staff and community members to rezone the site and to secure approval from the Chicago City Council and the Board of Education for this plan. But Alderman Mell needs to know and clearly see that we support his efforts. So what can you do? The RMA encourages residents of the Manor to write to the following key people, urging them to bring the school to our area:

Gery Chico, President
Board of Trustees
Chicago Public Schools
125 S. Clark St., 6th Floor
Chicago, IL 60603

Paul Vallas, CEO
Chicago Public Schools
125 S. Clark, 5th Floor
Chicago, IL 60603

Hon. Richard M. Daley
Office of the Mayor
121 N. LaSalle, Room 507
Chicago, IL 60602

Hon. Richard Mell
Alderman, 33rd Ward
3649 N. Kedzie
Chicago, IL 60618

Please cc:
Inter-American Magnet School L.S.C.
919 W. Barry
Chicago, IL 60657

Questions or want to get involved?

Call Marissa Hopkins at 588-8822

Inter-American Magnet's Awards and Recognitions:

Title VII BASES Grant
(1998-1999)

Two Golden Apple Recipients
(1999)

Academic Achievement
(1997 & 1998)

Technology Literacy
Challenge Fund Grant
(1998)

Outstanding Principal Award
(1997)

Kohl/McCormick Award Recipient
(1997)

State Accreditation
(1997)

Learning Power Initiative Grant
(1997 & 1998)

Best Practice in School Leadership
(1996)

Goals 2000:
Model School
Project for Exemplary
Bilingual Education Program
(1996)

Illinois Teacher of the Year
(1994)

Principal of Excellence Award
(1993 & 1994)

Golden Apple Award Recipient
(1991 & 1994)