

## Plainfield Park District goes tobacco free at all of its parks and facilities

The fresh air will be fresher at all of the Plainfield Park District's parks and facilities this summer after its board of commissioners passed a new ordinance banning tobacco use at all of its outdoor facilities.

The Smoke Free Illinois Act was first passed in 2008, and at the time banned smoking inside all public buildings including those owned by government agencies.

The new ordinance will now ban smoking from outdoor recreational facilities including restrooms, spectator and concession areas as well as all parks, sports fields, playgrounds and walking and hiking trails.



Tobacco use will be banned from all Plainfield Park District outdoor areas thanks to the work of student volunteers from Heritage Grove Middle School.

The new policy bans the use of all smoke tobacco products, as well as e-cigarettes, and smokeless products like chewing tobacco.

The new policy originated from the work of a group of concerned students at Heritage Grove Middle School in Plainfield School District 202.

The after school club called itself Plainfield Reality Illinois and they received a grant from the Illinois Department of Public Health for their work said Amrita Raghuraman, a community health educator with the Will County Health Department.

Raghuraman worked with the Heritage Grove students and their teacher Kathy Gregory on their community outreach efforts which included a park cleanup day at Northwest Community Park where they gathered cigarette waste. They also attended a Park District Board meeting, and conducted a community survey which showed an overwhelming support for the new smoking ban. They presented their findings to the Park Board of Commissioners in May and the board passed the ordinance in June.

Park District residents will begin seeing new signs at all of the parks alerting residents to the new tobacco ban this summer.

Plainfield Park District Executive Director Carlo Capalbo said that the new signs will first be installed at all ball fields and sporting areas with park entrance signs to follow.

Capalbo credits the work of Mrs. Gregory's students at Heritage Grove Middle School and their mentors at the Will County Health Department for the Park District's move to go completely tobacco free.

"The students of Plainfield Reality Illinois made the difference and our parks will be healthier places because of their work," said Capalbo.

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