



Legislation Text

File #: 21-0247, **Version:** 1

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

RECOGNIZING AND SUPPORTING MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH AND TOOLS 2 THRIVE OUTSIDE

WHEREAS, May is Mental Health Awareness Month and during May the Forest Preserves of Cook County (the “Forest Preserves”) is working with the Nature, Culture, and Human Health Network (NCH2) to highlight Mental Health America’s national movement to raise awareness about mental health; and

WHEREAS, the Forest Preserves is a founding member of NCH2, a network that connects people with interests in investigating and applying knowledge about the health benefits of nature to improve the health and well-being of Chicago -region communities; and

WHEREAS, numerous studies have shown that daily exposure to nature has a wide range of health benefits for both body and mind; and being outside in nature has been shown to reduce blood pressure, reduce feelings of stress and anxiety, decrease symptoms of depression, and improve mood; and

WHEREAS, scientific research in the growing field of ecotherapy, or nature therapy, demonstrates that people have a deep connection to their environment and nature and a failure to nurture this bond can negatively impact mental health and wellbeing; and

WHEREAS, outdoor nature-based activities such as hiking in the woods, forest bathing, gardening, outdoor meditation and yoga, nature-based volunteering, birding and more can greatly improve human health; and

WHEREAS, spending time in a natural environment hones your senses to your surroundings - calming sounds like birds chirping, leaves rustling, the feel of the warm sun or a gentle breeze, and breathing in fresh air can help you detach from the ordinary stressors of everyday life; and

WHEREAS, to build awareness of these benefits and the importance of nature’s role in improving mental health, the Forest Preserves and NCH2 have created and are promoting Tools 2 Thrive Outside; and

WHEREAS, Tools 2 Thrive Outside will provide practical tools that everyone can use to improve and strengthen their mental health, including tools that promote connecting with and spending time in nature; and

WHEREAS, on May 5, 2021 the NCH2 hosted an online event highlighting how engaging with nature can help humans thrive, and what humans can do to help nature thrive; additionally, the Tools 2 Thrive Outside campaign has a dedicated webpage promoting partner events and resources as well as sharing daily tips and engaging with people via social media.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Toni Preckwinkle, President, and the Forest Preserves of Cook County Board of Commissioners recognize that May is Mental Health Awareness Month and that spending time in nature has significant benefits to mental health, and seek to promote awareness of Tools 2 Thrive Outside programs and activities.