

A Message From Mayor Ronald M. Serpico

A brief recap of village activities for 2025 ... and now on to an even better 2026!

Dear Neighbors,

I wish to express my deepest gratitude to the dedicated employees of our Public Works, Water and Sewer, Police and Fire departments. Their exceptional efforts during the recent cold spell and snowstorms truly merit our recognition. These teams worked tirelessly, often around the clock to ensure our streets remained safe and passable for all residents. Their unwavering commitment to the well-being of our village is especially evident in challenging times like these.

Early voting for the March 17 Primary Election will take place between March 2 and March 16 at the Melrose Park Village Hall.

Residents may cast their votes Monday-Saturday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., and on Sunday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m..

In 2025, our Fire Department and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) responded to a remarkable 3,455 calls. The Fire Department responded to 1,908 emergency calls. This year, all Fire Department members received new protective turnout gear. The EMS Program was also upgraded. We acquired a new ambulance, two new power cots, and a battery-operated extraction and rescue tool. These upgrades ensure our first responders are equipped with state-of-the-art resources.

Melrose Park continues to attract new businesses. This reinforces our role as a thriving economic hub. In 2025 alone, 32 new businesses opened their doors, raising the total number of registered businesses within our corporate limits to 985. Notably, 15 of these businesses are grocery stores ... the highest number in any west suburban village.

The Water Department had an industrious year in 2025. They completed a significant water main project on 17th Avenue north of North Avenue. They installed 1,500 feet of 12-inch water main piping. The department also maintained 100 sanitary and storm manhole covers, in addition to caring for miles of main water lines. Their efforts included replacing 75 manhole structures, repairing 25 water main breaks, changing out approximately 100 water meters and responding to over 100 residential water service calls.

Our Public Works Department continued its exemplary work in maintaining the appearance and functionality of Melrose Park. In 2025, the department repaved 12,347 linear feet of street pavement. They addressed 10 streets in need of repair. To beautify our community, they planted 161 trees throughout the village. The department also replaced 5,600 damaged sidewalk squares and installed 9,400 linear feet of new gutters and curbs.

This year brought significant changes to our Police Department. Police Chief Sam Pitassi retired. Deputy Chief Anthony Greco assumed the role of chief. The department launched the Flock Safety Program, a new initiative that integrates residents' doorbell camera footage with both the Police and Fire departments to enhance community safety. We proudly recognize Police Officer William Bianchi, who was honored with the prestigious Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) Officer of the Year Award for his exceptional commitment to public safety.

Our village hosted its first-ever Dog Wellness Fair at the Civic Center, providing free vaccinations, microchipping and physical exams to over 100 dogs. In July, Mt. Carmel Parish celebrated its 132nd Feast – the oldest continuous feast in Chicagoland – bringing our community together in a cherished tradition.

During the fall, the village received two new, modern Dial-a-Ride Pace minibuses. These vehicles offer free transportation for residents to various locations throughout the village.

The village celebrated its 43rd Taste of Melrose Park over Labor Day weekend. Record crowds enjoyed beautiful weather at the state's most family-friendly food festival. Dozens of volunteers delivered over 260 Thanksgiving meals to deserving residents. On Dec. 17, we continued our festive tradition with the Christmas Lights Parade. This featured Santa Claus riding on a fire engine throughout the village, spreading holiday cheer. Additionally, the Chicago Fire professional soccer team hosted a soccer camp for over 60 children on our football field adjacent to the Village Hall. This provided a fun and enriching opportunity for our youth.

Well, the above was a quick recap of village activities for 2025, and now on to an even better 2026.

Sincerely,


Mayor Ron Serpico



*Ronald M. Serpico
Mayor*

**Check Out www.MelrosePark.org to
Learn More About Our Community!**

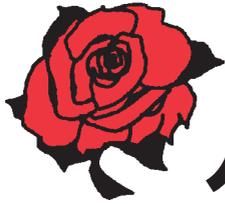


Follow us on Facebook.



Follow us on Instagram.

**Early Voting for the March 17, 2026 – Gubernatorial Primary Election
Runs Monday, March 2-Monday, March 16, at the
Melrose Park Village Hall (Multipurpose Room), 1000 N. 25th Ave., Melrose Park.
Early voting hours are Monday-Saturday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; and Sunday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.**



Village of Melrose Park

Ronald M. Serpico, Mayor

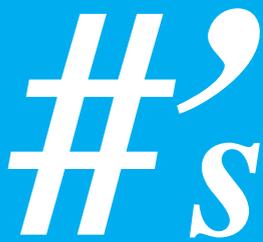
Mary Ann Paolantonio, Village Clerk

Trustees

Anthony N. Abruzzo • Jaime Anguiano

Arturo J. Mota • Sonny Nicotera

Mary Ramirez Taconi • Anthony "Tony" Williams



To Know

Village Hall.....(708) 343-4000

Hours – Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Birth Certificates • First Copy – \$15, additional copies \$4 each.

Death Certificates • First Copy – \$17, additional copies \$6 each.

Water, Tickets, Etc.

Office of the Mayor(708) 343-4000, Ext. 4410

Police Emergency911

Non-Emergency(708) 344-8409

Animal Control.....(708) 344-8409

Fire Emergency911

Non-Emergency(708) 344-1210

Public Safety/Homeland Security(708) 649-8000

Library(708) 343-3391

Public Works(708) 343-5128

Building and Code(708) 343-4000

Civic Center(708) 450-0555

Hall and Field Rentals, Sports, Etc.

Snow Removal(708) 649-4450

Senior Services(708) 343-4000, Ext. 4448

Taste of Melrose Park

Dial A Ride(708) 343-7047

Proviso Township Assessor(708) 449-4304

Economic Development(708) 865-8809

Important Upcoming Dates

Village Board MeetingsMarch 23 and April 27

**Village Hall Holiday ClosingsApril 3, May 25,
June 19 and July 3**

Resident Response

Dear Mayor Serpico ...

Many thanks to you for supporting our 15th annual Blast from the Past fundraiser for Misericordia. Together with your help and generosity we raised \$14,020 for Misericordia. Each year you have graciously donated to us the use of the Senior Center for our event, in addition to a generous monetary donation.

Once again, we want to thank the staff that helps us each year to set up and organize the Senior Center. They cannot do enough for us to make us feel comfortable and at home. We appreciate their time and effort.

We want to thank all the local businesses who donated food and/or gift certificates for our event.

Our heartfelt thanks to Chickies, Liborio, Ozzie's, Anthony B's, Bertolli's Pizzeria, The Great Escape, Roberto's, Scudiero's, Debbie's Chic Possessions, Shwings, Trattoria Poretta, Positano, Jim and Pete's, Crab du Jour, Cuomo Catering, Eliz Beauty Salon, Sporty's, Tom's Steak House, Blossom Cafe, Misericordia Green House Inn, Misericordia Hearts and Flour Cafe and Bakery, and Beautiful Blossom Skin Care.

The children and adults of Misericordia Heart of Mercy Center thank you for the love and compassion in supporting our fundraising efforts.

Misericordia exists because of the good people who share our ministry and support our efforts. Please know you are helping children and adults who are not able to create a good world for themselves. Your kindness does not go unnoticed.

May God bless you and yours for being there for us!

• Sincerely,

Jo, Tom and Matthew Halleran

Dear Melrose Park Police Chief Greco ...

On behalf of the Hillside Police Department, I want to extend our sincere appreciation for your agency's assistance during the ILEAS callout related to a fatal traffic accident involving numerous vehicles that occurred on Dec. 17, 2025, near the intersection of Wolf Road and Butterfield Road.

Officers Giron (#206) and DeCarlo (#87) responded promptly and professionally, and their support was instrumental in ensuring we managed the scene safely and effectively. The coordination, teamwork and steady presence your officers provided ensured the incident was handled efficiently while maintaining the safety of the public and first responders.

Please share our thanks with officers Giron and DeCarlo. We value our continued partnership and appreciate the Melrose Park Police Department's commitment to supporting neighboring agencies when it matters most.

• Sincerely,

Daniel J Murphy, Chief of Police, Hillside Police Department

Dear Melrose Park Chief of Police Anthony Greco ...

On behalf of the Forest View Police Department, I would like to personally express our appreciation to the WESTAF Major Crimes Task Force personnel who provided outstanding investigative assistance to our department for the homicide investigation activation that occurred on Jan. 29, 2026.

The task force team's professionalism, and investigative and forensic expertise was instrumental in the arrest of the suspect in this case.

The value and strength of our partnership with WESTAF was truly on display during the course of this investigation. Such cooperative efforts between all of our agencies facilitates our shared mission in keeping our

communities safe. All of the responding detectives and forensic team were a direct reflection of each of their agencies dedication and commitment to the law enforcement profession.

Please extend our sincere thanks in sharing this correspondence with the men and women of the WESTAF Major Crimes Task Force.

The Forest View Police Department looks forward to continuing our partnership with WESTAF in the future.

Please contact us at anytime if we can ever be of assistance to the task force.

• Respectfully,
Jim Ritz, Chief of Police, Forest View Police Department

Congressman Garcia Delivers \$13.6 Million for 15 Community Projects Melrose Park Receives \$1,092,000 to Replace Deteriorated Water Mains

On Feb. 13, Congressman Jesús “Chuy” García (IL-04) announced \$13,591,865.00 in direct federal funding for Community Project Funding for Illinois’ 4th District, benefitting 15 organizations. This funding represents the latest installment in more than \$63 million across 54 projects in targeted federal investments delivered to IL-04 since 2022 – resources centered on the district’s urgent needs.



Pictured at the check presentation with Congressman Garcia (center) are Melrose Park’s Michael LaGioia, assistant superintendent of Sewer and Water (left), and Michael Carpanzano, superintendent of Sewer and Water (right), accepting the contribution for Mayor Serpico who was grateful for the funding.

“I am pleased to have secured \$13,591,865.00 in Community Project Funding to address vital needs in our district,” Congressman García said. “Over the years, we’ve focused on investments that address the district’s urgent concerns. This round includes funding for lead pipe replacement, bus service improvements, updates to classrooms for students with disabilities and upgraded radios for police departments. I am proud to have delivered these investments to improve the health and safety of my district.

The village of Melrose Park will receive \$1,092,000 to replace existing deteriorated water mains. The condition of the current system is causing service interruptions to residents.

Melrose Park will also benefit from a \$250,000 investment allocated to Pace, to implement transit signal priority (TSP) on North Avenue, one of the busiest corridors between Melrose Park and Northlake. The project will update traffic signals to improve bus reliability, improve travel times and promote access to public transportation.

VILLAGE OF MELROSE PARK VEHICLE STICKER INFORMATION FOR 2026-2027

All vehicles registered in the village of Melrose Park are required to display a current Melrose Park vehicle sticker.

New stickers (valid from Jan. 1, 2026-Dec. 31, 2027) can be renewed now and must be displayed on or before Jan. 1, 2026.

All 2025 Vehicle Stickers Expired on Dec. 31, 2025.

• New stickers for 2026-2027 are available at the Melrose Park Village Hall.

Who Needs a 2026-2027 Sticker?

- All vehicles registered to a Melrose Park address.
- All vehicles registered to businesses located in Melrose Park.
- You must buy a sticker within 30 days of moving into the village or purchasing a vehicle.



2024-2025
VEHICLE STICKERS
EXPIRED
DEC. 31, 2025.

Vehicle Sticker Fees

Passenger Cars (Regular Vehicles)

- Covers two years if purchased on time.

Seniors (Age 65+)

- Covers two years (2026-2027) if purchased on time.
- One free sticker per household (65 and older).
 - Choose one free two-year passenger car sticker or one free one-year B-truck sticker.
- Second vehicle for a senior in the same household is \$15 (half price).
- Bring a valid driver’s license or state ID as proof of age to receive your sticker.

Car Vehicle Sticker Fees

	First Year Now-Feb. 28	First Year March 1-June 30	First Year July 1-Dec. 31	Second Year Jan. 1-Dec. 31
Passenger Plate	\$30	\$40	\$55	\$55

Note – If you purchased your vehicle or moved into town within the past 30 days, you will pay the regular \$30 fee, not the late penalty. Proof of vehicle purchase and residency is required.

Trucks

- Prices depend on the license plate class. • Sticker is valid for one year only.

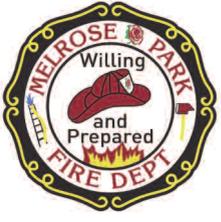
Truck Vehicle Sticker Fees

Plate Type	Now-Feb. 28	March 1-June 30	July 1-Dec. 31
B Plate	\$50	\$65	\$95
C Plate	\$75	\$90	\$145
D Plate	\$75	\$90	\$145
F Plate	\$75	\$90	\$145
H Plate	\$75	\$90	\$145
J Plate	\$80	\$95	\$155
K Plate	\$80	\$95	\$155
L Plate	\$90	\$105	\$175
M Plate	\$95	\$110	\$185
N Plate	\$100	\$115	\$195
P Plate	\$105	\$120	\$205
Q Plate	\$105	\$120	\$205
R Plate	\$110	\$125	\$215
S Plate	\$115	\$130	\$225
T Plate	\$125	\$140	\$245
V Plate	\$135	\$150	\$265
X Plate	\$145	\$160	\$285
Z Plate	\$155	\$170	\$305

IMPORTANT – PLEASE READ

- You must bring your current state of Illinois vehicle registration card to purchase stickers. (This proves your name, address and license plate.)
- No registration card = No sticker.
- Late fees may apply if not purchased on time.
- Even if your vehicle is not parked at your home, you still need a sticker if it is registered to a Melrose Park address.

For more information, please call (708) 343-4000
or visit www.melrosepark.org.



Melrose Park Fire Department NEWS



Rick Beltrame
Director of Fire Dept.

A Message from Rick Beltrame, Director of Fire Department

The Melrose Park Fire Department and Director of Fire Department Rick Beltrame want to ensure the safety of our residents and their families by providing these children and fire safety tips on behalf of the National Fire Protection Association. Please follow these tips to ensure your family's well-being!



Children "playing" with or starting fires is dangerous and costly. Each year these fires cause hundreds of injuries, millions of dollars in damage, and are most likely to kill young children under the age of 5.

Some children play with fire out of curiosity, boredom, or peer pressure, not realizing its danger. But other children misuse fire because they are struggling with problems or emotions. Without proper intervention and instruction, children who misuse fire will very likely do it again. However, if punishment is the only intervention strategy used, it could actually contribute to the problem. What can you do?

Follow these tips to keep your family safe:

- Keep matches and lighters out of the reach of children, up high, preferably in a locked cabinet.
- Closely supervise children, making sure that they are kept away from other fire sources, including lit candles, cigarettes, bonfires, and stoves.
- It is natural for young children to be curious and ask questions about fire, play with fire trucks, or pretend to cook. Use these opportunities to teach them about fire safety.
- Explain that fire moves very fast and can hurt as soon as it touches them. Tell them that this is why matches and lighters are tools for adults only.
- Teach young children to never touch matches or lighters. They must go tell a grown-up when matches or lighters are found.
- Establish clear rules and consequences about unsupervised and unauthorized uses of fire.
- Be a good example! Always use fire sources — matches, lighters, candles, fireplaces, and campfires — in a safe manner. Never treat them as toys, or children may imitate you.
- Talk with children about what their friends or other children are doing with fire. What are they seeing online in video games, on TV, in movies, and on social media? Teach them specific ways to resist the peer pressure to misuse fire.
- Give praise for showing respect and age-appropriate responsible behavior toward fire.

Important!

Understand that children and fire are a **deadly combination**. If you suspect a child is unusually interested in fire or is setting fires, take immediate action. Follow these safety tips. Contact your local fire department, school, burn center, or counseling agency to get help from specially trained experts.

All children are at risk for using fire unsafely. Many fires happen simply because matches and lighters are left within a child's reach.



NATIONAL FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION
The leading information and knowledge resource on fire, electrical and related hazards



MELROSE PARK FIRE DEPARTMENT

3601 W LAKE ST, MELROSE PARK IL 60160 PH (708) 344-1315, FAX (708) 531-5304

Melrose Park Police Department

A Message from Chief of Police Anthony Greco



Anthony Greco
Chief of Police



Important Parking Notice for Melrose Park Residents

A QUICK NOTE TO UPDATE WEEKEND PARKING RULES

Effective April 1, 2026, parking will be permitted on
both sides of the street on weekends

(Friday, 5 p.m.-Monday, 9 a.m.) until Dec 1, 2026.

These hours do not include the
Winston Park and West Melrose areas.
**REMEMBER, PARKING IS NEVER ALLOWED ON
EAST AND WEST STREETS – 2-6 A.M.**

**ALL VILLAGE OF MELROSE PARK
PARKING RESTRICTIONS WILL BE STRICTLY
ENFORCED AND TICKETS WILL BE
WRITTEN FOR CARS VIOLATING
CURRENT AND FUTURE PARKING RULES.**

STREET SWEEPING BEGINS WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1

Beginning Wednesday, April 1, the street sweeper will be out sweeping roadways.
Please follow all street sweeping signs located on village streets.
Please remove your vehicle from the street to help expedite sweeping.

Provide an Anonymous Crime Tip

The Melrose Park Police Department relies on individuals to help prevent and solve crimes in our community.

If you have information about criminal activity, please submit it.
However, if you would like to be contacted by a police officer,
just include a telephone number or email address where you can be reached.
Submit to tips@melroseparkpd.com.

Visit the Melrose Park Police Department Website at www.melroseparkpd.com ...

• For Melrose Park Police Department General Information • To Pay Tickets • To Obtain Police Reports

The website can be translated to Spanish and Polish.



Always Stepping Up ...

Mayor Serpico Launches Business Outreach Initiative to Strengthen Police-Business Partnerships

As part of the village of Melrose Park's ongoing commitment to supporting local businesses and fostering a welcoming, thriving commercial environment, Mayor Ron Serpico has announced a new initiative focused on strengthening communication and collaboration between the business community and the Melrose Park Police Department (MPPD).



Lt. Samuel Chiappetta

The initiative is designed to provide business owners and operators with enhanced access to police resources, guidance and support, while continuing the village's strong tradition of public safety and community partnership.

"As Melrose Park continues to grow and attract new investment, it's important that our businesses feel supported and connected," said Mayor Serpico. "This initiative is about accessibility, relationship building and making sure our business community knows the Police Department is a partner in their success."

As part of this effort, Lt. Samuel Chiappetta of the MPPD has been appointed as the police liaison to the business community. In this role, Lt. Chiappetta will serve as a dedicated point of contact for businesses seeking information, advice or coordination with the Police Department.

Lt. Chiappetta brings more than 23 years of law enforcement experience, including service in public safety, crime prevention, risk assessment, business security systems and technology integration. His extensive background and collaborative approach support the village's focus on proactive engagement and long-term relationship building.

"This initiative is about communication and partnership," said MPPD Chief Greco. "By building strong relationships with our business community, we can provide guidance, share information, and work together to maintain the positive, welcoming environment Melrose Park is known for."

Working in coordination with and at the direction of the mayor and Chief Greco, Lt. Chiappetta serves as a bridge between village leadership, the Police Department and local businesses. He is available to share best practices in crime prevention, discuss site-hardening and security planning, and connect businesses with Police Department resources that support safe and successful operations.

For more information or to connect with the police liaison to the business community, businesses are encouraged to contact the Melrose Park Police Department.

Save the Date and Support the Melrose Park Police Department, Mickenzie-Vertuno Memorial F.O.P. Lodge 19 2026 PANCAKE BREAKFAST



Join Us for a Morning of Pancakes and More!
Sunday, March 22, 2026
9 a.m.-1 p.m.

Melrose Park Civic Center
1000 N. 25th Ave.
Admission – \$10 Per Person

For tickets and additional information,
please email mvfoplodge19@gmail.com
or call (708) 649-6100.

Vote Democratic!

MAYOR SERPICO

asks that you please consider
voting for the following candidates:



**ELECTION
DAY
IS
TUESDAY,
MARCH 17**

**Early Voting
Runs**

**Monday,
March 2
through
Monday,
March 16**

**at the
Melrose Park
Village Hall
(Multipurpose Room)
1000 N. 25th Ave.,
Melrose Park.**

**Early voting hours are
Monday-Saturday,
9 a.m.-5 p.m.,
and
Sunday,
10 a.m.-4 p.m.**

FOR U.S. SENATOR

JULIANA STRATTON

PUNCH
3

FOR COMPTROLLER, STATE OF ILLINOIS

MARGARET CROKE

PUNCH
17

FOR U.S. REPRESENTATIVE, 4TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

PATTY GARCIA

PUNCH
31

FOR STATE SENATOR, 39TH DISTRICT

DON HARMON

PUNCH
61

FOR STATE REPRESENTATIVE, 7TH DISTRICT

(FOR ALL MELROSE PARK VOTERS WITH THIS CANDIDATE APPEARING ON THEIR BALLOT.)

EMANUEL "CHRIS" WELCH

PUNCH
71

FOR STATE REPRESENTATIVE, 77TH DISTRICT

(FOR ALL MELROSE PARK VOTERS WITH THIS CANDIDATE APPEARING ON THEIR BALLOT.)

NORMA HERNANDEZ

PUNCH
71

FOR STATE REPRESENTATIVE, 78TH DISTRICT

(FOR ALL MELROSE PARK VOTERS WITH THIS CANDIDATE APPEARING ON THEIR BALLOT.)

CAMILLE LILLY

PUNCH
71

FOR COMMISSIONER, METROPOLITAN WATER RECLAMATION DISTRICT

EIRA LIZETH CORRAL SEPULVEDA

PUNCH
81

PRECIOUS BRADY-DAVIS

82

BETH McELROY KIRKWOOD

83

FOR BOARD PRESIDENT, COOK COUNTY

BRENDAN REILLY

PUNCH
92

FOR ASSESSOR, COOK COUNTY

PAT HYNES

PUNCH
97

FOR COOK COUNTY COMMISSIONER, 16TH DISTRICT

MIRANDA E. HERNANDEZ

PUNCH
103

FOR COMMISSIONER, BOARD OF REVIEW, 1ST DISTRICT

GEORGE A. CARDENAS

PUNCH
111

FOR JUDGE, COOK COUNTY JUDICIAL CIRCUIT (VACANCY OF COGHLAN)

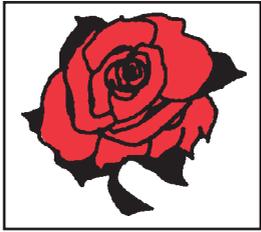
MICHAEL CABONARGI

PUNCH
136

FOR DEMOCRATIC TOWNSHIP COMMITTEEPERSON, PROVISO TOWNSHIP

EMANUEL "CHRIS" WELCH

PUNCH
151



Village of Melrose Park Public Works Report

*From the Desk of
Gary Marine,
Director of Public
Works*

Multi-Purpose Field

A new state-of-the-art, multi-purpose field has been set in place at the Ralph "Babe" Serpico Memorial Field on 25th Avenue. The new diverse field can be used for a football field, soccer field, unified lacrosse field and a new walking track. The field is now open to the public.



Feeding Wildlife

Attention Winston Park Area Residents – Please refrain from feeding wildlife, especially deer, around the Winston Park area. The food is attracting skunks and raccoons, and they are becoming a nuisance throughout this area.

Attention Residents Along Silver Creek Embankment



Please refrain from throwing grass clippings and any other yard waste into the creek.

25th Avenue Municipal Lot

Under Mayor Serpico's direction, the lot on 25th Avenue and Augusta has been paved and open for free parking to residents. The lot on the northeast corner of 25th and Augusta has been paved for additional free parking for residents. The Civic Center's east and west lots have been repaved as well.

Street Parking Restriction Signs

Please follow all street parking restriction signs posted throughout the village.

Street Sweeping

The street sweeper has been out sweeping roadways. Please follow all street sweeping signs located on village streets. Please remove your vehicle from the street to help expedite sweeping.

2026 – Fall Tree Planting Program

The list is now open for 2026 – Fall Tree Planting. To request a tree for 2026, please call the Public Works Department at (708) 343-5128.

2026 – 50/50 Sidewalk Program

If you would like to participate in the 2026 – 50/50 Sidewalk Program to request replacement of sidewalk squares, please call the Public Works Department at (708) 343-5128 for more information.

Melrose Park Dog Park

The village of Melrose Park Dog Park hours are 8 a.m.-8 p.m., seven days a week throughout the summer and fall. The fenced-in Dog Park is located at 13th and Main Street. Dog Park licenses are available at the Village Hall.

Please follow rules posted at the park.



Silver Creek Restoration Project

Under the direction of Mayor Ronald M. Serpico, the Village of Melrose Park Public Works employees constructed the Silver Creek Eagles Nest Park. This is a natural preserve that includes a walking path and a pavilion/gazebo, along with a canoe/kayak launch.

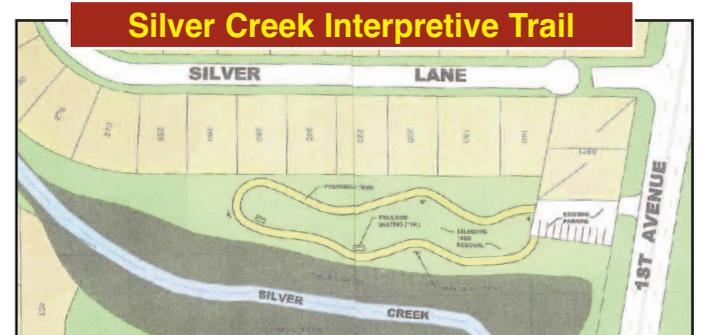
**Phase 5 and 6 of the
Silver Creek Stabilization Project have been completed.
Phase 7 is underway.**

This stabilization project restores the natural balance of the creek by restoring the embankment, and bringing back native landscape and shrubbery along with aquatic habitat. This is an invaluable stream system that provides storm water runoff, flood management and many other benefits for the residents of Melrose Park.



Silver Creek Trail Park

The Silver Creek Trail Park is located off of First Avenue. The trail is centered off the pond between Silver Creek and its tributary, the Des Plaines River. Native plants of this area were once lost to development and are now being reintroduced to the area. With the help of these native plants, more wildlife is returning to the area – from the Bald Eagle (sighted in the area), the Northern Pike, Red Foxes, Black-Crowned Night Herons and Cooper's Hawk, to name a few.



Do's and Don'ts While Visiting the Silver Creek Trail Park

1. No littering. Please clean up after any activities.
2. Pets must be leashed.
3. Smoking or fires are prohibited.
4. Please clean up pet waste and dispose of it.
5. Do not disturb any plants, trees or wildlife.
6. No loitering.
7. No hunting.
8. Fishermen must clean up any cut line, bail containers and all litter.
9. Park opens one hour after sunrise and closes one hour before sunset.
10. Enjoy the park.

The Public Works employees are always in full force, working to keep the village of Melrose Park clean and well-maintained. If you have a request, please feel free to call Gary M. Marine, director of Public Works at (708) 343-5128.

Apply Now for the 2026 Senior Painting Program!



Mayor Serpico announced the village of Melrose Park will once again offer the free Residential Painting Program for individuals 65 years of age and older who reside and own a single family home in Melrose Park. Those who qualify and need light paint work around their homes – fences, garage doors, railings, etc., (no interior painting, or no interior or exterior carpentry) – are encouraged to complete the MP Painting Program Request Form (right) and mail it to:

**The Village of Melrose Park Public Works
Attn.: Gary M. Marine, Director of Public Works
1000 N. 25th Ave.
Melrose Park, IL 60160**

The 2026 Senior Painting Program list will be closed July 31, 2026.
Only one item will be painted per year.
Get your request in early as the list fills fast.

Mayor Serpico's 2026 MP Painting Program Request Form

Please print clearly.

Name _____

Address _____

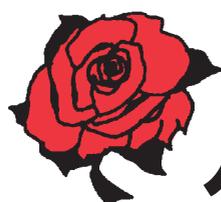
Phone _____

Age _____ Birthdate _____

One item to be painted (please circle one only):

Fence Garage Door Railings

Only one item will be painted per year. The 2026 list will be closed July 31, 2026.



Village of Melrose Park

**Mayor Serpico
and the**

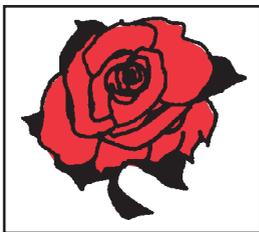
**Village of Melrose Park
are Seeking
Landscaping and
Snow Removal Professionals
to Provide Affordably Priced
Assistance to Our Residents
When Needed ...**



Interested parties will be listed on a special property maintenance services page in upcoming issues of *The Rose*.

To be considered, please send a copy of your business card to Director of Senior Services Peggy DiFazio (peg@melrosepark.org)

or you can call
(708) 343-4000, Ext. 4448,
for more information.



Village of Melrose Park Senior News

From the Desks of Peggy DiFazio, Director of Senior Services, Special Events and Taste of Melrose Park, and Lorena Anguiano, Bi-Lingual Services

Senior Services

Need help with Medicare, veterans benefits, circuit breakers, etc.?

Need sources for home health care, equipment, etc.?

Have questions you need resources for? We can help. Call Peggy DiFazio at (708) 343-4000, Ext. 4448.

Donation of Mobility Need Items – Canes, Wheelchairs, Walkers, Etc.

The Melrose Park Senior Center is currently accepting donations of canes, wheelchairs, walkers, etc., that can be given to those in need.

If you have something you would like to donate, please call Peggy DiFazio at (708) 343-4000, Ext. 4448.

Benefit Access Program Benefits

Senior Ride Free Transit Benefit • Persons with Disabilities Free Transit Ride • Secretary of State License Plate Discount

Programa Para el Acceso de Beneficios

Beneficio de Transporte Gratuito para personas Mayores de 65 años • Transporte Gratuito para Personas con Incapacidades
Descuento para la Placa de su Carro en la Secretaria del Estado



2026 Senior Club Lunch Dates ... Come for Some Fun!

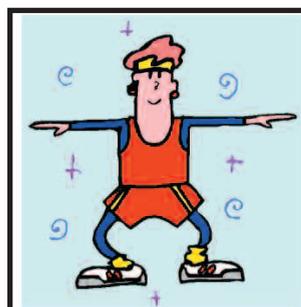
March 12/Celebrating Spring • May 14/Celebrating Mother's Day • June 11/Celebrating Summer
Oct. 8/Celebrating Halloween • Nov. 12/Celebrating Thanksgiving • Dec. 10/Celebrating Christmas

Interested in joining us? Call (708) 343-4000, Ext. 4448 or Ext. 4452, for details.

For more information, please call (708) 343-4000, Ext. 4448 or Ext. 4452.

Free Exercise for Melrose Park Seniors

**Come Join
in the Fun
with Instructor
Barb Rubright
(Rube's Garage)**



Monday-Friday • 9-10 a.m.

Melrose Park Civic Center

1000 N. 25th Ave. • Melrose Park

Socially Distanced Activity • Face Masks Required

For more information, please call (708) 343-4000, Ext. 4448.

It's Time for New Leadership!

Melrose Park

MAYOR

RONALD M. SERPICO

Endorses

**MIRANDA
HERNANDEZ**

FOR

**COOK COUNTY
COMMISSIONER**

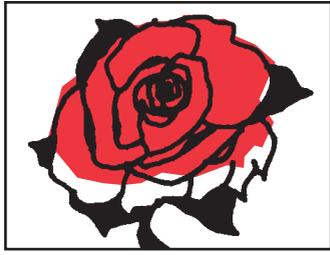
16TH DISTRICT

**VOTE
DEMOCRATIC**

**PUNCH
#103**

ELECTION DAY IS MARCH 17. Early voting runs March 2-16.

Paid for by
Citizens to Elect Ronald M. Serpico, Sr.



Village of Melrose Park Building Dept. Report

*From the Desk of
Ralph Sorce,
Building Commissioner*

Dear Residents of the Village of Melrose Park,

It is truly an honor to serve as your building commissioner and to witness the pride so many of you take in your homes and businesses. Melrose Park is more than just a place on a map, it is a community built on hard work, care and a shared commitment to making our village a wonderful place to live and raise our families.

Every well-kept lawn, every freshly painted home and every improvement made with care reflects the spirit of our residents. Your dedication strengthens property values, enhances neighborhood beauty and sets a positive example for future generations. Together, we shape the image and character of our village and that is something to be proud of.

As we continue investing in our properties, I kindly remind everyone of the importance of obtaining the proper building permits before starting any construction, remodeling or repair project. Permits are not just paperwork, they are safeguards. They ensure that work is completed safely, meets building codes, and protects both your investment and your neighbors. From small improvements to large renovations, checking in with the Building Department first helps prevent delays, unexpected costs and safety concerns.

Our office is here to serve you. We are your partners in progress, ready to answer questions and guide you through the permit process. When we follow the proper steps, we protect not only our own homes, but the integrity and future of our entire community.

Melrose Park continues to thrive because of residents like you, people who care, who invest and who take pride in where they live. Let's keep working together to build a village that reflects the very best of who we are.

Thank you for your continued cooperation, pride and commitment to our home.

- Ralph Sorce, Building Commissioner
Village of Melrose Park

MP Building Dept. Development Progress – Winter 2026

I am very excited about the continued economic growth in Melrose Park. Below is a list of construction jobs presenting economic growth within the corporate limits of the village. This is only a partial list:



- 901 W. North Ave. – Wells Fargo Bank ...Wendy's building to be demolished.
- 1931 Mannheim Rd. – Dutch Brothers Coffee ... Coming soon.
- 1105 W. Lake St. – Mezcal Mexican Restaurant ... Coming soon.
- 8349 W. North Ave. – 7 Brew Coffee ... Coming soon.
- 8490 W. North Ave. – Delta Sonic ... Newly remodeled and open for business.
- 2611 W. North Ave. – Insomnia Cookies ... Now open.

MP Building Dept. Construction Project Resource Information

The spring weather is fast approaching and many residents and business owners will be performing construction projects to their homes and businesses.

The Building Department of the village of Melrose Park is pleased to see the improvements within our neighborhood. Remember, before starting any construction project; obtain a building permit from the Building Department. All contractors performing work are required to obtain a contractor's license with the village. Rough and final inspections are to be performed to make sure work is being performed to code.

If you are planning to update your home or business, or if you have any questions, please come into the Building Department at 1000 N. 25th Ave., call us at (708) 343-4000, Ext. 4470, or send an email to rsorce@melrosepark.org.

Go to www.melrosepark.org to obtain the following Building Department forms.

- Debris Hauling Contractor's License Application • Vacant Property Registration • Permit Application Page 1 • Permit Application Page 2
- Building Codes • Certificate of Compliance Application • Contractor's Registration Application • Electrical Permit Application
- Form 3500 • Form 4000 • Items Covered in Cert of Compliance Inspection (Sale) • Sign Application
- Process of Selling a Property • Vending and Amusement License Application

Please note that registration does not replace building permits or other required information.

General contractors are responsible to assure that all their sub-contractors are licensed in Melrose Park. Failure to do so may result in citations, fines and work stoppage on site.

The Village Zoning Map is available on the home page of the village of Melrose Park website www.melrosepark.org.

MP Construction Hours Policy

No construction or alteration activities shall be carried on between the nighttime hours of 7 p.m. and 7 a.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday or Friday. On Saturday, no construction or alteration activities shall be carried on between the nighttime hours of 5 p.m. and 8 a.m. On Sunday and federal holidays, no construction or alteration activities shall be carried on between the nighttime hours of 5 p.m. and 10 a.m. Construction and alteration activities on Sundays and federal holidays shall not be accompanied by loud or annoying noises except in the case of an emergency. Emergency operations necessitating deviation from this section shall not be initiated until special permission is obtained from the director of Public Works. Construction or alteration activities with regard to public improvements and public service utilities, shall be exempt from this section.

Any person violating this section shall be fined not less than fifty dollars (\$50), nor more than seven hundred fifty dollars (\$750), for each offense, and each day's violation of the same shall constitute a separate and distinct offense.

A Note to All Melrose Park Residents Regarding Property Flood Protection, Flood Insurance, Village Assistance

The village of Melrose Park has earned a Class 7 Rating through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Community Rating System (CRS); for this reason, flood insurance policies issued or renewed in the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) qualify for a 15 percent discount off the premium cost.

Flood Protection Information

The village of Melrose Park strongly encourages these flood protection tips to be used:

- Stream Maintenance – Per the Clean Water Act and village ordinance, dumping into our ditches, creeks and sewers is strictly prohibited. This regulation helps prevent contamination to our water supply and lessens the chance of flooding. Grass clippings, leaves and branches can also cause problems as they can accumulate and plug the storm sewer channels. If your property is next to a ditch or creek, please do your part and keep the banks clear of brush and debris. Please feel free to contact the Public Works Department for information regarding the village's Creek Maintenance Program or reporting downed tree and other major blockages.

- Construction Requirements – Always check with the Building Department before you alter, re-grade or fill your property. A permit is needed to ensure that projects do not cause drainage problems to other properties and to ensure the general public welfare.

- Flood-Proofing – There are several different ways to protect a building from flood damage – retrofitting (altering a building to eliminate or reduce flood damage) measures include:

- Elevations – This involves raising the house so that the lowest floor is above protection level.
- Relocation – Moving a building out of the flood zone is the surest way to protect it from a flood.
- Floodwalls – These work to keep water from reaching your home by constructing barriers out of fill or concrete between the building and the flood water.
- Dry Flood-Proofing – Makes the building's walls and floors watertight so water does not enter.
- Wet Flood-Proofing – Modifies the structure and relocates the contents so that when flood water enters the building there is little to no damage.

Important notice: Any alteration to a building or land requires a permit from the Building Department. Even re-grading or filling in the floodplain requires a permit.

Flood Protection Assistance

If you have any concerns or issues with flooding or drainage, please call the Village of Melrose Park Sewer Department at (708) 531-5347 or the Building Department at (708) 343-4000. The Building Department can provide information, professional input and problem-solving measures without negatively affecting nearby neighbors. The Building Department can also provide a list of flood proofing contractors and conduct inspections.

Sand Bags

During a rainstorm or flood, sand bags are readily available for pickup at the Melrose Park Public Works Building located at 1002 N. 27th Ave. The Public Works Department also drops off sand bags throughout the village's high impact flood areas.

Flood Event Suggestions

Please keep in mind, during a flood the less water pumped into the village's storm sewer system the better. Please avoid excessive water use such as washing clothes, showering, washing dishes and toilet flushing. This provides time for the sewer system to stabilize and catch up to the large influx of water, thus, lowering the probability of a sewer backup in a building.

Be Prepared!

Have a plumber inspect sump pumps regularly!

If you experience flooding or drainage issues on your property, the village's staff may be able to help. Remember to televiser and clean sewer laterals to prevent sewer backups.

Leaf Removal, Street Sweeping, Storm Sewers and Swales

It is a violation of village code and the Clean Water Act to directly or indirectly discharge illicit substances into a storm sewer. The village strongly encourages that all grass clippings, leaves and yard waste be placed in approved containers and placed at the designated location for garbage pickup on scheduled pickup days.

Community Effort

The Public Works Department kindly requests your help. Throughout the village's corporate boundaries there are many streets with curbside storm sewer catch basins, culverts and storm sewer pipes that are prone to trouble in heavy rains when they are blocked by leaves and grass clippings. The village street sweeping vehicle is not effective in removing large quantities of wet or dry leaves off the streets and curbed areas. The street sweeper's intended use is to remove road debris such as gravel, dirt and trash from the road surface by way of water and scrubbing brushes.

The Public Works Department respectfully asks that every village resident do their part in keeping our storm sewer grates, culvert pipe and swales in front of their property free from leaves and debris throughout the year. By doing this, this will greatly diminish the need for storm sewer cleanups, as well as, eliminating street inlet flooding due to leaves clogging the designed drainage path.

Flood Insurance

Homeowner's insurance policies do not cover damage from floods. The village strongly encourages property owners to invest in flood insurance. This insurance is backed by the federal government and is available to everyone, even properties that have been flooded. In some cases, flood insurance is required by a bank when people purchase a property and get a mortgage or home improvement loan. These policies typically only cover the building's structure and not its contents. During the types of flooding that occur in your area, there is usually more damage to the furniture and personal items than there is to the structure. Be sure you have contents coverage! Don't wait for the next flood to buy insurance protection! In most cases, there is a 30-day waiting period before NFIP coverage takes effect. Contact your insurance agent for more information on rates and coverage.

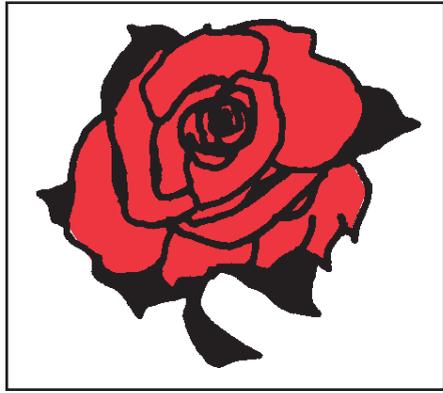
For more information regarding important Melrose Park flood information, please visit our village website at www.melrosepark.org and check under the Village Services tab. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns regarding flooding in Melrose Park, please feel free to contact the Building Department at (708) 343-4000, Ext. 4419. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Help Keep Our Village Clean!

Help keep our village clean by making sure you keep all garbage in your 90-gallon blue garbage container to keep garbage from blowing throughout the neighborhood. The village is proud of the garbage and debris services it provides our residents.

Help keep the parkways clean and in the front and rear of your house or building.

The village is dedicated to working with and for our citizens – together we can make Melrose Park look even better!



Village of Melrose Park Dial A Ride Program for MP Residents

Convenient Ride Service Now Available 8:15 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

The Village of Melrose Park Dial A Ride Program provides public transportation to any location within Melrose Park's boundaries. No one is turned away from utilizing this service. Riders are encouraged to use the program to do their everyday needs, such as grocery shopping, doctor appointments, etc. We are also handicapped accessible.

This service is available to residents Monday-Friday, 8:15 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

To make a reservation, please call (708) 343-7047. You can make appointments between the hours of 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday-Friday. We are closed on Saturdays and Sundays, and all major holidays. To book an appointment or make a cancellation, you must call at least 24 hours in advance.

Policies and Procedures

- 1) Only one reservation per rider per day. NO EXCEPTIONS!
- 2) Only two appointments a week can be made for miscellaneous use, such as grocery shopping, etc. Anyone using the van for doctor appointments, etc., may use the service up to three times a week.
- 3) You must stay at the destination you are going to for a minimum time of an hour. Any residents of Victory Centre MUST go with the group provided at their center for grocery shopping, etc. Any doctor appointment can be made with us.
- 4) Only three shopping bags per rider. Forgotten items in the van will be returned at the next pickup date.

Please note that our service is getting more popular every day so we will try to accommodate your needs to the best of our ability.



Mayor Serpico encourages residents to use this convenient transportation resource for their everyday needs, such as shopping, doctor appointments, etc.

Call (708) 343-7047 for service.

The AD RESERVATION FORM

Save the Dates!
 Next Issue – April 2026
 (Deadline for material March 25, 2026.)
 Schedule for 2026
 April, June, August, October and December

Dear Community Member,
 The Village of Melrose Park publishes *The Rose* (the official newsletter of the Village of Melrose Park) and mails the publication to all Melrose Park residents and businesses. We are offering advertising space and would greatly appreciate your participation.

Included is display ad pricing for your review.

If you are interested in advertising in one or more issues that will be delivered every other month, please complete this form and mail with completed ad to:

The Rose c/o Village of Melrose Park • 1000 N. 25th Ave. • Melrose Park, IL 60160
 or Email to: therose@melrosepark.org w/pdf or jpeg file.

(Checks need to be made to the order of Village of Melrose Park.)



Date _____

Name of Business _____

Contact Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail _____

Phone _____ Fax _____



Rates – Full Color Ads

- Full Page
\$400 per issue (9 x 10 1/2)
- Half Page
\$200 per issue (9 x 5 1/4)
- 1/4 Page
\$100 per issue (4 1/2 x 5 1/4)
- 1/8 Page
\$50 per issue (4 1/2 x 2 5/8)

Ad Size (Please Circle): Full Page 1/2 Page 1/4 Page 1/8 Page

Helping to Shape the Future of Our Community!

Melrose Park Mayor
RONALD M. SERPICO

Endorses

**VOTE
 DEMOCRATIC**

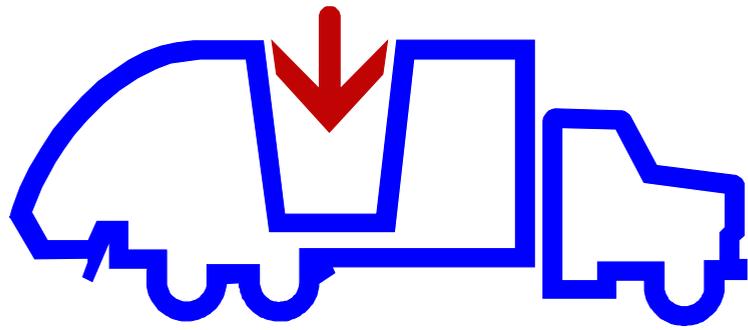


**PATTY
 GARCIA**

FOR U.S. REPRESENTATIVE, 4TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

ELECTION DAY IS MARCH 17. Early voting runs March 2-16.

Paid for by
 Citizens to Elect Ronald M. Serpico, Sr.



Village of Melrose Park Residential Garbage Pickup Information

Republic Services Garbage Schedule for Residential Bi-Weekly Pickup

24th Avenue to 11th Avenue – Tuesday and Friday

Winston Park Area – Tuesday and Friday

West Melrose – Tuesday and Friday

North of North Avenue – Tuesday and Friday

Republic Services is contracted to pick up your regular, everyday garbage and household items, such as couches, tables, mattresses, box springs, desks and chairs, etc.

Recycling and yard waste is collected on Tuesdays from April through November and must be placed in a 33-gallon refuse can or biodegradable paper bags. Plastic bags will not be accepted.

All items are to be put out the night before or morning of scheduled garbage pickup.

Winston Park Area and West Melrose – Once garbage has been picked up, garbage container is to be removed from curb line and placed back on resident's property.

The Village of Melrose Park Public Works Department Garbage Pickup Schedule

24th Avenue to 10th Avenue – North Side from Cortez to North Avenue – Monday

24th Avenue to 10th Avenue – South Side from Cortez to Main Street – Tuesday

Winston Park Area – Wednesday West Melrose – Thursday North of North Avenue – Thursday

The village of Melrose Park Public Works Department pickup items include all household remodeling items (homeowner/self – not contractor), such as kitchen and bathroom cabinets, drywall and cement.

All items are to be put out the night before or before 7 a.m. the morning of scheduled garbage pickup.

Once village trucks have passed and picked up items, the trucks will not pass again.

Any other garbage items are not to be left out and are to be put out for the next scheduled pickup.

This service is for Melrose Park residents in single and two-flat buildings only.

Commercial and apartment buildings must use a private scavenger company.

Village of Melrose Park Public Works regular hours are 7 a.m.-3 p.m.

This information is also available at www.melrosepark.org.

ATTENTION RESIDENTS – CALL TO REQUEST REPLACEMENT RESIDENT GARBAGE CANS

For a missing or damaged garbage can, please call the Melrose Park Public Works Department directly at (708) 343-5128 to request a replacement garbage can.

REPLACEMENT RESIDENT RECYCLING CANS

For the new larger recycling cans, please call the Melrose Park Public Works Department directly at (708) 343-5128 to request a recycling can. The smaller recycling can will no longer be available at the village Public Works Department or from Republic Services.

Your Safety is our Highest Priority.

You can now report safety and security concerns with the new Metra COPS app, available for Apple and Android devices.



Metra encourages you to report:

- ***Unattended bags or packages***
- ***Safety concerns***
- ***Suspicious activity***
- ***Vandalism***
- ***Robbery or theft***



You can also text comments/photos to 312-313-9015.

(Text or data rates may apply.)

In the event of an emergency, call 911 or
Metra Police at 312-322-2800.

Metra

St. Joseph Day Table

*Food Prepared by
Chef Frank Somers*



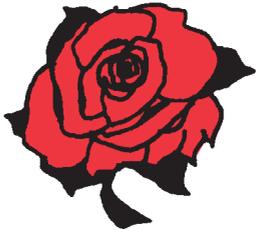
Friday, March 13, 2026 • Noon-8 p.m.

**Missionary Sisters of St. Charles
Melrose Park Senior Building**

900 N. 25th Avenue Melrose Park

Monetary Donations Accepted at Door

**FOR
ADDITIONAL
DETAILS
REGARDING
THIS YEAR'S
EVENT OR
TO MAKE A
DONATION,
PLEASE
CALL
(708)
343-2162.**



**Melrose
Park**

Village Hall News

Village Hall Hours – 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday through Friday
(May be subject to change.)

Birth Certificates

Birth Certificates – \$15 each,
\$4 per additional certification or copy requested.

We only provide birth certificates if the individual was born in Melrose Park.
Birth certificates can be only be obtained by the individual themselves,
a parent, or legal guardian.

A valid ID is required or in a legal guardian case,
the proper documentation is required along with the valid ID.

Death Certificates

Death Certificates (Including Fetal Death) – \$17 each, \$6 per additional certification or copy requested.

Vehicle Sticker Information

New stickers can be purchased at the Village Hall. Pricing varies based on type of vehicle.

For additional information, please call the Village Hall at (708) 343-4000.

Helping to Shape the Future of Our Community!

Melrose Park Mayor

RONALD M. SERPICO

Endorses

NORMA HERNANDEZ

VOTE
DEMOCRATIC

PUNCH
#71

FOR STATE REPRESENTATIVE, 77TH DISTRICT

ELECTION DAY IS MARCH 17. Early voting runs March 2-16.

Paid for by
Citizens to Elect Ronald M. Serpico, Sr.



Sign up today
E-Newsletter

GET OUR MONTHLY EMAIL
NEWSLETTER FOR ALL THE
LATEST AT THE LIBRARY!

www.mpplibrary.org



Stream, Download, & More!



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AUDIOBOOKS, MAGAZINES, &
MORE--ALL FOR FREE!



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ACCESS TO 1000S OF DIGITAL
COMICS, GRAPHIC NOVELS, & MANGA.



FREEGAL MUSIC: ACCESS
MILLIONS OF SONGS TO STREAM,
TO DOWNLOAD, & TO CREATE
YOUR OWN PLAYLISTS.



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WITHOUT PAYING A DIME.



SWAN LIBRARIES + APP:
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CARD AND MORE.



HOOPLA: READ, LISTEN, AND WATCH
EBOOKS, AUDIOBOOKS, MOVIES,
MUSIC, COMICS, & TV SHOWS
WITH YOUR LIBRARY CARD.

Check our website or call for
the most current information
on hours and procedures.

Mon Wed Fri 9:00am - 5:00pm

Tue Thu 9:00am - 7:00pm

Sat 10:00am - 2:00pm

Last Saturday of the month - Closed

Sunday - Closed

Memorial Day thru Labor Day - Closed on Saturdays

www.mpplibrary.org

801 N Broadway

Melrose Park, IL 60160

mps@mpplibrary.org

(708)649-7400





Adult Winter Programs

Melrose Park Public Library

FOOD DRIVE

Grab and Go Bags

Most Needed Items:

- Unexpired/non perishable food items
- Canned foods with pull tabs.

Receive a Free Print or Fax Coupon!

Patrons who donate items will receive a coupon at the front desk for a free print job or free fax job!

While Supplies Last!

Contact
☎ (708) 649-7400 🌐 www.mpplibrary.org

TRITON COLLEGE: SENIOR TAX FILING ASSISTANCE

Need assistance filling your taxes?
Triton College is here to help Seniors file taxes.

Triton College offers free tax assistance for seniors age 60+ from low to moderate income households through RSVP (Retired & Senior Volunteer Program). Call to make an appointment.

Phone #: (708) 456-0330, Ext. 3895
Hours: 9:30 am - 12:00 pm
Dates: Mondays
March: 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd, 30th
April: 6th
Location: Melrose Park Public Library

Triton College
www.triton.edu

Digital Learning

COMPUTER HELP SESSION

Adult & Senior Program

Monthly computer one on one help sessions. A Librarian will help answer your technology-based questions.

Mondays @ 3:30 PM - 4:30 PM
Mar. 9 | Mar. 23 | Apr. 6 | Apr. 20 | May 4 | May 18

Registration is required. First come, first served.
Call: (708) 649-7486 or Email: mpref@mpplibrary.org

ADULT & SENIOR PROGRAM

11 Health & Wellness

CHAIR YOGA CLASS

Instructor: Rhonda Fentry
Designed for all levels. No equipment needed.
Fridays @ 10:30 am - 11:30 am

Dates
Mar. 20th & Apr. 17th

Registration Required
PHONE: (708) 649-7485
EMAIL: mpref@mpplibrary.org
ONLINE: mpplibrary.org

[Register Now](#)

ADULT & SENIOR PROGRAM

03 Health & Wellness

GENTLE YOGA CLASS

Instructor: Rhonda Fentry
Registration required.
Please bring your own yoga mat.

[Register Now](#)

PHONE: (708) 649-7485
EMAIL: mpref@mpplibrary.org
ONLINE: mpplibrary.org

Saturdays @ 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm
Dates: March 21st & April 18th

ADULT & SENIOR PROGRAM

03 Health & Wellness

MEDITATION SOUNDBATH

Instructor: Rhonda Fentry
Yoga instructor Rhonda Fentry leads a form of meditation using ambient overlapping sounds and vibrations from crystal and Tibetan singing bowls, tapping into your subconscious and awakening new energy.

Please bring your own yoga mat.

Saturdays @ 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm
Dates: May 16th, October 17th

Registration Required
PHONE: (708) 649-7485
EMAIL: mpref@mpplibrary.org
ONLINE: mpplibrary.org

[Register Now](#)

All dates and times are subject to change without prior notice. Please see the website, or call us for updated programming information. All programs at the library are free but registration is required. MPPL card holders have first priority. To register, or with any further questions, please call 708.649.7400.



Youth Winter Programs

Make it Mondays: Visit the Library on Mondays to pick up your weekly craft bag. First-come, first-served. Ages 3 and up.

ABC Storytime: Join us for an interactive playtime filled with stories, music, puzzles, and toys! Wednesdays from 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM. Ages 1-5 with caregiver.

Bilingual Spanish Storytime: Join us for Bilingual Spanish Storytime. Thursday, March 12, from 11:00 AM to 11:30 AM.



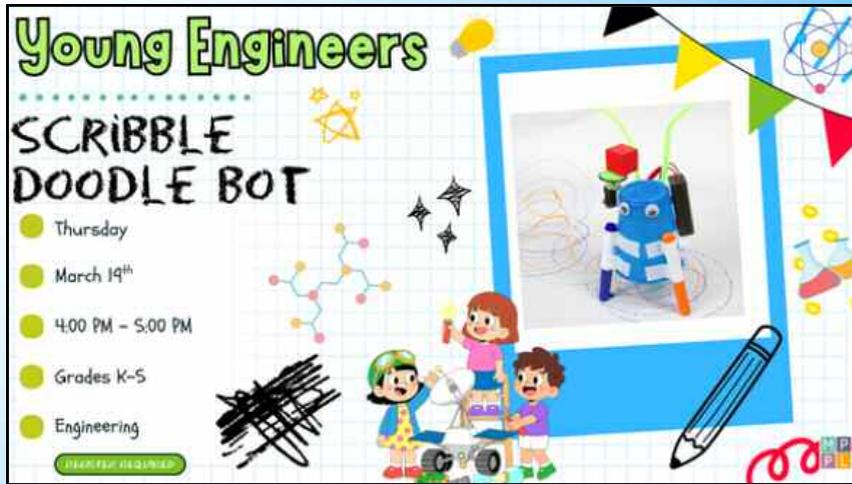
Sensory Shannanigans
MARCH SENSORY BINS
Monday, March 9 and Friday, May 13 ALL DAY

LENTAL GARDEN CLOUD DOUGH LUCKY CHARMIN



BILINGUAL SPANISH STORYTIME
THURSDAY, MARCH 12 11:00 - 11:30 AM
DROP-IN FOR AGES 1-5 WITH CAREGIVER
VISITA DE 1 A 5 AÑOS CON CUIDADORA

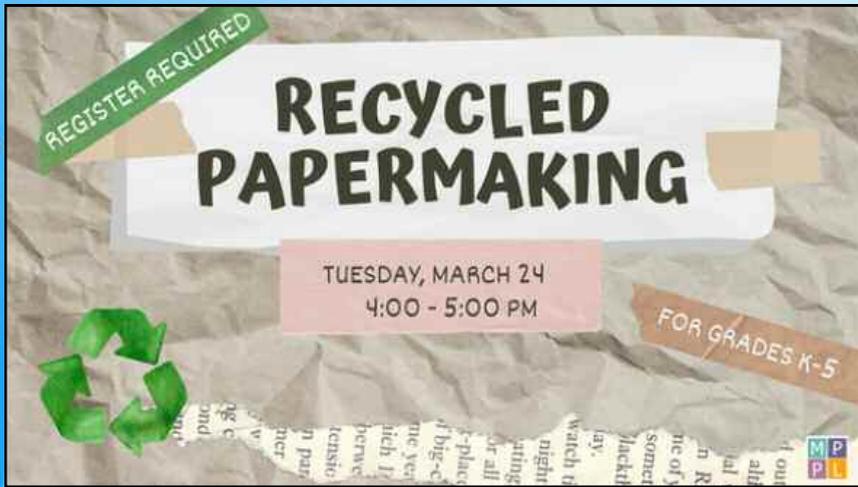
SECOND THURSDAY OF THE MONTH
SEGUNDO JUEVES DEL MES



Young Engineers
SCRIBBLE DOODLE BOT

- Thursday
- March 19th
- 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM
- Grades K-5
- Engineering

REGISTRATION REQUIRED

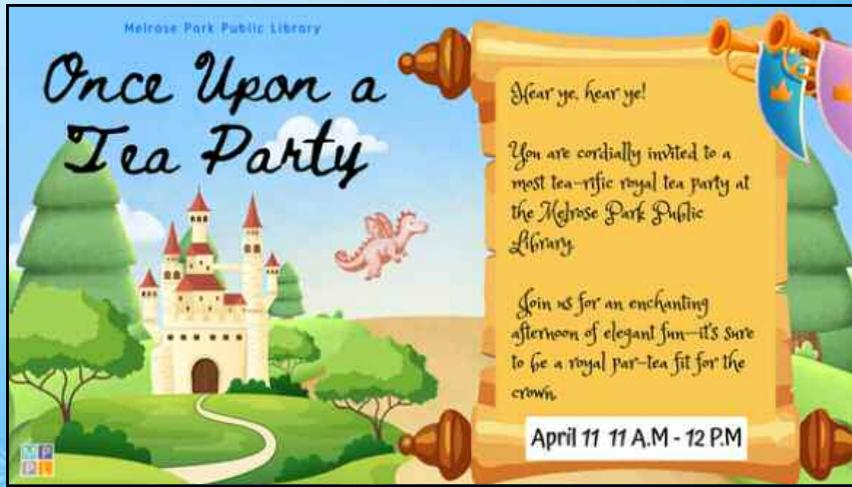


REGISTER REQUIRED

RECYCLED PAPERMAKING

TUESDAY, MARCH 24
4:00 - 5:00 PM

FOR GRADES K-5



Melrose Park Public Library

Once Upon a Tea Party

Hear ye, hear ye!
You are cordially invited to a most tea-rific royal tea party at the Melrose Park Public Library.

Join us for an enchanting afternoon of elegant fun—it's sure to be a royal par-tea fit for the crown.

April 11 11 A.M. - 12 P.M.

All dates and times are subject to change without prior notice. Please see the website, or call us for updated programming information. All programs at the library are free but registration is required. MPPL card holders have first priority. To register, or with any further questions, please call 708.649.7400.

Al Piemonte



**AL PIEMONTE NOW OFFERS BUICK AND GMC
SAME GREAT AL PIEMONTE SERVICE
SAME GREAT AL PIEMONTE PRICES
SAME GREAT AL PIEMONTE COMMITMENT
TO CUSTOMER SATISFACTION**



Sammy Alfano
sammya@apnissan.com



more than good hair.

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Open Tuesday - Saturday
Call us: 708 223 0981
Text us: 833 239 6837

www.bebellsalon.com

color ♥ extensions ♥ cuts ♥ blowouts



Village Hall Announces Holiday Closings

The Melrose Park Village Hall will be closed for the following holidays: Good Friday – Friday, April 3, 2026; Memorial Day – Monday, May 25, 2026; Juneteenth – Friday, June 19, 2026; Independence Day – Friday, July 3, 2026; Labor Day – Monday, Sept. 7, 2026; Columbus Day – Monday, Oct. 12, 2026; Veterans Day – Tuesday, Nov. 11, 2026; Thanksgiving Day – Thursday, Nov. 26, 2026; Day After Thanksgiving – Friday, Nov. 27, 2026; Christmas Eve (1/2 Day) – Thursday, Dec. 24, 2026; Christmas Day – Friday, Dec. 25, 2026; New Year's Eve (1/2 Day) – Thursday, Dec. 31, 2026; and New Year's Day – Friday, Jan. 1, 2027.

Residents are asked to make note of the dates listed.
For more information, call the Village Hall at (708) 343-4000.

Public Notice Regarding Scheduled Board Meetings

Take notice that the village of Melrose Park, Cook County, Illinois, will conduct the regular scheduled meetings of the president and the board of trustees on the fourth Monday of each calendar month, unless otherwise noted, at 6 p.m. at the Village Board Meeting Room located on the first floor of the Melrose Park Police Department, 1 N. Broadway Ave., Melrose Park.

The remaining schedule for calendar year 2026 is: March 23; April 27; Tuesday, May 26; June 22; July 27; Aug. 24; Sept. 28; Oct. 26; Nov. 23; and Dec. 28.

For more information, call (708) 343-4000.



MELROSE PARK

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

New Chamber Members and Renewals

The Melrose Park Chamber of Commerce and Community Development (MPCCCD) is pleased to welcome three new businesses as members to the chamber as we kick off 2026! Please help us welcome Fastest Labs of Melrose Park, Laila's Western Wear, and Storm Restoration Pros, LLC, on their membership and partnership with the MPCCCD.

We also want to give special thanks to the 15 businesses that renewed memberships in January and continue to participate in networking events, information sessions and provide feedback to surveys to help the chamber connect them with resources and solutions needed to support and fuel economic growth in their business. Please join us in thanking and supporting these local businesses. They are A&M Italian Ice; Action Painting Company; Alpha and Omega Outreach Ministries; Aqua Fiori, Inc.; Broadway Banquets, LLC; D & P Construction, Inc.; David King & Associates; Dynamic Powertrain Reman, LLC; Gaia Enterprises, Inc.; Harmony Care Home Services, Inc.; Little Achievers Child Care and Development Center; Sacred Heart Parish; Sahara Asian Elderly Care; Village of Maywood; and Wintrust Financial Corporation.

The Melrose Park Chamber of Commerce and Community Development has over 225 members, and the list continues to grow each month! If you are not currently a member of the MPCCCD, please reach out to Isaac Bazbaz, executive director, via email at lbazbaz@mpcccd.org or call (708) 343-9500 and he will schedule time to meet with you to discuss the benefits of partnering and working with our chamber.

For information about membership, please visit the chamber website Membership page at <https://mpcccd.org/benefits-dues/>.

Connecting Businesses to Resources

On Jan. 15, the Melrose Park Chamber hosted its first monthly business breakfast/training seminar for 2026 and we had a great turnout with over 40 business leaders joining us as Ignacio Marchan, of Marchan Consulting, led a conversation on tax strategies for small businesses. The presentation touched on some changes and what to expect in filing 2025 taxes, and more importantly, strategies for proactively planning for 2026 to help businesses maximize profits and fuel economic growth.

We want to thank Ignacio for an outstanding presentation and thank all that attended for the questions and group interaction to help make this a great event to kick off 2026.

Although the chamber has some topics that are presented on an annual basis, we regularly survey business owners and event attendees to learn more about topics they would like to see included or added to the calendar. The chamber has a very broad network and we are usually very successful in identifying subject matter experts that can assist our businesses regardless of the business sector.

Thanks again to all that registered and attended the session on tax strategies!



Upcoming Events, Training and Information Sessions

One of the primary functions of the MPCCCD is to connect businesses to resources to help support growth and to make a difference in the community. Although this takes many different shapes and approaches, one of the primary efforts is to host monthly training events, informational meetings, networking sessions and to participate in community events.

Upcoming Events

March 2026 – The chamber will again welcome Diana Alfaro from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) who will provide an overview of new and existing grants, access to capital and other resources available from the state to help sustain and fuel economic growth and to support small and midsize businesses. In recent years, the presentation by DCEO has been one of the most popular and best attended events.

Watch your email or follow the chamber on Facebook to stay updated on the date and time for this information session.

April 26, 2026 – Annual Legislative Breakfast will be held 8-10:15 a.m., at the Melrose Park Civic Center Gymnasium, located at 1000 N. 25th Ave., Melrose Park. Registration and continental breakfast begins at 8 a.m., and the program will begin promptly at 9 a.m. Illinois Senate President Don Harmon and Illinois Speaker of the House Emanuel “Chris” Welch will provide information and updates on important legislative issues regarding business and economic development in the state. As in the past, the agenda will provide about 30-45 minutes for Q&A.

May 2026 – Food Safety and Sanitation Certification. Although the date and time have not been finalized, The training and information session for the month of May will focus on our restaurants and hospitality businesses and we will be partnering with representatives from the Culinary Arts Program at Triton College to lead this session which will provide attendees an opportunity to obtain necessary certifications for food safety and sanitation.

Learn More About the Melrose Park Chamber of Commerce and Community Development!

If you are not getting emails from the MPCCCD about events, training or technical assistance offered for certifications, grant applications, etc., sign up for our newsletters at <https://mpcccd.org>. You can also follow the chamber on Facebook or LinkedIn to stay current on chamber activities.

To schedule an appointment to learn more about the chamber or to get information on membership, please reach out to Isaac Bazbaz, executive director, via email at ibazbaz@mpcccd.org or call (708) 343-9500 and he will schedule a time to meet with you.

MEET YOUR LOCAL PRINT TEAM



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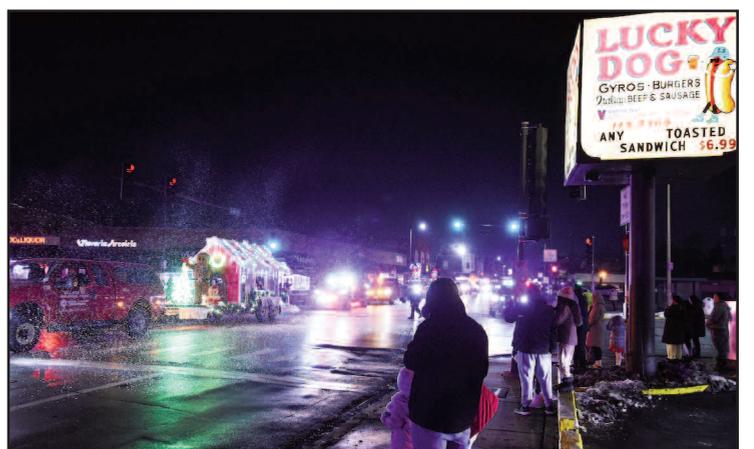
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Call us: (708) 343.0500 | Email us: orders@dandrpress.com
Check us out: dandrpress.com
Visit us: 1723 N. 25th Avenue | Unit 1 | Melrose Park, IL 60160

Mayor Serpico's Christmas Lights Parade with Santa

A special team of village employees and volunteers brought a lot of merriment to the Melrose Park residents over the holidays as they helped with Santa's visit and the annual Christmas Lights Parade held on Dec. 17. Thank you to all for bringing so much joy to the children of our community!



Mayor Serpico/Melrose Park Youth Commission

Outdoor Holiday Decorating Contest Homes *Congratulations to Our Winners!*



5 – \$150 Top Prize Winners



The Sanchez Family



The Iannelli Family



The DeCarlo Family



The Duran Family



The Sanchez Family



2 – \$50 Runners-Up Prize Winners



The Centeno Family



The Iannelli Family

**Thank you to everyone for joining in the seasonal fun!
Watch for details on our 2026 Holiday Decorating Contest
in upcoming issues of *The Rose*!**



Your Financial Help Makes This All Possible!



Mayor
Ronald M. Serpico

2026
Taste of Melrose Park

Celebrating Our 44th Year

September 4th, 5th & 6th



Melrose Park Campus
Near the NW Corner of
25th Ave. and Lake St.



WELCOME TO THE 44TH ANNUAL TASTE OF MELROSE PARK

Dear Friends of Melrose Park,

We invite you to partner with us as a sponsor of the **44th Annual Taste of Melrose Park**, taking place **September 4–6 over Labor Day Weekend**—one of the largest and most anticipated events in our community.

Each year, the Taste of Melrose Park attracts thousands of attendees for three days of great food, live entertainment, and family fun. Unlike other food festivals, most of our vendors are local residents sharing family recipes, creating an authentic and memorable experience that keeps visitors coming back year after year.

As a sponsor, your business or organization will receive high-visibility exposure to a large, engaged audience. Sponsorship is an effective way to:

- Promote your brand to thousands of potential customers
- Demonstrate your commitment to the Melrose Park community
- Gain recognition before, during, and after the event

Your support also plays a critical role in making this event possible. Sponsorship funds help cover event costs and allow us to keep food prices at **\$5 or less per serving**, ensuring the Taste remains affordable and accessible for families despite rising expenses.

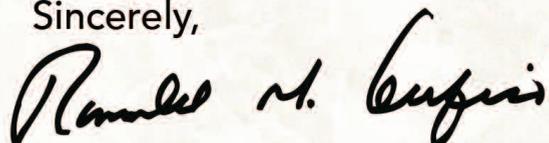
If you have sponsored the Taste of Melrose Park in the past, thank you for your continued support—we hope you will consider renewing your sponsorship for 2026. If you are new to the event, we would be honored to welcome you as a partner in this long-standing community tradition.

This insert outlines a variety of sponsorship packages designed to fit different budgets and marketing goals. To secure your sponsorship, please complete and return the application form located on Page 31.

For additional information or to discuss sponsorship opportunities, please contact **Lorena Anguiano** or **Taste Director Peggy DiFazio** at taste@melrosepark.org or call **708-343-4000 ext. 4452 or 4448**.

We look forward to promoting your business and working together to make the 44th Taste of Melrose Park another outstanding success.

Sincerely,



Ronald M. Serpico
Mayor of Melrose Park



TASTE OF MELROSE PARK SPONSORSHIP PACKAGES

\$8,000.00 PLATINUM SPONSOR PACKAGE

1- Full Page Color Ad (9" wide x 10.5" tall)
10' x 10' Hospitality Tent
2 - Main Stage Video Walls
1 - 4' x 6' Banner
1 - 2' x 4' Billboard

1 - Ad (4.5" wide x 2.28" tall) to run 6 times in *The Rose* newspaper
Public Address System Announcements
1 - Parking Pass

\$5,000 GOLD SPONSOR PACKAGE

1 - Half Page Color Ad (9" wide x 5.5" tall)
10' x 10' Hospitality Tent
Main Stage Video Wall
1 - 3' x 4' Banner
Public Address System Announcements

\$3,500 SILVER SPONSOR PACKAGE

1 - Full Page Color Ad
Main Stage Video Wall
1 - 2' x 4' Billboard
Public Address System Announcements

\$1,500 BRONZE SPONSOR PACKAGE

1 - 9.25" x 5.5" Color Ad
1 - 3' x 4' Banner
Public Address System Announcements

\$1,000 MAIN STAGE VIDEO WALL ADVERTISING PACKAGE

Your Ad Will Scroll on an 8' x 15' Screen
6:00 PM - Close Each Night

MORE SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

\$3,000 T-SHIRT SPONSOR

Your Company Logo
Printed On 500+ Volunteer Shirts
(T-Shirt Space Will Be Limited)

★ **MUST SUBMIT** ★
BY JUNE 1ST

\$850.00 COLOR BANNER

1 - 3' x 4' Color Banner will be displayed throughout the grounds
1 - Ad (4.5" wide x 2.28" tall) to run one time in *The Rose* newspaper

\$500.00 COLOR BILLBOARD

1 - 2' x 4' Color Billboard, which can include your logo. Displayed the month of August facing 25th Avenue
1 - Ad (4.5" wide x 2.28" tall) to run one time in *The Rose* newspaper

If none of these packages meet your needs or budget, we will work closely with you to design a sponsorship package that will.



Please detach order form on Page 31.

TASTE OF MELROSE PARK ORDER FORM

See Page 30 for the
44th Annual
Taste of
Melrose Park
Sponsorship
Details!

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:
TASTE OF MELROSE PARK

**Please Return This Form With
A Check Or Money Order
No Later Than May 15th To:
Taste Of Melrose Park
1000 N. 25th Ave.
Melrose Park, IL 60160**

**Please Select One of
the Following Packages:**

___ \$8,000.00 PLATINUM SPONSOR

___ \$5,000.00 GOLD SPONSOR

___ \$3,500.00 SILVER SPONSOR

___ \$1,500.00 BRONZE SPONSOR

___ \$3,000.00 T-SHIRT SPONSOR

(Submit by June 1st)

___ \$1,000.00 VIDEO WALL SPONSOR

___ \$850.00 3 X 4 COLOR BANNER

___ \$500.00 2 x 4 COLOR BILLBOARD

___ OTHER

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Sponsor Name: _____

Contact Name and Title: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____

Call Lorena Anguiano or Peggy DiFazio at
708-343-4000, ext. 4448 and they will work with your company
to develop a sponsorship package that will meet your budget.

Please detach this order form on the dotted line and return with your payment.

Important Please Read!!!

No later than June 1st we need you to email us your billboard or banner
Camera Ready Artwork or email us the vital information we need for us
to create your billboard or banner to: taste@melrosepark.org

For more information or if you have a question, please call Lorena Anguiano or
Peggy DiFazio at 708-343-4000, ext. 4448 or email them at taste@melrosepark.org



**Calling All
Area
Crafters,
Businesses,
Community
and
Public
Service
Organizations,
Etc., Etc., Etc.!**



The Taste of Melrose Park is looking for area crafters, businesses/organizations, etc., to purchase a spot in the new Craft Area or on Information Row at the

2026 Taste of Melrose Park, Friday, Sept 4-Sunday, Sept. 6.

This is a great opportunity to showcase your amazing masterpieces, products and services to the more than half a million people expected to patronize this year's big event.

For more information, please send an email to taste@melrosepark.org or call (708) 343-4000, Ext. 4448 or 4452.



The 44th Annual Taste of Melrose Park is Looking for VOLUNTEERS to Be a Part of a Great Weekend

Mayor Serpico and the Taste of Melrose Park are seeking volunteers for the beverage booths (individual or groups of eight or less) or ticket booths (a group of six or less) to help support this year's big event and we appreciate any assistance you can provide over the three-day festival.

All volunteers receive a 2026 Taste of Melrose Park T-shirt and must be 21 years of age. We're sure you'll have plenty of fun!

Friday, Sept. 4 • 5:30-11 p.m.

Saturday, Sept. 5 • 11:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. or 5:30-11 p.m.

Sunday, Sept. 6 • 11:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. or 5:30-10:15 p.m.

To volunteer, please complete the Taste of Melrose Park Volunteer Form and mail it to:
Taste of Melrose Park, Attn.: Lorena Anguiano,
1000 N. 25th Ave., Melrose Park, IL 60160

Interested parties, please respond before Aug. 1, 2026.
If submitting as a group, please send a main contact person's information.

Mayor Serpico and the Taste of Melrose Park Volunteer Form

Please print clearly.

Name _____ Age _____

Address _____ Apt. # _____

City _____

Phone _____

Please check all that apply.

Individual Group

Available to work: Friday Saturday Sunday

Would like to volunteer for:

Ticket Booth Beverage Stand

For more information, call Lorena at (708) 343-4000, Ext. 4452.



Your Donation Helps Underwrite More Than Just a Food Festival... It Helps Create a Better Melrose Park

Besides helping underwrite music and food, the most important result derived from your donation to the Taste of Melrose Park is the money raised for the *Melrose Park Sports and Family Benefit Fund*. Since this fund was initiated, we have raised \$1.5 million dollars from the sale of beer and wine at the three-day festival.

The *Melrose Park Sports and Family Benefit Fund* has only a 2% overhead with 98% being used to help underwrite youth athletics, senior citizen and veteran events, computer purchases for schools, donations to local charities, helping families in need, and much more.

When you donate to the Taste of Melrose Park you are not only helping underwrite a three-day food festival, but you are also helping make Melrose Park a better community to live, work and play. Long after the Taste folds its tents the smiles on the faces of those who benefit from the *Melrose Park Sports and Family Benefit* will endure... and helping our neighbors is what the Taste of Melrose Park is all about.

TASTE OF MELROSE PARK 2026 FOOD VENUE

Food, Food, Food and More Food ... Bon Appetit!
Our Food Booths are Filled to Capacity and There's No Room for More! It's Great!
Come on By and Enjoy the Delicacies We Have on the 44th Annual Taste of Melrose Park Menu.

ALL ITEMS PRICED AT \$5 OR LESS

Camaci's Italian Sausage
Camaci's Arancini
Tom's Steak House Filet Slider
Sam & Sammy's Italian Egg Rolls
Shwings Fried Shrimp
Carlotta's Sweet Aroma Linguine w/Garlic&Oil
"Cata's" Chicken Flautas
Mickey's Italian Beef
GALS Hot Dogs
Putt's Breaded Steak Sandwich
Richie's Curly Fries w/Cheese
Los Comales "Taco Bout It" Horchata
Los Comales "Taco Bout It" Tacos
The Roasted Cob
A&M Maxwell Street Polish
Cilla's Steak Teriyaki
Cervone's Homemade Cannoli
Ron & Debbie's Fried Dough
5 Stars Sports Cheese Enchiladas
Levato Affogato
Shwings Wings
Nacho Mama's
Athenian Foods Caprese Salad
Soon's Tres Leches Cake
Italian Stuffed Mushrooms
Carm's and Gino's Fried Calamari
Uncle Frankie's
Mostaccioli in Tomato Basil Sauce
Nikki's Zucchini Cheese Puffs
Lil Jimmy's Pierogies
Cody's Root Beer Floats

Cheesy Mac and Cheese
Athenian Foods Greek Chicken w/Rice
Strawberry Slushies
Squire's Cotton Candy
Pepe's Ceviche
Nutella Crepes
Nirvana's Brownie Sundaes
J.T.'s Italian Meatball Sandwich
Antney's Italian Lemonade
Ashley's Snow Cones
Tony & Teresa's Fried Oreos
Marilyn's Delicious Hamburgers
Riccio's Chocolate Frozen Bananas
Scudiero's Pizza
Scudiero's Pepperoni Rolls
Clara's Dippin Dots
Eli's Cheesecakes
Lil Dean's Lyza & Nella Raviolis
Vinnie Laraia's Baked Clams
Top Butcher Market Sinatra Sandwich
Jessica's Tamales
Paco's Cuban Sandwich
Jackie's Bavarian Cream Donuts
Corz Kids Garlic Shrimp
Corinne Ariola Principe's Artichoke Casserole
Elio's Funnel Cakes
Missionary Sisters of St. Charles "Sfingi"
Iannelli's Panzerotti
Sacred Heart & St. Eulalia Parish Food Trays
Melrose Park Senior Club
Popcorn & Coffee



**THE TASTE OF MELROSE PARK
IS LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS!**
Interested parties, please call (708) 343-4000, Ext. 4452.



TASTE OF MELROSE PARK

Entertainment Schedule

**Our 2026 Entertainment is All Set ... Stages are Full!
 For this Year's Taste, We are Featuring
 Some of the Best Musical Performances Ever!
 It's Going to be Amazing!**

Winston Plaza Main Stage

Friday, Sept. 4
 7-8:30 p.m. – The Blooze Brothers
 9-10:30 p.m.
 Chicago's Own Piano Man Band
Saturday, Sept. 5
 5-5:30 p.m.
 Forevermore Dance & Theatre Arts
 6-8 p.m. – Lounge Puppets
 8:30-10:30 p.m.
 American English Beatles Tribute
Sunday, Sept. 6
 4-5:30 p.m. – Breakfast Club
 6-8 p.m. – After Party
 8:30-10:30 p.m. – The Shagadellics

Peroni Garden Stage

Friday, Sept. 4
 7-10:45 p.m.
 Tony Ocean & The Rat Pack
Saturday, Sept. 5
 3:30-5 p.m. – Lake Effect
 6-8:30 p.m. – Reckless
 9-10:30 p.m. – The Four C Notes
Sunday, Sept. 6
 3-4:30 p.m. – Taylor Live
 5-6:45 p.m. – Jersey Girls
 7:15-10:15 p.m. – R-Gang

Main Drive

Friday, Sept. 4, 5 and 6
 J&J Enterprise Sound & Lighting
Friday, Sept. 4
 5-10 p.m. – Xplosive Sounds DJ
 6-11 p.m. – MB Entertainment DJ
Saturday, Sept. 5
 Noon-10 p.m. – Xplosive Sounds DJ
 5-11 p.m. – MB Entertainment DJ
Sunday, Sept. 6
 Noon-10 p.m. – Xplosive Sounds DJ
 12:30 p.m. – Jesse White Tumblers
 2-2:45 p.m.
 Chicago Garda Pipes & Drums
 5-11 p.m. – MB Entertainment DJ

**Continuous
Free Entertainment
All Weekend Long!**

Sabor de Mexico Stage ...
 To be announced.
 Watch for information
 as it becomes available.



Veterans Park District

Programs & Happenings

Early Childhood

Pee Wee Playtime • Ages Up to 5 Drop-in with Adult

This is a great opportunity for parents and tots to socialize. The room is set up with tables, fun toys, games, mats, big wheels and even a ball pit! You and your child can play, interact, make a craft, enjoy music and movement, and have lots of fun!

- Thursdays, Now-March 26, 9:30-11:30 a.m.; Bulger Park Community Center, 1601 Hirsch St., Melrose Park; Fee – Single visit \$5 per child/\$3 per sibling or purchase a punch pass \$20 for six visits (savings of \$10!), supervising adult is free; Plan to enjoy the free coffee bar; No registration needed; drop in anytime.

Start with Art – Think Spring Ages 2-5 (2s and 3s with Adult)

Explore the topics and areas of interest in this engaging art program. Participants become familiar with arts and crafts materials by engaging in interactive activities. Each week has a themed sensory station that relates to our weekly art projects. We cannot wait to see your child's creativity at work.

- Tuesdays, April 14-May 26 (no class on April 21), 10-11 a.m.; Grant Park Recreation Center, 44 W. Golfview Dr., Northlake; Fee – R\$60/NR\$70.

Mini Scientist – Signs of Spring Ages 2-5 (2s and 3s with Adult)

Participants explore the sights, sounds and changes of spring through hands-on science activities. From blooming flowers to busy bugs, each session invites playful discovery with the experiments, sensory fun and take-home activity to continue the learning.

- Thursdays, April 16-May 7, 4:45-5:30 p.m.; Grant Park Recreation Center, 44 W. Golfview Dr., Northlake; Fee – R\$40/NR\$50.

Youth Athletics

Soccer • Ages 8-12

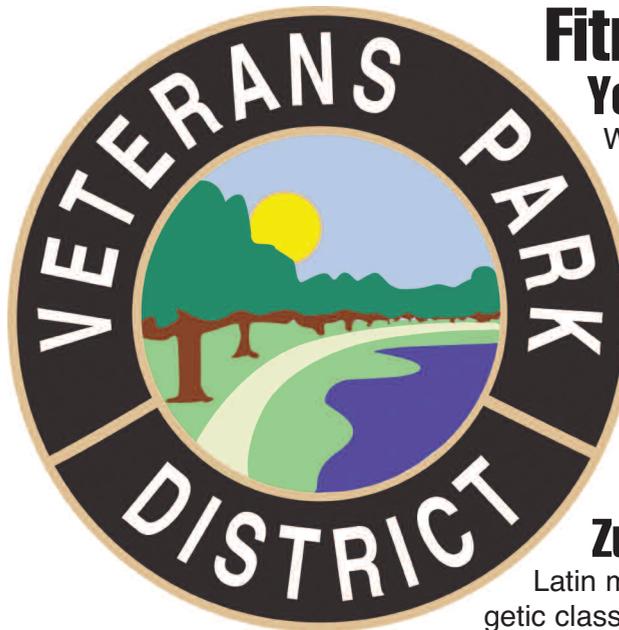
VPD staff will lead players in specific drills while they improve their overall understanding of the game, while having a blast! Each class lasts for one hour and players will rotate through different stations and drills.

- Thursdays, March 19-April 9, 5-6 p.m.; George Leoni Complex, 800 N. 17th Ave., Melrose Park; Fee – R\$55/NR \$70.

Volleyball • Ages 10-15

This fun and instructional program prepares players to succeed in volleyball. Players will improve their serving, bumping, setting and spiking skills. Games are played throughout the program. Teamwork and good sportsmanship are stressed.

- Wednesdays, March 18-April 8, 4-5 p.m.; Grant Park Recreation Center, 44 W. Golfview Dr., Northlake; Fee – R55/NR70.



Fitness

Yoga • Ages 16 and Up

Whether you're new to yoga or returning to your mat after time away, this series will help you develop confidence, body awareness and inner calm. Each week builds upon the last with simple movement, breathwork and mindfulness. You'll learn foundational poses, breathing techniques and relaxation practices to support strength, balance and flexibility.

- Saturdays, April 4-May 2, 10 a.m.; Cimbalo Fitness Center 1203 N. 24th Ave., Melrose Park; Fee – R\$40/NR\$55. Please call (708) 343-5151 for more information.

Zumba® • Ages 16 and Up

Latin music and easy to follow moves provide a fun, energetic class that will make you forget you're even exercising.

- Mondays, April 6-May 4, 6:30 p.m.; Cimbalo Fitness Center, 1203 N. 24th Ave., Melrose Park; Fee – R\$40/NR\$55. Call (708) 343-5151 to register or visit vdpark.org to register online.

Youth Boxing • Ages 12-18

Learn the basics of boxing. Participants will practice how to throw a variety of punches, footwork and timing, as well as the strategy involved with the sport of boxing.

- Tuesdays, April 7-May 5, 6 p.m.; Cimbalo Fitness Center, 1203 N. 24th Ave., Melrose Park; Fee – R\$40/NR\$55. Call (708) 343-5151 to register or visit vdpark.org to register online.

Youth Speed & Agility • Ages 8-15

This new and exciting class is taught by a certified strength and conditioning coach and is designed for youth athletes wishing to prepare for their upcoming athletic season. This class, which will focus on speed, agility, coordination and conditioning, will help build a strong foundation for future success.

- Wednesdays, April 8-May 6, 5 p.m.; George A. Leoni Complex, 800 N. 17th Ave., Melrose Park; Fee – \$40R/\$55NR. Call (708) 343-5151 to register or visit vdpark.org to register online.

Golf Simulator

Come experience Cimbalo Fitness Center's Golf Suite! Featuring a state-of-the-art Full Swing® golf simulator, our golf suite allows you to have a fun, realistic golf experience year-round. Our golf simulator offers something for everyone of all ages and experience levels, from the super competitive golfer to the super casual. With over 85 courses, multiple skill challenge courses, a driving range and a variety of challenge games/modes of play, we can provide users with a great experience customized to their goals, whether that be improving their golf game or just having fun. Pricing is \$40 for one hour and \$20 for a half-hour rental. Please call ahead to reserve a time slot. Cimbalo Fitness Center is located at 1203 N. 24th Ave., Melrose Park. Call (708) 343-5151 to reserve a time.

Call us for more information on our upcoming programs, (708) 343-5270, or check our website at www.vdpark.org or our Facebook Page for updates.

CONNECT WITH US!

@vpdpark @VPDpark @vpdparks

Download our mobile app

(708) 343.5270

E-mail us:
vpdsocial@vpdpark.org

Visit us online at: vpdpark.org



Cuomo To Go

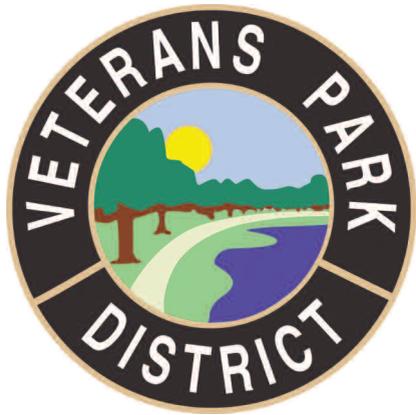
25 E. North Ave. • Northlake Ill.

Chef-prepared daily meals, salads, sandwiches, desserts and much more!

Take home HOT or COLD!

Visit our website -CuomoToGo.com.

Delivery available through GrubHub and DoorDash.



**Veterans
Park
District**

*Programs
&
Happenings*

TODDLER TURF TIME



AT LEONI COMPLEX

AGES 2-5 | MAR 2 -APR 6 | MONDAYS | 10-11AM | \$65R/\$75NR

Get ready for a fun-filled fitness adventure designed just for toddlers!

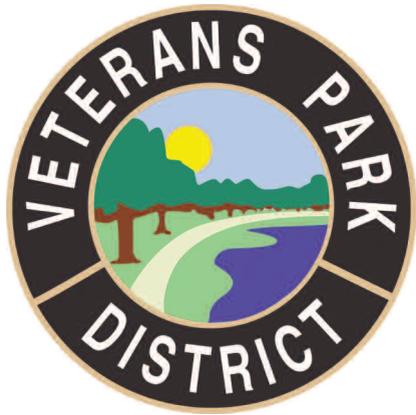
Each Session includes:
Play-based activity stations
Interactive circle time with music & movement
Mini sport & fitness challenges

Perfect for little ones to build coordination, confidence, and social skills all while having a blast!



(708) 343-5270 | VPDPARK.ORG | FOLLOW US ON





**Veterans
Park
District**

*Programs
&
Happenings*

Mini Poms



Get ready to
move, shake and shine!

In this fun and energetic class,
participants will learn basic pom
dance skills, simple routines, and
teamwork in a fun and
encouraging environment.

Perfect for beginners this class
builds rhythm, coordination and
confidence.



**Grant Park Recreation Center
44 w. Golfview Dr, Northlake**



Ages 6+

Wednesdays

5-6pm

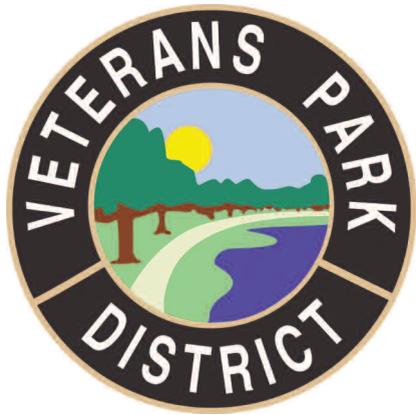
March 4 – April 8

\$65 R / \$75 NR



(708) 343-5270 | VPDPARK.ORG | FOLLOW US ON

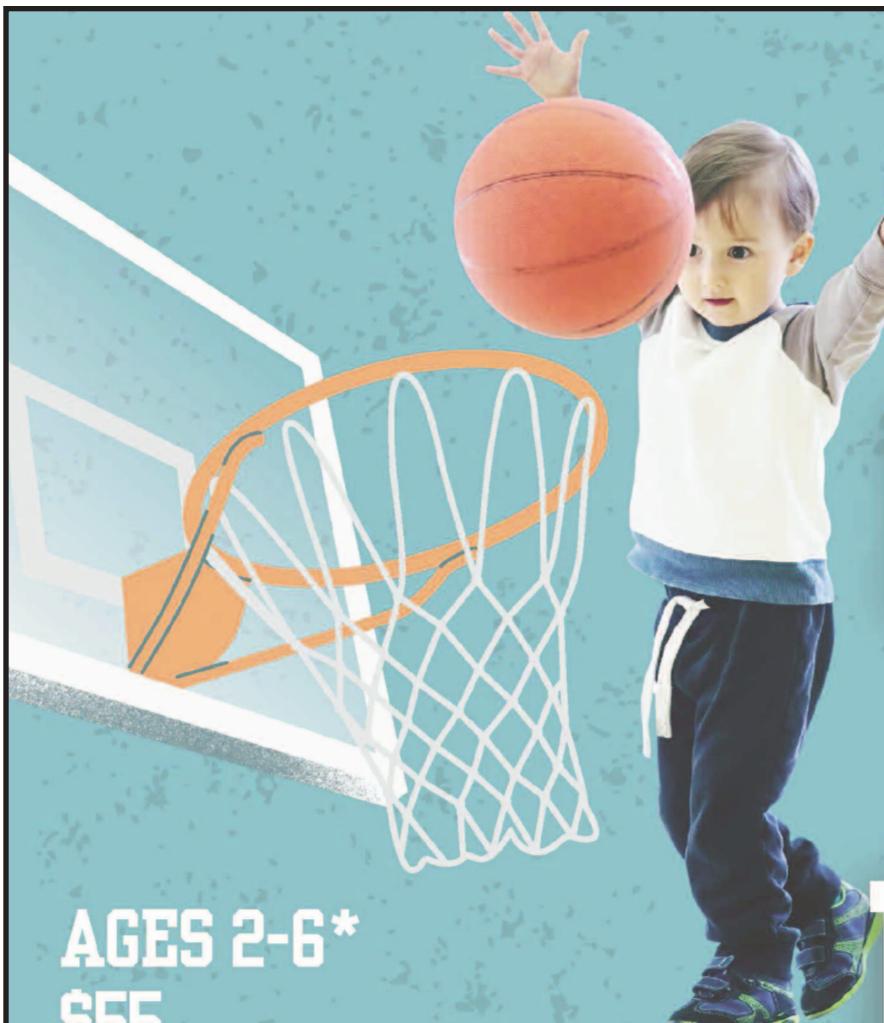




**Veterans
Park
District**

Programs

Happenings



HOPS & HOOPS

AGES 2-6*
\$55
TUESDAYS 4:45-5:30PM
MAR 24-APR 28
GRANT PARK REC CENTER

Little hoopers build basic basketball skills; dribbling, passing, and shooting, through fun and play

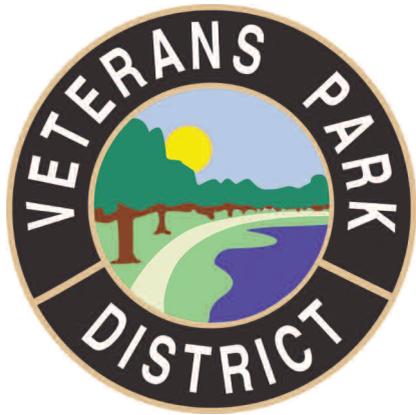


**2-3 YR OLDS
MUST BE
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BY AN ADULT*



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Veterans Park District

Programs & Happenings



FLASHLIGHT EGG & CANDY HUNT

AGES 6-10 FREE FAMILY EVENT!

Thursday, March 26 • 8 PM

Gouin Park Playground, Franklin Park

We will scatter the park with eggs and candy. THIS HUNT TAKES PLACE AT NIGHT, SO REMEMBER TO BRING YOUR FLASHLIGHT and a basket to collect your eggs and candy.

The hunt starts EXACTLY at 8 PM, rain or shine.

FLASHLIGHT GLOW EGG SCRAMBLER

AGES 2-10 FREE FAMILY EVENT!

Friday, March 27 • 8 PM

Bulger Park Playground, Melrose Park

Veterans Park District and the Melrose Park Youth Commission are proudly sponsoring an Egg and Candy Hunt at Bulger Park playground in Melrose Park. Eggs and candy will be hidden high and low for children to find. Remember to bring your basket to collect your goodies.

THIS HUNT TAKES PLACE AT NIGHT, SO REMEMBER TO BRING YOUR FLASHLIGHT. Parents may help two- and three-year-old children. Four- to ten-year-old children hunt on their own.

This Event starts EXACTLY at 8 PM, rain or shine.

TRUMBULL PARK EGG & CANDY HUNT

AGES 2-10 FREE FAMILY EVENT!

Saturday, March 28 • 9:30 AM

Trumbull Park Playground, River Grove

Hey, kids! The Easter Bunny will be hiding eggs and candy at Trumbull Park. This event is sponsored by Veterans Park District and the City of River Grove. Bring your baskets to collect your goodies.

Each hunt will be divided into age groups and will start at EXACTLY 9:30 AM, rain or shine.

GRANT PARK "EGG" STRAVAGANZA

FREE ALL AGE FAMILY EVENT

Saturday, March 28 • 11 AM

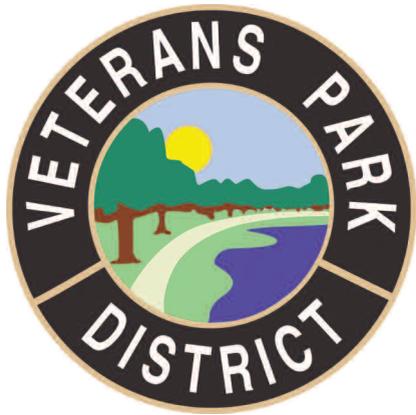
Grant Park Playground, Northlake

Veterans Park District and the City of Northlake are proudly sponsoring an Egg and Candy Hunt at Grant Park playground in Northlake. Eggs and candy will be hidden high and low for children to find. Remember to bring your basket to collect your goodies.

This Event starts EXACTLY at 11 AM, rain or shine.

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**Veterans
Park
District**
*Programs
&
Happenings*

FAMILY INDOOR GARAGE SALE & FLEA MARKET

SATURDAY, APRIL 25
9 AM-2:30 PM
GRANT PARK GYMNASIUM
44 W. GOLFVIEW DR.
NORTHLAKE



Come out and shop at the VPD Community Garage Sale. Time to clean out your attic, closets, or garage for items to sell. Upsell your baby clothes, toys, games, tools, books, or anything else you may have. Concessions will be open for snacks.

Registration is required to reserve your space. Tables are available on a first come, first serve basis. Set up time is 7-9 AM. You get two 8x3 1/2 feet tables and two chairs. Must register for a space and fill out an application.

Registration deadline is April 20.

Fee: R \$25 / N \$35



(708) 343-5270 | VPDPARK.ORG | FOLLOW US ON





Show Your Support for Our Veterans and Those Currently Serving Our Country! Call the Village Hall Today to Reserve a Flag in Their Honor



In 2014, Mayor Serpico and the Melrose Park Youth Commission launched Melrose Park's Avenue of Flags campaign and we're continuing our efforts.

Flags representing the United States of America, the state of Illinois, the village of Melrose Park, the United States Army, United States Navy, United States Air Force, United States Marines, United States Coast Guard, United States Space Force and POW/MIA are being displayed on lightpoles within the village.

If you know of a veteran or someone currently serving from the community and would like to have a flag displayed on a lightpole near their home, please call the Melrose Park Village Hall at (708) 343-4000 with details on their U.S. military branch.

Melrose Park is Looking for Residents Currently Serving in the Military

Attention Residents

The village of Melrose Park would like to know of any residents who are currently serving in the military. If you have a family member or know of a resident who is, please contact Jasmine Mendez via email – jmendez@melrosepark.org or by phone – (708) 343-4000, Ext. 4414.



Donations of any amount to support Melrose Park's Avenue of Flags initiative are appreciated and can be sent to: Village of Melrose Park/Avenue of Flags, 1000 N. 25th Ave., Melrose Park, Ill. 60160.

Please make checks payable to the Melrose Park Youth Commission or Melrose Park Sports & Family Benefit Fund.



Presented by Triton College

Sunday, April 26, 2026
10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Gates open to exhibitors at 8 a.m.

Triton College West Campus
Fifth Avenue and Hemingway Drive

Check out over 600 hot rods and classic cars, then take a tour of Triton's incredible Automotive Technology facilities.

CONCESSIONS • FREE GUEST ADMISSION
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For more information or to register your vehicle, please visit
triton.edu/carshow

In case of inclement weather, alternate date will be Sunday, May 3, 2026.



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for you.



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triton.edu

2000 Fifth Ave.
River Grove, IL 60171
(708) 456-0300



Triton College NEWS

Triton College to Once Again Host Region 4 Division I Basketball Tournaments

Triton College is proud to once again host the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) Region 4 Division I Men's and Women's Basketball Tournaments taking place March 4-7. Join us in the George T. Jorndt Athletic Complex Gymnasium (R Building) for an action-packed week of basketball.

The tournament schedule is as follows:

- Women's Semifinals: Wednesday, March 4, at 5 p.m. and 7 p.m.
- Men's Semifinals: Thursday, March 5, at 5 p.m. and 7 p.m.
- Championship Games: Saturday, March 7.
- Women's Championship at 5 p.m.
- Men's Championship at 7:30 p.m.

General admission is \$5 and children under 12 are free.

Both Trojan basketball programs are coming off thrilling performances at last year's tournament, with the men's team claiming the Region 4 crown, and the women's team earning a runner-up finish.

Grab your red and gold apparel, bring your school spirit and rally to the George T. Jorndt Athletic Complex Gymnasium to root for the Trojans!

For those unable to attend in person, all games are streamed live at no charge on fan.hudl.com/tritontrojans.

For more information about Triton College basketball, including schedules and rosters, please visit tritonathletics.com.

Mark Your Calendars for These Exciting Triton College Events

Spring Career Fair

Wednesday, March 4, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Career Services is hosting its Spring Career Fair in the Student Center Cafeteria (B Building). If you plan to attend, make sure to dress to impress by wearing professional attire. Students who would like assistance preparing for the fair or meeting with job recruiters are encouraged to contact Career Services in advance at careerservices@triton.edu or call (708) 456-0300, Ext. 3619.

Global Music Series: Irish Traditional Music

Wednesday, March 4, 7 p.m.

Enjoy instrumental dance tunes of Ireland with James Conway and Mike Austin of Chicago's Old Town School of Folk Music, featuring tin whistles, harmonicas, bodhran, guitar and more. Presented by Triton College's Visual, Performing and Communication Arts Department.

For information, contact musicdept@triton.edu.

Triton Alumni and Friends Reunion at the Ballpark

Friday, March 27, 6 p.m.

This event will be held on the Triton College campus and the first pitch will be thrown by Lance Johnson, a Triton alum who went on to enjoy a successful Major League Baseball career as a speedy outfielder, playing 14 seasons in the big leagues with teams including the Chicago White Sox, Chicago Cubs, New York Mets and the New York Yankees.

For more information, contact alumni@triton.edu or call (708) 456-0300, Ext. 3062.

Mental Health and Wellness Fair

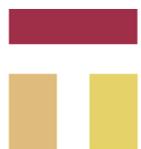
Wednesday, April 8, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.,

Pause. Breathe. Reconnect. Students, faculty and staff are invited for a day focused on wellness, care and connection, including mental health resources, yoga, meditation, massage and healthy living activities. This event will be held in the Student Center Cafeteria (B Building).

For information, email sylviasztark@triton.edu.



**Summer Registration is Now Open!
Secure Your Classes Early!
Visit triton.edu/summer.
Classes begin Tuesday, May 26.**



Triton College FOUNDATION

A 501(c)(3) organization.

Gifts to the Foundation are tax deductible as allowed by law.

Consider the Triton College Foundation as a Source for Your Goodwill ...

Your helping hand means a lot and together we can do some amazing things for our students!

The Foundation works to provide funding for scholarships, new programs and services, equipment and books, and helps maintain and operate Triton College facilities – benefitting the thousands of students and community members who visit the campus every day.

Visit www.triton.edu/foundation/pledge and make a contribution to the fund of your choice.

For more information, please call (708) 456-0300, Ext. 3758, or send an email to tcfoundation@triton.edu.

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Must be 21 or older to game. If you or someone you know has a gambling problem, crisis counseling and referral services can be accessed by calling 1-800-GAMBLER (1-800-426-2537) or text "GAMB" to 833234. Individuals can enroll in the IGB Self-Exclusion Program at all of the IGB offices located at all casinos. Additional information can be found on the Self-Exclusion Page at <https://igb.illinois.gov/>.

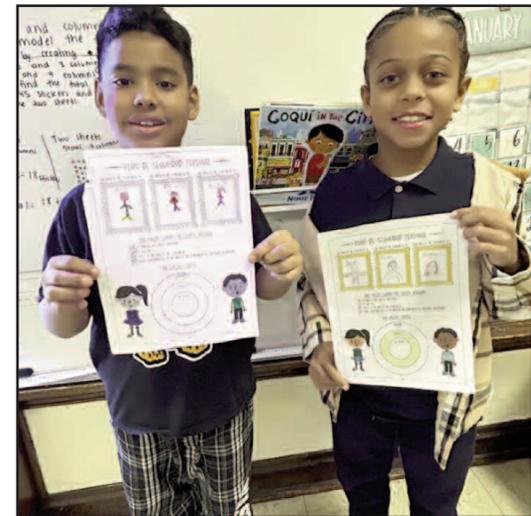


NEWS 89 School District 89 BRIEFS

District 89 Expands Student Safety Awareness, Hosts IESA Tournament

District 89 continues to demonstrate its commitment to student well-being, leadership and community engagement through two impactful initiatives: Erin's Law Student Safety Presentations and hosting the IESA Basketball Tournament for the second consecutive year.

From Jan. 15-Feb. 28, District 89 implemented Erin's Law Student Safety Presentations across the district in partnership with the Proviso Public Partnership (PPP) and led by the District's Student Services Department. The age-appropriate presentations empowered students with essential knowledge about personal safety, body autonomy, recognizing unsafe situations and seeking help from trusted adults. This collaborative effort reinforces the district's dedication to fostering safe, supportive learning environments where students feel informed, confident and protected.



In addition, District 89 proudly hosted the IESA Basketball Tournament at Irving Middle School for the second year in a row. The IESA seventh-grade tournament took place on Jan. 17, followed by the IESA eighth-grade tournament on Jan. 24, welcoming schools, families and community members from across the region. The tournament showcased strong teamwork, sportsmanship and school pride. A special highlight of the event was Daelin Caldwell (1), who received the IESA Seventh-Grade Sportsmanship Pin Award in recognition of his leadership, respect and positive spirit on and off the court.

These initiatives reflect District 89's ongoing commitment to developing well-rounded students through education, safety awareness and extracurricular excellence. To learn more about the many great things happening across the district, visit www.maywood89.org.



www.maywood89.org • Follow Us on Twitter "@maywood89"



News from Proviso Township High Schools

www.PTHS209.com

District 209 Superintendent Krish Mohip Appointed to Illinois Statewide Chronic Absence Task Force

Proviso Township High School District 209 announced that Superintendent Krish Mohip has been selected as one of 20 education leaders across Illinois to serve on the Statewide Chronic Absence Task Force.

Established through state legislation and convened by the Illinois State Board of Education, the task force brings together education leaders from across the state to develop, elevate and scale effective strategies to improve student attendance and engagement.

Mohip said he is honored to serve and views the appointment as recognition of the sustained progress underway across District 209.

“This appointment reflects the collective effort of our schools, staff, students and families to make attendance a priority,” Mohip said. “We have shown that when we lead with data, accountability and student-centered supports, real change is possible. I look forward to contributing Proviso’s experience to help strengthen attendance systems statewide.”

As of the end of Semester 1, District 209 achieved a year-to-date attendance rate of 91.4%, with 87% of freshmen on track – the highest levels ever recorded for the district. Proviso West High School currently ranks No. 1 in Illinois for chronic truancy reduction and No. 5 statewide for chronic absenteeism reduction among public, non-charter high schools.

“These outcomes demonstrate what can happen when districts commit to consistent monitoring, early intervention and meaningful engagement with students,” Mohip said. “Looking ahead, this task force is an opportunity to collaborate with colleagues across Illinois and ensure that effective attendance strategies are shared, strengthened and sustained for students everywhere.”

District leaders say the results reflect a long-term focus on data-informed decision-making, clear accountability and targeted supports designed to meet students’ academic and social-emotional needs. District 209 looks forward to contributing its insights and lessons learned to this important statewide effort aimed at improving student outcomes.

Additional information about the Statewide Chronic Absence Task Force, its legislative foundation and membership is available through the Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois General Assembly.

Proviso West Principal Jeremy Christian Named 2026 High School Principal of the Year for West Cook Region

Proviso Township High School District 209 announced that Proviso West High School Principal Jeremy Christian has been named the 2026 High School Principal of the Year for the West Cook Region by the Illinois Principals Association.

The honor is part of the Horace Mann/Illinois Principals Association High School Principal of the Year Awards Program, which annually recognizes outstanding high school leaders who demonstrate excellence in providing high-quality learning opportunities for students. Award recipients are selected by their peers and recognized for exemplary contributions to the profession and for excelling in seven areas of leadership, including school climate, instructional improvement, collaboration, innovation and community engagement.

Regional winners advance to the state-level competition. State honorees will be announced in early 2026 and formally recognized at the Illinois Principals Association Education Leaders Annual Conference, scheduled for Oct. 18-20, 2026. The state winner will receive a plaque and a \$1,000 honorarium, and may also be eligible to participate in the National Association of Secondary School Principals Awards Program.

Christian met rigorous eligibility and selection criteria, including demonstrated positive impact on education, strong advocacy for students, a commitment to continuous improvement, and the ability to foster a positive school climate with high staff and student morale. Under his leadership, Proviso West has focused on strengthening instructional practices, building collaborative relationships and engaging families and the broader community to support student success.

“I am truly humbled and honored to receive this recognition,” Christian said. “I have a strong passion to work with our teachers, parents and community to make our school better! This award reflects the incredible work of our students, staff and families and our shared commitment to making West better. I am grateful to be part of a school community that believes in high expectations, shared responsibility and doing what’s best for our kids every day.”

District 209 Superintendent Krish Mohip praised Christian’s leadership and impact on the Proviso West community.

“I am incredibly proud of Mr. Christian and this well-deserved recognition,” Mohip said. “Having the opportunity to nominate him for this honor was an easy decision. His leadership has been exactly what Proviso West needed – steady, student-centered and focused on building trust, culture and opportunity. He has made a meaningful difference for students, staff and families, and this award reflects the strength of his vision and commitment.”

For more information about the Illinois Principals Association Principal of the Year Awards Program, visit ilprincipals.org.

Proviso East High School Earns Commendable Designation, Makes History as Early Voting Site Led by Students

Proviso East High School continues its remarkable transformation, earning a commendable designation from the Illinois State Board of Education for the second consecutive year and emerging as a statewide model for academic achievement, civic engagement and community partnership.

In recognition of these accomplishments, Proviso East High School and the village of Maywood hosted a community dinner on Thursday, Feb. 5, 2026, at the school's Fred Hampton Social Justice Room, celebrating the achievements of students, staff and Principal Rodney Hull. The celebration culminated with a press conference on Friday, Feb. 6, 2026, where a formal resolution from the Cook County Board of Commissioners honoring Proviso East was presented and read by Cook County Commissioner Tara Stamps.

The resolution celebrates Proviso East's sustained academic growth, strong leadership and student success, as well as its deepening partnerships with local and county leaders.

"Today we begin by celebrating transformation," Stamps said. "Proviso East High School is not just being honored for its designation. It's being recognized for a turnaround. Earning commendable status two years in a row reflects disciplined leadership, committed educators and students that rose to the moment."

Stamps also highlighted Proviso East's leadership in civic engagement, connecting the school's work to Illinois Senate Bill 1786, which requires districts to provide eligible high school students with the opportunity to register to vote.

"Academic excellence and civic preparation can and must go hand in hand," Stamps said. "This is about preparation. It is about agency. It is about trusting our young people with responsibility instead of withholding opportunity."

A major milestone announced during the press conference is that Proviso East High School will become one of the first high schools in Illinois – and Cook County – to serve as an early voting site, with students playing a central role in operating the polling location.

Cook County Clerk Monica Gordon called the initiative historic.

"Your school will serve as one of the first early voting polling places ever located inside a high school," Gordon said. "Even more impressive, it will be run by the students. Students will be checking voters in, issuing ballots and seeing firsthand how democracy actually works."

Gordon noted the program will serve as a pilot for Cook County, bringing early voting directly into schools and placing students "at the center of the democratic process."

Principal Rodney Hull, who has led Proviso East since 2021, credited students and staff for the school's success.

"These students to my left and to my right are the reason," Hull said. "We are celebrating because of what they have done in the classroom and on our statewide assessments. Our commendable status is based on their scores and we are very proud of them."

Hull highlighted the school's top 25 students from the class of 2026, noting their hard work over the past four years and emphasizing that Proviso East is in a celebration season because of student achievement.

Proviso Township High Schools District 209 Superintendent Krish Mohip underscored the districtwide progress taking place under strong school leadership.

"This transformation that's happening here at Proviso East is happening around our entire district," Mohip said. "Our freshmen on-track rate is at the highest it's ever been, attendance is up and chronic absenteeism and truancy are down."

Mohip credited Hull's leadership with significant gains at Proviso East, including 20% growth in English language arts, 28% growth in math, a 12-point increase in graduation rates and major reductions in chronic absenteeism and truancy.

"Principal Hull is a transformational leader that should be celebrated," Mohip said.

Maywood Mayor Nathaniel George Booker emphasized the power of collaboration between schools and the community.

"When I first became mayor in 2021, we had five schools in the bottom 5% in the state," Booker said. "Through collaboration – people plus partnership equal possibilities – all five of those schools have come out of the bottom 5%."

Booker also praised Proviso East's focus on civic engagement.

"We have to be the change we want to see and pour into our youth to help them understand why civic engagement is so important and why their voice matters," he said.

Illinois Senate Majority Leader Kimberly Lightford, a Proviso East alumna, read a proclamation honoring the school's progress.

"Proviso East High School has steadily risen from being in the bottom 5% of schools in the state to earning a commendable designation for the last two years," Lightford said. "This resurgence is due to the collective efforts and dedication of Principal Hull, his team and the students themselves."

Dr. Jo Ann Roberts, former CPS chief deputy superintendent and a key advocate behind Senate Bill 1786, praised the school's leadership and commitment to student empowerment.

"All of this greatness is because of the leadership that you have in place," Roberts said. "Leadership matters."

Voting rights advocate Letina Brady Pettis, founder of Get Out the Vote for Teens and National Teens Voter Registration Day, called the moment historic.

"We're here to let these teens know that they deserve a seat at the table," Pettis said. "This is our voice. This is our agency. This is how we are taken seriously in this country."

The press conference concluded with elected officials and community leaders walking to Proviso East's cafeteria, where they joined staff in registering dozens of students to vote, reinforcing the school's role as a leader in both academic excellence and civic engagement.

As Proviso East High School continues its upward trajectory, district and community leaders say the school stands as a powerful example of what is possible when students, educators and partners work together to transform outcomes and prepare young people for both college, career and citizenship.



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A Lenten Message from Fr. Richard Bezzegato, CS, The Parish of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel

What is Lent?

In 2026, the Christian season of Lent began on Wednesday, Feb. 18 (Ash Wednesday) and concludes on Thursday, April 2 (Holy Thursday), leading into the Easter Triduum and Easter Sunday on April 5, marking a time of prayer, fasting and almsgiving before Easter. It honors the time when Jesus went into the desert to fast and pray before beginning God's work.

Lent is an opportunity for our spiritual formation and discipline. To seize this opportunity, we need to be led and guided by the Spirit who facilitates our encounter with God.

As Jesus was led into the desert by the Spirit (Mt. 4:1) to face the great issues of his life and mission before he entered into his ministry, so also, we too enter into this Lenten time to face the great issues of our life.

God is waiting for us, expecting us, offering us a time of restoration ... a time of RETREAT ... the chance for a fresh start in the spiritual life (cf. Hosea 2:16-17). The goal of this time is to seek and find the will of God over and beyond all the movements of our heart.

Lent is a season for quiet introspection, a time for honesty – a time for reality. That's the soul-picture we get when we take an honest look inward. Being honest with ourselves can

be painful. Especially when the standards we use are unattainable, as they are during Lent. During this season we are encouraged to hold up the Ten Commandments against our words, deeds and even our thoughts. It is during Lent that we are invited to get in touch with what that really means – what it means that we have let God down over and over again.

Lent is not just a time of introspection, a time of looking inward, it is a time of looking at the CROSS.

The ashes that on Ash Wednesday that mark our forehead in the shape of the cross proclaim that there is something more powerful than death, something that defeated death and sin and Satan once and for all: the cross.

Lent is a time to restore that relationship to its rightful place in our lives. The Gospel passage which is given at the beginning of Lent each year as a roadmap for our Lenten journey, places before our attention: prayer, fasting and almsgiving as means by which we can love God and our neighbor as ourselves (cf. Mt. 6:1-6, 16-18). But no matter what we do to enhance our experience of Lent, the good news of this season is the same good news we proclaim the rest of the year – that our hope is not in what we do, but in what Jesus already did!

That is why the day Jesus died on the Cross can be called "Good Friday." "Unless there is Good Friday in your life, there can be no Easter Sunday." (Fulton Sheen)

And one of the great blessings of Lent is this opportunity to take that honest look at ourselves and realize how sinful we are. During Lent, many Christians give up certain foods and luxuries, such as alcohol, chocolate, cake and fast food, to remember and pray tribute to Jesus' sacrifice, as well as to test their self-discipline and strength of character.

Lent is a true sacrifice, requiring a strong commitment and self-discipline to give up the things that you enjoy. St. Ignatius of Loyola says that two things are needed for this: 1.) magnanimity, i.e., a wide and open mind which is not confined to narrow horizons of small interests, and 2.) generosity, i.e., the readiness to give without conditions and limits.

In the solitude of the desert, we are meant to find the clarity and firmness which we shall need in the turmoil of actual life.

We read in all the gospels that Jesus would withdraw to deserted places and pray. While prayer was a common practice of his culture, Jesus nevertheless sought times of quiet, times of solitude. For any Christian who aspires toward union with God, SOLITUDE holds an extremely important place in life, it is a prerequisite for the communion one must keep both with God and with other people. Christian solitude is never a solitude from people, but a solitude for people. "The desert does not mean the absence of people, it means the presence of God." (Carlo Carretto)

Lent gives us the opportunity to reencounter prayer which brings us face-to-face with God who already delights in us. Prayer is an encounter with God. The goal and mentality of prayer is not success or conquest, but surrender. The goal is to give oneself away completely and to remember how much the Lord will love you when you fail and try again.

Lent is a period of profound significance in the Christian calendar. It is a transformative journey that offers Christians a chance to deepen their faith, strengthen their relationship with God and prepare for the joyous celebration of Easter.



MARCH 2026 ORGANIZE YOUR BLESSED MOMENTS
Special Masses & Events

Friday 6 **Saint Anthony's fish fry**
Dinner and Entertainment
5:30 pm to 8:30 pm at Carmel Hall

Monday 9 **Lenten Evening of Recollection**
Mass at 6:00 pm preside by Fr. Esequiel Sanchez
followed by dinner and reflection

Friday 6 13 **Stations of the Cross**
7:00 pm Trilingual Stations of the Cross
20 27 7:00 pm Sacrament of Reconciliation

Thursday 19 **Saint Joseph Day**
Mass with a Special blessing for all Men
5:30 pm Sacrament of Reconciliation
6:30 pm Trilingual Mass

Saturday 21 **Pilgrimage to Saint John**
A pilgrimage to walk the Stations of the Cross
and venerate Our Lady of Millennium

Sunday 22 **St Joseph's Table**
10:30 am Italian Mass followed by
Procession and Reception

Wednesday 25 **Solemnity
Feast of the Annunciation**
6:30 pm Rosary and Mass in all languages
Followed by Reception

Sunday 29 **Palm Sunday**
Regular Mass schedule, distribution of Palms and Procession

Madonna del Arco 10:30 am Italian Mass
Banner Procession and Palms



📍 1101 23rd Ave. Melrose Park, IL
☎ (708) 344 - 4140
🌐 www.olmcp parish.org

**OUR LADY OF
MOUNT CARMEL**

OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL PARISH & SHRINE

*Special
Masses
and
Events*

**St. Anthony Society
Fish Fry**

**Dinner and
Entertainment**

**Friday, March 6
Carmel Hall
5:30 pm to 8:30 pm**

Donation \$15 - Kids under 12 - \$10
Reservations (708) 344-4140

**Altar and Rosary
Lenten
Evening of Reflection**

Monday, March 9

Reservation must be paid in advance by February 27
Mass - 6 pm Call 708 344-4140

Followed by Dinner and
Reflection in the Gym
Donation \$25

The Very Reverend Esequiel Sanchez
Rector of the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe

**OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL
School of Evangelization and
Pastoral Formation
Class Calendar - Lent 2026**

MAR 5	Letters and Acts of the Apostles - Class 3
MAR 12	Old Testament 1 - Class 4
MAR 19	Old Testament 2 - Class 5
MAR 26	Praying with the Psalms - Class 6

Carmel Hall - 7pm - Thursday of each week.
Please bring your Bible, notebook, and pens.

ALL ARE WELCOME !

MARCH 2026

19

MASS

Special Blessing for Men

5:30 pm Confessions
6:15 pm Benediction
6:30 pm Trilingual Mass
7:15 pm Blessing upon all men

OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL
1101 23rd Ave. Melrose Park, IL
(708) 344 - 4140
www.olmeparish.org

Joseph DAY

**Lenten Pilgrimage to the Shrine of
Christ's Passion
St. John Indiana**

Saturday, March 21, 2026
departs Mt. Carmel 11:00am - returns 7:00pm

A 1 1/2 mile tour of
The Passion, The Ascension,
and Moses at Mt. Sinai

Visit Our Lady of Guadalupe
Plaza... her statue, chapel, grotto,
and gift shop.

Stop at the Sanctity of Life to
view the memorial garden, Our
Lady of the Millennium, and the
original gift shop.

\$55 per person
Price includes
transportation, tour, all
gratuities, donations, snacks, and
a light dinner on the bus.

\$10 extra
if you can't walk the 1 1/2 mile tour
and would like to request a seat on
the golf cart (limited seating)

Payment must be paid at the time reservations are made
Request and payment for a cart must be made with your reservation.
Cart is available for tour only. The other areas involve minimal walking. Benches are available along the way.
Call the office for more information or to make a reservation - 708/344-4140

er Mt. Calvary

**Call
(708) 344-4140
for more
information.**



SACRED HEART & ST. EULALIA PARISH

Join us for our Lent, Holy Week, and Easter celebrations!

PALM SUNDAY, HOLY WEEK & EASTER

PALM SUNDAY | March 29, 2026

Saturday 4:30pm English Palm Sunday Mass at **Sacred Heart**
Saturday 6:00pm Spanish Palm Sunday Mass at **Sacred Heart**
8:30am English Palm Sunday Mass at **Sacred Heart**
10:30am Spanish Palm Sunday Mass at **Sacred Heart**
10:30am English Palm Sunday Mass at **St. Eulalia**
12:30am Spanish Palm Sunday Mass at **St. Eulalia**

HOLY THURSDAY | April 2, 2026

8:00am Prayer Service at **Sacred Heart**
7:00pm English Mass of the Lord's Supper at **Sacred Heart**
7:00pm Spanish Mass of the Lord's Supper at **St. Eulalia**

GOOD FRIDAY | April 3, 2026

8:00am Prayer Service at **Sacred Heart**
3:00pm English Stations of the Cross at **Sacred Heart**
3:00pm Spanish Stations of the Cross at **St. Eulalia**
7:00pm English Liturgical Service at **Sacred Heart**
7:00pm Spanish Liturgical Service at **St. Eulalia**

HOLY SATURDAY | April 4, 2026

8:00am Prayer Service (Laudes) at **Sacred Heart**
10:00am Blessing of the Food at **St. Eulalia**
3:00pm Blessing of the Food at **Sacred Heart**
7:00pm English Easter Vigil Mass at **Sacred Heart**
7:00pm Spanish Easter Vigil Mass at **St. Eulalia**

EASTER SUNDAY | April 5, 2026

8:30am English Easter Mass at **Sacred Heart**
10:30am Spanish Easter Mass at **Sacred Heart**
10:30am English Easter Mass at **St. Eulalia**
12:30am Spanish Easter Mass at **St. Eulalia**

Sacred Heart & St. Eulalia Parish
ST. JOSEPH TABLE
Dinner & Desserts

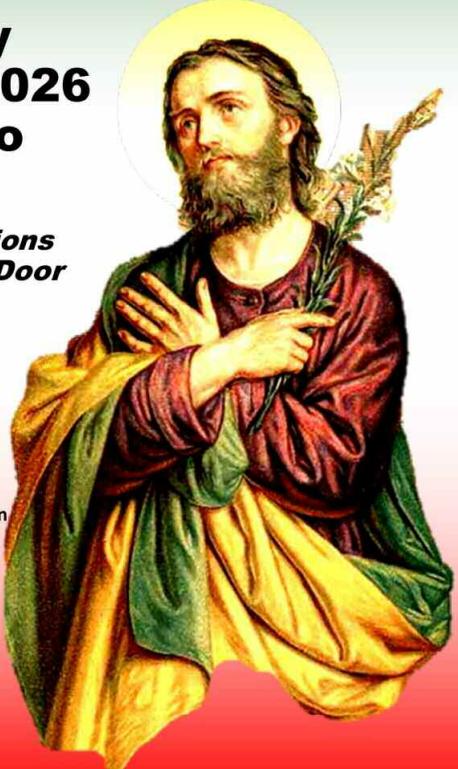
Saturday
March 14, 2026
5:00pm to 8:00pm

Monetary Donations Accepted at the Door

Cash Raffle
 1st Prize - \$500
 2nd Prize - \$300
 3rd Prize - \$200

The Raffle Drawing will be held Saturday, March 14, 2026
 Winners need not be present to win
 Tickets available at Parish Office

Sacred Heart Church
Marian Hall
(Church Basement)
15th Ave & Iowa St.
Melrose Park, IL
708-344-0757




SACRED HEART CHURCH: 819 N. 16th Ave., Melrose Park



ST. EULALIA CHURCH: 1825 S. 9th Ave., Maywood



708-344-0757



shsparish.org



SACRED HEART & ST. EULALIA PARISH



WEBSITE: shsparish.org

PHONE: 708-344-0757

EMAIL: shseparish@archchicago.org

UPCOMING EVENTS



First Friday Devotion to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus

Mass every First Friday of the month **7:30pm**.
Upcoming dates: **March 6** and **May 1** at **Sacred Heart**

Adoration & Anointing of the Sick on FEBRUARY 26

7:00pm at **St. Eulalia**.



Thursday Adoration and Confession at 7:00pm

March 19 and **April 16** at **Sacred Heart**.
March 12 & **March 26** and **April 9** & **April 23** at **St. Eulalia**.



Second & Third Saturday Chaplet of Divine Mercy

Every **Second Saturday** of the month in **English** and every **Third Saturday** of the month in **Spanish** at **3:00pm** in **St. Eulalia**.



Upcoming Women's Club Meetings MARCH 5, APRIL 30

7:00pm at **Sacred Heart's Marian Hall**. Bring a snack to share!

SAVE THE DATE for the Feast of Sacred Heart

This year the **Feast of Sacred Heart** is on **Friday, June 12**. There will be Mass celebrations that weekend finishing with the **Taste of Sacred Heart** on **Sunday, June 14** featuring food and entertainment. More info will be available in the future. Call **708-344-0757** for details.



Join us for our weekly Masses at Sacred Heart & St. Eulalia Parish.

Below are our weekly Mass times. For more information, please visit our website at shsparish.org or call our Rectory office at **708-344-0757**.

Weekdays **8:00am English** at **Sacred Heart**

Saturdays **4:30pm English** at **Sacred Heart** **6:00pm Spanish** at **Sacred Heart**

Sundays **8:30am English** at **Sacred Heart** **10:30am Spanish** at **Sacred Heart**
10:30am English at **St. Eulalia** **12:30pm Spanish** at **St. Eulalia**



Proviso Township Handyman Program

Early Spring 2026 – Proviso Township Handyman News

Did you know that ceiling fans help distribute heat evenly to your rooms?
Are yours in good working order? When was the last time you changed the filters in your furnace?
Time to check the caulk around your tub and sinks! Leaky sinks mean higher water bills!
Replace your furnace filter for better air flow.

The Proviso Township Handyman Program serves homeowners over the age of 60
and disabled homeowners who are residents of Proviso Township.

Call us at (708) 547-4001 to schedule an appointment and register for our program.



Bellwood · Berkeley · Broadview · Brookfield · Forest Park · Hillside ·
LaGrange Park · Maywood · Melrose Park · North Riverside · Northlake
· Stone Park · Westchester · Western Springs

+ Only Homeowners within the boundaries of the Proviso Township +

Michael A. Corrigan
Supervisor

Anthony "Tony" Williams
Clerk

Steven J. Zawaski
Assessor

Gay F. Chase • Evelyn Chavez • Joseph Christopher • Tommy Olson
Trustees

Proviso Township Handyman Program



Handyman Program for homeowners over the age of 60 and/or disabled residents of Proviso Township.

- Minor repairs only.
- \$5 per visit plus cost of parts, if needed.
- Provide referrals on a variety of home maintenance issues.
- Appointments are 45 minutes or less.

The Proviso Township Handyman Program Only Serves Homeowners Within the Boundaries of Proviso Township.
 Bellwood • Berkeley • Broadview • Brookfield • Forest Park • Hillside • LaGrange Park
 Maywood • Melrose Park • Northlake • North Riverside • Stone Park • Westchester • Western Springs

Please call us at (708) 547-4001 if you have any questions and to schedule your appointment



WE DO	WE DO
Blinds/Curtain Rods - Install/Repair	Mailboxes - Install/Repair/Replace
Boxes Stored (50 lbs. limit)	Outdoor Furniture - Put Away/Take Out
Carpentry-Minor repairs i.e.: Replace loose/rotten boards	Outdoor Lighting - Repair or Replace (Height Limit of 6 feet)
Caulking - Minor interior only - No removal of existing caulk	Outdoor Water Spigot - Shut Off/Turn On
Ceiling Fans - Repair Switches Only	Picture - Hang Only
Decks - Minor Repairs Only	Referrals for Tradesperson - Referrals Only Not Recommendations
Doorbells - Repair/Replace Buttons	Screens - Put In/Take Out (Limit 6 feet)
Door Locks - Repair/Replace	Shower Heads - Repair/Replace/Install
Door Sweeps - Repair/Replace/Install	Shower Wands - Repair/Replace/Install
Doors - Plane, Repair/Replace Hinges	Sink Drains Pipes & Stoppers - Repair or Replace
Electrical Outlets & Switches - Replace	Smoke Detectors/CO Detectors - Install or Replace Batteries
Electrical GFCI Outlets - Replace & Install	Storm Doors - Repair (No Installations)
Faucets - Repair or Replace	Storm Windows - Put In/Take Out (Limit 6 feet)
Furniture Assembly (Small pieces only) (no IKEA)	Supply Valves - Replace, Kitchen & Bath Only
Furniture Moving - 50 lbs. limit	Threshold - Repairs & Replacement
Furniture Repair - Minor Only	Toilets - Minor Repairs - No Rodding
Grab Bars - Install or Replace	TV/TV Converter Box - Install & Program (NO Comcast)
Handrails - Install or Replace	Weather Stripping - Doors & Windows
Light Bulbs - Change	
Light Fixtures - Repair or Replace	

PROVISO TOWNSHIP – Your Neighbors, Your Government

MICHAEL A. CORRIGAN, SUPERVISOR

Anthony "Tony" Williams, Clerk • Steven J. Zawaski, Assessor

Gay F. Chase, Trustee • Evelyn Chavez, Trustee

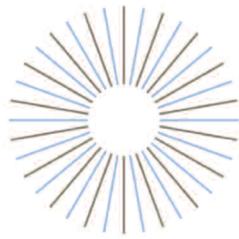
Joseph Christopher, Trustee • Tommy Olson, Trustee

Here to Serve Melrose Park & Surrounding Communities

Thank You Mayor Serpico!



TOWNSHIP OF PROVISO
 4565 Harrison St.
 Hillside, IL 60162
 P: 708-449-4307
 F: 708-202-1265
www.provisotownship.com



Mental Health Commission Delivers for Residents Thousands of Residents Find Support to Lead Healthy Productive Lives

Twenty-two agencies provided behavioral health services to thousands of Proviso Township residents across 14 villages in 2025. Those agencies provided support and services for residents facing challenges with developmental and intellectual disabilities, mental health struggles, substance use disorders and preventative services.

“Our job is to improve the quality of life for our residents across the entire township,” said Proviso Township Mental Health Commission President Mike Corrigan. “When we address these issues proactively, everyone benefits because we don’t have as many people slipping into crisis situations which are financially and socially costly for our communities.”

The Mental Health Commission partners with different agencies, municipalities and stakeholders to target needs in the community. While many programs continue to address the needs of adults and seniors, the commission renewed their emphasis on services for young people and their families last year. By working with local schools and other community-based organizations, the commission identified a marked increase in behavioral and mental health concerns among adolescents. Those risky behaviors include vaping and substance use disorders, particularly with cannabis consumption. Rising rates of anxiety and depression among young people were also concerning.

“Since we are constantly monitoring behavioral health markers in the community, we were able to identify these needs and bolster our support for programs that serve families and children,” said Corrigan. “We work closely with our local schools and other community organizations to ensure that they have the support that they need to help children and families before they reach a crisis.”

If you or someone that you know is in need of behavioral health services, please contact the PTMHC at (708) 234-TALK to learn more about the agencies providing services in your community.

“This is important work because healthy communities are successful communities,” said Corrigan. “Just like it is important to treat a broken arm or high blood pressure, it’s important to treat depression or substance use disorders. We are here to help everyone live up to their potential and contribute to our communities.”



PROVISO TOWNSHIP | MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION

4565 W. Harrison St., Third Floor
Hillside, IL 60162
www.ptmhc.org • 708.449.5508

DEDICATED TO THE SPECIAL
NEEDS OF OUR COMMUNITY

The Proviso Township Mental Health Commission ensures that you have prevention and treatment services in your community. Services include mental health, substance abuse, domestic violence, developmental disabilities, senior care, youth prevention and crisis intervention.

Connect with us – Call (708) 234-Talk (8255) or visit ptmhc.org to learn more about resources in your community. It’s completely confidential.

Michael A. Corrigan, President

*Nicole Gilhooley, Vice President • Michelle De La Rosa, Secretary • John Walsh, Treasurer
Angela D. Walker, Commissioner • Nicole Keefer, Commissioner*

Joseph V. Vasilevski, Executive Director



@PTMHC



@provisomhc



@ProvisoMentalHealth

A Gracious Thank You from Proviso Township



Proviso Township is incredibly thankful to our community partners and senior citizens for their vital support during our 2026 food drive.

Your partnership ensures our neighbors will have access to nutritious food and restore hope for a brighter future.

Together, we collected enough food to provide 150 meals, also, Proviso Township Supervisor Michael A. Corrigan presented a check in the amount of \$ 1,390.

We are honored to walk this mission with you to benefit our Westchester Food Pantry for local families in 2026.

Pictured accepting the check from Supervisor Corrigan (center) and Proviso Township Trustee Joe Christopher (right) is a representative from the food pantry.

Christmas in Proviso 2025

Another Successful Event to Help Families Throughout the Township Celebrate Christmas!

On behalf of Mayor Serpico, Melrose Park Trustee Tony Williams and members of the MP Chamber of Commerce and Community Development joined Illinois Speaker of the House Emanuel "Chris" Welch, state, county and township leadership, and local mayors at the Christmas in Proviso event held in December, at Proviso West High School.





News from ...

ILLINOIS SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE EMANUEL “CHRIS” WELCH



*Illinois Speaker of the House
Emanuel “Chris” Welch*

Welch Marks Five Historic Years as Speaker of the Illinois House

Speaker Emanuel “Chris” Welch is recognizing five years of leadership in the House, and the transformational changes delivered in that time. Since assuming leadership on Jan. 13, 2020, Welch has dedicated his tenure to advancing an agenda focused on economic opportunity, health care expansion, education reform, and fairness for all Illinois residents.

“In five years, we’ve moved Illinois in a fundamentally better direction than what we’re seeing in Washington by prioritizing common sense, and the common good,” Welch said. “In this moment unlike any other, people across Illinois have looked to the state to take charge of what we can control. And we’ve spoken clearly: Our rights are inalienable – not subject to the whim of politicians. Affordability is a promise – not a hoax. Our budgets will responsibly meet the needs of students, seniors and working families – not recklessly cut taxes for billionaires. And our future is ours to shape together – not something dictated to us by a would-be strongman. There’s more work to be done, and I’m so proud to make that work my priority every day.”

In the first five years of Welch’s speakership, House Democrats have led on a number of key issues, including:



Speaker Emanuel “Chris” Welch in Chambers.

- Fiscally and socially responsible budgets that have strengthened Illinois’ commitments to education, health care, and opportunity – while also building the strongest rainy day fund Illinois has seen in decades and restoring Illinois to A-level credit.
- Major affordability measures to take charge of what Illinois can control and provide some relief for working people – even as Trump’s tariffs raise the prices of everyday purchases. This includes a new child tax credit, cutting the state’s grocery and eliminating over \$1 billion in old medical debt for tens of thousands of Illinois families.
- Reforms to make health insurance better and more affordable by creating new oversight of premium increases, ending step therapy and pre-clearance gimmicks big insurance companies use to deny care, and cracking down on the big pharma middlemen who drive up the cost of life-saving prescriptions.
- Landmark reforms and investments to save public transit and create a system that more effectively and responsibly delivers affordable bus and train options for communities across the state.
- Major green energy production and affordability packages which move Illinois to a 100% clean energy future, create thousands of high-tech jobs and are already providing relief for consumers with a new carbon mitigation credit appearing on customers’ bills.
- Landmark protections for reproductive rights, countering the Supreme Court’s ruling striking down Roe v. Wade with immediate protections for patients and providers.
- New protections against Trump’s lawless raids, strengthening safety at hospitals, courthouses, day care centers and schools – and giving people the power to sue agents who violate their rights.
- The nation’s strongest ban on assault weapons and military-style modifications, new safe storage requirements and expanded red flag laws to get guns out of the wrong hands.
- A brighter economic future reflected in Illinois rising to the top 15 of CNBC’s rankings of the best states for businesses, leading *Site Selector Magazine’s* rankings for workforce development, and doubling private-sector investment.

Speaker Welch tops the list of Most Effective Lawmakers by the Center for Effective Lawmaking. Welch has been named Legislator of the Year for two consecutive years by the Chicago Teachers Union, and this year was named Legislator of the Year by Leading Age Illinois, an advocacy group for seniors and the elderly. Welch has received numerous awards during his term in the Illinois General Assembly. He has been recognized for his work on education, immigration and for his work toward helping working families in Illinois. For more information about Illinois Speaker of the House Emanuel “Chris” Welch, visit www.emanuelchriswelch.com. For more information about the National Conference of State Legislatures visit www.ncsl.org.

Welch, Hernandez Discuss Affordability, Speaking Up to Washington at Packed Town Hall Meeting

A full house of more than 100 community members joined Speaker Emanuel “Chris” Welch and Rep. Norma Hernandez for a town hall meeting recently to share their thoughts and discuss efforts to help families make ends meet and put a check on Washington’s extreme agenda.

“Throughout our suburban communities and throughout our state, we see and we feel what’s going wrong in Washington. Their short-sighted policies are raising the cost of everything families buy every day, making it scary to open a utility bill, driving up the cost of health care, and making people feel unsafe in their own homes. Worse yet, it makes people feel like Washington just isn’t listening,” Welch said. “A better Illinois begins with listening. It means doing what we can to cut costs, to make health insurance work for working people, and to protect people’s rights. I truly appreciate the people who came out to share their thoughts – because when we hear from people in our communities, we can keep moving Illinois in a better direction and we can tell Washington exactly what we expect.”

Welch and Hernandez welcomed residents to the town hall held at the Sheet Metal Workers Local 73 hall in Hillside and streamed online on Welch’s social media channels. Welch gave an overview of House Democrats’ efforts to improve access to affordable public transit, to cut home energy costs, and to strengthen due process protections in the wake of Donald Trump’s lawless raids. Discussion also focused on the upcoming work of the 2026 legislative session, focusing on the state budget, health care access and affordability, infrastructure and economic development, and continuing to help families make ends meet as Washington’s policies drive costs higher.





Illinois State Representative NORMA HERNANDEZ

77th District

State Rep. Hernandez Returns to Springfield for Spring Session!



Illinois State Representative
Norma Hernandez

To my constituents of the 77th District, I'm back in Springfield and ready to get to work on your behalf. Every day, I am fighting to ensure our communities have the protections, opportunities and resources they need to thrive.

This session, my legislative priorities include expanding access to quality education, addressing the affordable housing crisis, protecting workers and families, and advancing policies that promote health, safety and economic stability for all.

Youth Ambassador Program

On Jan. 12, 2026, Rep. Hernandez proudly launched her third Youth Ambassador Program, welcoming high school and college students from across the district. Designed to foster hands-on civic engagement and leadership development, the program empowers young people to become informed, active and socially responsible contributors within their communities.



Youth ambassadors commit to monthly programming at Rep. Hernandez's district office, and attendance at municipal and community meetings. Through these experiences, participants gain firsthand exposure to the legislative process, local government operations and the importance of civic participation.

The program also emphasizes mentorship and professional development, offering students opportunities to engage directly with elected officials, community leaders and policy advocates. Ambassadors build critical skills, such as public speaking, collaboration, advocacy and community organizing – tools that will serve them both academically and professionally.

Program highlights include 20 youth ambassadors selected from across the district; representation from 10 high schools and colleges; a guest speaker series featuring five elected officials; participants ranging in age from 15 to 20; and diverse perspectives reflecting the district's communities

By investing in the next generation of leaders, the Youth Ambassador Program reinforces Rep. Hernandez's ongoing commitment to youth empowerment, civic education and building a more engaged and inclusive future for the district.

End of Year Open House

To close out the 2025 year, our office proudly hosted an End of Year Open House in collaboration with Congressman Chuy García's office. The event created a welcoming space for community members, local leaders, and elected officials to stop by, connect and engage directly with our team.

Guests had the opportunity to meet our staff, learn more about the work we've accomplished throughout the year, and hear about our vision and priorities for the year ahead. The open house also served as a chance to strengthen relationships with community partners and celebrate the collaboration that helps drive meaningful progress across the district.

In true community spirit, we were excited to support local businesses by providing food from beloved Melrose Park vendors, including Aracely's Bakery and Taqueria Asadero. Their generous contributions helped create a warm, festive atmosphere and highlighted the importance of investing in and uplifting local entrepreneurs.



We are grateful to everyone who joined us and helped make this event a meaningful way to reflect on 2025 and look ahead to a productive and impactful year to come.

State Resources

Important changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) went into effect on Feb. 1, 2026. These updates may affect eligibility requirements, reporting obligations or participation guidelines for some households.

If you or someone you know has questions about how these changes may impact your benefits, needs assistance understanding new requirements, or is looking for referrals to employment or approved volunteer opportunities, our office is here to help. We can provide guidance, connect you with trusted

resources and help ensure you have the information needed to maintain access to essential food assistance.

In addition, we have included a list of local food pantries below for community members who may need immediate support. If you need help accessing these resources or would like additional referrals, please do not hesitate to reach out to our office – we are committed to supporting our community and ensuring no one goes without food or assistance.

SNAP Rules are Changing

What you need to know

On July 4, 2025, the federal government passed a new law that makes significant changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), also known as Link in Illinois. Illinois and all other states are now required to implement the changes. The changes could affect your SNAP eligibility or require you to take extra steps to receive SNAP benefits. Please read the following details carefully.

WORK REPORTING REQUIREMENTS EFFECTIVE FEB. 1, 2026	IMMIGRANT ELIGIBILITY EFFECTIVE APR. 1, 2026
<p>Many people between the ages of 18 and 64 who do not have dependents under the age of 14 will be required to work or volunteer a minimum of 80 hours per month to keep SNAP benefits.</p> <p>To meet this requirement, a person must work (paid or unpaid), participate in SNAP Employment & Training Programs, volunteer to do community service, or any combination of these.</p> <p>Exemptions may be available for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> People younger than 18 or older than 64 A parent or other member of a household that includes a child under the age of 14 People who have a physical or mental condition that prevents them from working or makes it difficult to maintain work People who are pregnant Some Native Americans People caring for an incapacitated person Regular participants of a drug or alcohol treatment program And others <p>If you believe you are exempt from work reporting requirements, please check with the Illinois Department of Human Services. See the other side of this page for instructions.</p>	<p>Immigrants granted official humanitarian protections will no longer be eligible for SNAP, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refugees Asylees Victims of human trafficking Certain victims of violence and torture And other historically qualified statuses. <p>The only immigrants who will remain eligible for SNAP are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lawful Permanent Residents (green card holders) who have been in the US for at least 5 years (or are exempt from the 5-year wait period) Cuban and Haitian entrants Individuals lawfully residing in the US in accordance with a Compact of Free Association (COFA)

OUR MISSION IS TO END HUNGER

chicagosfoodbank.org/snap

DON'T LOSE YOUR SNAP BENEFITS

Take these steps to ensure your SNAP benefits stay active and accessible for everyone

UPDATE YOUR INFORMATION

Report any changes in your income or changes to your household to the Illinois Department of Human Services. Find your case using the QR code.

You can also call the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) Line at 1-800-843-6154 or visit your local IDHS office.

REVIEW WORK REQUIREMENTS

Make sure you are connected to a job, volunteer opportunity or education & training program for at least 80 hours per month. Use the ABE Screener tool via the QR code to see if you are meeting new work requirements or if you qualify for an exemption.

If you are eligible for an exemption, complete the form titled SNAP WORK RULES - Request for Exemption.

STAY INFORMED & GET SUPPORT

Information is changing quickly. For further assistance and to stay up to date, use the QR code to visit chicagosfoodbank.org/snap or call us at 773-247-FOOD (3663)

NOT USING SNAP? APPLY TODAY!

Get help paying for food and groceries. Contact us to determine your eligibility.

Call 773-247-FOOD (3663) or visit chicagosfoodbank.org/snap
En español: bancodealimentoschicago.org/snap

FOOD PANTRIES SERVING IL-77

<div style="background-color: #f8bbd0; padding: 5px; text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;">Addison</div> <p>Good Samaritan United Methodist Church 960 Army Trail Boulevard, Addison, IL 60101 Thursdays from 6:30pm to 8:30pm</p>	<div style="background-color: #f8bbd0; padding: 5px; text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;">Bensenville</div> <p>Bensenville Wooddale Food Pantry 192 S. Center Street, Bensenville, IL 60106 Saturdays from 8:00am to 10:00am</p>
<div style="background-color: #f8bbd0; padding: 5px; text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;">Elmwood Park</div> <p>Elmwood Park Community Church 2334 N. 75th Ave, Elmwood Park, IL 60707 Saturdays from 10:00am to 12:00pm</p>	<div style="background-color: #f8bbd0; padding: 5px; text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;">Franklin Park</div> <p>Leyden Family Service & Mental Health Center 10001 Grand Avenue, Franklin Park, IL 60131 Monday-Friday, See website for full hours</p>
<div style="background-color: #f8bbd0; padding: 5px; text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;">Melrose Park</div> <p>The Parish of Our Lady of Mount Carmel 1101 N. 23rd Ave. Melrose Park, IL. 60160 Wednesdays from 3:30pm to 5:30pm</p>	<div style="background-color: #f8bbd0; padding: 5px; text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;">Northlake</div> <p>Sai Spiritual Community Center 370 W. Golfview Drive, Northlake, IL 60164 1st & 3rd Saturdays of the month from 10am to 11:30am</p>

FOOD PANTRIES SERVING IL-77

<div style="background-color: #f8bbd0; padding: 5px; text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;">River Grove</div> <p>River Grove Food Pantry 2607 N Thatcher Avenue, River Grove, IL 60171 Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 to 11 am</p>	<div style="background-color: #f8bbd0; padding: 5px; text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;">Stone Park</div> <p>The Parish of Our Lady of Mount Carmel 1101 N. 23rd Ave. Melrose Park, IL. 60160 Wednesdays from 3:30pm to 5:30pm</p>
<div style="background-color: #f8bbd0; padding: 5px; text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;">Leyden Township</div> <p>Leyden Township Office 2501 N. Mannheim Road, Franklin Park, IL 60131 Monday - Friday, See website for full hours</p>	<div style="background-color: #f8bbd0; padding: 5px; text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;">Addison Township</div> <p>Addison Township Office 401 N. Addison Road, Addison, IL. 60101 Wednesdays from 9:00 to 11:00 AM</p>
<div style="background-color: #f8bbd0; padding: 5px; text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;">Proviso Township</div> <p>Cosmopolitan United Church 1112 N. 9th Ave. Melrose Park, IL 60160 Saturdays from 8:00 am to 10:00 am</p>	



Cook County Commissioner
Frank J. Aguilar



IMPORTANT NEWS FROM **FRANK J. AGUILAR** COOK COUNTY COMMISSIONER

Commissioner Frank J. Aguilar Hosts Sixth Annual Three Kings Celebration

On Tuesday, Jan. 6, Cook County Commissioner Frank J. Aguilar hosted his sixth annual Three Kings Celebration at his district office. Over 300 children were present, receiving toys which were donated by Pastor Al from Toys of the Ark, Pastor John Harrell from Chicago's New Hope MBC, and the Naranjo Foundation.

Attendees also had the opportunity to drink hot chocolate, which was donated by Aracelis Bakery, and eat Rosca de Reyes, which was donated by Rincon Family Services.

Partnering with Commissioner Aguilar were the Village of Lyons, Rincon Family Services, Toys of the Ark, Pastor John Harrell, the Naranjo Foundation, and Get Covered Illinois. Also in attendance was Cook County Circuit Clerk Mariyana Spyropoulos and Lyons Mayor Chris Getty.

"I'd like to thank Toys of the Ark, Pastor John Harrell, and the Naranjo Foundation for helping make sure all children receive joy this holiday season. I am also so grateful for all our sponsors and partners for being on-site, making families' holiday wishes come true while also distributing important information and resources," said Commissioner Aguilar. "This is a wonderful time for residents to come together, and celebrate our community and the things that unite us"



Three Kings Day, also known as the Feast of Epiphany, celebrates the last of the 12 days of Christmas. The holiday celebrates the biblical tale in which the Three Kings, or Three Wise Men, visit baby Jesus after his birth. In keeping with the Chicano culture of many 16th District residents, Rosca de Reyes, a sweet bread meant to represent a king's crown that is a mile long, was also available for residents to enjoy.

Cook County President Toni Preckwinkle Joins Commissioner Aguilar for a Virtual Town Hall

On Friday, Jan. 16, Commissioner Frank J. Aguilar hosted a Facebook Live Virtual Town Hall. The town hall discussed the completed Medical Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI) that Cook County implemented in 2022 and closed in 2025, though further rounds of medical debt relief will continue in the future.

Joining Commissioner Aguilar was Cook County President Toni Preckwinkle and Deputy Chief of Staff for the President's Health Administration Matt Richards. After remarks from President Preckwinkle, Matt Richards delivered a presentation that gave an overview of the program and the impact it has had on Cook County residents.

"When individuals and their loved ones face medical issues, getting healthy should be the top priority," said Commissioner Frank J. Aguilar. "This initiative brought much needed relief to people who were unable to pay their medical bills, giving them another chance to live their lives fully. This was a targeted approach to those who need help the most. I'd like to thank President Preckwinkle and Matt Richards for joining me today to share these exciting and important results."

Cook County's Medical Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI) has successfully abolished \$664,744,470.53 in medical debt, benefiting 556,815 Cook County residents since the program launched in 2022.

By leveraging \$9 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, Cook County is both reducing financial strain and addressing a critical barrier to health and economic stability. As the first local government to partner with Undue Medical Debt, the county set a national example for how public funds can be effectively used to deliver immediate, meaningful relief.

"Medical debt is the result of a health care system that too often leaves people exposed to devastating costs simply for seeking care," said Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle. "Medical debt relief does not replace the need for broader health care reform, but it is a powerful, immediate

intervention. It removes harm, it restores dignity and it allows families to move forward.”

MDRI’s model represents a strong return on investment. For every dollar invested, approximately \$100 of medical debt can be eliminated, maximizing available resources. Undue medical debt achieves this by purchasing eligible debt for pennies on the dollar, based on the age and market value of the accounts.

To watch the town hall, please visit www.facebook.com/commissionerfrankjaguilar.

Cook County Commissioner Aguilar Releases Annual State of the District Report

Commissioner Aguilar of Cook County’s 16th District released his annual *State of the District Report*. The report, an eight page magazine newsletter, details Commissioner Aguilar and Cook County’s support for economic, environmental, community and infrastructure initiatives, along with his accomplishments over the last year and beyond.

“I am so excited to release this year’s *State of the District*,” said Commissioner Aguilar. “My office has been very busy over the last year and throughout my entire term delivering real support and investments into the 16th District. I’d also like to thank all county and 16th District municipal leaders who have worked closely with my office to ensure our residents are being supported and have access to the many available resources that they are eligible for.”

This *State of the District* documents a variety of accomplishments, including economic support, infrastructure spending, legislative actions and more. The report begins with a letter from Commissioner Aguilar to the 16th District on Page 2.

On Page 3, readers can find information on community support actions, including legal aid programs, referrals to 211 Metro Chicago, the replacement of over 60 lead pipe lines in child day cares and more.

Page 4 documents infrastructure investment, including funding through the Invest in Cook and Build Up Cook Grant Programs. The 16th District has continued to receive an outsized share of infrastructure investment, bringing tens of millions of dollars into 16th District communities.

Page 5 details economic investments and small business support, including the Small Business Source Grant and projects through the Manufacturing Reinvented Program. Page 5 also details environmental initiatives, such as climate resiliency planning for 16th District towns and local businesses.

Page 6 covers Commissioner Aguilar’s efforts to protect immigrant communities, leading Know Your Rights workshops and joining other elected officials for press conferences and visits to the Broadview Detention Facility to demand accountability from federal immigration enforcement agents.

On Page 7, the document goes over three of Commissioner Aguilar’s top accomplishments: working with the county board to support medical debt relief for residents, delivering FEMA aid to homeowners who suffered damages from the major storms in the summer of 2023 and being the lead sponsor and initiator for the Cook County Sheriff’s Office to receive their first helicopter.

Lastly, on Page 8, readers can find information on Commissioner Aguilar’s annual signature events, including the Three Kings Toy Drive, the 16th District Community Resource Fair, the Dia de los Muertos Celebration and more.

You may view the *State of the District* in both English and Spanish here: www.commissionerfrankjaguilar.com/state-of-the-district.

Commissioner Aguilar Hosts Open House at District Office

On Tuesday, Jan. 13, Commissioner Frank J. Aguilar hosted an open house at his district office. The event attracted over 50 attendees from throughout the district and connected residents to government, health and community services.

Joining Commissioner Aguilar and his office were staff from the Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court Mariyana Spyropolous, staff from the Office of Illinois Treasurer Michael Frerichs, Cook County’s Department of Public Health (CCDPH), Cook County’s Racial Equity and Inclusion Outreach Manager Vilma Colom, staff from the

Veteran Assistance Commission of Cook County (VACCC) and Brookfield Zoo. Also in attendance were Forest View President David Liska and members of Teamsters Local 777, including their

Secretary-Treasurer Greg Glimco.

“I am so pleased to see so many familiar and new faces at our open house. This shows firsthand that the government’s role in our community must be proactive,” said Commissioner Aguilar. “We must meet the community where they are, open up our offices to the people we serve and ensure that residents are not only aware of county services, but have the opportunity to access them directly. I’d like to thank my staff, volunteers, all our partner organizations and everyone who attended.”

Residents in attendance had the opportunity to speak with Commissioner Aguilar and his office, and learn about county services and responsibilities. Residents also had access to multiple resources and services.

The Illinois’ Treasurer Office connected attendees to the ICash Program to see if individuals were owed unclaimed funds from the state. Attendees also had an opportunity to learn about upcoming health events and receive Narcan free-of-cost from CCDPH. In addition, the VACCC connected veterans and their families with county services. Director Vilma Colom spoke with attendees about employment and other opportunities within Cook County. The clerk of the Circuit Court also provided residents with information on court records and support to navigate the judicial process.

“This was a great opportunity to meet our local leaders and get connected to so many services,” said Riverside resident Karl Strittar. “I was impressed by their emphasis on accessibility, bringing in so many different government departments and organizations to the community. It is very comforting to know that these resources exist and that Commissioner Aguilar is making sure they are available in our community.”





News from Illinois Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias

Giannoulias Moves Commercial Truck Renewal Process Online

New Modernized System Brings Efficiency and Convenience for Illinoisans and Businesses

The Secretary of State's Office is making it easier and faster for Illinois-based commercial trucking firms to renew their federal registration credentials by expanding online filing and payment options.

Companies with fewer than 250 vehicles can now complete International Registration Plan (IRP) renewals online by uploading their IRS-issued Heavy Vehicle Use Tax (HVUT) Form 2290 and submitting payment electronically. Once required documents are confirmed, registration credentials will be emailed within three business days – eliminating the need for an in-person visit to the Dirksen DMV in Springfield.

"This enhancement reflects our ongoing commitment to modernizing services and reducing unnecessary paperwork and in-person requirements for Illinois businesses," said Illinois Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias. "By expanding online IRP renewals, we're creating conveniences and saving time for businesses and truck drivers while maintaining the accuracy and integrity of the registration process."

"Allowing trucking companies to pay for their IRP renewal online is a major step forward for our industry," said Matthew W. Hart, executive director of the Illinois Trucking Association. "This new system at the Illinois Secretary of State saves valuable time, adds real convenience for truck owners and provides flexibility by allowing payments to be split – while eliminating the need to stand in line at the IRP Office in Springfield."

"The Secretary of State's revamp of the registration system for truck owners and operators is a major step forward in saving time and easing what has been a very cumbersome process," said Don Schaefer, president and CEO of Mid-West Truckers Association. "The ability to complete their renewals online and submitting payments electronically will help to avoid the last-minute crush that has plagued the system in the past. Truck owners will also have the ability to split up their payments before the March 30 deadline, a great convenience for those companies that are writing their biggest checks of the year."

The new system also includes real-time mileage checks, which flags errors or inconsistencies immediately, allowing customers to correct them on the spot without having to contact the Secretary of State's Office. The system automatically determines whether estimated or actual mileage is acceptable, further streamlining the process. Registrants may reenter the application as many times as needed to renew additional vehicles without requesting a system reset.

Carriers can pay renewal fees using a credit card or e-check. For large online payments, customers are encouraged to confirm with their bank to avoid delays and returned check fees.

This online option applies only to renewals of existing vehicles already registered to a firm. Registering new vehicles, updating existing units or obtaining new plates will continue to be handled through the IRP Supplement process, which opens April 1, 2026. Invoices can still be generated for customers who prefer to pay by mail or in person, and in-person customers are advised to bring printed documents to avoid processing delays.

More information about IRP renewals and online services is available at www.ilsos.gov.

Making Illinois Streets Safer and Protecting Lives: Giannoulias Unveils Statewide E-Bike Safety Initiative "Ride Safe, Ride Smart, Ride Ready" Campaign Confronts Rapidly Growing Micromobility Risks

Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias recently announced a comprehensive, statewide initiative to protect pedestrians, riders and drivers by addressing the dangerous rise of high-speed e-bikes and other powerful electric transportation devices on Illinois streets and sidewalks.

The multi-pronged campaign – "Ride Safe, Ride Smart, Ride Ready" – combines public education, updated driver training and a push for modernized safety laws to keep pace with the fast-evolving micromobility industry. As e-bikes and similar devices become faster, heavier and more powerful, Illinois law has not kept up – putting lives at risk.

"Micromobility technology is advancing faster than our rules," Giannoulias said. "Some of these devices now travel at highway speeds, yet there are few clear standards, age limits and safety requirements. We need common-sense solutions that reflect today's reality and make our streets safer for everyone".

E-bike injuries surged by 293% nationwide from 2019 to 2022, according to a study by Columbia University. Since then, continued technological advances have produced devices capable of traveling more than 50 miles per hour, far beyond what existing state law contemplated.

Tragically, the consequences have already been felt in Illinois. Last fall, a Mount Prospect teen was killed when the e-bike he was riding collided with a pickup truck and in 2022, an Illinois State University official died after he was struck by an e-bike rider in Bloomington-Normal.

This initiative will raise awareness of current rules governing e-bikes, scooters, skateboards and unicycles while laying the groundwork for updated regulations to be introduced this session. Key components include a new public education website, expanded driver education curriculum and collaboration with lawmakers, local officials, medical experts, law enforcement, and cycling and safety advocates statewide.

Proposed Regulatory Framework

Illinois currently recognizes three classifications of e-bikes – pedal bikes with electric motor assistance – a structure shared by 46 other states and one that would remain unchanged. New legislation would instead focus on higher-powered, higher-speed e-bikes and other electric devices that fall outside the existing definitions or are largely unregulated.

Many of these devices exceed 750 watts and can travel more than 28 mph – and in some cases exceed 50 mph – yet are not clearly defined or regulated under state law. High-speed electric scooters, skateboards and unicycles face similar regulatory gaps.

Giannoulas emphasized that any new legislation would establish clear statewide baseline standards while preserving local governments' authority to adopt additional safeguards tailored to their communities. Additional, nonlegislative efforts will include the following:

- **Updating Driver Education**

The Secretary of State's Office is partnering with the Illinois High School and College Driver Education Association to develop new programming and curriculum that addresses micromobility across K-12 education and within high school driver education classes.

- **Community-Based Enforcement**

The Secretary of State will work with law enforcement partners to establish balanced, community-centered micromobility enforcement guidelines – aimed at establishing credibility and trust through – preventative, not reactive – actions and position officers as mentors and safety advocates that focus on building partnerships to promote e-biker safety.

- **Public Awareness and Transparency**

With new statewide regulations and local ordinances in effect, the Secretary of State and Ride Safe, Ride Smart, Ride Ready groups will develop and distribute tools as part of a public service awareness campaign, reflecting consistent, clear and up-to-date messaging, and ways to promote micromobility safety at key times throughout the year.

A new public education website – www.ilsos.gov/oneroad – will serve as a central hub for micromobility safety, rules and policy updates. The site explains what micromobility is, identifies common devices and outlines how they are currently regulated. A dedicated Know the Rules section translates existing law into straightforward guidance for riders, parents, drivers, educators and local officials.

Giannoulas Expands Electronic Lien and Titling to Deliver Faster, More Secure Vehicle Titles

Statewide ELT Transition Streamlines Processing and Reduces Fraud for Lenders and Consumers

Illinois motorists, lenders and dealers will soon experience faster title processing, fewer delays and stronger fraud protections as the Secretary of State's office transitions to mandatory participation in its Electronic Lien and Titling (ELT) Program statewide, Secretary Alexi Giannoulas announced.

All financial institutions that process five or more liens annually in Illinois will be required to transition to ELT by July 1, 2026. By replacing paper titles with a secure digital system, ELT reduces mailing and storage costs, shortens processing times and provides real-time visibility into lien and title records.

"Moving to mandatory electronic lien and titling is the next step in bringing Illinois' vehicle services fully into the digital age," Giannoulas said. "This secure, paperless system cuts red tape for lenders and dealers, speeds up lien releases, accelerates the transfer process and better protects consumers. What once took weeks or months can occur within hours."

"Together, the Secretary of State, IADA, and CHAMP Titles are committed to replacing slow, manual processes with modern digital solutions," said Illinois Automobile Dealers Association Executive Director Joe McMahon. "By eliminating paper-based processes, the system significantly reduces processing times, with many transactions completed within hours. It improves accuracy, keeps rejection rates below 0.1%, and includes enhanced safeguards to help protect against fraud."

Through ELT, lien and title records are transmitted directly and securely to the Secretary of State and maintained electronically by approved service providers until the lien is satisfied. When a loan is paid off, banks, credit unions and dealers can release the title instantaneously, which benefits consumers, who no longer need to fill out paperwork or make in-person visits and enables sales, trade-ins or refinancing to occur.

The system reduces operational risk and data entry errors, lowers administrative and mailing expenses, eliminates the need for physical title storage and improves transparency by giving lenders immediate access to lien and title status information. It also helps prevent title washing and fraudulent lien releases, protecting both consumers and financial institutions.

There is no enrollment or annual participation fee. Statutory lien fees remain unchanged and continue to be collected at the point of sale, while any non-statutory service fees are assessed per transaction by the lienholder's chosen provider.

Lienholders may enroll through an approved ELT service provider, including PDP Group, DDI Technology, Secure Title Administration or Vitu. Enrollment is also offered directly through the State ELT portal by contacting enroll@champtitles.com.

Background

The Illinois General Assembly first approved ELT in 2000 but outdated technology delayed full implementation. Upon taking office in 2023, Giannoulas made modernization a top priority and created the infrastructure to allow for ELT to launch.

The Illinois Secretary of State's Office first introduced ELT in 2024. The system has already helped cut customer wait times, improve accuracy and strengthen safeguards against fraud.

The office will continue working closely with lenders, dealers and service providers to ensure a smooth and efficient transition ahead of the July 2026 implementation date.

To learn more, visit www.ilsos.gov/mobile.



From the Office of Michael W. Frerichs, Illinois State Treasurer

Illinois Treasurer Frerichs Reminds People to Check for Missing Money During National Unclaimed Property Day Visit the ICash Website to Find Out If Money Is Waiting for You

National Unclaimed Property Day was Feb. 1, and Illinois State Treasurer Michael Frerichs encouraged people to visit the ICash missing money website to see if they have money or other unclaimed property waiting for them.

Treasurer Frerichs said. “The ICash site is available anytime, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.”

An estimated one-in-four adults who check ICash discover they have missing money or other unclaimed property, added Frerichs, who recommends checking the website at least a couple of times a year.

“It’s a good idea to check the names of family members and friends, as well as your own name, because you might find some unexpected treasures. If you find something for your relatives or neighbors, you can use our website’s Family and Friends ‘share’ feature to let them know,” he said.

“We work hard to return missing money and unclaimed property to the rightful owners. The proof is in our record-breaking numbers over the years,” he added. “Putting money back in your warm hands is better than keeping it in our cold bank vaults.”

Since Frerichs began serving as state treasurer in 2015, he has returned more than \$2.4 billion in unclaimed property – the largest amount in state history.

During 2025, Frerichs helped almost 545,000 people get back nearly \$294 million in missing money. The average claim was \$539.

Unclaimed property includes forgotten or overlooked bank accounts, uncashed rebate checks, unpaid life insurance claims and the contents of abandoned safe deposit boxes. When companies and banks cannot return these items to the rightful owners, by law they must be turned over to the Illinois State Treasurer’s Office. The state treasurer is legally required to return unclaimed property to its owners or their heirs, no matter how long it takes.

Discovering missing money can make a real difference in people’s lives.

Take Ray from McLean County, who recently received about \$27,000 in unclaimed property. Almost all that money came from a cryptocurrency account that belonged to his late wife.

Ray said he tried to access his wife’s account after her death, but without success. Eventually, the cryptocurrency company told him the funds would be turned over to the state. A friend at work had told Ray about the unclaimed property program in Treasurer Frerichs’ office, so he checked the ICash website, hoping to find a listing for his wife’s crypto account.

“Sure enough, it showed up exactly in the amount I was expecting,” Ray said.

He filed a claim and received the money in November. Ray plans to retire soon, so he added the funds to his individual retirement account instead of splurging. He advises people to regularly check the ICash database for themselves.

“It was amazing, I could have that experience,” he said. “The Unclaimed Property Division was very helpful with me at each step.”

Treasurer Frerichs worked with state lawmakers to streamline the process, eliminating red tape, making online claims easier, returning money without the need to file a claim through the Enhanced Money Match Program and adding a Spanish-language website.

Treasurer Frerichs also recently started an online unboxing video series highlighting baseball cards, jewelry and other unclaimed property in the Springfield vault to encourage people to check for unclaimed property.

The National Association of Unclaimed Property Administrators (NAUPA) launched the first National Unclaimed Property Day on Feb. 1, 2021, to inform more people about missing money. Treasurer Frerichs’ office is a national leader on unclaimed property issues and is frequently consulted by other states that are reforming their unclaimed property laws, rules and procedures.

Illinois Treasurer Michael Frerichs Makes \$1.5 Billion in Investment Earnings for State Portfolio During 2025 Another \$882 Million for Cities and School Districts Through Illinois Funds

The State Treasurer’s Office made \$1.5 billion in investment earnings from the state investment portfolio during 2025, Illinois Treasurer Michael Frerichs announced recently.

Treasurer Frerichs is the state’s chief investment and banking officer. He is responsible for investing state revenue in the state investment portfolio.

Under state law, the Treasurer’s Office is prohibited from directly investing the state’s portfolio in the stock market. Treasurer Frerichs convinced the General Assembly to allow his office to invest in secure local government bonds, such as those issued by Illinois school districts to purchase land or erect buildings, and prime money market funds that emphasize security and liquidity.



Under Frerichs, the Treasurer's Office has improved returns by increasing the average weighted maturity of our investments, which was made possible by a healthier fiscal situation in our state, and by working with the governor and General Assembly on innovative ideas.

Also in 2025, the Treasurer's Office made \$882 million in gross investment earnings for cities, villages, school districts, counties and other units of government that take part in the highly rated Illinois Funds local government investment pool the State Treasurer's Office operates. The Illinois Funds has received the highest rating of AAA from Fitch, a national credit ratings agency.

"We are working with local government to earn cities and school districts more through smart, safe investing to help out when costs are rising," he said.

Key monthly metrics and more are available in The Vault, the transparency website that allows Illinois residents to see how the State Treasurer's Office is working for them. The site is at iltreasurervault.com.

Also, the Illinois State Treasurer's Office announced that it has renewed \$15 million in Israel Bonds that were set to expire at the start of February.

"It is my responsibility as treasurer to get the best returns for Illinois taxpayers with stable and diversified investments as called for by state law. Israel Bonds have consistently generated among the highest returns in the state portfolio for two decades," Frerichs said. "I make our investment decisions transparently and ethically."

The Bonds will mature in five years with an interest rate of 4.86%. That outpaces a five-year U.S. Treasury Note by about 114 basis points, a difference of 23%.

The total amount invested in Israel Bonds remains \$100 million. That represents one-fourth of 1% of the \$39 billion state portfolio.

The Illinois State Treasurer's Office has also invested in \$15 million in Republic of Poland bonds. A law passed by the Illinois General Assembly sets out parameters on foreign investments. One of the benchmarks is that a nation must meet its bond payment obligations for at least 25 years, which the Republic of Poland and Israel have done. In addition, State Treasurer's Office guidelines require that the bonds must be rated in the three highest classifications of at least two rating services.



State Treasurer Michael Frerichs Returns \$100,000 in Missing Money to Illinois Food Pantries

Bolingbrook Nonprofit That Twice Saw Thieves Steal Catalytic Converters Off Donation Trucks Receives \$5,500

Illinois Treasurer Michael Frerichs is returning \$100,000 in missing money to food pantries throughout the state.

Each December, Frerichs' office focuses on returning money through the ICash Program to nonprofit groups that help people in need. Last year, Frerichs decided to help food pantries that saw resources stretched and demand spike when the federal government shutdown stopped food assistance to many Illinois families in November.



In December, Frerichs visited the food pantry at 4 K.I.D.S. Sake in the southwest suburbs to return \$5,500 to the nonprofit. Twice this year, thieves stole the catalytic converters from their donation trucks to sell for scrap metal. The latest theft happened in November.

The Bolingbrook nonprofit was founded in 2012 by Theresa Watson when she was 17 and saw that the needs of so many children in difficult situations were not being met. Since then, the charity has helped more than 10,000 children. 4 K.I.D.S. Sake has a food pantry and resale shop.

"This money will help as we try to meet the needs of families during the holiday season," Watson said. "We pick up six days a week. Our trucks are critical to serving families. These thefts have been devastating, but we're strong and resilient."

The money for 4 K.I.D.S. Sake came to the Illinois Treasurer's Office from a health insurance company last year.

"What those thieves did to 4 K.I.D.S. Sake's trucks is unconscionable. This group does so much to help people, and we are happy to be able to do something to help

them, especially at such an important time of year," said Frerichs, who returned the money along with Bolingbrook Mayor Mary Alexander-Basta, State Sen. Meg Loughran-Cappel of Shorewood, and state representatives Natalie Manley of Joliet and Dagmara Avelar of Romeoville.

Illinois' unclaimed property program, also known as ICash, is one of the state's oldest consumer protection initiatives. In Illinois, the state treasurer is tasked with safeguarding unclaimed property, such as the contents of overlooked safe deposit boxes, unpaid life insurance benefits, forgotten bank accounts, and unused rebate cards.

Illinois holds more than \$5 billion in unclaimed property. More than \$2.4 billion has been returned since Frerichs took office, the most in state history. To see if you have unclaimed property, check the online database at icash.illinoistreasurer.gov. The state treasurer is legally required to return unclaimed property to its owners or heirs, no matter how long it takes.



Greetings from Walther!

Walther Family,

As we're into February, Walther Christian Academy is proud to celebrate Black History Month – a time that I hold close to my heart, not only as an educator and leader, but as a proud Black man.



Dr. Terence Swims

Walther has always stood firmly on our Lutheran values and traditions that shape our Christian walk. Yet one of the enduring gems of our school is our diversity – an authentic reflection of God's creativity in the world and in his people. That diversity is not incidental – it is a gift, and it deserves to be honored with intention.

As the largest demographic of our student body is Black/African American, it is especially important that we recognize the value, resilience and contributions of Black people – contributions that have shaped our nation and our world. Black history reaches back to a rich legacy across Africa, and carries through a painful and unjust period in America marked by slavery, Jim Crow, and systemic racism. And still, God has preserved Black people. Through generations, we have continued to progress, create, build, lead and advance. That story is worth celebrating – and it must also serve as a blueprint and framework for the next generation.

Black History Month is not only for Black people. It is for all people – to witness God's love, providence and purpose at work, even through hardship. This month, Walther hosts a series of events designed to help our students learn, feel seen and valued, experience joy, and honor the past, present and future.

To our alumni community, I encourage you to join us in spirit and in celebration. Let's recognize the lives we live today and the opportunities we share – because of the contributions and perseverance of Black people. Happy Black History Month!

• God Bless and Keep You,
Dr. Terence Swims
Principal, Walther Christian Academy

Kickstart

One day this fall following a Campfire Worship (a 20-minute period each Friday where the full student body and faculty gather in the gym for praise songs and scripture), Mrs. Boyer had the A Cappella Choir continue to sing praise songs during their rehearsal period. Afterwards, sophomores Andy Leininger and Ellen Claud approached student council President and Praise Team member Steve Heard with the idea to start a student-led group. Steven had a similar thought last spring and decided to run with it. He received administrative approval and gathered a leadership team. A few weeks later, on the morning of Nov. 18, a completely student-led group gathered for praise and worship.

Kickstart, as it is called, now meets in the Music Room every Tuesday morning at 7:15 a.m., to sing praise songs and share a devotional thought based on scripture. Andy shared, "The name comes from the idea to kickstart your day with Jesus."

The five-member leadership team rotates weeks picking the songs and leading the devotion. They rehearse on Mondays after Gospel Choir and communicate with each other at A Cappella and through a group chat.

Elijah Seabaugh was asked by Steven to play keyboard. "After the first week I was like, wow, this is a powerful experience." He then joined the leadership team. Fellow leader Blythe Balock added, "What I like is that we have more autonomy over which songs we choose to sing. It is more free-flowing. Steven has a real passion, confidence and genuineness in his leadership that makes this so much fun to be a part of. It's really cool."

The group is currently getting 10-12 students a week to attend, but would love to get more. "We are looking for ways to attract more students," shared Steven. "Once they experience it, we believe they will come and enjoy being in God's presence. Seeing people worship, warms my heart." Ellen added, "Just because it is student-led doesn't mean only students can attend. Teachers, parents or anyone else are certainly welcome." All are welcome to come when you can and leave when you need to.

Principal Swims shared, "Kickstart is one of the most rewarding experiences for me as a Walther school leader. Students taking the initiative to organize, gather, sing, pray and testify in worship to God – at 7:15 in the morning – is so beautiful! Kickstart is the embodiment of who we are cultivating our students to be at Walther!"



Walther Alumni Spotlight



Dr. Timika Anderson Reeves, a proud Walther Class of '98 graduate, has over 23 years of experience serving the maternal and child health population. She is currently making a significant impact as the special assistant to the director for Maternal Child Health at the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services. In her leadership role, she champions statewide initiatives that empower birthing individuals and families by promoting inclusive policies and innovative programs. Fueled by a deep passion for uplifting vulnerable populations, Dr. Anderson Reeves has dedicated her life to transforming communities affected by social injustices.

Her career includes serving as chair of the CEDA Head Start Policy Council and as president of the National Healthy Start Association Board of Directors. She is also an active participant in numerous community coalitions. "My passion has always been about teaching the community to find and use their voice for social change and exploring new ways to support families in need," she shares. Beyond her advocacy work, Dr. Anderson Reeves has served as an adjunct faculty member in the Social Work and Sociology Department at Trinity Christian College.

After graduating from Walther, Timika earned a Bachelor of Social Work from the University of Saint Francis in 2002, a Master of Social Work from Chicago State University in 2007, and a Ph.D. in Social Work-Health Policy from Walden University in 2020. She also holds an Advanced Generalist Forensic Social Worker Certificate and is a licensed social worker.

Timika credits her Walther experience with shaping essential traits that continue to serve her. "Volunteering was a core part of Walther's culture, laying the groundwork for my involvement in countless professional and community endeavors. The time management skills I developed, balancing multiple roles as a student, enabled me to give back in many ways."

During her time at Walther, she participated in poms, basketball and track & field, reaching the state meet in shot put. She also played clarinet in the Wind Ensemble for four years and participated in drama productions. After high school, she continued her athletic journey in college, competing in shot put, weight throw, hammer throw and discus, while also joining the Pep Band.

Timika emphasizes the influence of her religion classes and chapel experiences, noting, "I learned that although we are all uniquely created, we each have gifts to share. This shaped my purpose of serving as a change agent within many organizations."

Since 2020, she has been an engaged member of Walther's Board of Directors, where her son graduated in 2022; and her daughter is currently a junior. Now serving as chair of the Board, she reflects, "My time at Walther blessed me in so many ways – academically, spiritually, athletically, and musically. I am honored to give back, ensuring that other children can experience what I did."

As chair, Timika's primary goal is to prepare students for the 21st century through a dynamic curriculum and vibrant extracurricular activities. She adds with enthusiasm, "Things are heading in the right direction at Walther. Greatness is on the horizon."

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Save the Date! Melrose Park's Boy Scout Troop 112 to Host Annual Food Drive Collection Date is Set for April 18

Boy Scout Troop 112 from Melrose Park will participate in the Annual Scouting for Food Drive.

On April 11, the Scouts will be distributing a limited amount of promotional door hangers with complete details to Melrose Park residents.

On April 18, they'll be out collecting the bags of food from community members.

All food collected will be donated to the Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Food Pantry.

If you'd like additional information on the Scouts annual collection drive, please contact Fred Crancich at (708) 609-5539.

The Melrose Park Boy Scouts Program is Looking for New Members
Any boys interested in joining the troop are encouraged to call Mr. Crancich at (708) 609-5539.

To learn more about the Boy Scouts of America, including information on exploring, activities, membership details and more, visit www.scouting.org.





Check Out These Seasonal Events and Activities at the Cook County Forest Preserves

***Join Our Programming
Teams and Naturalists
for Some Upcoming
Fun, Educational
In-Person and
Virtual Offerings***

www.fpdcc.com

Full Moon Animal Adventure – Tuesday, March 3 • 6:30 p.m.

Crabtree Nature Center (3 Stover Rd., Barrington)

Search for signs of native wildlife in the moonlight. All ages.

Cost – Free. Contact – (847) 381-6592 (registration required, call for information).

Senior Fitness Walk – Wednesday, March 4 • 9 a.m.

Thatcher Woods (Chicago Avenue, West of Thatcher Avenue, River Forest)

Join other seniors for a gentle, moderately paced 1-mile walk. Led by Roberta Janssen, University of Illinois Extension volunteer.

Cost – Free. Contact – (708) 366-6530 (registration required, call for information).

Dungeons & Dragons (Flies Theme) – Thursday, March 5 • 5:30 p.m.

Caldwell Woods Wellness Center (6350 W. Devon Ave., Chicago)

Join us for a nature-themed DND one-shot campaign. No experience required. BYO-Dice.

Cost – Free. Contact – 773-758-8899/northzoneprogram@cookcountyl.gov.

Sacred Wanderings – Saturday, March 7 • 8:30 a.m.

Thatcher Woods (Chicago Avenue, West of Thatcher Avenue, River Forest)

Connect with nature and surround yourself with the energy of the natural world. Led by Unity Temple of Oak Park. For information, contact mindful@unitytemple.org.

Cost – Free. Contact – (708) 366-6530.

Maple Tree Tapping – Saturday, March 7 • 10 a.m.

Trailside Museum of Natural History (738 Thatcher Ave., River Forest)

Enjoy a short walk and watch a maple tree tapping demonstration.

Cost – Free. Contact – (708) 366-6530 (registration required, call for information).

Children's Storytime – Wednesday, March 11 • 9:30 a.m.

Thatcher Woods Pavilion (Chicago Avenue, West of Thatcher Avenue, River Forest)

Listen to a nature-themed children's book read aloud, followed by an activity. Indoor program.

Cost – Free. Contact – (312) 533-5751/centralzoneprogram@cookcountyl.gov.

Celtic Mythology Walks – Saturday, March 14 • 10 a.m.

Bemis Woods-South (Ogden Avenue, West of Wolf Road, Near Western Springs)

Walk through the forest to hear stories from Celtic mythology about humans' connection to nature. Grove 7.

Cost – Free. Contact – (312) 533-5751/centralzoneprogram@cookcountyl.gov.

Animal Enrichment Studio – Saturday, March 14 • 1:30 p.m.

Trailside Museum of Natural History (738 Thatcher Ave., River Forest)

Learn about animal behavior and craft enrichment items for our ambassador animals! Ages 10 and up.

Cost – Free. Contact – (708) 366-6530.

Maple Syrup Festival – Sunday, March 15 • 11 a.m.

River Trail Nature Center (3120 Milwaukee Ave., Northbrook)

Celebrate the arrival of spring with a special day of activities, including crafts, games, tree tapping and maple syrup history.

Cost – Free. Contact – (847) 824-8360.

Forest Bathing: Celebrate the Spring Season – Thursday, March 19 • 10 a.m.

Caldwell Woods Wellness Center (6350 W. Devon Ave., Chicago)

Experience the health benefits of being in nature with Gayle Byck of InTune with Nature. Ages 18 and up.

Cost – Free. Contact – (773) 758-8899/northzoneprogram@cookcountyl.gov (registration required, call for information).

World Water Day – Sunday, March 22 • 1 p.m.

Sagawau Environmental Learning Center (12545 W. 111th St., Lemont)

Celebrate World Water Day with an indoor presentation and discussion on water rights and ethics.

Cost – Free. Contact – (630) 257-2045.

Become a Concessionaire in the Forest Preserves

The Forest Preserves of Cook County is offering businesses the opportunity to sell goods and services, from food to fitness classes, at playfields and other locations. With around 62 million annual visits and counting, the Forest Preserves seeks to enhance visitors' convenience and enjoyment while supporting its mission to protect and preserve the county's open spaces. Cost is \$250 for a daily permit, \$500 for an annual permit, plus a \$25 application fee.

Concessions Opportunities – The Permits, Rentals & Concessions Department is currently seeking quality vending and service offerings. A concession permit and a variety of contract opportunities are available as part of the concessions program.

Concession Permits

- Apply for a Permit – Concessionaires can apply for a permit to sell food, beverages, goods and services from traditional stationary concession stands, push carts and food trucks within designated areas in the Forest Preserves, including at campgrounds and playfields. The total cost includes a nonrefundable application fee of \$25, plus a permit fee of either \$250 for a one-day permit or \$500 for an annual permit per location; an additional \$50 fee will apply to non-Cook County residents or businesses per location.

Applications can be submitted via email (fpd.concessions@cookcountyl.gov), fax (708) 771-1071, or dropped off in person at the Forest Preserves General Headquarters, 536 N. Harlem Ave., River Forest, and are approved on a first-come, first-served basis. Please allow up to 15 business days for applications to be reviewed and/or approved.

All application materials include the necessary rules, regulations and restrictions. If you have any questions or need further assistance, please feel free to contact us at fpd.concessions@cookcountyl.gov or call (708) 771-1024. Additionally, concession applications are available in Chinese, Polish and Spanish. To request an application in one of these languages, please contact us.

- General Opportunities – The Forest Preserves of Cook County protects and preserves more than 70,000 acres of natural, open spaces and welcomes an estimated 62 million visits each year to our sites and amenities, such as picnic groves, athletic fields, trails and boathouses. Patrons can also enjoy cross-country skiing, horseback riding, mountain biking, special events and more.

The Forest Preserves recognizes concessions opportunities will increase visitor engagement by providing the public access to various foods, goods, recreational activities and services at reasonable prices. Whether selling fully loaded hot dogs or delicious ice cream, offering on-the-spot bike repair services or anything in between, there are concessions opportunities supporting outdoor events of all sizes.

Applicants can apply for a concession permit across the Forest Preserves' nearly 300 picnic groves and designated sites. Additional information is available on our picnic grove maps and interactive web map. For a full list of Forest Preserves locations, visit our Locations List Page at www.fpdcc.com.

- Playfields – Some of the most popular sites for concessionaires are playfields. The multiple sports opportunities at Forest Preserves playfields make these popular places for families and youth. Playfields are ideal locations for a friendly game of soccer, baseball or rugby, a relaxing picnic and even a leisurely walk. Each location is open from dawn to dusk unless otherwise posted.

The Forest Preserves is accepting concession applications from qualified vendors to conduct concession cart and/or food truck sales at select playfields beginning March through December.

Playfield concessions opportunities are available at the following locations where no other food and/or beverage service is currently offered:

- Busse Woods: Available starting March through May with some dates in October on the following days during the week – Saturday, Sunday.
- Robinson Woods-South: Available starting May through September on the following days during the week – Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, Sunday.
- Schiller Playfield: Available starting March through September on the following days during the week – Saturday, Sunday.
- Schiller Woods-South: Available starting April through September with some sporadic dates in October and November on the following days during the week – Tuesday-Thursday, Saturday, Sunday.
- Thatcher Woods: Available starting April through September with some sporadic dates in October on the following days during the week – Monday-Thursday.

Contract Opportunities – We encourage you to learn more about the Forest Preserves' concessions program and how to conduct business with us by participating in the following contract opportunities:

- Pilot Concession Contracts – A Pilot Concession Contract is a two-year, non-bid opportunity that will generate less than \$25,000 per year while operating in the Forest Preserves. Please submit a business proposal and financial plan for your concession/business.

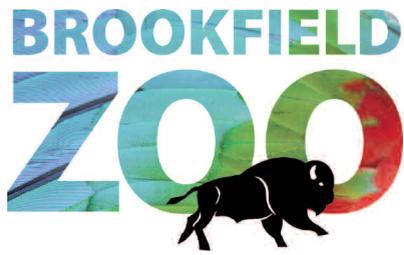
The Permits, Rentals & Concessions Department is seeking unique and interesting collaborations that enhance and promote the Forest Preserves with businesses that share a commitment to health and wellness, sustainability and strong communities. Opportunities vary, with some sites appropriate for carts, food trucks and other self-contained businesses. Most locations do not have storage or electricity available. Small businesses and women- and/or minority-owned businesses (W/MBE) are encouraged to submit proposals.

Before submitting your proposal and financial plan, please review the FAQ and site descriptions and visit the preserve location.

- Small Concession Contracts – Concessionaires must submit a competitive bid or a Request for Proposal to the Forest Preserves of Cook County for opportunities that generate no more than \$25,000 per year while operating in the Forest Preserves for up to three years. Interested parties are encouraged to register as a vendor on our Doing Business & Partnerships Page at www.fpdcc.com. The Forest Preserves' Board of Commissioners reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive technicalities.
- Large Concession Contracts – Concessionaires must submit a competitive bid or a Request for Proposal to the Forest Preserves of Cook County for opportunities generating more than \$25,000 per year while operating in the Forest Preserves for five years or more. Interested parties are encouraged to register as a vendor on our Doing Business & Partnerships Page at www.fpdcc.com. The Forest Preserves' Board of Commissioners reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive technicalities.
- Class/Tour Contracts – Classes/Tour Contracts are non-bid concessions opportunities and generate less than \$25,000 per year while operating in the Forest Preserves. This contract runs for five years or less. This contract allows a concessionaire to conduct fitness/athletic classes or tours within the Forest Preserves; the Forest Preserves receives 20% of registration fees.

For additional information, please visit <https://fpdcc.com/permits/concessions-opportunities/>.

Take some time to explore our website at www.fpdcc.com for additional events and valuable information linked to the Cook County Forest Preserves experience!



News from the Zoo!

Your next visit to Brookfield Zoo isn't complete unless you've experienced the amazing things on hand.

Here's a list of some incredible current and upcoming attractions. Be sure to check out our website at www.brookfieldzoo.org for additional happenings.

Want to make the most of your zoo experience? Become a member and you'll get exclusive discounts to most attractions, not to mention so much more!

Wildlife Lanterns Illuminate the Night as Brookfield Zoo Chicago Debuts Glow Wild this Spring

The All-New, Visually Stunning Experience Opens March 19, Featuring Larger-than-Life Glowing Animals, Cultural Performances and Conservation Storytelling After Dark

Towering, radiant wildlife will light up the night at Brookfield Zoo Chicago this spring with the debut of Glow Wild: A Lantern Festival of Hope, an all-new evening lantern experience opening March 19. After dark, the zoo will be transformed by massive, brilliantly illuminated animal lanterns – each a larger-than-life work of art – creating an immersive journey that blends wonder, global culture and conservation storytelling. Glow Wild invites guests to experience the zoo in a whole new light, 6-10 p.m., Thursdays-Sundays, through May 10.

As guests wander the zoo at their own pace, Glow Wild unfolds as a living gallery of light, where handcrafted wildlife lanterns rise, glow and surround visitors like a sculpture garden brought to life. Along the walk-through experience, guests will encounter powerful stories and simple, actionable ways to protect wildlife. The festival is produced in collaboration with Hanart Culture, known for their Chinese Lantern Festival experiences and their extraordinary hand-built, illuminated works.

“This limited-time exhibition is something entirely new for Chicago and unlike anything guests have experienced at Brookfield Zoo Chicago before,” said Andrea Rodgers, senior vice president of Guest Experience and Operations. “Bringing an immersive, after-dark wildlife lantern experience to our region creates a powerful, emotional connection between people, animals and nature. Being surrounded by glowing, larger-than-life artworks and stories of hope can spark a deeper appreciation for the wildlife we’re working to protect – both here in our community and around the world. Whether experienced with family, friends or as a special night out, Glow Wild offers a shared experience that is both joyful and meaningful.”

The must-see lanterns will be complemented by cuisine inspired by flavors from around the world and community-focused programming. The Hub of Hope, a central plaza located at the zoo’s Pavilions, will feature cultural performances by community partners and additional interactive experiences on select dates. Select Thursday evenings will also offer a sensory-friendly experience with adjusted lighting and sound. Guests interested in an elevated experience can reserve the Lantern Lounge for a cozy, private setting with food and beverages for up to 12 guests.

Wander beneath the stars among more than 70 handcrafted lantern displays, spotlighting the creatures of land, sea and sky – from glowing river and ocean animals to wildlife of sweeping savannas, lush forests and local landscapes. Along the journey, guests will encounter everything from majestic elephants, lions and tigers to shimmering corals and fish, rare pangolins, radiant butterflies, elk, vibrant plant life and even mythical creatures – each illumination telling a story of connection between people, wildlife and the planet we share.

Advanced tickets are required and now on sale at brookfieldzoo.org/glow-wild, with pricing starting at \$9.95 for children and \$19.95 for adults. This outdoor, evening-only experience offers exceptional value, with each ticket including access to all Glow Wild festival experiences, unlimited rides on the Carousel and Ferris Wheel, as well as complimentary North Gate parking. Zoo members receive discounted admission, making Glow Wild an added benefit of membership. Guests who wish to see the animals that inspired the lantern displays are encouraged to visit Brookfield Zoo Chicago during regular daytime hours, available at brookfieldzoo.org/visit.



Photo credit – © Brookfield Zoo Chicago.



Brookfield Zoo's Zoo Camp Registration is Now Open

This Year's Reservation Openings for Children 4-14 are Filling Quickly

Zoo Camp is the perfect opportunity for your child to connect with animals and nature in a variety of fun and exciting ways. Children ages 4-14 will explore the zoo through play and learning with our skilled camp counselors. There's so much to see and do with weekly sessions that offer many unique experiences. Our Zoo Camp is an inclusive camp program where ALL children come together to learn, play, and explore together. They make new friends, explore the world around them, and learn that "I can" is much more powerful than "I can't." At Zoo Camp, children are creating memories that will last a lifetime.

Campers explore animals and the natural world in a fun, engaging, age-appropriate setting. Activities include nature hikes, animal observations and encounters, games and crafts. We have thousands of animals and 235 acres to explore all summer long, which means that campers may attend more than one week and still be able to discover all that Brookfield Zoo Chicago has to offer in many different ways.



2026 Weekly Zoo Camp Pricing

- Full Day Zoo Camp: Nonmember \$599/Member \$499.
- Half Day Zoo Camp: Nonmember \$399/Member \$275.

For aspiring Zoo Campers who aren't quite 4 years old yet, check out our popular Seedlings programs where you and your tot can sing, dance, explore, and play along with the staff and animals at the Hamill Family Play Zoo. And for those in high school who are interested in exploring new ways to get involved with Brookfield Zoo Chicago, check out our King Conservation Science Scholars Program where workshops, immersive research expeditions, and hands-on career exploration enables teens to grow as conservation leaders as they explore the zoo in the ways that matter the most to them. Looking for opportunities for Zoo-Camp-aged children (grades PK-8) all year long? Check out our free youth- and family-programs offered through our KCLA Community Engagement team.

Zoo Camp registration opened on Tuesday, Feb. 3, 2026 and is filling quickly. Some sessions are still available. To register, add your camper to the wait-list or for more information, visit <https://www.brookfieldzoo.org/education/zoo-camp> or call (708) 688-8000.

Join Us for These Exciting Featured Events!

Brunch with the Bunny ...

Saturday, April 4, 9:30 and 11:30 a.m.; Sunday April 5, 9 a.m, 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.

Savannah Ballroom in Discovery Center

Experience an unforgettable easter celebration at Brookfield Zoo Chicago!

This Easter, hop on over for a one-of-a-kind brunch experience at the zoo. We're not just serving brunch; we're crafting memories.

- Create Colorful Creations at the Coloring Book Tables: Let your creativity shine at the designated coloring book tables, where children can unleash their artistic spirit.
- Enjoy an Egg-cellent Brunch Buffet: Delight in a brunch buffet that caters to everyone's tastebuds featuring an array of classic and new brunch favorites.
- Get the Party Hopping on the Dance Floor: Get into the festive spirit with an energetic interactive DJ, who will keep the brunch atmosphere lively with upbeat music and engaging activities for kids and adults alike.
- Explore the Zoo: Tickets for Brunch with the Bunny include admission and parking at Brookfield Zoo Chicago.

Visit <https://www.brookfieldzoo.org/BrunchWithTheBunny> for tickets and more details



Twirl Around the Whirl ... Saturday, April 25 • 6-11:30 p.m. • Hilton Chicago

Brookfield Zoo Chicago celebrates the 45th anniversary of its annual black-tie gala, the Whirl, on Saturday, April 25, 2026. Co-hosted by the board of trustees and the Women's Board, this celebration highlights the impactful work of the zoo's education, animal welfare and conservation programs.

Host Committee tables are available at \$100,000, \$75,000, \$50,000 and \$25,000. A table of 10 is available for \$10,000. A half-table of five is available for \$5,000. Individual tickets are available at \$1,000 each. Corporate sponsorship and underwriting opportunities are available.

For more information, please visit <https://www.brookfieldzoo.org/Whirl>.



For more details or a complete listing of the fun, family activities happening at Brookfield Zoo, check out www.brookfieldzoo.org or call (708) 688-8000.

ComEd Announces \$70 Million in EV Rebates Available to Boost EV Adoption Across Northern Illinois

ComEd's 2026 Programs Continue to Prioritize Equity in Increasing Access to EVs and EV Charging Infrastructure

During the annual Chicago Auto Show, ComEd announced approximately \$70 million in electric vehicle (EV) rebates available for residential, business and community customers in 2026. Funding for EV projects is designed to reduce the upfront cost barrier of EV adoption. ComEd offers a suite of programs covering residential EV chargers and installation, electric fleet vehicles, and business and public sector make-ready charging infrastructure.

"As the demand for EVs grow in our region, ComEd is committed to helping our customers navigate the transition to electric vehicles," said Ajit Apte, SVP of Customer Operations at ComEd. "Building on the success of the last two years, ComEd is delivering a substantial investment in EV programs that will help remove cost barriers to EV projects at home, and in our communities and businesses, which will in turn improve air quality and bolster a network of EV charging serving our northern Illinois communities."



ComEd EV rebates are made possible through the Beneficial Electrification Program, approved by the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC). The programs place priority on funding for low-income customers and equity-eligible communities, and since launching in 2024, have delivered more than \$160 million in EV funding for projects across northern Illinois, more than 80% of which has been directed to Equity Investment Eligible Communities (EIEC). These projects have helped add more than 10,000 EV chargers and directed investment in projects reaching 350 zip codes across Illinois.

"Since their initial launch, ComEd's EV rebate initiatives have helped empower consumers in northern Illinois to make cleaner choices and support the transition to zero emission transportation," said Megha Lakhchaura, state EV officer of Illinois. "These continued investments to support EV adoption and expanded charging infrastructure are leading the drive toward a more sustainable future for our state."

ComEd's 2026 EV rebate programs include the following offerings for customers:

- The Residential EV Charger and Installation Rebate Program, more than \$4 million available for rebates of up to \$2,500 per household to support the purchase and installation of residential Level 2 electric vehicle chargers.
- The Business and Public Sector EV Purchase Rebate Program, more than \$35 million available for rebates supporting the purchase or lease of new and pre-owned fleet EVs of all weight classes, ranging from \$7,500-\$240,000 per vehicle.
- The Business and Public Sector Make-Ready Rebate Program, more than \$29 million available for rebates to cover costs to make sites ready for public and private Level 2 and DC Fast Charging, ranging up to \$5,000 to \$7,500 per port for sites with Level 2 chargers and up to \$450 to \$675 per kW for sites with DC Fast Chargers.

For all future funded projects, equity will remain prioritized throughout ComEd's investments. More than 50% of funds are reserved for low-income customers and projects located in, or primarily serving, low income or EIECs, who are also eligible for higher rebate amounts.

"The Illinois Alliance for Clean Transportation is committed to advancing clean transportation solutions that reduce emissions and improve energy security across the state," said Samantha Bingham, IACT board member. "ComEd's rebates are an essential tool for business and local government fleets to pursue fleet electrification efforts, which in turn support state initiatives and community health. Our collective efforts continue to position Illinois as a leader in clean transportation."

"Air pollution poses significant health challenges for residents throughout Illinois and reducing vehicle emissions is one of the most effective steps to improve air quality and public health in Illinois," said Brian Urbaszewski, director of Environmental Health Programs at Respiratory Health Association. "ComEd's programs allow businesses, customers and communities to help eliminate pollution and create cleaner air for our communities with the addition of each EV and EV charger in our state."

ComEd's rebates include substantial funding opportunities for EV fleets, including support to school districts that are proactively working to reduce emissions and achieve decarbonization goals by electrifying their school bus fleets. In facilitating partnerships with EV manufacturers and school districts, ComEd helps districts achieve their electrification goals and improve public health, especially in communities disproportionately impacted by air pollution. Districts located in EIECs continue to qualify for higher rebate amounts for fleet EVs.

"We are proud to partner with ComEd to bring electric school buses to districts across northern Illinois," said Josh Williams of Highland Electric Fleets. "Electric school buses not only improve air quality for children and communities, but they also have the potential to export energy to help support the local grid when not performing their critical role of safely transporting students."

"The Environmental Law & Policy Center is pleased for the first time the Chicago Auto Show has an electric school bus on display at the Family Zone," said Susan Mudd, senior policy advocate, Environmental Law & Policy Center. "ELPC appreciates ComEd and Highland Fleets' efforts to get the bus to the show where thousands of families will see one up close and learn about the public health benefits these buses can provide. We especially want parents with school-age children to learn how they can help their school districts acquire these buses so their children can ride these quiet, safe, zero emission buses. ComEd has funding for the next three years to accelerate this progress, so more Illinois children can benefit from clean, quiet rides to and from school."

In addition to rebates for charging infrastructure and fleet vehicles, ComEd will continue to drive customer education and awareness initiatives that

support customers in moving toward EVs and help communities achieve their own local and regional transportation net-zero emissions goals. This includes ComEd and the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus' EV Readiness Program, a training program for municipalities and local governments to integrate permitting safety and infrastructure plans designed to accommodate the growing demand for EVs in their communities. So far, this program has reached 38 communities and the fourth cohort will complete the program in 2026.

To help customers connect to the benefits of EVs, ComEd offers a variety of resources including the EV Ambassador Program, a community-driven initiative designed to expand education and awareness around EV adoption and benefits, Fleet Electrification Assessments, the ComEd make ready rebate reservation program, EV Rebate Dealer Network, EV Service Provider Network, ComEd EV Toolkit, EV Load Capacity Map, EV Dealership Network and more.

"A Step Beyond is excited to partner with ComEd as an EV ambassador and help our community experience the vast benefits available from electric vehicle adoption," said Nicole Wheatly, ComEd EV ambassador. "The continued adoption of EVs, especially for businesses large and small, lead to benefits that impact full communities, reducing collective carbon footprints and building a healthier future in Illinois."

To review eligibility requirements and to apply for EV funding, customers are encouraged to visit [ComEd.com](https://www.comed.com).

ComEd Offering \$515,000 in Grants to Support Community Programs Across Northern Illinois

Applications Now Open for ComEd's Three Power for Good Grant Programs, Awarding Grants to Support Community Organizations Across Northern Illinois

ComEd is now accepting grant applications for three of its Power for Good Grant programs. This year's annual program will provide a total of \$515,000 in funding to municipalities and nonprofit organizations to strengthen environmental sustainability efforts, advance public safety and clean transportation projects, and broaden access to arts programs.

The three Power for Good Grant programs accepting applications are Green Region, administered by Openlands; Powering Safe Communities, administered by the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus; and Powering the Arts, administered by the League of Chicago Theatres.

Organizations and municipalities are encouraged to apply for these grant programs and visit [ComEd.com/Grants](https://www.comed.com/Grants) for application instructions. Applications will be accepted for all three grant programs through 5 p.m. CT, March 13, 2026.

"At ComEd, we're honored to invest in programs that improve the quality of life of the customers we proudly serve across northern Illinois," said Melissa Y. Washington, senior vice president of Government, Regulatory and External Affairs at ComEd. "Through our Power for Good Grants – and in partnership with Openlands, the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus and the League of Chicago Theatres – we're able to deliver meaningful impact in communities year after year."

This annual competitive grant program is part of ComEd's commitment to community investment. To date, these programs have delivered nearly \$6 million in funding to support hundreds of community-based projects. All funding is provided by ComEd and stays in northern Illinois.

The Green Region Grant Program, in partnership with Openlands, supports the efforts of nonprofit, educational, and public organizations to improve and protect open spaces. Now in its 14th year, the grant program has supported the development of more than 86,000 feet of ADA-accessible trails, 1,800 acres of restored land and the planting of almost 39,000 new trees.

"At Openlands, we believe that healthy communities are rooted in land as the foundation of a connected, resilient region where people and nature can thrive together. Our longstanding partnership with ComEd reflects our continuous support to projects that increase access to green space, strengthen local stewardship and empower communities to care for the natural areas that sustain us all," said Michael Davidson, president and CEO of Openlands. "Protecting critical habitats and expanding natural spaces is a shared commitment to building a more resilient, equitable and vibrant region for today and for generations to come."

The Powering Safe Communities Grant Program, in partnership with the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus, supports public safety and clean transportation initiatives. These grants support projects designed to increase public safety, reduce carbon emissions and improve community resiliency.

"The Metropolitan Mayors Caucus is honored to partner with ComEd for the 12th year through the Powering Safe Communities Grant Program," said Neil James, executive director at Metropolitan Mayors Caucus. "Equipping our communities with infrastructure and financial support through this program creates a cleaner and safer future. This year's grant funding will help increase safety, improve air quality and accelerate the transition to an electrified future across northern Illinois."

The Powering the Arts Grant Program, in partnership with the League of Chicago Theatres, recognizes that access to the arts brings vibrancy to local communities. Now in the program's ninth year, these grants support programs and workshops across northern Illinois communities that boost public awareness, engagement and enjoyment of the arts.

"The League of Chicago Theatres is proud to continue this longstanding partnership with ComEd through the Powering the Arts Grant Program," said Marissa Lynn Jones, executive director of the League of Chicago Theatres. "This grant program empowers our communities and organizations to develop creative methods to connect with and inspire their audiences through art. We appreciate ComEd's efforts to support diverse, expressive communities in northern Illinois."

For more information on each grant program, including eligibility guidelines and how to apply, visit [ComEd.com/Grants](https://www.comed.com/Grants).

Chicago Magazine Names 24 Loyola Medicine Physicians to Top Cancer Doctors List

Twenty-four Loyola Medicine physicians have been honored in *Chicago* magazine's Top Cancer Doctors list for the Chicago area, recognizing their expertise and commitment to exceptional patient care.

"Loyola Medicine's cancer specialists are dedicated to advancing oncology through groundbreaking research while delivering exceptional, compassionate care to patients," said Shawn P. Vincent, president and CEO of Loyola Medicine. "We are proud to see so many of our physicians recognized for their leadership and excellence."

The Top Cancer Doctors list is published in the January 2026 issue of *Chicago* magazine and is also available online.

"At Loyola, we take pride in offering comprehensive, patient-centered cancer care that combines advanced treatments with compassion," said William Small Jr., MD, chair of Radiation Oncology and director of the Cardinal Bernardin Cancer Center. "This recognition reflects the unwavering commitment of our physicians to deliver world-class care and improve outcomes for every patient we serve."

The list was compiled by Castle Connolly Medical Ltd., a trusted health care research and information company. Physicians are nominated by their peers through an open online process and each nominee undergoes a rigorous review of education, training and professional experience. Doctors cannot pay to be included on the list.

The Loyola Medicine physicians recognized include:

- **Colon & Rectal Surgery** – Joshua M. Eberhardt, MD; Marc A. Singer, MD.
- **Gastroenterology** – Scott J. Cotler, MD.
- **Gynecologic Oncology** – Ronald K. Potkul, MD.
- **Hematology** – Patrick Joseph Stiff, MD.
- **Medical Oncology** – Kathy Sue Albain, MD; Joseph Ignatius Clark, MD.
- **Neurological Surgery** – Min S. Park, MD; Vikram Prabhu, MD.
- **Otolaryngology** – Richard W. Borrowdale, MD; John P. Leonetti, MD.
- **Pathology** – Robert Pooley Jr., MD.
- **Plastic Surgery** – Eleanor I. Bucholz, MD; Victor G. Cimino, MD, DDS; Darl Vandevender, MD.
- **Radiation Oncology** – William Small Jr., MD.
- **Surgery** – Fred A. Luchette, MD.
- **Surgical Oncology** – Gerard J. Abood, MD.
- **Urology** – Robert C. Flanigan, MD; Gopal N. Gupta, MD; Kevin T. McVary, MD; Marcus L. Quek, MD; Thomas Turk, MD.
- **Vascular & Interventional Radiology** – Marc A. Borge, MD.

To learn more about Loyola Medicine or find a physician, visit [loyolamedicine.org](http://www.loyolamedicine.org).

Gottlieb Child Development Center Celebrates New Playground Opening

The Gottlieb Child Development Center, located at Gottlieb Memorial Hospital (GMH), recently held a ribbon-cutting ceremony to unveil a newly renovated playground designed specifically for children aged 2 to 5 years old. Licensed by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, the Gottlieb Child Development Center welcomes children from 6 weeks to 5 years old, serving both Loyola Medicine families and the local community.



The new Prehistoric Park playground was made possible by a gift from the Gottlieb Memorial Hospital Auxiliary Board, which has served the community for over 60 years. "This gift is more than a playground – it's a promise," said Woodridge resident and Auxiliary President Jan Morgan "A promise that our youngest learners will have a safe, inspiring environment to grow strong bodies and bright minds."

"It reflects the auxiliary's enduring legacy of compassion and commitment, making Gottlieb Memorial Hospital not only a place of healing, but a cornerstone of community," Judith Nealey, director of Operations for the Gottlieb Child Development Center.

The ribbon-cutting was attended by members of the Gottlieb Auxiliary board; Jan Morgan; past presidents Cynthia Gottlieb and Helen Mattis; Gottlieb Memorial Foundation President Jack Weinberg; Elizabeth E. Early, president of Loyola University Medical Center; and Sarah Hunter, president of GMH.

"It's important for parents to feel like they are leaving their child in a safe environment where kids can grow, learn and thrive," said Hunter. "At Gottlieb, we want these parents to feel comfortable going to work knowing their child is cared for physically and mentally."

The 55,000-square-foot center provides cozy infant rooms to vibrant pre-K classrooms. Each space is thoughtfully designed with age-appropriate materials that spark curiosity and creativity. The program is built on a research-based, play-centered curriculum that nurtures social, emotional and cognitive development.

The Gottlieb Child Development Center is open Monday-Friday, 7 a.m.-6 p.m. Tuition includes three scratch-cooked meals tailored to meet every child's nutritional needs and preferences. The center offers full-time and part-time enrollment and accepts the Illinois Child Care Assistance financial aid program (CCAP). Discounts are available for Loyola Medicine colleagues. The expansive outdoor yard, playground and spacious indoor gym can accommodate up to 46 children.

"We have many colleagues who were raised in this day care center and now work at a Loyola Medicine hospital," said Early. "It's one big family environment."

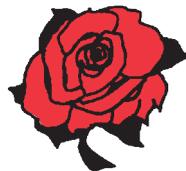
Everyone Has the Right to Live Where They Choose

In the exercise of its power to regulate for the protection of the public health, safety, morals and welfare, it is declared to be the public policy of the village to assure fair housing and freedom from discrimination throughout the community, to protect the community from the effects of residential segregation by race, color, religion, sex, physical or mental handicap, familial status or national origin, and to secure to its citizens the economic, social, and professional benefits of living in an integrated and stable society.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Administers The Federal Fair Housing Act

Every first Monday of the month the Fair Housing Review Board meets at 6 p.m. in the Village of Melrose Park (1000 N. 25th Ave.). If you feel you have been discriminated in any way while renting, purchasing or selling a home you are welcome to attend our meetings to present your case.

Village of Melrose Park
Brian Miller, Office of the Village Attorney
(708) 343-4000, Ext. 4487



*Village of
Melrose Park*



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- **Address Change**
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 - Vision Screening
- **Disability Placards**
 - Temporary First Time Issuance
 - Temporary Replacement
- **Drivers License**
 - Duplicate/Corrected
 - First Time Issuance
 - Instruction Permit Duplicate/Corrected
 - Instruction Permit First Time Issuance
 - Instruction Permit Renewal
 - Motorcycle Road Test
 - Motorcycle Written Test
 - Non-Visa Temporary Visitors (TVDL)
 - Renewal
 - Road Test
 - REAL ID
 - Vision Screening

- **Drivers License**
 - Written Test
- **License Plates**
 - Renewal Stickers
 - Sticker Replacement
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- **Non-CDL Written Test**
- **Organ Donor Registry**
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- **State ID**
 - Duplicate/Corrected
 - First Time Issuance
 - Renewal
 - REAL ID

- **Vehicle**
 - Registration Renewal
 - Sticker Replacement
 - Seven-Day Drive Away Permits
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- **Voter Registration Applications**

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**For more information,
visit www.ilsos.gov.**

OFFICE OF THE ILLINOIS SECRETARY OF STATE

Alexi Giannoulas
Secretary of State



Nicor, Salvation Army Partner to Provide Assistance Through Shield of Caring Program

Nicor Gas is dedicated to providing affordable, reliable energy and supporting income-eligible customers. Through the Shield of Caring Program – administered by The Salvation Army – eligible residential customers can receive up to \$250 per year in emergency assistance to help with overdue bills and financial hardships. Applications are now open.



Shield of Caring is an emergency assistance program, it provides individuals and families in Nicor Gas' service area with natural gas bill payment assistance and support for other basic needs, including housing, rental and grocery assistance.

Customers may also apply to receive a discount on their bill through the Nicor Gas Low-Income Discount Program. Shield of Caring enrollment is open now-Sept. 30, 2026, or until funds are exhausted.

Shield of Caring Program

Helping Individuals and Families with Natural Gas Bill Payments and Emergency Assistance Relief

The Salvation Army and Nicor Gas are partnering to provide emergency assistance and homelessness prevention through Shield of Caring, a program that helps individuals and families to pay their natural gas utility bills and meet other basic needs now and well into the future.

Nicor Gas has contributed \$10 million to The Salvation Army to serve those in need. The Salvation Army will distribute the financial assistance in 37 counties in Nicor Gas' Illinois service territory. The funding will assist residential customers who are past due on their natural gas utility bill and report a financial hardship, such as a job loss, illness, military deployment or disability. A portion of the funds will also support The Salvation Army's basic needs programs, such as emergency housing and rental assistance, food assistance and case management to help families identify barriers to self-sufficiency.



The multiyear partnership is estimated to help more than 25,000 families. Nicor Gas residential customers with a household gross income in the last 30 days below 400% of the Federal Poverty Level may be eligible to receive a grant of up to \$250 once every year to apply to their past due account balances. Customers who are eligible to receive assistance grants from other programs, such as LIHEAP or Sharing, should first apply for a grant from these programs. Customers who still have a past-due account balance after receiving assistance from those programs may be eligible to receive a grant under the Shield of Caring Program.

Note: Nicor Gas and The Salvation Army reserve the right to modify, suspend or discontinue the program at any time.

Nicor Gas and The Salvation Army have proudly worked together to help nearly 6,000 customers last program year; Shield of Caring is now accepting applications.

Apply Online for the Shield of Caring Program

<https://centralusa.salvationarmy.org/northcentralillinois/shield-of-caring-application/>.

Shield of Caring Application Details

Shield of Caring assists residential customers who are past-due on their Nicor Gas bill and have a financial hardship including job loss, illness, military deployment, disability, etc. Income-eligible, residential customers can apply once every year for a grant up to \$250 based on overall account balance and availability of program funds. It may take up to 30 days for grants to be applied to customer accounts.

Key Things to Note

You may be eligible for additional assistance through other energy assistance programs such as LIHEAP or Sharing. If you meet the income requirements for those assistance options, please apply to those programs first so you can maximize your assistance. If you still have a past-due balance on your Nicor Gas account after receiving assistance from those programs, you may be eligible for a Shield of Caring grant.

Am I eligible?

You're eligible to apply for a grant if you:

- Are a residential Nicor Gas customer with a Nicor Gas account in your name.
- Have a past-due balance on your Nicor Gas account.
- Have a household gross income in the last 30 days less than 400% of the Federal Poverty Level.
- Not a Nicor Gas customer? Do not complete the application. Check with your local utility for assistance options.

What do I need to apply?

To apply for a grant, you must:

- Meet the eligibility guidelines in the Am I Eligible section.
- Know your Nicor Gas account number.
- Know your current past-due balance.

To find your account balance and number, view your bill's Account Summary section or access online by logging in to My Account at Nicorgas.com..

To learn more about Nicor Gas, visit www.nicorgas.com.

Obituaries

Benedetto

John Benedetto, March 14, 1941-Dec. 9, 2025. Beloved husband of Bernice Benedetto; loving father of Tricia (Dave) Bush; cherished grandfather of Andrew and Carson Bush; loving brother, uncle, cousin and friend of many. John proudly worked at the Matsushita company in Franklin Park and then worked for Triton College until retirement. He was proud of his World Series of Poker achievements, loved hanging out with his grandchildren, never stopped trying to master the game of golf and always made everyone around him happy. Arrangements by Carbonara Funeral Home.

Broekema

Jerome Broekema, Nov. 9, 1930-Dec. 21, 2025. Beloved son of the late Rose; cherished brother of Ted, Claud and Ann; loving uncle of Geraldine, Lisa, Tony and Bobby. Arrangements by Carbonara Funeral Home. Entombment Queen of Heaven Cemetery.

Cannella

Joan Marie Cannella, nee Loverde, Nov. 24, 1935-Jan. 14, 2026. Joan Marie Cannella passed away peacefully at home on Wednesday, Jan. 14, 2026, at the age of 90. She was born on Nov. 24, 1935, in Chicago to Josephine (DeRose) and Paul Loverde. Joan attended Tuley High School and was a proud member of the Class of 1954. Joan was preceded in death by her parents, Paul and Josephine Loverde; her beloved husband of nearly 60 years, Frank Cannella; and her sister, Rosemarie Errera. She is survived by her children – Frank Cannella Jr. (Susan), Pamela Cannella Treacy (Jim Jameson), Joseph Cannella (Lisa) and Paul Cannella; her grandchildren – Tricia Horab (Jeremy), Luke Treacy (Kaycee), Katherine Treacy, Ivy Rusch (Will), Liliana Cannella and Jack Cannella; her great-grandchildren – Daven Williamson (Kaylee), Kylee Treacy and Leah Joan Treacy; and her great-great-grandchildren – Westyn Williamson and Alina Williamson. She is also survived by her sister, Jacqueline Loverde, as well as many nieces, nephews, cousins and dear friends. She met her future husband, Frank, while working as a secretary at Motorola. They were married in 1955, beginning a lifelong partnership that set a benchmark for devotion, stability and love. Together, through hard work and sacrifice, they ensured their four children could attend college and graduate without the burden of debt – a gift that shaped generations. After the birth of her first child, Joan devoted herself fully to raising her family. Later, she returned to work part time in the grocery industry, where her strong work ethic and natural leadership quickly led her to become a deli manager at Dominick's. She ultimately retired from her role as office manager at Case Construction Equipment, where the general manager famously remarked that Joan truly "ran the business." Joan ignited her family's love of travel. From organizing road trips when her children were young to continuing adventures well into her later years, she believed in seeing the world together. Before Joan and Frank had children, they often travelled with other family members including Frank's brother Dominick and his family to Miami, Wisconsin and Springfield. Family trips with Frank and the children included destinations of Colorado, Florida, Wisconsin Dells, the Ozarks and California. She also traveled to Italy with her husband, sister Rosemarie and brother-in-law Jim. She cherished time at the family lake house in Wisconsin, their home in Florida, fall drives to Minnesota with Paul to visit Joe and his family, and annual winter and spring drives to Florida with a stop at Pamela's home. Joan's home was often the heart of extended family gatherings, especially during the holidays. Her kitchen was legendary – filled with Italian dishes, including her famous manicotti, calzone, red gravy with meatballs, home-

made sausage and braciole, frazines, pizzelles and lamb-shaped pound-cakes for Easter, all made with love. Joan loved celebrating life's moments and rarely missed a chance to come together with family and friends. She delighted in Cousins Club gatherings, weddings, showers and birthdays. For Joe's 50th birthday party, Joan embarked on a road trip with her sister Jackie, niece Bianca and her kids – where she gleefully hid in the pantry and jumped out to surprise him. A lifelong volunteer, Joan supported Cub Scouts, Girl Scouts as a troop leader and later as a regionwide volunteer. She also enjoyed her volunteer landscape gardening, while living at Cambridge on the Lake. Joan spent her later years at Brookdale Independent Living and volunteered at Kenny's Closet to raise funds for Alzheimer's disease. She especially enjoyed playing Rummikub and Hand and Foot with her Brookdale friends and was always encouraging fellow residents to keep up with their weekly blood pressure checks. The years never slowed Joan's willingness to travel to see family. At age 87, Joan took her final road trip with grandchildren Liliana and Jack, driving from Illinois to Georgia to visit Paul's cabin and spend time with all the grandchildren. Hopping on a plane at 89, she traveled to Frank's home to enjoy the ocean view from the deck, accompanied by Brian and Sandie Cannella. In November, Joan joyfully celebrated her 90th birthday surrounded by immediate family – and, of course, plenty of Italian food. The family was truly blessed to have her for 90 incredible years. Her legacy is one of family, hard work, generosity, adventure and unforgettable memories. Live like Joan lived. Be kind, take the trip, eat the cake and cherish each day as a gift – because each day is a gift, including this one. Arrangements by Carbonara Funeral Home. Entombment Saint Joseph Cemetery.

Cimino

Anthony J. Cimino, July 21, 1956-Feb. 3, 2026. Beloved son of Theresa and the late Anthony G. Cimino; dear brother of Ralph (Lynn) and Michael (Lori); fond uncle of Stephen (Lauren), Jack (Eliza), Anthony (Jen), Michael (Taylor) and the late Thomas (Kelley); Arrangements by Carbonara Funeral Home.

Dames

Angeline Dames, Aug. 18, 1925-Feb. 16, 2026. Beloved wife of the late Anthony Dames; loving mother of John (Kyle Green) Dames, Gregory (Jane) Dames, Ronald (Laurel Dineff) Dames, Anthony (Grace) Dames, and Donald (the late Bonnie) Dames; beloved daughter of the late Dominic and Frances Saraceno; fond grandmother of Nina (Jason), Alexandra, Anastasia, Christian (Denise), Katarina, Nicholas, Constantine, Gianna (Steve), Ariana (Frank), Anthony (Sydni) and Katie; fond great-grandmother of Isaac, Emory, Gracie Ann, Sam, Gia, Frankie, Nico, Aria Grace and Vincenzo Anthony, Will and Quinn; dear sister of the late John (the late Paula) Saraceno; loving aunt and friend of many. Arrangements by Carbonara Funeral Home. Interment Queen of Heaven Cemetery.

Dorwart

Martin R. Dorwart, Jan. 17, 1948-Feb. 16, 2026. Beloved husband of Christine; loving father of Tony (Tammy) and the late Chad (Kjrsten); beloved son of Martin Sr. and Lillian; fond grandfather of Zachary (Kimi), Harley, Ian (lily) and Gracie; fond great-grandfather of 11; dear brother of the late Bob Scroggin, the late Warren Scroggin and the late Ryann Dorwart; loving uncle, cousin and friend of many. Arrangements by Carbonara Funeral Home. Interment Queen of Heaven Cemetery.

Emeterio

Irene Emeterio, Nov. 20, 1964-Feb. 9, 2026. Beloved wife of Jobo Emeterio; loving mother of Yolanda Emeterio, Edilberto (Adriana) Emeterio, Norma Emeterio and Oscar Emeterio. cherished daughter of Maria De Jesus Gomez and the late Jose Lomas; fond grandmother of Liz, Alex, Danny, Yaya, Vane, Mona, Livi, Lio and Nina; fond sister of Malena, Lety, Uva, Rafa, Justina, Male, Esther, Juvenal and Leonel; loving aunt, cousin, and friend of many. Arrangements by Carbonara Funeral Home. Interment Resurrection Cemetery.

Galvan

Kevin Galvan, Aug. 22, 1998-Jan. 9, 2026. Beloved son of Mario and Juana Galvan; dear brother of Miguel Galvan; cherished nephew of Vicente Hernandez. Arrangements by Carbonara Funeral Home. Interment private.

Genualdi

Joseph Genualdi, Dec. 8, 1952-Dec. 20, 2025. Loving father of Gina (Christopher) Mendoza, Joe (Megan) Genualdi and the late Johnny Genualdi; beloved son of the late Frank and Mary Genualdi; fond grandfather of Jaedon, Brandon, Ava, Vince and Dom; dear brother of Angel (the late Curt) Schultz, the late Dominic and the late Anthony (Debbie) Genualdi; fond former spouse of RoseMarie Genualdi; loving uncle, cousin and friend of many. Arrangements by Carbonara Funeral Home. Interment Mary Hill Cemetery.

Hernandez

Carlos Hernandez, Nov. 9, 1963-Feb. 7, 2026. Carlos Hernandez passed away at the age of 62 in Chicago Illinois. Born on Nov. 9, 1963, to Miriam and Pablo Hernandez, he was the sixth child in a large and loving family of 14 children. He was a devoted husband, loving father and grandfather, and a dear son and brother. He is preceded in death by his wife Mayra Rosario, mother Miriam Hernandez and brother Baby Boy Hernandez. He is survived by his children – Jessica Hernandez, Yenitza Hernandez and Jonathan Valentin; his grandchildren – Daziel, Bryan, Ruby, Frandriel, Juleisy, Jessen and Jessiel; his beloved father – Pablo Hernandez; and his siblings – Humberto, Pablo Jr., Jose Luis, Frank, Elizabeth, Noel, Sarai, Damaris, Misael, Ariel, Daniel, Ruth Miriam and Heidi; and numerous nieces and nephews, as well as many cousins and friends. Carlos was a caring and loving man, always willing to help in any way he could. He was hardworking, smart, energetic and the kind of person who naturally took charge when needed. His laughter was contagious, and his beautiful smile could brighten any room. Above all, Carlos was a devoted father who adored his children, a loving husband who cherished his wife, and loved his parents and siblings unconditionally throughout his life. His presence, his strength and his love will forever remain in the hearts of those who knew him. “Carlos, we love you deeply and will carry your memory with us always. Your presence, your positive and high energy, will be greatly missed.” Arrangements by Carbonara Funeral Home. Interment Arlington Cemetery.

Lavenu

Marion Lavenu, Feb. 17, 1931-Jan. 16, 2026. Loving Mother of Suzanne “Sue” Kawahara, Carol Blacconiere and the late Robert Lavenu; beloved daughter of the late Walter and Edna Dierssen; cherished grandmother of Danielle (Will) Nelson, John (Liv) Blacconiere, Luke Blacconiere and the late Danny Kawahara; great-grandmother of Megan Nelson, Will Nelson, Sarah Nelson, Ava Nelson and Isabella Blacconiere; great-great-grandmother of Leo Daniel; loving cousin and friend of many. Arrangements by Carbonara Funeral Home. Interment Chapel Hill Garden Cemetery.

Lira

Anthony "Junior" Lira, April 13, 1950-Jan. 1, 2026. Cherished partner of Janice Hantosh; loving father of Anthony Jr.; beloved son of the late Roy and Lily Lira; dear brother of David Lira, Sandra Tagler, the late Ronald, the late Carol, the late DeeDee and the late Paula; loving grandfather, uncle, cousin and friend of many. Arrangements by Carbonara Funeral Home. Interment private.

Lugo

Maria De La Luz Lugo, June 1, 1941-Dec. 29, 2025. Dearly beloved wife of the late Daniel Lugo; loving madre of Danny (Selina) Lugo; Wally (Rita) Lugo and Eddie Lugo, whose lives were shaped by her strength, sacrifice, and unwavering love; cherished Abuela of Daniel Lugo, Gael Lugo, Sofia Lee Lugo, Olivia Lugo and Alyssa Lugo. Her love for her grandchildren was boundless, and her presence will be felt in their lives forever. Loving sister, aunt, cousin and friend to many. Arrangements by Carbonara Funeral Home. Interment private.

Macz

Edwin A. Macz, Aug. 6, 1961-Jan. 5, 2026. Dearly beloved husband of Maria Macz; loving father of Esther and Oscar Macz; cherished grandfather of Madelyn Macz; loving brother, uncle, cousin and friend of many. Arrangements by Carbonara Funeral Home. Interment private.

Mantinan

Angela Carmen Mantinan, Oct. 3, 1970-Jan. 28, 2026. Loving mother of Miguel Mantinan, Basilio Bursley and Jesenia Mantinan; beloved daughter of the late Graciliano Vega and Dolores Mantinan; cherished grandmother of Julian Mantinan, Alaya Martinez and Azaelia Martinez; loving sister, aunt, cousin and friend of many. Arrangements by Carbonara Funeral Home. Interment private.

McKay

Nettie McKay, Dec. 12, 1940-Dec. 21, 2025 Arrangements by Carbonara Funeral Home. Interment Oak Ridge Cemetery.

Patano

Mary Ann Patano, April 18, 1928-Jan. 26, 2026. Dearly beloved wife of the late Salvatore Patano; loving mother of Alexander (Lori) Patano and Jean (Kevin) Goheen; beloved daughter of the late Vittorio and Angelina Lachiano; cherished grandmother of Jennifer, Michelle, Ann, Logan, Megan, Angelina and Maria; loving great-grandmother, sister, aunt, cousin and friend of many. Mary Ann was a kind and wonderful woman who will be remembered for many things in life. Her love for her family was most important to her. Her willingness and love to start singing her favorite songs, and whether you are a friend or stranger, when you enter the room with Mary Ann be ready to answer the question "Do you want to play cards?". Arrangements by Carbonara Funeral Home. Interment Queen of Heaven Cemetery.

Polkow

Mr John P Polkow, Nov. 7, 1964-Feb. 10, 2026. Beloved husband of Yesenia Ortiz-Polkow; loving father of Alisha (Dan) Janociak, Stephen (Casey), Angelica (Miguel Fernandez) Bernaschina, Brian (Evelis) Bernaschina; beloved son of the late Harold and Elizabeth; fond papa of Aiden, Mason, Hunter and Zavier; dear brother of David (Judy), Linda (Roger) Bartkowicz, Mary (Peter) Gonzalez, Anne and Bill; loving uncle, cousin and friend of many. Proud volunteer of Bellwood Emergency Services. Proud member of Spectrum Pyrotechnics. Arrangements by Carbonara Funeral Home.

Ramirez

Juan Manuel Ramirez, June 12, 1973-Jan. 21, 2026. Dearly beloved husband of Marlen Ramirez; loving father of Antonia, Ryan, Abigail and Sophia; cherished son of Miguel and Emilia Ramirez; loving brother of Ana (Marco) Ramirez, Miguel Angel Ramirez and Jose Daniel Ramirez; loving uncle, cousin and friend of many. Arrangements by Carbonara Funeral Home. Interment Risen Lord Cemetery.

Rosa

Joseph P. Rosa, April 6, 1945-Dec. 26, 2025. Son of "Slicker" Sam Rosa and Zena (nee DiFrancesca) Rosa; father of Samara (Thomas) Condon, Sasha (Owen) Dougherty and Gabrielle Rosa (Maddy Arteaga); beloved "nano" of Carter Condon and Alex Dougherty; godfather to many. Devoted member of St. John Cantius Parish and Our Lady of Mt. Carmel of Melrose Park. Arrangements by Rago Brothers Funeral Homes.

Shelfo

Ellen Shelfo, April 26, 1945-Dec. 17, 2025. Dearly beloved wife of the late Louis Shelfo; loving mother of Joseph and Richard (Adriana) Shelfo; beloved daughter of the late Fredric and Mary Alice Salzbrunn; cherished grandmother of Isabella and Daniella Shelfo; dear sister of Bill Salzbrunn, Renee Salzbrunn, the late Jim Salzbrunn, Richard Salzbrunn, Rose Mary Haas (Salzbrunn), the late Bernard "Benny" Salzbrunn, Don Salzbrunn and Carol Pohlman; loving aunt, cousin and friend of many. Arrangements by Carbonara Funeral Home. Interment Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery.

Solivan

Ines Solivan, April 24, 1928-Jan. 9, 2026. Dearly beloved wife of the late Jorge Solivan; loving mother of Lynda (Joel) Alvarado and Jorge (Monique) Solivan; loving sister, aunt, cousin and friend of many. Arrangements by Carbonara Funeral Home. Interment Elmwood Cemetery.

Spacucello

Joseph J Spacucello, May 13, 1952-Dec. 20, 2025, 73. Loving husband of the late Laurette Spacucello (nee Sims); beloved son of the late Joseph A. Spacucello and Rose Spacucello (nee Cerone); loving brother of John (Leigh) Spacucello and Maria Spacucello; proud uncle of Rosa (Adis) Skenderovic; fun-loving great-uncle of Aiden and Noah Skenderovic; cherished cousin and devoted friend to many. Arrangements by Carbonara Funeral Home. Interment Mount Carmel Cemetery.

Tuccillo

Ms Phyllis Tuccillo, Dec. 25, 1923-Jan. 25, 2026. Loving mother of Jacquelyn Pesola and Carolyn Cassata; beloved daughter of the late Arturo and Elisa; cherished grandmother of Michelle Mazzacchi, Gina Taglia, Lisa Cassata, Michael Pesola and Kimberly Enright; great-grandmother of 17; great-great-grandmother of one; loving sister, aunt, cousin and friend of many. Arrangements by Carbonara Funeral Home. Interment private.

Williams

Linda Kay Williams, Aug. 5, 1954-Jan. 8, 2026, 71, passed away peacefully at home in Melrose Park, Illinois with her family by her side. She is survived by her husband – Michael Williams; her daughters – Tracy Smaron (Frank), Betty Marling (Mike) and Mary Smaron; as well as 11 grandchildren – Tommy Smaron III, Chassidy Wells, Taylor Napoli, Gianna Napoli, Samantha Napoli, Todd Napoli, Jr., Cortland Smaron, Joshua Koenig, Katelyn Koenig, Hailey Koenig and Jaxon Koenig. Linda was preceded in death by her parents, Betty Imogene Stover, Charles Albert Lang, Jr. and one child, Tommy Smaron. Arrangements by Carbonara Funeral Home. Interment private.

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