



Quarterly

A Publication of the 19th Ward Youth & Community Foundation
Matthew J. O'Shea

FEBRUARY 2024

10 WGN Radio
Vest-a-Thon
FUNDRAISER
SATURDAY,
FEBRUARY 24, 2024
10 A.M. - 1 P.M.

Tune into WGN Radio 720 AM or WGNRadio.com
to participate in this great event!
If you are interested in volunteering or sponsoring, please contact mattoshea@the19thward.com.
To donate, please visit www.cpdvest.com

The 19th Ward is partnering with **WGN Radio Home Sweet Home Chicago with David Hochberg** for this fundraiser supporting the **Chicago Police Memorial Foundation** and promote **Alderman Matt O'Shea's Get Behind the Vest Pancake Breakfast**.
Tune into AM Radio 720 to hear stories from Chicago Police Officers whose lives have been saved by bulletproof vests and learn more about the increased danger and difficult work they do.
Listeners who call in with donations will have the opportunity to win great prizes including skybox experiences for Chicago sports teams, sports memorabilia and much more!

SPONSORS:

ALDERMAN MATT O'SHEA'S
GET BEHIND THE VEST PANCAKE BREAKFAST

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 25th
8:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.
SAINT JOHN FISHER – KANE HALL
10200 S. Washtenaw Ave., Chicago
Tickets: \$5 per person / \$25 per family
All proceeds will benefit the Chicago Police Memorial Foundation's Get Behind the Vest Campaign.

When Chicago Police Officers are hired, they receive a new bulletproof vest. However, a vest isn't bulletproof forever.
It wears out. It breaks down. It needs to be replaced every 5 years. Just one bullet permanently damages a vest, making it unusable. Chicago Police Officers are responsible for replacing their own vests. At \$500 or more per vest, in addition to other equipment and uniform expenses, the costs can quickly add up. That's why we need your help.
The Chicago Police Memorial Foundation has paid out more than \$4.9 million to purchase over 12,000 replacement vests for Chicago Police Officers and at least 500 more in 2023. The initiative is ongoing and we project 500 officers a year will need new vests in the future.
This event has raised over \$500,000 to date.



For more information, please contact Matt O'Shea at mattoshea@the19thward.com or (773) 238-8766.

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WE'RE PROUD TO SUPPORT THE 19TH WARD YOUTH FOUNDATION

Being Beverly's neighborhood bank means more than just offering solid banking solutions. It means doing our part to give back to the local charities and social organizations that unite and strengthen our area. We're particularly proud to support the 19th Ward Youth Foundation and its commitment to providing quality recreational opportunities for children and teens.

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CHECK OUT THESE PAW-SOME BENEFITS WITH THE JUNIOR SAVERS CLUB®!

(Must be under age 22. Ask personal banker for details.)

- ✓ FREE Junior Savers Club® events, activities, sweepstakes, and giveaways all year long!
- ✓ Earn interest on every dollar in your Junior Savers account.¹
- ✓ NO minimum deposit to open.²

1. Junior Savers Account. At account opening, child(ren) must be accompanied by a parent or guardian and present a valid Social Security number(s). **2. Fees.** A maintenance fee of \$5.00 will be imposed every calendar month if the balance in the account falls below \$200.00 any day of the calendar month once the Junior Saver has reached the age of 22. Transaction limitations will apply. Fees may reduce earnings. **A listing of Wintrust Financial Corporation locations can be found here:** wintrust.com/locations.



Rep. Mary Gill Seeks to Preserve LSCs Right to Decide on Police Protection

State Rep. Mary Gill introducing legislation to ensure that Chicago Local School Councils (LSC) maintain the authority to decide if Chicago Police officers are assigned to their schools.

Gill’s proposed change to state law would preempt the Chicago Board of Education’s reported plan to strip LSC members of that decision-making power, which would effectively end the practice of having resource officers in any Chicago Public School.

“The parents, community members, and teachers elected to serve on their LSC understand their school’s environment better than anyone else,” Gill said. “They are in the best position to determine whether the presence of a police officer is good for their school, not the downtown CPS bureaucracy.”

Gill is a former public-school teacher and CPS graduate. Prior to becoming a state representative last year, she served as a member of the LSC for the Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences.

“The Illinois state legislature created Chicago Local School Councils nearly 30 years ago in order to give parents, community residents, teachers, and principals a bigger role in how each school is run,” Gill said. “Unfortunately,

the Chicago Board of Education has sought to strip power from the LSCs ever since. With this legislation, I am asking my colleagues to ensure parents still have a say in our children’s safety.”

State Rep. Angelica Guerrero-Cuellar, D-Chicago, will be a chief co-sponsor on this legislation.

“The LSC understands the pulse of the school. Made up of teachers, parents and community members, they know their school community best and should make decisions about school security,” Guerrero-Cuellar said. “The LSC may want police presence for a wide variety of reasons, including the worst-case scenario of a school shooting. It should be their decision on how to protect their students and school community.”

Carisa Parker, community engagement coordinator of the Chicago Police District 22 Council and chair of the LSC at Morgan Park High School is working collaboratively with Gill on this measure.

“Local School Councils were cre-

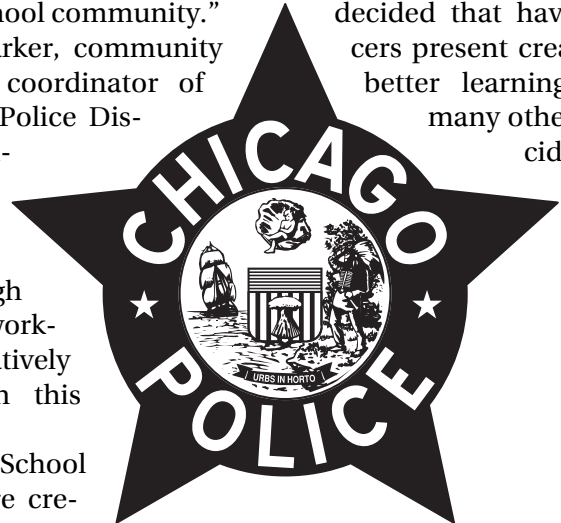
ated to give voice to the school community,” Parker said. “We are comprised of elected individuals who are entrusted with doing what is best for our student body. It is alarming to me that the Chicago Board of Education would consider, without due cause or process, taking the decision away from LSCs.”

Last week, several news outlets reported that CPS officials had informed high school principals that the Board of Education had decided to remove police officers from all schools, starting this summer. According to a report in the Chicago Sun-Times, school councils at 39 of CPS’s 91 high schools have voted to have police officers.

“While the LCS I served on decided that having police officers present creates a safer and better learning environment, many other LSCs have decided to go in the



opposite direction,” Gill said. “I respect their point of view and I want to ensure that those LSCs and the LSC I served on remain empowered to decide what is best for their school.”



New Speed Camera Locations to Improve Pedestrian Safety

The Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) will install automated speed enforcement cameras at three locations in our community this month to reduce traffic speed and enhance pedestrian safety. Under state law, cameras must be within 660 feet adjacent to a park or school location. The new locations in our community are 2710 W. 103rd St. (St. John Fisher School), 10525 S. Western Ave. (King Lockhart Park), and 1700 W. 99th St. (Ridge Park/Beverly Montessori School).

Fines are \$35 for traveling 6 to 10 mph over the speed limit and \$100 for traveling 11 or more mph over the speed limit. Enforcement hours for school cameras are limited to 7:00am-7:00pm on school days and 6:00am to 11:00pm every day for park cameras. CDOT has also put forth a comprehensive public education plan to help drivers avoid citations.

Each camera location will also include signage warning motorists of the automated speed enforcement camera ahead. Driv-

ers approaching the camera from any direction will pass at least one warning sign before they encounter the camera. In addition, each camera will have a 30-day warning period during which motorists exceeding the speed limit will receive a warning notice in the mail but no ticket.

Once the 30-day warning period is over, the cameras will be turned off for two weeks to allow time for all warning notices to be received. At the end of that two-week period, the regular violation process will begin.

Vehicles with no previous automated speed camera violations will receive a one-time warning once the camera is active; please note, this warning is only provided to vehicles that have never received a speed citation from any camera in Chicago.

All three of these cameras will enforce the speed in both directions of travel and will issue citations regardless of the direction a vehicle is traveling. Drivers are allowed to contest the ticket if they believe it was issued in error.



19th Ward

YOUTH & COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

BLOOD DRIVE

SUNDAY, MARCH 10, 2024

8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

ST. CHRISTINA - PARISH CENTER
 (enter thru school parking lot or 110th & Christiana)
 11034 S. Christiana Avenue, Chicago

In order to ensure appropriate social distancing, appointments are required and can be made at either www.communityblood.org or 1-800-280-4102.

Use code CS01 to locate this blood drive.

Bring Photo ID to Appointment.

No Walk-ins/Appointments Only

www.communityblood.org

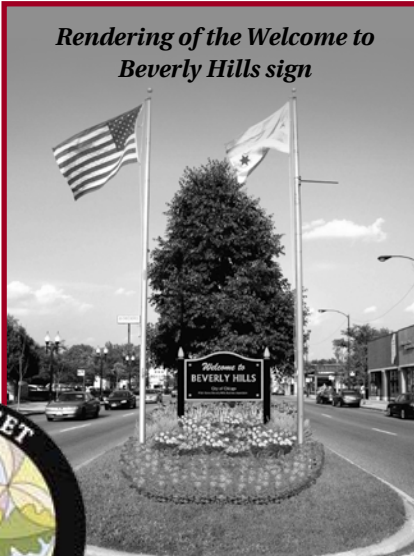
Final Phase of 95th Street Streetscape Begins this Summer

This summer, construction will begin on the final phase of Streetscape Improvements on the 95th Street business corridor. Building on the success of the first three phases of this work, the final phase will improve the area from Wood Street to Ashland Avenue. The project will include full width roadway resurfacing, new curb and gutter, new sidewalk and ADA ramps, pedestrian refuge islands, new ornamental street lighting with energy efficient LED lighting, stamped crosswalks, paver parkways with new trees, site furnishings, light pole community identifiers, landscaped planters, and an improved connection to the Major Taylor Trail.

This final phase of streetscape represents a \$5.9 million investment in our community. The project will be going out to bid soon with an anticipated contract award this spring. Construction is expected to begin this summer and conclude in summer of 2025.



Streetscape improvements will include ornamental light poles, brick pavers, and flower planters along 95th Street.



Rendering of the Welcome to Beverly Hills sign



Ornamental streetlights that include a community identifier medallion.

PRE-PARADE FUNDRAISER

SATURDAY MARCH 2 2024

3:00PM TO 8:00PM AT 115 BOURBON STREET

PAT FINNEGAN & FRIENDS

KIERAN BYRNE

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COST

\$50 AT THE DOOR

INCLUDES BUD LIGHT DRAFT BEER, WINE, POP, WATER FOOD AND MUSIC

FOR TICKETS, PLEASE VISIT

www.SouthsideIrishParade.org

NEEDS YOUR HELP

DURING THIS ST. PATRICK'S DAY APPEAL

OUR SHELVES ARE IN NEED OF:

• Hot and cold cereals	• Cake mix	• Canned chili no beans	• Snack bars
• Bottled water	• Pancake mix	• Sloppy joe chili	• Tea bags
• Bottled juices	• Pancake syrup	• Manwich chili	• Toothpaste
• Baby formula	• Spaghetti	• Spam	• Toothbrushes
• Baby diapers	• Spaghetti sauce	• Chef boyardee	• Dentures cleaners
• Adult diapers	• Pasta	assorted products	• Bar soap
• Canned tuna	• Stove Top dressing	• Boxed sugar	• Dish detergents
• Canned chicken	• Mac and Cheese	• Boxed mashed potatoes	• Kleenex tissue
• Canned salmon	• Pork and beans	• Hot sauce	• Disposable latex gloves (lg & md)
• Condiments	• Baked beans	• Milk products	• Wrapped frozen packaged meats
• Corn muffin mix	• Hormel chili with beans		
• Cranberry sauce			

WE ARE ALSO IN NEED OF MONETARY DONATIONS

Donate \$20, \$30, \$40, \$50, \$100 or \$200 to help out with discounted and tax-exempt bulk food purchases from local businesses.

You can now donate online at www.maplemorganparkfoodpantry.org or checks, cashier checks and sealed cash envelopes are welcome.

Make checks payable to: Maple Morgan Park Food Pantry, 11030 S Longwood Dr., Chicago, IL 60643-4012

11030 S Longwood Dr., Chicago, IL 773-239-3013

SAFE / CONTACT-FREE DROPOFF EVENT

Curbside drop-offs only – in the parking lot

Wednesday, March 13, 2024

12:00 P.M. - 3:00 P.M.

*Note: per food guidelines/regulations, non-perishable food items must be sealed, unopened and unused.

19th Ward Seeks Election Judges

The Chicago Board of Elections is seeking individuals to serve as election judges for the Presidential Election on Tuesday, March 19, 2024. Election judges administer election procedures in polling places and ensure that voters’ rights are protected and respected on Election Day. Election judges receive pay for their services. Election judges are the officials responsible for the conduct of the election in the polling place. Responsibilities include opening the polling place and setting up the voting equipment by 5:00 am on Election Day; conducting a fair, impartial and secure election in the polling place; and tabulating the vote totals for the precinct and transmitting the results to Election central after the polls close at 7:00 pm.

“Election judges serve an important role in our democratic process, by ensuring an unbiased and uncompromised voting location,” said Alderman O’Shea. “Being an Election Judge is a great way for people to not only meet neighbors in their community, but also take an active role in the election process.”



Among the requirements to become a Judge of Election, individuals must:

- I am a U.S. citizen.
- I am a registered voter in Cook County (if 18 or older).
- I can speak, read, and write English.
- I am not a committeeperson, precinct captain or candidate, and will not serve as a judge if I become one.
- I am not a registered sex offender anywhere in the United States and have not committed a crime that would require me to register as a sex offender in the United States.

Election Judges can earn anywhere from \$170 to \$255 for their service. Payment is based on completion of training and service on Election Day.

For more information on being an Election Judge, please visit www.chicagoelections.gov.

Citywide Composting Program Available Now

Last fall, the Chicago Department of Streets and Sanitation launched a citywide Food Scrap Drop-Off Composting program. Roughly 17% of all household waste is food scraps that could be diverted from our landfills. Now, all Chicago residents are welcome to drop off their household food scraps at one of 15 composting locations across the City for free. In our area, the drop-off location is at 11059 S. Homewood Ave. (immediately behind the 22nd District Chicago Police Station).

To register, please visit www.chicagorecycles.org. Once registered, please begin collecting food scraps in a container with a lid in your home. Once full, you can bring your container to the drop site and deposit the scraps in one of the green containers. Please note, no bags or liners of any kind (even bags that are compostable) can be deposited in the compost drop-off bin.

Drop-off sites are open daily from 7:00am-7:00pm, please help fill one green cart completely before adding food scraps to an empty cart to help conserve cart liners. Each cart has a latch on the lid to prevent

wildlife from opening the cart, following all drop offs, please ensure that the latch is securely closed.

If you choose to use a bag or liner in your container at home, please empty the bag into the green composting cart and then use the black carts on site to dispose of your bag or liner. Once emptied, residents are encouraged to rinse out at home containers before refilling. A 5-gallon bucket with a lid can also be used as a larger container.

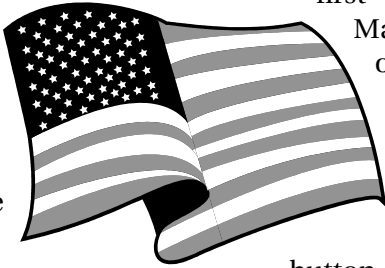


When filling your container, please be mindful that food items are the only acceptable materials for this program. This includes fruit & vegetable scraps, cooked food, meat, fish and bones, dairy, eggshells, bread & grains, coffee grounds and tea leaves (all filters must be removed). Items that cannot be accepted include bags of any kind, including compostable bags, pet waste, napkins or other paper products, food ware or packaging, yard waste, pizza boxes, liquids, produce stickers, and rubber bands.

For more information on recycling and the Food Scrap Drop-Off program, including drop off sites and where to sign up, please visit www.chicagorecycles.org.

3/19 Election Information

Tuesday, March 19, 2024 is Illinois’ Presidential Primary Election; the polls will be open from 6:00 am to 7:00 pm. On the ballot this time are federal offices like President of United States, Senators, Representatives, and all Congressmen. Cook County Offices including State’s Attorney, Clerk of the Circuit Court, and Metropolitan Water Reclamation District Commissioner, several judges and more. Make sure your voice is heard – vote in this and every election. All voters are eligible to participate in this election via early voting, voting by mail, or voting on Election Day.



VOTE BY MAIL

Any registered voter may Vote by Mail. Voters do not need a reason or excuse to Vote by Mail. To request to Vote by Mail, you must first complete a Vote by Mail application either online or using a paper form. To apply online, please visit www.chicagoelections.gov and click on the “Voting” button at the top left hand of the home page. Paper forms are available at the 19th Ward Office, 10400 S. Western Ave. or can be downloaded from www.chicagoelections.gov. Vote by Mail applications must be received by the Chicago Board of Elections by 5:00 pm on Thursday, March 14, 2024.

Upon receiving your completed application, the Chicago Board of Elections will mail you a ballot with return instructions. All Vote by Mail ballots must be post marked on or before Tuesday, March 19th to be counted. Please note, ballots cast in Early Voting or Vote by Mail are final; after casting ballots in either method, voters may not return to amend, change, or undo a ballot for any reason. Questions? Call 312-269-7900 or visit chicagoelections.gov.

EARLY VOTING

Early voting is available at Mount Greenwood Park (3721 W. 111th St.) starting on Monday, March 4th through Election Day on Monday, March 19th and at the Board of Elections Early Voting Super Site (191 N. Clark) and Board Offices (69 W. Washington, 6th floor) Hours of operation are:

- Weekdays: 9:00 am - 6:00 pm
- Saturday: 9:00 am - 5:00 pm
- Sunday: 10:00 am - 4:00 pm
- Election Day: 6:00 am - 7:00 pm (March 19)

Game Night Celebrates Black History Month at Esmond Elementary

Cook County Sherriff Tom Dart, Alderman Matt O’Shea and Esmond Elementary School will host a black history month game night for students on Wednesday, February 28th. The event will feature games and activities that celebrate African American history and culture. Games will provide

opportunities for students to learn more about important figures in black history and honor the important contributions made by African Americans. The event will also include food and prizes for participants. If you would like to donate a prize for this event, please email mattoshea@the19thward.com.

SXU to Host Free Adult Hearing Screening

Who:	Open to the public
What:	Adult Hearing Screening
Where:	Ludden Speech and Language Clinic, 3700 W. 103rd Street, Chicago, IL 60655
When:	Friday, February 16, 9 a.m. to noon
More info:	Receive a free adult hearing screening at SXU’s Ludden Speech and Language Clinic, hosted by the Communication Sciences and Disorders Division. To make an appointment, call 773-298-3564. For any questions, please contact Melanie Greenspan at greenspan@sxu.edu .



By investing in the BAC, you provide our neighborhood and community with lively arts and entertainment offerings. You help ensure the sustainability of a lively space that enriches the lives of adults, children, and families. You support working and aspiring artists through art, education, and performance opportunities.



**VISIT OUR
WEBSITE**

www.thebeverlyartscenter.com

19th Ward Get Behind the Vest Pancake Breakfast Returns Sunday, February 25th, with Third Annual Vest-A-Thon Scheduled for Saturday, February 24th

19th Ward Alderman Matt O'Shea's 10th Annual Get Behind the Vest Pancake Breakfast will be held on Sunday, February 25th 8:00am-12:00 pm at St. John Fisher School (10200 S. Washtenaw Ave). Additionally, Ald. O'Shea will once again join forces with WGN-AM Radio's Home Sweet Home Chicago with David Hochberg, to host a "Vest-A-Thon" on Saturday, February 24th.

The Get Behind the Vest Pancake Breakfast and Radiothon benefits the Chicago Police Memorial Foundation's (CPMF) initiative, which purchases bullet proof vests for Chicago Police officers.

Admission to the Pancake Breakfast is \$5 per person or \$25 for families, which includes all you can eat Original Pancake House – Beverly pancakes, and sausage.

The WGN Radio Vest-A-Thon will be aired live on WGN-AM/720 AM from 10:00 am – 1:00 pm on Saturday. The Vest-a-Thon will feature stories of officers whose lives have been impacted by bullet proof vests, who will share their perspective on the increasingly difficult work they do each day. Donors to the Vest-A-Thon will have

the opportunity to win incredible prizes including skybox experiences at many of Chicago's best teams, sports paraphernalia, and much more.

Donations will also be accepted by visiting cpdvest.com, or by calling 872-262-8378 (VEST). To volunteer, donate sports tickets, or other items to be given away throughout the Vest-a-Thon, please e-mail mattoshea@the19thward.com.

"Chicago Police officers have extremely difficult jobs, and see and experience things that most of

us could never dream of," said Ald. O'Shea. "We must provide our officers with all the tools possible to ensure that they are safe, and will return home to their loved ones at the end of each shift. It is imperative that Chicago Police officers have access to equipment with the latest technology advancements, and the funds raised through the Get Behind The Vest Pancake Breakfast and Vest-A-Thon will help to provide that."

In the past ten years, Ald. O'Shea's Get Behind the Vest Pancake Breakfast has raised hundreds

of thousands of dollars to purchase bullet proof vests for Chicago Police Officers, which need to be replaced every five years. After receiving a complimentary vest when they join the force, it is the officer's responsibility to replace their vest at an expense of at least \$600. To date, the Chicago Police Memorial Foundation has replaced almost 13,000 vests for officers, with 1,000 more slated in 2024.

Ald. O'Shea sits on the Chicago Police Memorial Foundation Advisory Board and the Chicago Police Chaplains Ministry Board of Directors. He represents the communities of Beverly Morgan Park and Mount Greenwood, where thousands of first responders reside.

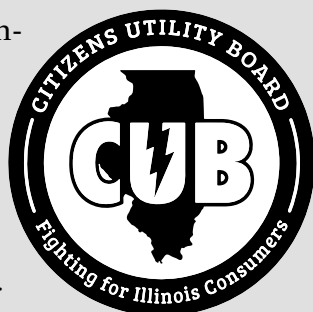
The Get Behind the Vest Pancake Breakfast is generously co-hosted by Saint John Fisher Parish, the Harrigan Family and the Original Pancake House (Beverly).

For more information on Alderman Matt O'Shea's Pancake Breakfast, benefiting the Get Behind the Vest initiative, or to support this great cause, please call 773.238.8766 or visit www.the19thward.com



Citizen Utility Board Hosts Virtual Presentations for Home Energy Savings and Cable Options & Reducing Robocalls

Alderman Matt O'Shea, Senator Bill Cunningham, State Representative Mary Gill, and the Citizens Utility Board (CUB) will host two virtual presentations on Tuesday, April 2nd from 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm, and Thursday, April 4th from 6:00 pm – 7:00 pm. There is no cost for these webinars. To reserve your spot today, visit the19thward.com.



Home Energy Savings:

Tuesday, April 2nd at 1:00 pm

Are you concerned about the rise in utility prices? Join CUB for information about how to reduce your energy usage. This event is designed to help you better understand the ins and outs of your bill, and avoid utility scams, as well as programs designed to save you money and energy. Bring all your utility-related questions.

Understanding Cable Options & Reducing Robocalls:

Thursday, April 4th at 6:00 pm

CUB will present the different choices in the TV market, ways to cut your cable costs, whether or not to keep cable, alternatives to satellite or cable, and streaming services available to consumers. In addition, CUB will discuss the different types of robocalls, how to avoid common robocall scams, call-blocking services and what they mean for your pocket, and new proposed federal legislation.

For money-saving advice and consumer tips, visit www.citizensutilityboard.org.

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- Test prep including ACT & SAT
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Debra Gawrys,
M.A. Ed
Owner

Illinois changes license requirements for senior drivers

After a study showed senior citizens are among the safest drivers in Illinois, the state legislature approved a new rule to raise the age at which mandatory driving tests are required, Senator Bill Cunningham announced.

The Joint Committee on Administrative Rules, a legislative committee chaired by Cunningham, okayed raising the age requirement for taking mandatory driving tests from 75 to 79. The recommendation to adjust the age requirement for senior drivers was made by Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias.

“As Secretary of State, road safety is a top priority of mine,” Giannoulias said in a statement released by his office. “Statistics show that seniors are among the safest drivers of any age category.

This change would make Illinois driving standards for senior drivers more consistent compared to other states while keeping Illinois as one of the strictest states for license renewals.”

The change in age requirements was prompted in part by social distancing policies that were put in place by the Covid-19 pandemic. In an effort to reduce crowding at Secretary of State offices and limit close contact between driving instructors and seniors, a temporary emergency rule was put in place relaxing some license renewal requirement for senior citizens. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) studied accident rates during the period the emergency rule was in place in 2022 and reported the relaxed restrictions did not result in increased crash rates

for drivers 75 and older. The crash rate for drivers in that age group was 24.39 traffic accidents per 1000 drivers, which is a lower than crash than almost every other age group.

“The temporary loosening of certain licenses restrictions on senior drivers during the pandemic gave IDOT the ability to study whether or not Illinois’ strict requirements for drivers over 75 were necessary,” Cunningham said. “While crash rates went up nationally during the pandemic for almost all age groups, we found no increase in crash rates for Illinois drivers 75 and older. That is proof that older drivers are safer motorists than most young drivers. It makes sense that we adjust our license requirements for seniors based on these findings.”

State records show there are more than 9.1 million licensed drivers in Illinois. Of those, approximately 280,000 individuals between the ages of 75 and 78 will be impacted by the relaxed age requirements. Even with the new rules in place, Illinois will remain one of the most restrictive states in the nation when it comes to licensing senior drivers. Additionally, this requirement will help reduce the number of drivers attempting to access Secretary of State facilities throughout the year resulting in lower waiting times.

According to the Secretary of

State’s Office, Illinois is the only state in the nation that requires senior drivers to have their behind-the-wheel skills tested on a regular basis. The last two states that mandated driving tests for seniors did away with them in 2011 (New Hampshire) and 2005 (Indiana).

Current Illinois law would remain unchanged when it comes to renewing drivers for other age groups:

- All drivers below the age of 81 must renew their licenses every four years.
- Drivers aged 79 and 80 must take a vision and driving test (if their four-year renewal is up during this time period).
- Drivers aged 81 to 86 must take a vision and driving test every two years.
- Drivers aged 87 and older must take a vision and driving test every year.

“It seems that some of our license restrictions might be based on false assumptions about senior drivers,” Cunningham said. “Secretary Giannoulias is to be commended for his efforts to adjust senior driving requirements based on actual traffic safety statistics. We should continue to evaluate the data and consider changes that reflect the reality that seniors are among our safest drivers.”



Knights of Columbus Feed Special Olympics Snowshoeing Competitors

Father Perez Knights of Columbus Council #1444 Knights, family members, and friends grilled hot dogs, put them on buns, wrapped them in foil and provided condiments, chips, and soft drinks for 85 competitors during the Illinois Special Olympics Area D Snowshoeing hosted by Mount Greenwood Special Recreation on Saturday, December 9th.


The participants raced in snowshoes in 50 meters, 100 meters, 400 meters, and 4 X 100 meters relay events. Those who earned a gold medal in their division are now eligible to advance to the State Winter Games in Galena, Illinois February 6-February 8, 2024.

According to Father Perez Special Olympics chairman Sir Knight Marty McCue, “The lack of snow did not diminish the joy we witnessed in the eyes of the racers. Our members enjoy the chance to be face to face with those whose programs receive support from our generous community through our annual ‘Tootsie Roll Drive’. There

is no better way for our member to realize how their hard work during the ‘Tootsie Roll Drive’ influences lives in so many ways”.

In 1909, seven Catholic men organized to establish a Knights of Columbus Council in St. Brendan Parish on Chicago’s Southside. What began as a small, local parish-based fraternal establishment has since grown to be a leader among Illinois Councils in membership. Its roster includes more than 700 members from several parishes. Moreover, the council continuously tops the state in revenues from the Council’s “Tootsie Roll Drive”, the Newman Fund Drive, scholarships for eighth graders matriculating to Catholic high schools, support for seminarians and religious vocations, food banks and needy families, blood drives, and ultrasound machines.





19TH WARD

DOCUMENT SHREDDING


Please note, this event is for document shredding only.
We will not have electronics recycling available.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2024
9:00 A.M. - 11:00 A.M.
CROSSWINDS CHURCH
10835 S. PULASKI RD.

This service is provided free of charge, but is open to 19th Ward residents only. Documents are shredded onsite.
Only documents that are loose can be shredded; please remove any staples or binders before you arrive.

SPONSORED BY:


Matt O'SHEA
19TH WARD ALDERMAN

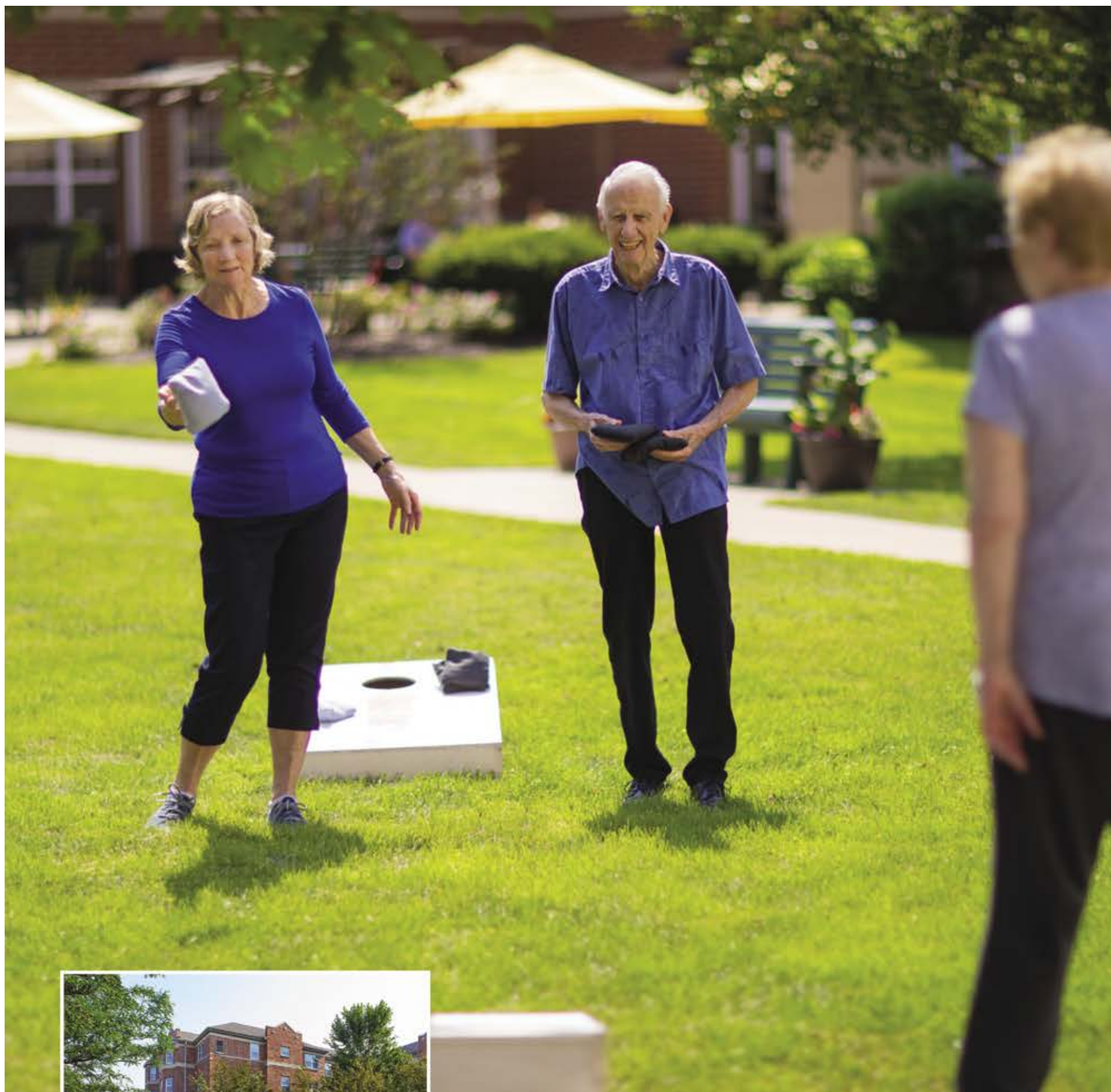


BILL CUNNINGHAM
STATE SENATOR

Mary GILL
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
35th DISTRICT

CROSSWINDS CHURCH





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South Side Irish St. Patrick’s Day Parade Kicks Off Festivities with Pre-Parade Fundraiser

Pre Parade Party set for March 2 at 115 Bourbon Street

One of Chicago’s most well-known traditions, the South Side Irish St. Patrick’s Day Parade, will kick off the festivities with a pre-parade party to inspire the Spirit of Saint Patrick on Saturday, March 2, 2024. The event will feature the selection of the South Side Irish Parade Queen, live Irish music, buffet food, beverages and much more. The party will be held from 3:00 p.m. to 8 p.m. at 115 Bourbon Street located at 3359 West 115th Street, Merrionette Park, IL, 60803. Admission includes a dinner buffet, draft beer and wine. Live music of Kieran Bryne and The Avondale Ramblers will be featured inside the Performance Hall along with a special appearance by the Chicago Stock Yard Kilty Band. The fun evening celebrating Irish heritage will also offer a quieter approach with Irish traditional music sessions featuring Pat Finnegan

and Friends. Proceeds from the fundraising event help offset operating expenses to produce the annual parade set for Sunday, March 17. Tickets are available for purchase at the door or in advance on the Parade website store, <https://southsideirishparade.org/product/kickoff-to-parade-season-party/> “We are excited to see everyone come together at the South Side Irish Kick-Off Party event for 2024. This great evening helps us to raise funds that keeps our tradition of marching down Western Avenue alive and thriving” said Marianne Rowan Leslie, this year’s chair of the South Side Irish Parade Committee. “We also encourage families and businesses to consider



purchasing a street pole banner as a great way to both honor your name and show your support for the Parade,” added Leslie. To purchase a customized street pole banner, visit the store <https://southsideirishparade.org/product/street-pole-banner/> **About The South Side Irish Parade:** The parade is operated by the South Side Irish St. Patrick’s Day Parade and Heritage Foundation, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, where more than 100 volunteers work year-round to ensure this family-friendly celebration continues for future generations. The parade is generously supported by major sponsors including by Tullamore D.E.W. the official Irish Whiskey of the Parade,

Lakeshore Beverage, Ozinga, The Beverly Review, IUOE Local 399, Old National Bank, Chicago White Sox, Med Express Spa, Local 150, Midwest Express Clinic, Ullico Inc., Flood Brothers, Home Run Inn Beverly, UPAT District 14, Chicago City Soccer Club ComEd, County Fair Foods, Hilton Chicago/Oak Lawn, OSF Little Company of Mary Medical Center, UICE Local 2, Mercedes-Benz of Orland Park, Marquette Bank, Megent Financial, Nascar Chicago Street Race, McCready Law, Dunkin’, Guinness, BudLight, Green River, Roofers and Waterproofers Local 11, JDog Junk Haulers and South Side Irish Imports and more. Visit southsideirishparade.org and the parade’s Facebook page for more information on the kick off party and the South Side Irish Parade.

Scouts BSA Troop 609 Hosts Second Annual Don Eppley Memorial Pancake Breakfast

Troop 609 invites the community to attend its annual pancake breakfast

Scouts BSA Troop 609, based in the Beverly / Morgan Park neighborhood of Chicago, invites the community to attend the second annual Don Eppley Memorial Pancake Breakfast on Saturday, March 16, 2024, 7:30am-12:30pm at Morgan Park United Methodist Church, 11030 S. Longwood Ave., Chicago, IL 60643. Suggested donation is \$10 per person; children preschool aged and younger are free. All proceeds from the pancake breakfast benefit the programs of Troop 609, which has served youth in the community for over 100 years. Back by popular demand, Cub Scout Pack 3609 will hold a bake sale as part of the event. Troop 609 has a long tradition of holding a pancake breakfast in mid-March on the weekend of the South Side Irish Parade. In 2023, the Troop decided to rename the event in honor of Don Eppley, Scoutmaster of Troop 609 for 52 years: 1975-2017.

Scouting is a proud tradition in the Eppley family. Don’s grandfather served as one of the first Scoutmasters of the troop in 1927. His two brothers, a son, a nephew and a grandson are all Troop 609 Eagle Scouts. **EVENT DETAILS** Scout Troop 609 Second Annual Don Eppley Memorial Pancake Breakfast Saturday, March 16, 2024 7:30am-12:30pm Morgan Park United Methodist Church 11030 S. Longwood Ave. Chicago, IL 60643 Cost: \$10 per person suggested donation Children preschool aged and younger FREE Event URL: <https://fb.me/e/49bFA5ZN4>

About Scouts BSA Troop 609 Boy Scout Troop 609 of the Pathway to Adventure Council (formerly Chicago Area Council) was Chartered by the Boy Scouts of America to Morgan Park Baptist Church on February 10, 1922. Troop 609 has the longest consecutive number of summers under its own adult leadership at Chicago Area Council’s Owasippe Scout Reservation located near Whitehall, Michigan. Scout Troop 609 has been teaching the Scout Oath and Law to boys since 1922 and to girls since 2019. Troop 609 has served countless youth in the Beverly / Morgan Park community, and produced over 100 Eagle Scouts in its 100 year history. www.scouting609.com



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Chris Webber, Diane, and staff are amazing! They consistently go above and beyond to provide excellent, personalized service. They have guided my son and me through some really difficult situations, and always provide calm and reassurance. A few years ago, we had a house fire on a Friday night. Chris was physically at my door Barn Saturday morning to make sure we were ok! I am consistently amazed at the service they provide. They are honest, caring, supportive, and just really kind people. I frequently brag to all of my friends and family about what a great State Farm agent I have, and how I never feel like a random, unidentified customer when I call. I think I've been with them for about 10 years now and I have no intention of ever leaving. This is the best customer service I've ever had, although it feels more like family!! Thank you Chris, Diane, and team for all that you do! We truly appreciate you all!!

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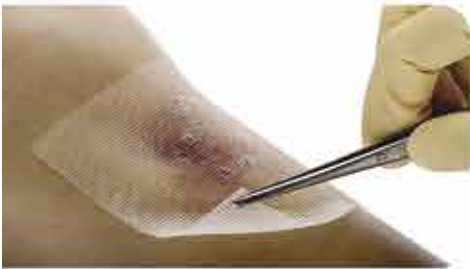
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MAIN STAGE

EVENTS



8-18
FEBRUARY

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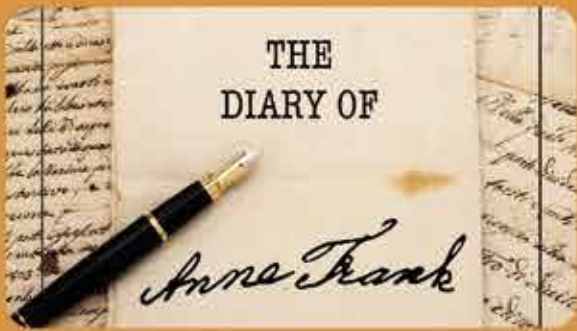
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4-14
APRIL

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6-16
JUNE

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South Side Irish St. Patrick's Day Parade Announces Ronald McDonald House Charities of Chicagoland & Northwest Indiana as 2024 Grand Marshal and Smith Village as Parade Honoree

The South Side Irish St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee announces Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Chicagoland & Northwest Indiana (RMHC-CNI) will lead this year's parade as the Grand Marshal. Smith Village, celebrating its 100th year of senior living in the Beverly community was named the 2024 Parade Honoree. The Grand Marshal will lead the parade set to step off at noon on Sunday, March 17 from 103rd and Western in Chicago's Beverly/Morgan Park neighborhood.

"We are delighted to announce this year's Grand Marshal, Ronald McDonald House Charities of Chicagoland & Northwest Indiana, who provide families with amazing respite and the resources they need as their children undergo complex medical care at area pediatric hospitals. We are inspired to have them lead our annual march down Western Avenue sharing the needs of so many families they serve" shares Marianne Rowan Leslie, chair of the South Side Irish St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee. Juxtapose this Grand Marshal choice with the Honoree and the joy that seniors have found for a century living at Smith Village, a unique senior living community right here in the heart of Beverly and along the Parade route. "Both our Grand Marshal and Honoree are incredible organizations reflective of the core values of the Parade Committee," adds Leslie.

Holly Buckendahl, Chief Executive Officer of Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Chicagoland & Northwest Indiana, adds, "We are honored to be recognized as the 2024 South Side Irish St. Patrick's Day Parade Grand Marshal. Much like Ronald McDonald House, the parade is so deeply rooted in family and community, and we couldn't imagine a better collaboration. Through our Ronald McDonald House in Oak Lawn, along with nine additional program locations throughout the Chicagoland area, we help families in our community get better together. We are so excited to be a part of this memorable community event."

The first Ronald McDonald House in Chicago and the second in the world opened in 1977 and over the past 45 years, RMHC-CNI has helped more than 150,000 families stay close to their hospitalized children through its six Ronald McDonald Houses® and four Ronald McDonald Family Rooms® across the Chicagoland area. Each program location provides support to families while their children are being treated at nearby hospitals through comfortable, private

rooms so families can get a good night's rest, fresh meals to return to after long days at the hospital, and so much more. In addition, the Ronald McDonald Care Mobile® program provides medical services to children in underserved neighborhoods, offering health care treatment, vaccinations, and distributing backpacks with food and supplies.

In 2023, RMHC-CNI served over 11,500 children and 8,700 families, enabling families to save over \$9 million in food, lodging and travel expenses during their child's critical medical treatment.

For a limited time, RMHC-CNI is offering exclusive "Get Shamrock'd" themed yard sign kits for \$125. When you purchase a kit, you're not only showing your support for RMHC-CNI and the South Side Irish Parade, you're helping children and families get better together during their greatest time of need. For more information, visit ronaldhousechicago.org.

Smith Village, celebrating 100 years on the Southwest side of Chicago has been selected as the Parade Honoree.

"Over the past century of caring for older adults, Smith Village is grateful to the support of Chicago business and civic leaders who have helped the community thrive," says Kevin McGee, president and CEO of Smith Senior Living. "Situated near the end of the parade route, we look forward to this wonderful celebration of culture every year, and we are grateful to be recognized as an honoree."

During 2024, Smith Village, a not-for-profit community sponsored by Smith Senior Living, is celebrating a century of caring for older adults. The community originally opened in 1924 as Oak Haven Old People's Home. In 1929, the estate of Emilie Smith gave \$1.75 million to the community which was renamed Washington and Jane Smith Home to honor her parents.

From 1930 to 1960,, the community has expanded four times to accommodate the growing need for senior care and housing. A fifth time in 1991, occurred with the addition of a three-story skilled nursing care wing along Oakley Avenue. In 2004, the Smith Senior Living board of directors launched a \$65 million redevelopment plan to create the first continuing care retirement community in the area offering independent living, assisted living, memory care, skilled

nursing care and rehab. The community was renamed Smith Village to mark the transformation. Smith Village builds on a century of care for older adults, evolving to enhance daily life and offer residents the care they need. For more information, visit SmithVillage.org.

Pre-Parade Fundraising Party

The South Side Irish Parade will kick off the festivities with a pre-parade fundraiser on Saturday, March 2, 2024. The party will be held from 3 p.m. to 8 p.m. at 115 Bourbon Street, 3359 West 115th Street, Merrionette Park, IL, 60803. Proceeds from the evening will help support the expense of operating the parade.

Tickets are \$50 at the door and admission includes a dinner buffet, draft beer and wine. The event will feature raffle prizes, a silent auction, selection of the South Side Irish Parade Queen, and much more. The Avondale Ramblers and Kieran Bryne will provide live music inside the 115 Bourbon Street Performance Hall. The fundraiser will also feature a quieter approach with Irish traditional music sessions featuring Pat Finnegan and Friends inside

the Saloon.

South Side Irish Parade merchandise will be available for purchase at South Side Irish Imports, 3446 W. 111th St. Chicago, IL 60655, through St. Patrick's Day.

About The South Side Irish Parade

The parade is operated by the South Side Irish St. Patrick's Day Parade and Heritage Foundation, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, where more than 100 volunteers work year-round to ensure this family-friendly celebration continues for future generations.

The parade is generously supported by major sponsors including by Tullamore D.E.W. the official Irish Whiskey of the Parade, Lakeshore Beverage, Ozinga, The Beverly Review, IUOE Local 399, Old National Bank, Chicago White Sox, Med Express Spa, Local 150, Midwest Express Clinic, Ullico Inc., Flood Brothers, Home Run Inn Beverly, UPAT District 14, Chicago City Soccer Club ComEd, County Fair Foods, Hilton Chicago/Oak Lawn, OSF Little Company of Mary Medical Center, UICE Local 2, Mercedes-Benz of Orland Park, Marquette Bank, Megent Financial, Nascar Chicago Street

Race, McCready Law, Dunkin', Guinness, BudLight, Green River, Roofers and Waterproofers Local 11, JDog Junk Haulers and South Side Irish Imports and more.

Visit southsideirishparade.org for more information on the pre-parade fundraiser and the South Side Irish Parade.

About Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Chicagoland & Northwest Indiana

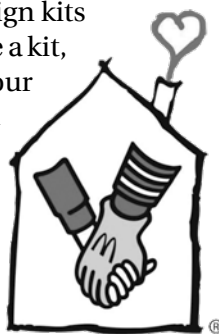
Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Chicagoland & Northwest Indiana exists so families can get better together. Each night, we keep 181 families close to the care and resources they need through six area Ronald McDonald Houses® and four Ronald McDonald Family Rooms®. Enabling families to stay close to their hospitalized child supports the health and well-being of the child and saves families more than \$9 million in hotel and food costs each year. We are located inside or near Advocate Children's Hospital in Oak Lawn and Park Ridge, Northwestern Medicine Prentice Women's Hospital, Loyola University Medical Center, UChicago Medicine Comer Children's Hospital, Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago, Edward Hospital in Naperville and Northwestern Medicine Central DuPage Hospital. The Charity also operates the Ronald McDonald Care Mobile® program, providing medical care to children in underserved areas. RMHC-CNI is an independent not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization and is an approved BBB Accredited Business and recipient of Guidestar's Platinum Seal of Transparency, and Charity Navigator's 4-star rating. For more information, visit ronaldhousechicago.org.

Connect with RMHC-CNI on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram!

About Smith Village

Smith Village, the only a life plan community on Chicago's southwest side, originally opened in 1924 and has operated continuously since then serving older adults on the same city block it has always occupied in the Beverly/Morgan Park neighborhood.

Settings at the not-for-profit community range from independent living apartments to assisted living and memory care residences, plus short-term stay rehab suites and skilled nursing care rooms. The campus features a broad array of common areas including venues for dining, entertainment, lifelong learning and wellness programs. For more information about Smith Village, call 773-474-7300 or visit SmithVillage.org.



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Jim Brett discovers a renewed sense of community in his new home at Mercy Circle

To say that Mercy Circle resident Jim Brett has roots on Chicago's Southwest Side is something of an understatement.

Born and raised on the Southwest side in the Little Flowers parish, Brett and Patricia, his wife for 65 years, raised 10 children in their home near 103rd and Kedzie. Later, they moved to Palos Heights where they lived for 20 years. Today, he has 33 grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren, and the entire family still lives in the Chicago area, with eight of his children raising their children on the Southwest Side.

After their children grew up, Brett and Patricia started attending Mass at Mercy Circle and got to know the community. So, when

Patricia passed away two years ago, Brett sold his home to one of his children and moved to the continuing care retirement community. The move allowed him to stay near the neighborhood he loved and remain connected to a religious community that he really appreciates. Yet, the move felt like a significant change.

"There always are many things to do at Mercy Circle. It is nice to have people

around for a conversation," he says reflecting on his new home's friendly atmosphere. "Age can slow down daily life, but the nature of the people here keeps things moving."

He also enjoys participating in the MACs with Mercy events, working with Mother McAuley students on projects to benefit Pat's Pantry. The monthly gatherings are especially nice for Brett because his youngest granddaughter, Lizzie, who attends Mother McAuley, often participates.

For many years, Brett worked in human resources for BorgWarner. Meeting the smart, ambitious students from Mother McAuley reminds him



(from left) Edith Herman-Lopez, Isabella Braschi and Elizabeth Brett with Elizabeth's grandfather and Mercy Circle resident Jim Brett.

of those days. "During our most recent event, two of the girls at my table said they hoped to become doctors and two or three of the others were exploring careers in science," he says. "It was wonderful! I found myself using my human resources skills to learn more about what interested them and what they hoped to do."

Brett spent a lifetime building a network of friends and neighbors. With the move to Mercy Circle, he has a new sort of community to enjoy.

"If a friend were interested in Mercy Circle, I would encourage him or her to visit for a meeting, activity or Mass to get a feeling for our community," says Brett. "There is an interesting mix of retired people here including many teachers, principals, healthcare professionals and leaders of religious orders from across the country."

For more information or to schedule a private appointment, please call 773-253-3600 or visit MercyCircle.org.



MACs with Mercy was extra special for (from left) Mercy Circle resident Jim Brett and McAuley senior Elizabeth Brett. Jim is Elizabeth's grandfather!

100

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Banner Purchase | Beginning January 2024
Day of Giving | April 16, 2024
Day of Service | May 16-17, 2024
100th Anniversary 21+ Block Party | June 8, 2024
100th Anniversary Gala | November 23, 2024
100th Anniversary Mass & Epiphany Concert | January 12, 2025

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Smith Village celebrates 100 years of service in the 19th Ward

All began with visionaries, donors and community leaders creating a new way to care for older adults

In 1915, on Chicago’s Southwest Side, a housewife had an idea.

Susie Woodman was concerned about older adults who needed a place to live, especially women and the “deserving poor.” It took nine years of commitment to a vision, diligence and fundraising, but her idea became a reality and changed countless lives when the Oakhaven Old People’s Home opened in 1924. That organization grew and evolved over the decades. This year, Smith Village, built on the same city block, celebrates 100 years of caring for older adults.

In a time before Social Security and Medicare, many older people found themselves without a safety net. Often religious communities rallied to support the seniors, but Woodman saw that system falling short. She thought the community needed a better solution to provide a respectful, safe and comfortable home for older adults.

Fortunately, Woodman was a woman of action. She reached out to her personal physician, William Gregg, M.D., for advice and the two developed ideas for a new way for seniors to live and to receive care when they might need it.

“At that time, senior living was nothing like it is today,” says Ken Jellema, who became Smith Senior Living’s unofficial historian while his wife Karen Jellema was the Human Resources Director at the orga-

nization for decades. Jellema also is the historian for Blue Island Historical Society and serves on the board of the George W. Maher Society. “There were a few homes with four or five bedrooms where older adults could live together, but Woodman and Gregg developed a plan for a community that would become home to dozens of seniors. That was extremely uncommon at that time.”

The community rallied around the new project. Woodman was a member of the Englewood Women’s Club, a cultural force in Chicago’s South Side. With more than 900 members, the group embraced the project. Woodman’s minister, Dr. Rufus White, pastor of the People’s Liberal Church, at 66th and Stewart, joined this nascent group as well. In 1915, Woodman asked her neighbor, Illinois Governor Charles Deneen, to prepare a state charter for Oakhaven Old People’s Home.

In 1917, Lowell Hoit, a South Shore resident, grain dealer and vice president of the Chicago Board of Trade, bought five lots at the corner of 113th Pl. and Western Ave. for \$3,500 (or about \$108,500 today), and donated them to the Oakhaven Old People’s Home. This section of Morgan Park had been annexed to the city three years prior, but it was largely undeveloped. Western Avenue at the time was a two-lane gravel road.



Original residents of the Oakhaven Old People’s Home, now Smith Village, gather in 1924.

Of course, fundraising ground to a halt as all eyes turned to Europe and WWI. Still, Woodman and Gregg were determined and patient. In 1919, they redoubled their efforts, setting a fundraising goal of \$300,000, the equivalent of \$5.5 million in today’s dollars, for their project.

“I don’t know how they had the confidence that they could raise that much money,” says Jellema. “But they knew how to attract many influential donors.”

In addition to Deneen, John G. Shedd, Jane Addams, U.S. Senator Joseph McCormick and Clarence Darrow all pledged support. White inspired members of People’s Liberal Church of Englewood to raise \$60,000.

The group raised enough money to break ground in 1923 and they celebrated the grand opening on Easter Sunday, April 24, 1924. The first residents moved in on May 1, 1924. At the time of the grand opening, the community was already sold out with 43 residents and a waiting list.

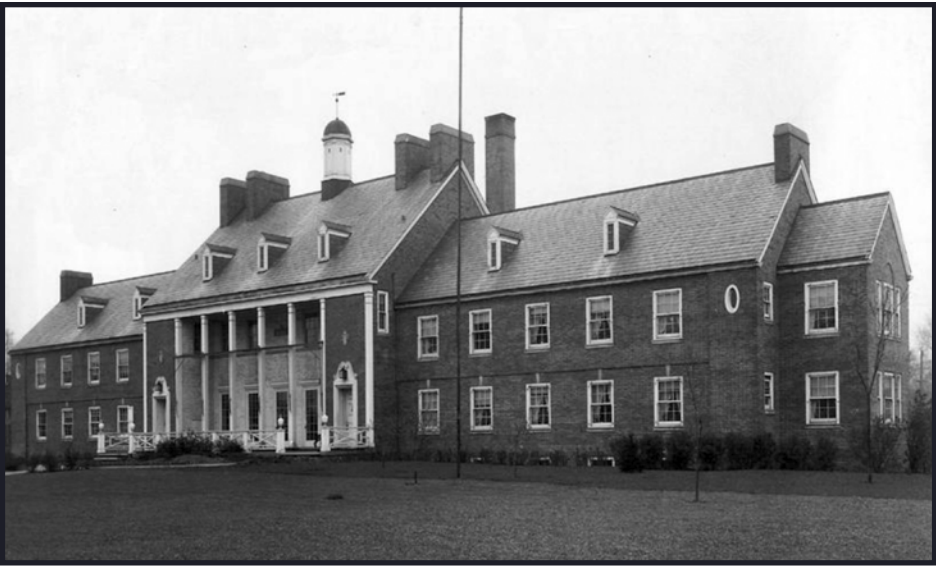
Today, residents, employees, trustees and supporters of Smith Senior Living, Smith Village and Smith Crossing in Orland Park remember and honor those early visionaries as they celebrate a remarkable legacy that has ensured

Smith’s century of history and progress.

“I truly believe those early donors would be proud to see the organization today and appreciate how it has transformed to meet the evolving needs of residents,” says Kay E. Thurn, chair of Smith’s centennial committee and immediate past chair of the Smith Senior Living Board of Trustees.

Smith Village has many celebrations planned for its milestone year. To launch the year, Jim Piko, Jr., president of Marathon Sportswear, donated Smith spirit wear shirts silk screened with a special centennial logo created for Smith Senior Living. “These shirts are one of many ways for the greater community to note the centennial celebration is underway,” says Thurn. February will kick off a series of Department of the Month breakfasts honoring current employees. At Smith Village every month, employees will be served and fêted by Smith leaders and residents and serenaded with a chorale group comprised of Smith Village residents.

Then in March, Smith Village is honored to have been selected as Parade Honoree for the 2024 South Side Irish Parade. This honor is a remarkable way to celebrate Smith Village’s century of contributions to the community.



Oakhaven Old People’s Home, now Smith Village at completion of the original building in 1924.

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New book is a valuable guide for anyone grappling with a student encountering academic difficulties

Debra Gawrys releases ‘Beyond Tutoring: A guide for parents who want REAL answers to their child’s academic struggles’

Many parents throughout the country seek solutions for their children’s academic challenges, a quest often fraught with elusive answers. Recognizing the scarcity of correct guidance, Debra Gawrys embarked on crafting a book to serve as a comprehensive manual for parents and guardians. This resource aims to empower them to navigate the educational system effectively and provide optimal assistance to their children.

“Beyond Tutoring: A guide for parents who want REAL answers to their child’s academic struggles” (published by Xlibris) is a valuable guide for anyone grappling with a student encountering academic difficulties. It delves into the inadequacies of traditional tutoring methods, highlighting alternative educational therapies that address the core issues underlying academic struggles. The book elucidates the true nature of learning disabilities, identifies potential core issues, and outlines programs designed to overcome learning weaknesses by addressing these fundamental problems.

In a society where many stu-

dents, particularly in underprivileged areas, grapple with academic challenges, Gawrys emphasizes the systemic failure of educational institutions to adequately support students. This, she contends, leads to a disproportionate reliance on special education assistance. Gawrys expresses confidence that her book will resonate with readers who are eager to aid children in overcoming academic hurdles.

When asked about the key takeaway she hopes readers glean from the book, Gawrys stresses her desire for them to comprehend that their children need not endure a lifetime of academic struggles. She aims for readers to grasp the true implications of a dyslexia or learning disability diagnosis and dispels the misconception that traditional tutoring is the solution. Gawrys aspires for readers not only to comprehend the problem but also to embrace the array of solutions available.

“Beyond Tutoring: A guide for

parents who want REAL answers to their child’s academic struggles” is available in hardcover, softcover and e-book at Amazon and Barnes & Noble.

About the Author

Debra Gawrys holds a bachelor’s degree in Education and a master’s degree in Learning Disabilities from St. Xavier University. With experience teaching second, fifth, and sixth grades in traditional

classrooms and serving as a learning disabilities resource teacher in the suburban public school system, she has a comprehensive background in education. After her tenure in traditional education, Gawrys transitioned to private practice, initially operating from her home starting in 1997. This shift

was spurred by her discovery that her own daughter struggled with dyslexia. Upon discovering the effectiveness of the Wilson Reading System during her daughter’s instruction, Gawrys shared her success with other mothers, leading to

the establishment of her tutoring services. Word of mouth spread, and demand grew, prompting her to hire additional teachers. For nearly a decade, this home-based tutoring flourished until the need for expansion became evident. In response to the growing demand, Gawrys established the current location of Connections Learning Center in Beverly almost 10 years ago. The center has been a hub for assisting numerous children, all stemming from her initial motivation to help her dyslexic daughter. Grateful for the opportunity to make a positive impact, she acknowledges the blessing of aiding countless children over the years. Having gained substantial insights, she has developed a solution-oriented approach. Recognizing the challenges parents face when seeking answers for their children, she empathizes with the time and resources wasted on ineffective methods. At Connections Learning Center, she is committed to providing solutions for every parent who seeks assistance, anticipating the opportunity to continue helping students in the years to come.



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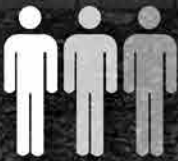


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Smith Village residents and St. Cajetan students honor veterans with the 9th Annual Valentines for Vets

Intergenerational cupids shared respect and caring for 40 veterans in the Road Home program at Rush University Medical Center. The ninth annual Valentines for Vets program held on Monday, February 12, Smith Village and student council members at eniors at St. Cajetan School to created Valentines Day gifts for veterans.

Alderman Matt O’Shea and Representative Mary Gill sponored this annual event. “Seeing the community come together to share love with our veterans on Valentine’s Day touches my heart every year,” says Alderman Matt O’Shea who inspired this program nearly a decade ago.

This year, each veteran received a dreamcatcher. Students and seniors created the iconic woven web within a metal hoop. They will also make encouraging cards sharing their thanks to veterans for their service.

“This community is so grateful to the veterans and the sacrifices that they have made for our country,” says Illinois State Representative Mary Gill. “This demonstration of caring and support is really inspiring.”

All gifts are were given to veterans in the Road Home Program at Rush University Medical Center.

The Road Home Program is dedicated to the mental health and wellness of veterans, service members, members of the National Guard, reservists and their families. The free program specializes in healing the invisible wounds of war, including PTSD, that resist traditional metods of treatment. The Road Home Program is nationally recognized for an intensive two-week outpatient program that draws service members from around the country. To date more than 3000, have benefited from treatment in the Road Home Program.

“The veterans can’t stop smiling when they receive the gifts from the Smith Village resident and St. Cajetan students,” says Modie Lavin, USMC Gold Star Mother and Family Outreach Coordi-

nator for the Road Home Program at Rush University Medical Center. “Their thoughtfulness of the hand-made gift and cards is so moving. It reminds them that the community remembers and cares about them.”

For more information about Smith Village, 2320 West 113th Place in Chicago, call 773-474-7300 or visit SmithVillage.org.



*Eric Chessier, (l) army veteran and community outreach coordinator for the Road Home program at Rush University Medical Center, works with (l-r) Smith Village resident **Gene Sablick** and St. Cajetan students **Bridey O’Malley** and **Lily Tait** at the 2023 Valentines for Vets event. This year, the students and seniors worked together to make dream catchers.*

Marathon Sportswear donates shirts to celebrate Smith Village Centennial



Marathon Sportswear donated t-shirts for all Smith Village and Smith Crossing employees to mark the centennial celebration of the senior living communities. (From left) Beth O’Rourke, sales manager for Marathon Sportswear, Vetie-sha Fleming, Smith Village human resources assistant, Jim Piko Jr., president of Marathon Sportswear and Joyce Kindt, director of human resources for Smith Senior Living, unpack the shirts to launch the yearlong celebration with shirts for all employees.

(From left) Jim Piko Jr., president of Marathon Sportswear, Joyce Kindt, director of human resources for Smith Senior Living, Kevin McGee, president and CEO of SSL and Beth O’Rourke, sales manager for Marathon Sportswear check out the employee shirts just off the presses where all six colors of the Smith Senior Living logo were applied by Marathon. The shirts will be a visual reminder of the centennial celebration throughout the year for hundreds of Smith employees.



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