

Valpo Named Indiana's First Monarch City, USA

The City of Valparaiso has become Indiana's first Monarch City, USA, recognized by the nonprofit organization Monarch City, USA, for the city's work to support the monarch population by providing habitats and awareness. "As a community, we're interested in fostering monarch butterflies for their natural beauty as well as because they're an indicator species," said Mayor Matt Murphy. "Helping the monarchs helps the overall environment."

Monarch butterflies are threatened worldwide as their habitats of milkweed and other nectar plants are vanishing. More than a billion monarch butterflies have vanished since 1990, according to data from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The City of Valparaiso prepared a proclamation to raise awareness of the monarch butterfly's plight, encouraging others to plant native milkweed and other nectar plants to welcome them to Valparaiso, provide stopping points for their migration. Murphy recognized Jerry Newman, a Valparaiso resident working to promote awareness for monarch butterflies, as well as Jessica Coral and Valparaiso elementary school art teachers who led students in creating butterfly art now on display at Valparaiso's City Hall, 166 Lincolnway. The public may view the art during business hours, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday, from now through May 21.

Valparaiso has historically made butterflies a priority, creating habitats throughout City parks and properties, including a 13-acre way station for butterflies at Foundation Meadows Park. Valpo Parks also features a native tree arboretum, native prairie plantings on Chicago Street and at Lakewood Park, and about 10 acres of naturalized area at Creekside Park, inviting butterflies. The City's Horticulture Department, under the leadership of Horticulture Superintendent Steve Martinson, fosters these areas.

To bring further awareness and support to the monarch population, VALE School, guided by Principal Mike Bendicsen, will work with Valpo Parks to plant a monarch-friendly garden at the Vale School later this spring. The City's Parks Department will distribute milkweed seeds and awareness for the monarchs at Porter County's Earth Day celebration on Saturday, April 30 from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm at the Porter County Expo Center, 215 E. Division Rd. in Valparaiso.

Photo caption: The City of Valparaiso has become Indiana's first Monarch City, USA, recognizing the city's support for monarch population. Mayor Matt Murphy issued a proclamation supporting the butterflies and encouraging the community to plant milkweed and nectar plants to foster butterfly populations. At the proclamation reading were (left to right) local naturalist and butterfly advocate Jerry Newman, Mayor Murphy, VALE Principal Mike Bendicsen and Horticulture Superintendent Steve Martinson, all appearing in front of butterfly artwork created by Valparaiso first graders.

The complete proclamation is included below:

WHEREAS the monarch butterfly is an iconic North American species whose multigenerational migration and metamorphosis from caterpillar to butterfly has captured the imagination of millions of Americans, young and old; and

Our City...Our Values

Honestly Accountable Surprisingly Responsive Boldly Proactive Creatively Frugal Respectfully Compassionate

WHEREAS the monarch is also extremely beneficial, pollinating many cultivated flowers and crops, and serves as an indicator species for the ecological health of large geographical areas; and

WHEREAS scientists estimate the monarch population to have declined about 80 percent over the past 20 years.

WHEREAS cities and communities have a critical role to play in helping to save the monarch butterfly, and the City of Valparaiso has an interest in becoming Indiana's first Monarch City as designated by Monarch City USA, a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping the monarch butterfly recover city by city; and

WHEREAS every citizen of Valparaiso can make a difference for the monarch by planting native milkweed and nectar plants to provide habitat for the monarch and pollinators in locations where people live, work, learn, play and worship, and.

WHEREAS, the City of Valparaiso has established more than 20 acres of habitat areas for monarch butterflies and other species, including a designated Monarch Way Station at Foundation Meadows.

WHEREAS, on behalf of the people of Valparaiso who have already created healthy habitat for these beautiful butterflies, it is our hope that other communities will also help to ensure that the monarch butterfly will once again flourish across our continent.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of Valparaiso does hereby proclaim that Valparaiso is committed to supporting the monarch butterfly species in our community and beyond.

Matt Murphy, Mayor
April 11, 2022