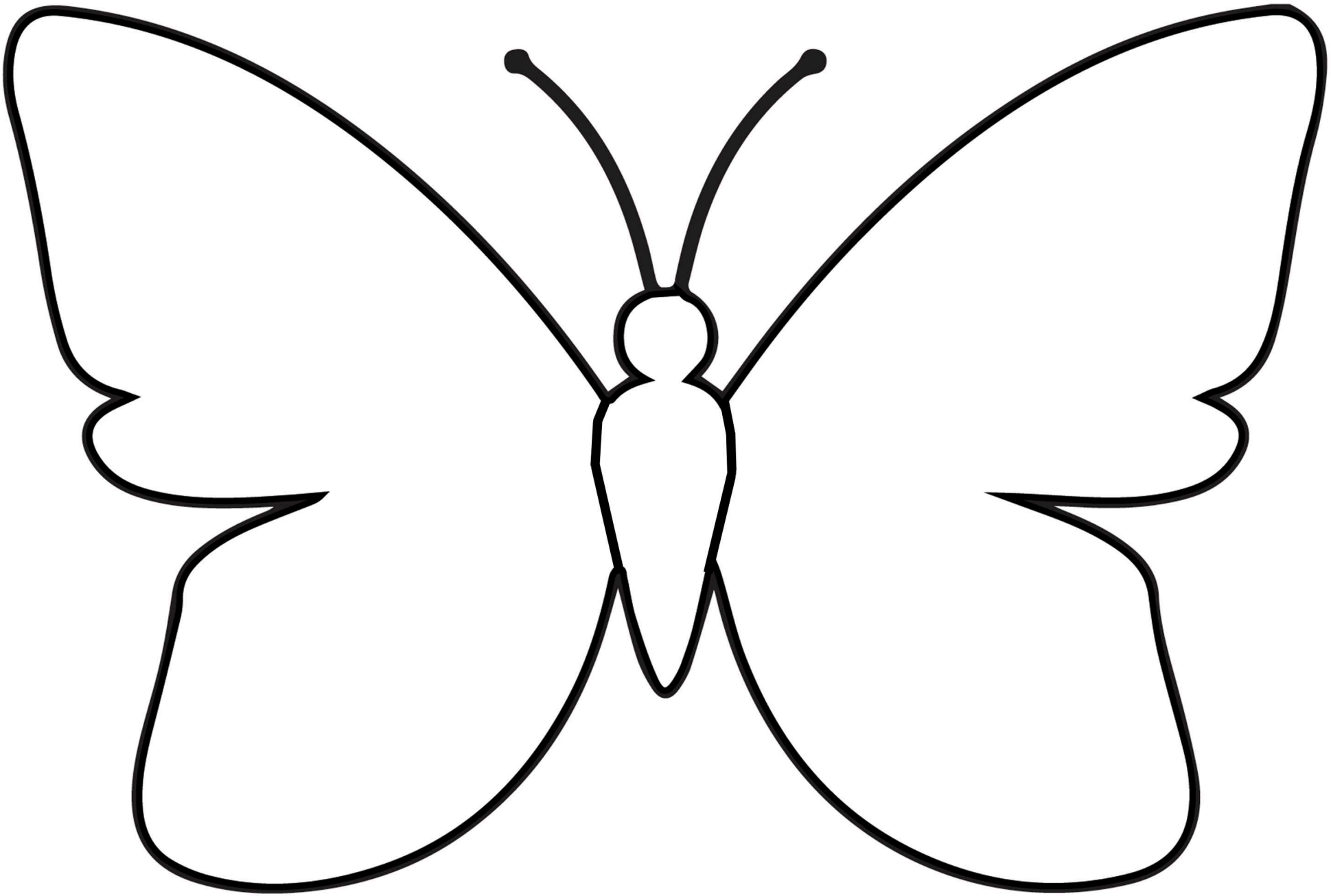
Monarchs
ACROSS CRYSTAL LAKE

BE PART OF THE CRYSTAL LAKE MONARCH JOURNEY

Your butterfly could become part of a community art project! Color and design your monarch butterfly below. Return your art to Crystal Lake City Hall, 100 W Woodstock Street by October 16 at 5.p.m. for a chance to be part of this project.





MONARCH BUTTERFLY FUN FACTS

Monarch butterflies migrate between 1,200 and 2,800 miles or more in autumn from the United States and Canada to central Mexican forests where they hibernate. They can travel between 50 and 100 miles a day, and it can take up to two months to complete their journey.

Monarchs know when it's time to migrate south for the winter based on signals from the environment indicating the seasons are changing. When it's time, the butterflies will lift up on air currents high into the sky and embark on their journey. A glider pilot observed a monarch 11,000 feet in the air (almost two miles up), the highest on record.

Migrating monarch butterflies are guided by the sun's orbit as they travel through North America. Even on cloudy days, they're able to stay on track thanks to an internal biological compass that functions based on the movement of the sun.

The scientific name for monarch butterfly is Danaus plexippus, which in Greek means "sleepy transformation," a reference to the butterfly's ability to hibernate and metamorphize.

Millions of monarch butterflies share a single acre of forest at their hibernation site in the Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve in Mexico.

A group of monarch butterflies is called a flutter. A monarch flaps its wings five to 12 times per second, approximately 720 times per minute.

Male monarchs are slightly bigger than females and have black dots along the veins of their wings.

Milkweed is the only plant that monarchs will lay their eggs on, because it is the only source of food for the emerging baby caterpillars.

Monarchs are pollinators and play a huge role in the health of our food system by fertilizing flowering plants. Without them, many fruits and vegetables that people and animals rely upon would decrease in quantity and quality.

The bright orange and black colors of the monarch warn predators that they are inedible, due to their diet of toxic milkweed. Few animals can eat monarchs without getting sick. Other nontoxic butterfly species, such as the viceroy butterfly, take advantage of the monarch's defenses and have evolved to look exactly like them to fool predators into thinking they, too, are toxic and inedible. This phenomenon of nature is called mimicry.

The monarch butterfly has been named the official state insect or butterfly in Alabama, Idaho, Illinois, Minnesota, Texas, Vermont, and West Virginia.