



# VENTURA VILLAGE NEIGHBORHOOD



## JANUARY '22 NEWS

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### Our Saviour's Community Services: Same Name, Different Services

**By: Mike Huffman, Executive Director**

Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Mike, and I'm the new Executive Director at Our Saviour's Community Services (OSCS). We provide dignified shelter and housing for single adults and education for adult English language learners through our two programs – Our Saviour's Housing and the English Learning Center. I wanted to take just a second to share some exciting changes happening with our services in the coming months.

As the pandemic continues to impact service delivery for many nonprofits, OSCS made a strategic decision to transition our emergency shelter to a medical-respite model, also known as a recuperative model. Beginning in 2022, we will specialize in providing temporary, emergency shelter with on-site healthcare staff and other supportive services to homeless adults who are being released from the hospital with a medical need that makes them too vulnerable to recover on the street or in a traditional shelter.

This change allows us to make the best use of our unique shelter facility, which was originally designed as a medical clinic, as well as our location near two major hospitals. More importantly, we will address a critical gap in homeless services – a need the pandemic has made painfully apparent – and help ensure that medically vulnerable, unhoused community members have a safe place to heal and recover as they search for permanent housing.

Changes are also taking place in our English Learning Center (ELC). This fall, we began providing both in person and virtual learning opportunities, which doubled our offerings and doubled the need for volunteers. The ELC is also starting to prepare for winter/spring term, which will run from January 3-April 28. We are resuming math classes in the evening, adding digital literacy classes, and hoping to start an afternoon drop-in tutoring lab if we can get interest

from volunteers and students. New volunteers are welcome at any time and can apply using the sign-up form on our website (<https://oscs-mn.org/elc-volunteer-application>).

OSCS started in this community with community members seeking to support recent refugees. While our mission has expanded to include housing and shelter, our focus on community remains in our name and our values. My hope for OSCS going forward is to continue to be a community asset located in the heart of the neighborhood, and I look forward to continuing to build those relationships. If you want to connect, please reach out to me.



Photo by Amanda Steepleton

### Franklin-Chicago Anchor

**By: Steve Dreyer**

Franklin Avenue in Ventura Village is dotted with a number of small businesses and markets. One such small retail business anchoring the busy Franklin - Chicago intersection is Two Amigos. Two Amigos is located in the PPL -owned building that served as its learning center and is now the Loring Nicollet Alternative School. Owner Richard Inamagua started Two Amigos at that location in

2003. The other Amigo was his brother-in-law who has since left the business, although Richard's sister is part owner. Richard came to the United States from Ecuador when he was 17. He worked in other small businesses and at one time owned a restaurant in another city.

Two Amigos specializes in check cashing, wire transfers, money orders, phone sales and repairs, bus cards and other related services...A large part of his business is with regular customers whom he built a relationship with. A big part of the store has a section that sells clothing, and does prints and designs.

The crime and drug dealing in that area is a big concern for Two Amigos and the other legitimate businesses and organizations nearby.



### Ventura Village Neighborhood News!

- Our first meeting of 2022 will be Wednesday, January 12th, at 7 PM. We will meet in person at ICCM Life Center, 1812 Park, and you can attend via Zoom by calling or sending us an email.

### Seasonal Increase in Automobile Theft

**By: Kali Pliego**

During the colder months, car thieves take advantage of residents who leave their cars running unattended. All precincts see a spike in auto thefts when temperatures plunge and the snow flies. The temptation to start the car and let it warm up while you stay warm inside or leaving it running while doing a short errand could be a costly mistake; even if you lock the car, it only takes seconds to break a window or jimmy a door lock. It is against City ordinance to leave your key in the ignition while you are not in your car: Minneapolis City ordinance 478.160, Open Ignition – failure to lock ignition and remove key from passenger vehicle is a towable offense. It is legal to use a remote starter but keep in mind that an unoccupied running vehicle will provide some temptation to a thief. If the car is running and locked, they may still attempt to break into the vehicle. What you can do:

- Do not leave your vehicle running and unattended, including to 'warm up', or run a quick errand
- Use anti-theft devices such as steering wheel clubs, GPS trackers, and/or engine kill switches
- Be aware of unauthorized tow trucks in the neighborhood or other suspicious vehicles in the alley or on your block
- Call 911 when you witness any suspicious activity and/or people around your property or block
- Have your license plate and VIN documented in case you need to report your car has been stolen
- Meet your neighbors and watch out for each other – organize your block and share information – consider being a block leader to help facilitate information sharing.

For more information on block clubs, crime prevention tips, contact your Crime Prevention Specialist, Kali Pliego at [kali.pliego@minneapolismn.gov](mailto:kali.pliego@minneapolismn.gov)

### Youthline Program Information & Updates

**By: Courtney Gillman, Youth Program Specialist**

Youthline engages youth ages 12-17 in positive leadership experiences and recreational activities while connecting them to adult mentors in the parks. A Youth Program Specialist is returning for a special assignment. Sarah Chelstrom will be back at the Upper South Parks (East Phillips, Phillips Community Center & Stewart) in January 2022. There will now be three programmers – Courtney, Sarah & Seng.

Program Highlights:

- Stewart Park will be doing Archery, an Arts & Craft group, and Teen Hangout Time.
- Phillips Community Center has a Technology & Me group and a Self Defense class.
- East Phillips will have Work Hard Play Hard – where kids get homework help and then play gym games. There is also an Art and Cooking group meeting throughout the week.

Questions:

If you would like to see when and where programming is happening, you can look here: [https://apm.activecommunities.com/minneapolisparcs/Activity\\_Search](https://apm.activecommunities.com/minneapolisparcs/Activity_Search) Or email [cgillman@minneapolisparcs.org](mailto:cgillman@minneapolisparcs.org)

### ICCM Opens New Parking Lot/Community Space

**By: Chris DeLaurentis**

For over 30 years the 3 lots at the corner of Park Avenue and E. 18th St. sat vacant. Weeds, garbage, and a broken down chain link fence occupied the lot until ICCM Life Center broke ground there in September of 2020. It is now a parking lot and community outreach corner. Paving, curbs, landscaping, trees and shrubs have brought beauty and purpose to this underutilized space. Not only will it provide off street parking for the Life Center, but it will also be used for outdoor events, youth activities, and hopefully in the future farmers markets, and community yard sales..

We thank Ventura Village for it's ongoing support as well as all the donors and volunteers who contributed to this improvement to our community.

