



Jane Charmelo

## OUT AND ABOUT

# Healthy Lombard Foundation annual fair

Having worked with and around children during her career as a teacher and elementary school district spokesperson, Jay Wojcik has gotten many chances to observe them, and as a result, started raising concerns about what has become a documented rise in childhood obesity.

That holds especially true in DuPage County, where Fighting Obesity Reaching healthy Weight Among Residents of DuPage, or FORWARD, has compiled data on the obesity rate among the county's children.

Even though there has been a slight decline since 2011-12 in obesity rates among children in kindergarten, sixth grade and ninth grade, one in seven of these students in DuPage County is obese, with 44 percent being reported as having elevated blood pressure.

What's more, when divided into regions, the northeast part of DuPage County, including Villa Park and Oakbrook Terrace, shows a 19-percent obesity rate, while the north central portion of the county, including Lombard, shows a 15.7-percent obesity rate.

Wojcik was concerned about the health of children, yet she also turned her focus to obesity in adults, with the FORWARD report showing that one in four adults in DuPage County is considered to be obese; one in three is overweight.

These numbers are part of the reason Wojcik founded the Healthy



Photos courtesy of Jay Wojcik

THE ANNUAL FEBRUARY Fitness Fair is being held Saturday, Feb. 27, at Yorktown Center. There will be interactive exhibits and tables for adults, competitions for children and demonstrations, as well as a raffle. In the above photo, Glenbard Township High School District 87 students will be demonstrating yoga techniques. In the lower left photo, health screenings will be available for adults. Collect at least 16 stickers from visits to the exhibits, and enter to win a raffle prize. Jay Wojcik founded Healthy Lombard in 2009, which in 2010 became a 501(c)(3) non-profit foundation. Since then, she has gained supporters, partners and sponsors who are all on board with helping the community attain healthier lifestyles. Visit [www.healthylombard.com](http://www.healthylombard.com) for more information.

Lombard Foundation back in 2009—with the help of the late Bill Mueller. She wanted to encourage children, their parents and other adults in the community to rethink their lifestyle, including diet and physical activity.

With help from sponsors and supporters, the founder and president created a number of challenges, such as the Flat Apple program, in which people would submit photos of themselves engaging in healthy activities. This year the program added a bike ride for kids.

G.Y.M., or Get Yourself Moving, targets second-graders in Lombard, in which they get a backpack to take home over the weekend, filled with items such as a frisbee, jump rope, paddleball, books and healthful hints.

The students maintain a journal of their activities with these items, then return the bag and journal to school.

Apple Crunch Day is a day to send a selfie while eating an apple and the local cable TV show, "Health Local," offers ideas for healthy living.

Wojcik said she is working with local restaurants such as Maxfield's and Main Street Café, both in Lombard, to have them highlight certain menu items "so [customers] can identify quickly a healthy selection."

"We're hoping that other villages can copy that, too," she added.

The Health Heroes challenge encourages adults to engage in healthy activities, with some getting recognition after being nominated

by someone who has observed their efforts; and the National Night Out event this year included fitness challenges for kids.

With the new year—and resolutions—not that far behind us, the foundation's annual February Fitness Fair invites members of the greater Lombard community to stop by Yorktown Center and check out the health-related features and events.

When asked why she decided to host a fitness fair, the founder responded that in part, it is aimed toward adults.

Wojcik commented about the adults that "I see parents and other adults as role models" for their children or students, and added that it is the adult who does grocery shopping and hits the drive-through at fast food restaurants.

"We've got to get them on the same page," she added. "With the health fair, the parents can come by. We make them do something healthy."

According to Wojcik, this year's fair, the sixth annual, will consist of displays, free health screenings, the opportunity to participate in interactive presentations and a raffle. She related that visitors can obtain a sheet of stickers at the exhibit tables, containing 16 spaces. After visiting at least 16 of the 36 exhibits and receiving a sticker for the sheet, they can enter the raffle for prizes.

Wojcik quipped that this is "not the adult Trick-or-Treat Syndrome," whereby people just stop and grab a pen or key chain. Rather, the exhibits are interactive and, "This way you're going to remember being at that table and what they talked about."

In addition to the exhibits, the fair will also include performances. There will be demonstrations such as fast-paced exercise workouts by ESSETRICS of Lombard, and Sky Centers, also of Lombard, will demonstrate martial arts moves.

Glenbard Township High School

District 87 students will be on-hand to demonstrate yoga techniques and children can participate in jump rope and hula-hoop competitions.

Additionally, Supernova, the Red Starts Women's Soccer Team mascot, will present Health Hero awards at 1 p.m. to four individuals who have made healthy lifestyle changes in 2015. Two businesses will also be chosen for having actively supported the mission of the Healthy Lombard Foundation.

A number of area businesses and organizations have offered their support and sponsorship of the health and fitness event, Wojcik indicated. They include Main Fair Sponsors, the Kiwanis Club of Lombard, Orange Theory Fitness, Stage Sponsor Revolution Physical Therapy and Weight Loss in Glen Ellyn.

General sponsors include Balance Pediatric and Family Weight Management Specialists, Bob Goldin State Farm Insurance, Elmhurst Memorial Hospital, the Helen M. Plum Memorial Library, Jazzercise Lombard, LiNiTo Cycle, Lexington Square of Lombard, the Lombard Park District, Sky Centers Martial Arts, Points to Wellness Acupuncture, VFW Lilac Post 5815 and West Suburban Wellness.

Ironclad Performance is a Health Hero Award sponsor and Olympia Chiropractic and Physical Therapy is sponsoring the kids' contest, Wojcik mentioned.

This year's February Fitness Fair will take place Saturday, Feb. 27, from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Yorktown Center, at a new location in the lower level of the mall near Home Goods and Marshall's. Wojcik stated that the best way to enter is through the mall entrance by Forever 21, near the Streets of Butterfield.

For more information, visit [www.healthylombard.com](http://www.healthylombard.com) or contact Wojcik at 630-916-0519 or [jay@healthylombard.com](mailto:jay@healthylombard.com).



# Creating monarch-friendly communities

Has anyone noticed a decrease in the number of monarch butterflies as of late? You know, those distinctive gold, orange, white and black insects that can be seen flitting about in the garden, incubating on milkweed and serving as one of nature's pollinators?

Chances are you will say, "Come to think of it, I haven't seen many of them anymore," and there's a reason why: Their population is on the decline. Some research cites that the decline may be as much as 90 percent over the last 20 years.

Besides managing their stages of growth, from egg to fully-developed butterfly, these creatures seem to know exactly how, when and where to migrate, and reports show that it can take four generations of insects to make a year-long trip.

That is, when spring arrives, the monarch begins its pattern of migration, starting with the "first generation." They may travel anywhere from 1,250 to 2,500 miles, to the east, west and midwestern portions of the United States, and even as far as central and eastern Canada, according to scientists. Some will lay eggs along their journey.

These monarchs contribute to repopulation but don't live for more than a few months, while the eggs then

hatch around late spring or early summer. The caterpillars eat and grow, then turn into a chrysalis before becoming full-fledged butterflies some 10 days later.

These butterflies, in turn, continue on the journey and lay eggs that are born in late summer, around July and August. The second and third generations have roughly two to six weeks to complete their part of the journey.

The fourth generation of monarchs, born in September and October, live as many as eight months, and spend their lives traveling and reproducing. These monarchs know when it's time to migrate south to warmer weather.

The above synopsis comes from information supplied by the National Aquarium, or [aqua.org](http://aqua.org), which also notes that while the monarchs travel to winter in Mexico, there are not many "overwintering" sites for them to stay. One such location is the Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve, which is a protected nature preserve in central Mexico.

The monarchs lay eggs on and eat milkweed, and it has become apparent that the milkweed supply itself is on the decline. According to Monarch Conservation Science Partnership

estimates, between 1.25 and 1.5 billion stems of milkweed have been lost.

Much of this loss is reported to be due to the changing face of land use. Additionally, the use of pesticides is also suspected as a factor in the reduction in milkweed supply.

Pesticides have also been implicated in the decline of another pollinator—the honeybee—as well, scientists have reported.

Consequently, conservationists, scientists and naturalists—even politicians—from the international level on down to individual communities are turning their efforts to not only educating the public but also sharing easy ways to help the monarchs survive—by planting butterfly-friendly gardens that include the vital milkweed these insects require for survival.

One of those groups is the DuPage Monarch Project (DMP), which was created in 2015 by Lombard residents and Lombard Garden Club members Lonnie Morris and Karen Brittain.

Brittain offered examples of international and state efforts to save the monarchs: The United States, Mexico and Canada worked together, passing a resolution "to save monarch habitats in their respective countries."

In the state of Illinois, she

continued, the Garden Clubs of Illinois have worked with the Illinois Tollway to plant milkweed along toll roads, especially at open-area on-off ramps.

Brittain related how she and Morris were learning about how different parts of the country were handling the monarch crisis, and wanted to bring similar efforts to our area—the local connection.

Consequently, the DMP was launched and now has partnerships with the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County, the River Prairie Group of the Sierra Club, The Conservation Foundation and Wild Ones Greater DuPage Chapter.

Brittain said the project also has the support of the Field Museum, which has its own wealth of resources.

These collective groups share the goal of protecting the monarchs; through education and letting people know how they can obtain milkweed plants and seeds that can be planted to create "monarch-friendly" communities.

What that means is a community whose leader signs a "resolution of commitment" to take such actions as planting milkweed, reducing the use of pesticides and educating residents as to how they can help the monarchs thrive.

Brittain said that as an example of creating a monarch-friendly environment the DMP has worked with the Lombard Park District to help it get certified by Monarch Watch as a Monarch Waystation.

Brittain outlined that the park district reviewed its 13 parks and met the criteria for the certification. She noted that this is one way the project and local municipal groups can work toward the same goal.

"Everyone needs to work together," she continued, emphasizing that for the monarchs, "The only host plant is milkweed. It's their habitat loss."

The DMP, the River Prairie Group and the Glen Ellyn Environmental Commission are hosting a free program on Tuesday, Feb. 23, at the Glen Ellyn Public Library.

The program is entitled "The Plight of the Pollinator," with Andre Copeland, interpretive programs manager for the Chicago Zoological Society and Brookfield Zoo. There is no registration and everyone is welcome.

For more information about the DuPage Monarch Project and the Feb. 23 program, contact Connie Schmidt at [twstr@msn.com](mailto:twstr@msn.com).