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Contact:

McKinley Park News

info@mckinleypark.news

(312) 560-1115

P.O. Box 9136

Chicago, IL 60609

<https://mckinleypark.news>

McKinley Park News Thanks Neighborhood Association for Recognition of Local Journalism

CHICAGO – March 16, 2024 – The *McKinley Park News*, a micro-local news publication serving Chicago's McKinley Park neighborhood, thanked the McKinley Park Civic Association for its recognition of local journalism through the 2024 William H.G. Toms Community Service Awards.

"It is profoundly meaningful and moving to have our local journalism work acknowledged and supported by our local community," said *McKinley Park News* Publisher and award recipient Justin Kerr. "I and the *McKinley Park News* are deeply honored by this recognition."

Now in its 53rd year, the William H.G. Toms Community Service Award joins the Educator of the Year Awards presented at the association's annual banquet, set for Sunday, April 21, 2024.

Dr. Roy Pletsch, the association's longtime education officer and columnist for the *Brighton Park-McKinley Park Life* newspaper, is also a recipient of the 2024 William H.G. Toms Community Service Award.

Winners of the 2024 Educators of the Year are Gina Burrows of Nathanael Greene Elementary School, Mayra Jimenez of Namaste Charter School, Jinhua Lai-Bao of Evergreen Academy Middle School, Olivia Medina of Blessed Sacrament Parish's Religious Education Department and Joellen Zielazinski of Thomas Kelly College Prep.

"Starting up a local news business is extremely challenging, especially since we're doing this ourselves, with no funding or formal support," Kerr said.

"The Toms award inspires us to keep pursuing local journalism and fighting through all slings and arrows," Kerr said. "It demonstrates the value and trust that our community places in our local news, which is the primary thing that gives it value."

The McKinley Park Civic Association is the neighborhood's longest-serving community organization. In addition to its annual awards banquet, the group meets monthly except in July and August and also hosts the neighborhood's annual Memorial Day Parade.

ABOUT THE MCKINLEY PARK NEWS

The *McKinley Park News* is an award-winning local news publication covering the McKinley Park neighborhood of Chicago from its website at <https://mckinleypark.news>. Its features include original news reporting, a calendar of neighborhood events, interactive memberships and

subscriptions, and sponsorships and advertising. Online as a neighborhood news source since 2016, the *McKinley Park News* launched its commercial operations in 2019 as a publication of Local News LLC. In 2024, the McKinley Park Civic Association lauded the *McKinley Park News* through the William H.G. Toms Community Service Award to Publisher Justin Kerr for the publication's local journalism. It is a member of LION Publishers and the McKinley Park Underage Drinking and Other Substances Abuse Coalition (McK-UDOS).

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