EDITOR'S NOTE

Brady or Giglio lists are databases of law enforcement officers who have past incidents of criminal convictions, issues of candor, or untruthfulness that would place their credibility in question. These lists or databases are usually compiled by a prosecutor's office or a police department. It's a legal obligation for prosecutors and police departments involved in court cases (as outlined in the U.S. Supreme Court decisions that the lists' names originate from, 1963's *Brady v. Maryland* and 1972's *Giglio v. United States*) to provide this information to defendants.

Such lists are integral to ensure due process but also shield prosecutors from potentially building a case around public employees and others with credibility issues, which could result in not only injustice but costly exonerations down the line. In a city that accounted for more than half of all exonerations recorded nationwide in 2022 (according to the National Registry of Exonerations), keeping our public officials accountable is paramount.

With this in mind, reporters Max Blaisdell and Sam Stecklow have been researching Brady lists, the CPD, the office of the Cook County State's Attorney, and elsewhere for nearly a year, resulting in a series published by us in cooperation with Invisible Institute. Read their latest in this issue (starting on page six) and check out their past reports online at chicagoreader.com.

—Salem Collo-Julin, editor in chief
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Reader Letters

Re: "It takes a village to sell a raised bed of produce," written by DMB (D-M Brown) and published in the August 22 issue (volume 53, number 29)

Really great piece on the Community Food Navigator from DMB . . . it's a great look at the support structure critical to supporting the growing ecosystem of Chicago farmers. —Joe Engleman, via X

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CORRECTIONS

The *Reader* has updated the online version of the August 22 print article "Will CPD's response to the DNC bring more of the same violence?" written by Sam Stecklow, Isra Rahman, Andrew Fan, and Layla June West. Additional information from a statement provided by the Art Institute of Chicago after the May 4 action was added to the second paragraph to provide further context.

The addition to the paragraph reads, "The Art Institute of Chicago, in a statement issued after the events, stated that 'protesters were offered an alternative location to continue their protest on campus that would be safer for all involved, and they did not accept that relocation offer.' The museum said that after approximately five hours of negotiation between SAIC and a student group, an agreement could not be reached, and 'arrests were made after protesters were given many opportunities to leave.'"

The *Reader* has also corrected the online version of "Communal viewing," written by Zachary Lee and published in the August 29 issue. The first published version of the story suggested that DJ Les Talusan was employed by the Smithsonian. The story has been updated to clarify that Talusan has been a contractor for the Smithsonian but is not an employee of the institution.

CITY LIFE

NEIGHBORHOODS

Running with the nuns

Sister Stephanie Baliga, a former competitive runner, raises funds and awareness for a mission in West Humboldt Park.

By Isa Giallorenzo

Sr. Baliga on an early Sunday run ISA GIALLORENZO

Yes, there was once a flying nun in a TV series, but here's what's happening in real life: we have a running nun in Chicago who raises money for charity using the Bank of America Chicago Marathon as a vehicle. She established the Guinness World Record for fastest amateur female treadmill marathon runner in 2020 and has been endorsed by none other than Mr. T! Truth is really stranger than fiction.

Sister Stephanie Baliga is a 36-year-old nun who serves with a Catholic religious community. Baliga (and her fellow religious community members) contradict nun stereotypes. She was a cross-country and track star at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and still radiates a contagious, vibrant energy.

Always on the go, speaking fast, and smiling generously, Baliga leads multiple efforts to benefit those in need, especially on the west side. Baliga and her community reside at Mission of Our Lady of the Angels (OLA), a church and Catholic mission in the West Humboldt Park area which has a six-building campus on the site of the former Parish of Our Lady of the Angels (which suffered a tragic fire in its school's basement in 1958 that claimed 95 lives). Today's OLA does not function as a church within the Archdiocese of Chicago but was instead reorganized in the 2000s specifically to provide outreach to the poor.

To help support OLA, Baliga is in charge of fundraising connected to the marathon, which happens this year on Sunday, October 13. "Team OLA" participants either claim one of the team's hard-to-get guaranteed marathon entries and run, walk, or roll or support one of the runners on the team through fundraising. Marathon entries for the team are long gone for 2024 (all were claimed by the end of January) but Baliga is already taking wait-list requests for 2025.

Team OLA has raised over $166,000 so far this year and has a goal of $300,000, which will go directly to OLA programs that serve West Humboldt Park and to the renovation of a convent building in Avondale. For those interested in running in the 2025 marathon, OLA will have 160 guaranteed entries. Team OLA requires a donation for participants, who often go above and beyond to continue to fundraise for the cause.

OLA was founded in 2005 by Bishop Bob Lombardo. At that time, the main buildings still belonged to the Parish of Our Lady of the Angels, which had been closed by the Archdiocese in 1990 due to an insufficient number of parishioners. In 1999, the school closed, and a previous order in residence, the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, also left the parish.

The neighborhood itself had been in decay, in part due to predatory and discriminatory real estate practices. "When Father Bob arrived in 2005 it was one of the most desperate, needy neighborhoods in Chicago, known for

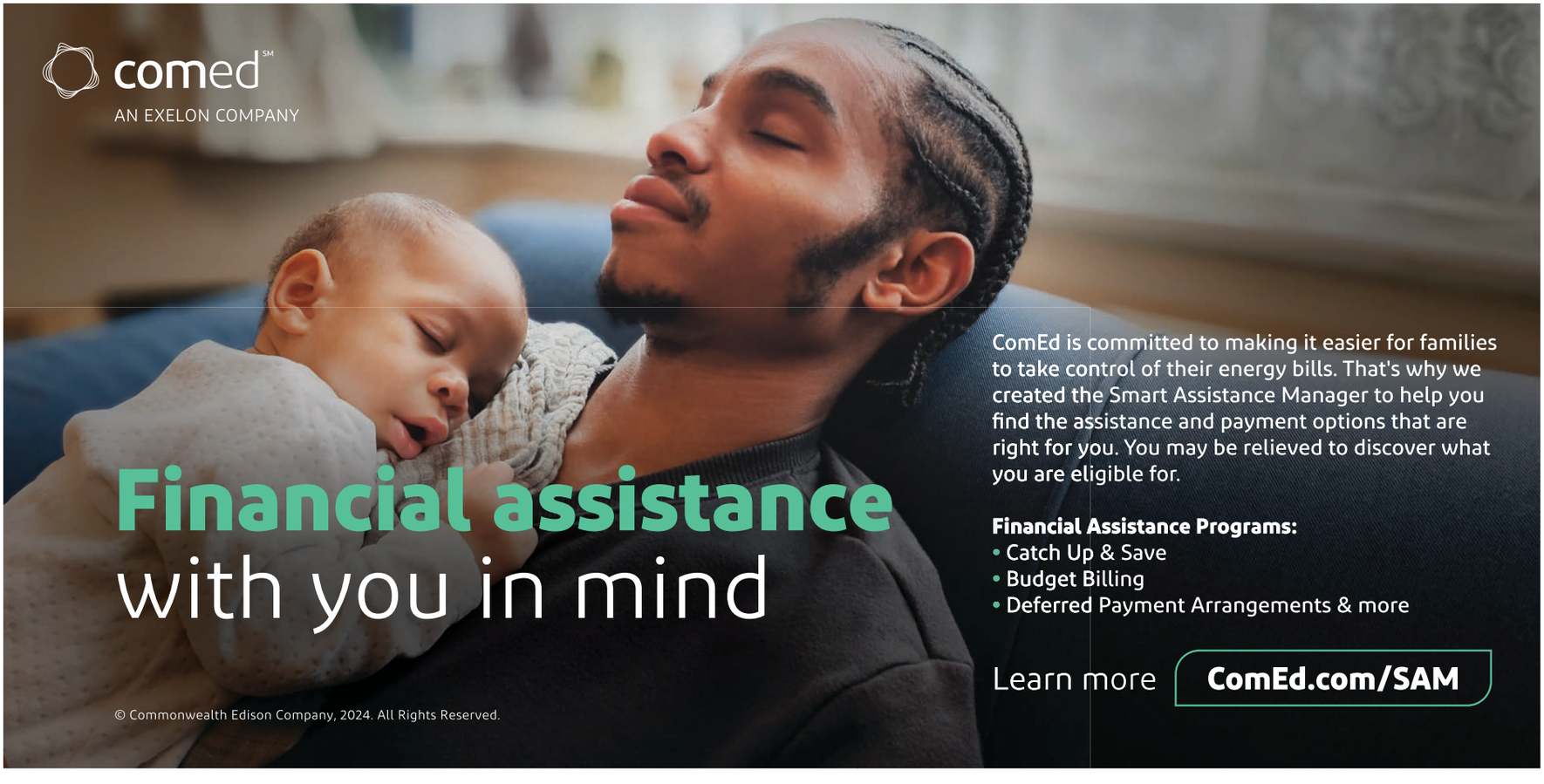
tremendous poverty, gang violence, and drug trafficking. The Cardinal [Francis George] in his wisdom wanted Father Bob to establish a Mission at the former Our Lady of the Angels parish not only because of the history and the need, but also to let the neighborhood know that the [Catholic] Church had not forgotten the poor," explains the website of the Franciscans of the Eucharist of Chicago, the order Bishop Lombardo established to serve OLA. The run-down buildings of the shuttered parish were revitalized with much dedication and generosity from OLA members and supporters. Currently, the campus comprises a church, a convent, a rectory, Kelly Hall (which hosts after-school, evening, and summer programming for youth and families in partnership with Greater Chicago Food Depository and the YMCA), an outreach and retreat center that houses OLA's food pantry, and a home for out-of-town visitors.

In this complex, OLA offers all kinds of services to the "materially poor," including family programming, workshops for local seniors, community dinners, block parties, distribution of free clothing and household goods, and a massive food pantry that feeds over 4,000 families per month. Their food pantry is so impressive that it drew attention nationally last year when it was featured on *Good Morning America*, who dubbed the group "Millennial Nuns" and highlighted the order's work as well as Baliga and some of her fellow nuns and their surprising activities. Sister Alicia Torres won the Food Network's competition cooking show *Chopped* in 2015, and Sister Jaime Mitchell is a motorcycle enthusiast.

OLA's Tuesday Pantry serves about 500 families weekly.
ISA GIALLORENZO

Whatever skills and interests the nuns might have, they find a way of incorporating them into their work at the mission. Baliga's story illustrates that: an avid runner since she was nine years old, Baliga won 18 conference championships in high school and was three times all-state. In college, she qualified as the sixth-fastest freshman in the nation.

"My life shattered when my foot spontaneously fractured during a training run in 2008. My body decided it was done with running 65 miles a week," Baliga wrote in her vocation testimonial. She then decided to go on a Catholic religious retreat on campus, and that changed the course of her life: "From my depressed, injured state, I realized Jesus wanted me, not my achievements," she wrote.

Baliga now uses her running prowess to raise funds for those in need, including a large influx of migrant families. She is so busy with the Mission she can't really exercise as much right now. When training, Baliga swaps her habit for a running skirt, a T-shirt, and a bandanna, and favors the Lakefront Trail. With a personal Chicago Marathon record of two hours and 53 minutes, she is excited to enjoy the event with her teammates, who focus on prayer as an essential aspect of their marathon experience. Baliga advises her teammates of her beliefs, "Jesus is here to meet you where you are . . . give him some silent time so he can speak to you." She adds, "I love how running helps me pray."

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