



On the web at <http://www.indiancreeksubdivision.org> Contact us by email at [indiancreeknews@hotmail.com](mailto:indiancreeknews@hotmail.com)

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## Fostering Dignity – An Indian Creek Treasure

*"We exist to bring comfort to a victim of child abuse at the time he or she is most vulnerable."*

Fostering Dignity (FD) provides backpacks to children entering foster care at the time of an investigation by the State of Illinois. Our project will provide backpacks to Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Investigators. FD is a non profit organization in partnership with Illinois Prairie Community Foundation. Valerie Beguin (Indian Creek resident) her son Bob and husband, Dan Duback lead this grassroots nonprofit from their home in Towanda. The backpacks are for the abused child to carry their belongings - instead of a garbage bag and it's negative meaning.

### **History**

In fiscal year 2012, 4,454 Illinois children were removed from homes and placed in protective custody as a result of indicated findings of abuse or neglect. For the fiscal year 2013, that number increased to 4,488.

### **Partnered Organization - Illinois Prairie Community Foundation (IPCF)**

What is Illinois Prairie Community Foundation (IPCF)? : A community foundation is a tax exempt, independent, publicly supported philanthropic organization established and operated as a permanent collection of endowed and pass through funds for the long-term benefit of a defined geographic area.

Contact Information: [vgb223@aol.com](mailto:vgb223@aol.com) (309) 728-2696 M-F 8:30am – 5pm.

Website: <http://www.fosteringdignity.org/about.html>

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## WOW – Women of Words

In nearly five years this group of nine women have written over 400 stories. What began as a one-time event to share stories of young love became a monthly event. They each write a story based on a single theme and then gather to share those stories with each other.

On December 12<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 at the Towanda Library, Linda Garbe (Indian Creek resident) and six other members of the group will read holiday-themed stories from their collection. You are invited to join them for snacks, drinks and great stories.



## Garden Tips

by Helen Leake

Between the snow and Jack Frost, the summer gardening is pretty well finished. Now is a good time to get the garden journal out and make some reminders for next year. Some people take a picture of the garden standing in the same spot every spring, summer, fall, and winter.

One way to know for sure where you planted a new plant or where an older plant is to mark the spot. You can purchase wood or plastic markers. Or you could also use popsicle sticks or even that white plastic knife from the carryout meal. Use a permanent marking pen to write the name on one side and the year on the other.

The recent snow reminds us that the salt spray from the snow and ice removal can damage plants. Before the ground freezes is a good time to put the posts in the ground. You can use black plastic or burlap to prevent the spray from hitting the plant. Salt pulls the moisture out of the leaves and roots.

Snow protects the plant from the wind and bitter cold and it insulates the soil that holds the plant dormant. It also provides moisture when it melts. However, do not dump snow on the shrubs when you are scooping or plowing snow. You could damage the plant by breaking a branch.

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It is the time of the year for that fascinating Amaryllis. The bulb is large, sometimes as large as a softball. It likes to be crowded in the pot, usually a round pot that is just a little wider than the bulb. It also likes to have the top 1/3 of the bulb not covered with soil.

Years ago you could only get them in orange color. Now you can get them in red, pink, salmon, white, green, etc. Also, some of the larger bulbs can send up 2 flower stems. This time of year you can buy a kit containing the pot, bulb, and soil. The soil is in a disc that you put in water and as it gets wet, it turns into soil. It is coir, which is made from coconut shells.

You can buy 3 bulbs and plant them in one container, using a container at least 7 inches deep and 11 inches wide. Fill the pot 1/3 full with potting soil. Place the 3 bulbs close together, but not touching each other. Add soil around and between the bulbs until the bottom 2/3 of the bulb is covered. Leave the top 1/3 bare and press the soil down. Water it well and place it by a sunny window. Keep the soil moist and in about 3-6 weeks a stem so the stem can grow straight up. It tends to lean toward the light.

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Now that it is cold outside, don't forget to protect your newly purchased plants from the cold when you take them home. Just a few minutes of cold air can damage a plant. It is best if you can have the clerk place the plant into a paper bag and place a plastic bag over the top. I have bought a towel and wrapped it around the plant. Also, don't leave the plant in a cold car while you finish your shopping.

Now that the garden is pretty well finished for the season, it is a good time to have the soil tested. If you are using a garden bed that is lined with treated wood, the chemicals could leach out into the soil and the food could absorb some of them. Also, the excess use of pesticides or herbicides could harm the soil.

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Now is the time to apply some good organic compost to the garden. It would have all winter to break down and add nutrients to the soil. If you added a couple of inches of leaves or grass clippings, next spring you would not need to work it in. Research has shown that food produced today only has about 50 percent of the nutrients of food produced 40-50 years ago because of the lack of organic compost

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## Ecology Action Center announces recipients of 2019 McLean County Green Awards

The Ecology Action Center annually presents the annual McLean County Green Awards in order to recognize significant local efforts to improve our environment. The 2019 award recipients were named at the EAC's annual fall event, the Sustainable Gourmet on November 14.

**The McLean County Recycling and Waste Reduction Award** identifies businesses, schools or organizations with outstanding recycling programs or waste reduction efforts or individuals who have played a role in a successful program or effort. The 2019 award was presented to a group of volunteers who coordinate local collections of "Terracycle", a nontraditional recycling program that recycles a wide range of diverse items including snack chip bags, drink pouches, water filters, and beauty product packaging. Amie Keeton, Janet Guaderrama, Macia Nagy, Melanie Ziomek, organize Terracycle collections through a 24 hour drop-off site in partnership with St. Luke Union Church in Bloomington. Over the past several years they have helped divert over 100,000 items from the landfill through their efforts. More information on Terracycle programs in Bloomington-Normal is available on the EAC website at <https://ecologyactioncenter.org/terracycle/>.

**The Anne McGowan Making a World of Difference Award** recognizes outstanding projects, activities, or individuals in McLean County who promote environmental awareness or natural resource conservation. The EAC dedicated the World of Difference Award in memory of McGowan, an early director of the EAC, due to her ability to inspire and motivate others to take action.

Henry Brockman is a local organic produce farmer in the Congerville area who provides vegetables to hundreds of Central Illinois residents each year through CSA (community supported agriculture) subscriptions. He is a leader of local food in central Illinois as he adopts new strategies on an ongoing basis to better protect our local environment; saying "the goal of everything I do in my fields is to give life to the soil and the entire ecosystem". He plants over 650 varieties of vegetables each year, experimenting with new types and improving his practices to adapt to a changing climate. Learn more about the Brockman family farm or sign up for a 2020 CSA subscription at <https://brockmanfamilyfarming.com/henrys-farm/>.

Past recipients of the McLean County Green Awards are listed on the Ecology Action Center website at <https://ecologyactioncenter.org/green-awards-2/>.

*The mission of the Ecology Action Center is to inspire and assist our community in creating, strengthening, and preserving a healthy environment. The EAC acts as a central resource for environmental education, information, outreach, and technical assistance in McLean County.*



## Ecology Action Center cautions residents in selection of alternative energy suppliers

The Ecology Action Center has received numerous inquiries lately regarding letters or postcards people got from Arcadia Power offering energy savings through community solar, or other renewable energy sources.

One of our roles as an energy educator in the community is to ensure residents are able to make informed choices about their energy consumption, and understand different ways to reduce energy costs through efficiency upgrades and renewable energy investment.

The Illinois Attorney General's office has noted that the majority of residents that switch to alternative energy suppliers end up paying more for their energy. There are a few key elements to understand and consider before signing up with an alternate energy supplier or third party energy broker.

What is an alternate energy supplier? Illinois has a deregulated energy market, which allows alternative energy suppliers to sell energy to customers. Alternative energy suppliers are for-profit companies that sell electricity and natural gas to consumers. They offer the exact same energy that your traditional public utility provides, but they can charge higher prices because their prices are not regulated by the state. If consumers choose to receive energy from an alternate supplier, they still receive a monthly bill from Ameren and their alternate supplier is listed on the bill next to the supply rate.

Arcadia Power is not an alternate energy supplier, but instead a third party energy broker. They do not sell energy users power directly – they contract through other alternate suppliers the same way consumers or municipalities can directly.

### **What is municipal aggregation?**

Municipal aggregation is an option for a municipality to choose an alternate energy supplier for their community. Bloomington and Normal both have municipal aggregation agreements for Ameren residents through June 2020. Through those agreements, residents receive their energy supply from MidAmerican Energy.

### **Renewable Energy Credits**

Some alternate energy suppliers offer “green” energy through Renewable Energy Credits or RECs. MidAmerican offers a green energy option through Bloomington and Normal's municipal aggregation program. In Bloomington, the green energy option at 5.07 cents per kWh is the default. In Normal, residents could choose from a base rate of 4.98 cents per kWh or select the green energy option at 5.07 cents per kWh.

Through green plans, the energy supplier pledges to buy RECs from a company that produces power from renewable sources, such as wind. That renewable energy producer agrees to produce

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and deliver an amount of renewable energy to the grid that is equal to the amount of energy you consumed. In this case, MidAmerican purchased RECs from a wind producer that generated wind electricity in Texas.

Participating in a green energy program where the supplier uses the REC system does not mean your home is being powered by renewable energy. Instead, it is an investment in renewable energy; but not necessarily an investment in renewable energy here in Illinois.

Arcadia Power is offering renewable energy through this same REC process. Any offers for community solar would also use RECs because Arcadia Power is not one of the developers that was awarded a community solar array project here in Illinois through the Illinois Power Agency's lottery. *Again, they are not a direct energy supplier, so any energy they sell you, whether renewable or not, is through another energy supplier and they are just the third party broker.*

There will be options to invest in community solar in Illinois in the near future when some of the arrays that were selected through the lottery process are completed and developers begin selling subscriptions.

## **Community Solar**

Community solar is an option for Illinois Ameren and CommEd residents to purchase subscriptions to large solar arrays operating in their utility territory. Purchasing a subscription to a community solar array will give consumers credit on their energy bill for energy produced by their portion of the solar array.

If the subscription fee consumers pay for their community solar is at a rate lower than their current electricity supply rate, investing in community solar will help them invest in renewable energy in Illinois, and reduce their energy costs at the same time.

## **Energy Supply Rates**

Choosing alternate energy suppliers or third party brokers comes down to understanding the current price you pay for your electricity and the price the other vendors are offering.

Ameren is the default public electricity utility for Bloomington and Normal (for residents and businesses that are not in Corn Belt territory). The current Ameren rate is 4.715 cents per kWh for October through May 2020 (historically it was 4.658 from June – October 2018, 5.038 from October – May 2019, and was 4.561 from June – September 2019). As mentioned in the municipal aggregation section above, Ameren territory residents that did not opt-out of the aggregation program have paid a flat rate of 5.07 cents per kWh in Bloomington and either 4.98 cents per kWh or 5.07 in Normal depending on whether or not residents chose the green option. These rates began July 1, 2018 and end June 30, 2020.

The Illinois Attorney General's office reported that between June of 2014 and May of 2018, customers in Illinois overpaid for alternative electricity by over \$600 million. Regardless of what salespeople for alternative energy suppliers tell you, you are not required to enroll with an alternative supplier. Taking no action will leave you with the supplier chosen by your municipality – which has contracted a flat rate for two years, or with your public utility (Ameren in our area) as a default – and their rates are regulated by a state agency.

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The Ecology Action Center wants to help consumers understand all these elements, so if they choose to utilize offers from alternate suppliers or third party brokers, they can make the choice from an informed position, and avoid paying more for the energy supply in the long run.

## Protect our local water supplies – Curb your leaf piles

For many Bloomington-Normal residents, leaf-raking efforts are already underway. The City of Bloomington and Town of Normal directs residents to rake leaves to the curb, but not into the street. In addition to clogging storm drains and causing street flooding, leaves are a storm water pollutant. Washed into the storm sewer system and on to creeks, streams, and lakes, the additional nutrients from the massive amounts of leaves breaking down remove oxygen from the water, suffocating plants and wildlife.

The Ecology Action Center urges residents to help keep our local waters clean - by either composting leaves or piling them neatly near the curb for collection.



For additional information on composting contact the Ecology Action Center at (309) 454-3169 or consult [ecologyactioncenter.org](http://ecologyactioncenter.org).

Information on protecting our local watersheds is available at the [mCLEANwater.org](http://mCLEANwater.org) website, a clearinghouse of local resources about our water and efforts to better protect it.

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## Towanda HCE News for December!

The Towanda HCE will be meeting for their December Holiday Potluck Party on Monday, December 9, 6:30 p.m. at the Towanda Community Building. Please bring a dish to share. Meat, drink, and table service will be provided. If you wish to participate, bring a \$10 gift exchange.

The hostess committee is Cindy Kelley, Bev Hornickel, Clara Lehan and Karen Wyant. For more information and to RSVP, contact Clara at 309-826-8044 or Cindy, 824-4797 by Saturday, December 7. Join us for a festive and fun time and fellowship.

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## Community

### Unit 5

12/4 - Unit 5 1-hr late start  
12/20 – last day of school before winter break (students return to classes on 1/7/20)

### Community

Sat. Dec. 21 - Start of Winter (Winter Solstice)  
Sun. Dec. 22 - Hanukkah (begins at sundown)  
Wed. Dec. 25 - The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)

Please provide information about your organization: contact name, phone number, email address, usual meeting day, time and location and any other pertinent description of your organization to: [clerk@villagetowanda.org](mailto:clerk@villagetowanda.org) so the village website <https://www.villageoftowanda.org/organizations/> can be updated. Thank you for your help!!

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# December Library Announcements

## November Holiday Hours

Towanda District Library will be closed Wednesday, November 27 through Friday, November 29 in observance of Thanksgiving. The library will reopen Saturday, November 30 at 10:00 am. Towanda District Library is thankful to serve a wonderful community and its patrons, and we wish you an enjoyable holiday!

## December Technology Updates & Holiday Hours

Towanda District Library will be closed Thursday, December 19, 2019 to accommodate the installation of an updated computer network. The library will close Wednesday, December 18 at 6:00 pm and will reopen Friday, December 20 at 1:00 pm. Books and other materials can be returned to the library during this closure, and all online resources will remain accessible.

Towanda District Library will be closed Tuesday, December 24 through Thursday, December 26 in observance of the holidays. The library will reopen Friday, December 27 at 1:00 pm. Towanda District Library will be closed Tuesday, December 31 through Wednesday, January 1 in observance of the holidays. The library will reopen Thursday, January 2 at 1:00 pm.

## “Season of Giving: Food for Fines”

Towanda District Library is partnering with Home Sweet Home Ministries for our “Season of Giving: Food for Fines” event! Beginning Monday, November 25 through December 30, 2019, patrons are encouraged to donate nonperishable food items and/or shampoo, soap, toothbrushes, or toothpaste. In the spirit of giving, Towanda District Library will waive \$1.00 in overdue fines for each donated item. (Please note food items must be nonperishable with expiration dates past May 2020.) Thank you for partnering with us to support our community.

## “Women of Words”: Seasons’ Readings Program

For nearly five years, nine women have met monthly to share stories they have written. While one topic is selected each month, the stories are vastly different. By nurturing each member’s craft, they have collectively authored over 400 stories, underscoring the group’s name, “Women of Words.” On Thursday, December 12 at 5:30 pm, you’re invited to enjoy an evening of fall and winter holiday-themed selections presented by several members of this group. Refreshments will be provided, and the library will remain open beyond its typical hours to highlight this featured program.



**Upcoming  
Very Ready Reader Story Times:**

- ★ December 4: “B” is for Bear
- ★ December 11: Snow-ry Time!
- ★ December 18: T.D.L.’s Jolly Story Time  
(Celebration of Winter Holidays)

Towanda District Library is closed Wednesday, November 27.  
Spring Story Time Meetings resume Wednesday, March 4, 2020.



**Towanda Reads**  
Adult Discussion Group

- Featured Books for December:  
The Vanderbeekers of 141<sup>st</sup> Street  
by Karina Yan Glaser and  
Elevation by Stephen King
- Meeting Date: Tuesday, December 10;  
5:00 – 6:00 pm
- New and returning participants  
welcome
- Facebook Group participation available

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## Classified

### Businesses:

**John Hermann**

Financial Professional Associate  
Greater Illinois Financial Group

**Prudential Advisors**

1907 Jumer Drive, Suite D, Bloomington, IL 61704  
Tel 309 808-5212 Fax 309 808-5230 Cell 309 287-5972  
[john.hermann@prudential.com](mailto:john.hermann@prudential.com)

Pampered Chef features cooking shows, catalog parties, freezer meal workshops, bridal showers & fundraisers!

Contact your local Indian Creek consultant for these events.

Annette Hancock  
7 Bent Tree Lane  
Call Home - 728-2990  
Text or call- 242-1802  
Email - [annettehancock1953@gmail.com](mailto:annettehancock1953@gmail.com)  
Website - [www.pamperedchef.com/pws/annettehancock](http://www.pamperedchef.com/pws/annettehancock)  
Pinterest - [www.pinterest.com/ahancock0935](http://www.pinterest.com/ahancock0935)



### For Hire:

Need someone to take care of your pet while you are away, call Bailee Harmon at (309) 530-5360. I have experience with animals at the Humane Society and have been petting sitting for two years. References provided upon request.

Brenna Schwamberger is available for babysitting. She will be a sophomore next year at NCHS and has completed her Red Cross Babysitting class. You can contact her at 728-2857 (h) or (309) 824-1410 (c).

Are you looking for someone to take care of your pets or children? Do you need someone to do housework or cleaning so weekends can be spent relaxing? Call me, Aubrey Thomas, and I will help you out. I will be a freshman at NCHS in the fall. I love animals of all kinds. I have completed the Safe Sitter course and will make sure I watch your children carefully. Mother makes sure I get plenty of opportunities to practice my cleaning skills. I can be reached at 309-728-2246 (home) or (309) 532-7466. Reasonable rates.

