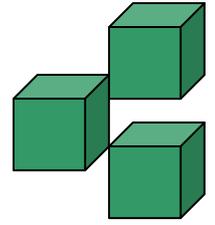


GREEN BLOCKS in OAK PARK



The Green Blocks Initiative is a citizen-based, block-by-block approach to achieving sustainability in neighborhoods throughout the Village. The first Green Block was created as an outcome of *Green Tuesdays in the Village*, a public environmental lecture series organized by Mike Iversen with the Oak Park Environmental & Energy Commission and the Forestry Commission.

A “Green Block” is formed by a group of neighbors who are committed to learning about energy conservation and environmental programs and taking individual and collective actions to implement these initiatives in their neighborhood. The Green Blocks program has proven to be beneficial for residents in their efforts to make their homes more energy efficient, participate in ongoing environmental activities and share their success stories.

The first two “Green Blocks” were formed in 2007 and 2008. Residents have shared their experiences and below are their ideas and comments outlining some steps you can take to form your own “Green Block”.

Getting Started: A core group met to form the first Green Block and created the following Vision Statement: *“To encourage actions in our every day life to support a sustainable, healthy environment, for the earth and its people.”* Your group can work together to write your own vision statement.

Inventory: Develop a survey and distribute to each home on the block (sample survey attached). The Village will help measure baseline energy usage for the block if residents sign the ComEd Challenge form (attached). Discuss findings at the first meeting. Conducting the “inventory” each year to measure results is recommended as it will help you see your successes and plan future projects and activities.

Meetings: It is helpful to have a regular meeting schedule. The core group meets monthly and they have arranged larger meetings for the entire block with guest speakers on topics such as weather stripping, energy efficient furnace replacements or green remodeling possibilities.

Networking: Form an email list or telephone tree to help keep everyone informed.

Projects and ongoing activities: Plan a project for each quarter of the year and ask all to participate. Here are some ideas:

- Replace light bulbs with CFLs
- Install rain barrels
- Build compost bins
- Hold a progressive dinner to “show off” individual “green” efforts
- Hold a “Zero Waste” block party
- Plan some children’s environmental activities
- Plant native or adaptive plants in individual and common areas
- Weather strip your home (conduct a “workshop” for neighbors)
- Compost fall leaves
- Participate in a Keep Oak Park Beautiful program (Alley Clean Up Event or Adopt A Block)
- Share errands – car pool materials to special collection events for electronic recycling, the paint exchange or household hazardous waste
- Share shopping – car pool to Farmers Market or local business district
- Share refuse carts – ask the Village speak to your group about recycling and how to reduce billing for shared refuse carts
- Share resources – a little research might find “joint purchasing” opportunities or incentives (tax rebates, cost savings, etc.) for green initiatives (Energy Star appliances, recycled content building materials)
- Support local groups – visit the Village’s Environmental web page to link to organizations that help promote sustainability in Oak Park.

The Village of Oak Park encourages residents to form their own Green Block. If you list your Green Block with the Village, you will get E-news updates on special collection events, green forum presentations and new resources you can use to assist your efforts.

For more information contact Karen Rozmus at 708.358.5707 or rozmus@oak-park.us or visit www.oak-park.us/environment