Garden for a Changing Climate
American Indian Center Street Fair

Garden for a Changing Climate

A city-wide public art project co-created by Chicago communities and artist Jenny Kendler

July 21
12 PM – 4 PM
Garden for a Changing Climate

As residents of Turtle Island (North America) we must first recognize that we are occupying stolen lands. This area is the historically settled area of the Miami and his Chippewa. Chicago, in the end has always been a metropolis and center of trade for Indigenous peoples and nations alike. For over 500 years Native Nations have been forcibly removed from this territory through acts of exploration, settlement, exploitation, assimilation and genocide. The State of Illinois remains home to over 100,000 tribal members.

GARDEN FOR A CHANGING CLIMATE STREET FAIR ACTIVITIES

Chi-Nations Youth Council: Create Space for Native youth through arts activism and education. Learn how you can help Chi-Nations and the American Indian Center establish a Community Garden in the 35th.

Elevate Energy: Educates and advocates around energy efficiency resources in Illinois. Learn about renewables, federal and state funded programs, tips and best practices to be environmentally friendly and more energy efficient in everyday life.

Little Village Environmental Justice Organization: The vision of LEJO is to build a sustainable community that promotes the healthy development of youth and families, provides economic justice, and practices participatory democracy and self-determination.

Sierra Club & Peoples Climate Movement: Will be present to collect petition signatures that demand Mayor Emanuel work with Chicagoans who want cleaner-air and water, good paying clean energy jobs, and a brighter future for their communities, to create a plan for how Chicago can become a strong and just 100% clean energy economy.

Voter Registration: Politics are personal, make sure you vote.

MISSION & VISION

American Indian Center–Chicago

"To promote fellowship among Indian people of all Tribes living in metropolitan Chicago and to create bonds of understanding and communication between Indians and non-Indians in this City. To advance the general welfare of American Indians in the metropolitan community life; to foster the economic advancement of Indian people, to sustain cultural, artistic, and recreational pursuits; and to perpetuate Indian cultural values."

Today, the AIC remains the oldest inter-tribal Cultural Center north of the border and strives to be the primary cultural and community resource for nearly 6,000 American Indians in Chicago’s six county region. Chicago is the third largest urban Native American population in the country with over one hundred tribal nations represented. With over 75% of all Native people living off reservation and in urban settings, the AIC represents this emerging Native urban estate and is creating a safe, fun and cultural place of gathering. Through a combination of short-term relief services and long-term education and support programs, we seek to foster physical and spiritual health in the community, an active connection with tradition in values and practices, stronger families with multi-generational bonds, and a rising generation of educated, artificiates, and visionary youth.

Arts

American Indian Center showcases traditional and contemporary Native American (NA) interdisciplinary art that promotes cultural pedagogy for discourse and understanding, while providing an inclusive platform for cultural exchange. As visitors to the AIC learn about Native history, contemporary culture, identity and cultural contributions, they become aware of the NA historical and present-day contributions to the cultural fabric of the City of Chicago and the State of Illinois.

Education

The AIC works toward the creation, development and sustainability of innovative learning environments that are built from the intellectual and cultural strengths of our urban-tribal community. We serve as both a community partner and as a national leader in innovative programming with measured success in creating learning environments that support academic excellence, leadership, and cultural vitality for Indigenous youth, their families, teachers, and other community members. The department’s many programs include but are not limited to: Urban Explorers Program, Indigenous Science Days, and Professional Development.

Outdoor Classrooms

Garden for a Changing Climate

For indigenous peoples of Turtle Island have relied on various species of plants for food, medicine, industry and ceremonial life. As in the past, many members of the American Indian Community of Chicago still utilize these plants and traditions today.

Angie Decoursy was a founding member of the American Indian Center of Chicago and dedicated herself to the betterment of the American Indian Community. Angie encouraged generations of "Urban Indians" to reclaim our traditional medicines here in Chicago and was an main inspiration of the Medieval Garden at the AIC’s long time home 1050 W. Wilson. She encouraged many to reconnect with the ancestral teachings of the land and that seed continues to grow within our community and within the work of the Education Department.

Upcoming Garden Programs

UPCOMING GARDEN PROGRAMS

Freedom Camp Community Celebration with Garden for a Changing Climate

Wednesday, August 2

365 North at Charles Sumner Math & Science Community Academy

First Nations Community Garden

The AIC and Chi-Natives Youth Council are working in partnership with Arlister Carlos Rincon-Rosa at the 35th Ward to develop a community garden. would transform the vacant lot on Pilsen Rd. & Wallace Ave. into a culturally relevant gathering space and educational hub in the heart of Atley Park. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to provide a healing space for the Inter-Tribal Native Community of Chicago and to promote public knowledge and appreciation of Chicago’s indigenous landscapes, native plants, and environments through seasonal community programs and workshop opportunities for the greater Chicago community.

NORTHWEST PORTAGE WALKING MUSEUM

Working in close collaboration, the Chicago Public Art Group, the American Indian Center, and the Portage Park Neighborhood Association are pleased to guide a shared community vision into the creation of the Northwest Portage Walking Museum—a walking trail that will connect and highlight the Historical and continual activation of two here, the North Branch of the Chicago River and the Des Plaines Rivers. The NWPM is a living, accessible museum featuring multiple art installations and gardens along Irving Park Road focusing on the connections and critical role of our natural waterways in the formation of modern-day Chicago. NWPM is dedicated to the reactivation of the rivers through the creation of art installation, earthworks and native gardens that tells the living Indigenous histories of the landbank. The neighborhood along the trail will add their history and voice to each installation and garden also, creating a pleasant pedes- trian-friendly trial that invites people to learn the history and story each garden, earthwork and art installation tells.

The Garden for a Changing Climate is a co-created project initiated by artist Jenny Kendler and UIC’s Gallery 400. GCC partners with five Chicago community organizations to create plant-based infrastructures which will provide meaningful resilience as our planet warms, systems shift—and perhaps even collapse. Through a series of climate change street fairs, GCC works side-by-side with Chicago residents to envision positive post-climate-change futures—stake out strategies to claim physical and cultural space against the forces of disaster capitalism, preparing our communities to thrive in this rapidly changing climate.