



VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST E-NEWS

Thank you for taking the time to read the Village's E-News. These messages are sent approximately once per month and include timely information regarding Village events, news and other useful information. We strive to keep the content brief and relevant to the issues that matter most to the community.

Message from the Village President



Dear River Forest Residents,

Happy New Year to all of you and welcome to 2019.

Here's what happened at the board table in December

The Village Board of Trustees and I celebrated promotions for two of our fine police officers. James Greenwood was promoted to the rank of Police Commander. Commander Greenwood began serving River Forest in 1997 and has been a Sergeant, Detective Sergeant and Training Officer. He is known for his leadership and dedication.



Glen Czernik was promoted to the rank of Sergeant. Sergeant Czernik has been in the department since 2010. He has been engaged with community programs and leads our crime prevention seminars. Sergeant Czernik also conducts outreach to seniors and was named outstanding elderly service officer by the Illinois Attorney General's Office. Many may remember his appearance on Wheel of Fortune in 2017.

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The Board of Trustees adopted an \$8 million property tax levy. The property tax increase is 2.1% and represents the change in the Consumer Price Index between December 2016 and December 2017. These dollars are crucial to the essential functions of the Village and are used to help fund core services such as public safety. Additionally, this tax levy serves as the funding source for our Fire and Police Pension funds.

Trustee Mike Gibbs was voted by his fellow Trustees to be one of our two representatives to a committee assessing what to do with the River Forest Community Center on Madison Street owned by the River Forest Civic Authority. This collaborative effort will have two representatives from each taxing district and two representatives from two of the non-profit organizations who currently lease space in the Community Center. Trustee Gibbs has a good grasp on community needs and will serve the Village well. The committee's next meeting will be later this month.

Please remember the **Canadian National tracks** that run through River Forest from Madison Street (between Park and Forest) heading due north until they reach Iowa Street at which point they turn northwest and cross at grade at Forest, Augusta, Keystone and finally Thatcher before heading through the Forest Preserves and over the Des Plaines River **are considered an active railroad**. In response to residents' concerns, the Village will ask Canadian National Railroad to install more safety signs along their tracks to keep people from trespassing on the railway. The Village will also reach out to schools and advise students that trains are still using the tracks. Keeping everyone safe is one of River Forest's top priorities. We urge all residents to not walk on the train tracks.

The Village has honored former Sustainability Commissioner Sue Crothers for her service and leadership in helping River Forest become better stewards of the environment. [Read the proclamation](#) passed by the Village Board to learn more about her work and stop by the Butterfly Wall on Central east of Keystone to see the new plaque.



And in January

Trustees and I begin preparing next year's budget by setting our goals for the year. We will also review and approve the Village's annual capital improvement plan (CIP). These are the first steps in beginning to shape the Village's 2020 Fiscal Year that will begin on May 1, 2019.

A final draft of our Safe Walking Routes to School Plan will come back to the Board for approval. We anticipate implementing the recommended initiatives before the start of the next school year.

The Village's new Comprehensive Plan is now in draft form and is being reviewed by various advisory boards and commissions. The next steps include a review by the Plan Commission and then an Open House and Public Hearing to make the plan available to the entire community for review and feedback. Finally, the Comprehensive Plan will be presented to the Village Board for adoption.

Please join the River Forest Police Department for its quarterly Community Crime Prevention Meeting, from 4:30 to 6 p.m., January 23, at Village Hall. Police department personnel will inform residents on how they can become more involved in preventing, stopping and solving crime. All residents and members of the public are invited. Specific topics for each meeting will be published on the Village's website in advance.

On January 30, I will join Forest Park Mayor Tony Calderone and Elmwood Park Village President Skip Saviano in a conversation about issues affecting our towns. It will be at 7 p.m. at the River Forest Public Library. The program is sponsored by the River Forest Civic Association.

Don't forget that the Village is collecting holiday lights for recycling through January 15. Please drop off working and non-working lights/cords on Central Avenue in the container by Village Hall (under the elevated tracks). No CFL or fluorescent bulbs - only holiday lights please. These include Italian mini-lights, traditional lights, extension cords, rope lights, and LED lights.

Happy New Years!!

Best,



Cathy Adduci
Village President

Holiday Wreaths, Trees and Garland Collection Schedule

Roy Strom will collect Christmas trees, wreaths, and garland on **Tuesdays in January**:

- January 8
- January 15
- January 22
- January 29

Residents should remove all decorations, lights, metal wiring and place holiday greens on the parkway by 7 AM on the above days. Please note - this does not include yard waste and/or leaves.

New Illinois Law for 2019

As of January 1st, all children under the age of 2 riding as a passenger of a vehicle must be secured in a rear-facing child safety seat. This is an addition to the existing law which states that all children under the age of 8 riding as a passenger of a vehicle must be secured in a child safety seat.

River Forest Police Department offers free child safety seat inspections and will assist with installation. To schedule an appointment or for more information please [click here](#).

Safety for the Season

Please [click here](#) to read important safety reminders from the River Forest Fire Department.

Coyote Information

From time to time, the Village receives reports from residents of coyote sightings. Residents are cautioned that coyotes are generally not dangerous to humans, but they can be territorial when protecting their young, and should not be approached. Small pets may be considered prey by coyotes. Please do not leave your pets outside unsupervised.

Tips to protect your family and pets from coyotes include:

- Never feed coyotes as it lures coyotes into neighborhoods
- Do not leave small pets unattended outside, even in a fenced in yard
- Keep dogs on a short leash while walking outside
- Yell, clap hands or blow a whistle and try to make yourself look larger if a coyote approaches
- Do not allow a coyote to get in between you and your pet or child

[Click here](#) for information on Coyotes from the Cook County Forest Preserve.

Special message from Oak Park River Forest High School District 200

District 200 Board approves actions aimed at net tax reduction of \$4.4 million

At its regular meeting on December 20, the District 200 Board of Education took a combination of actions that are expected to net a savings of \$4.4 million for local property owners. First, the Board approved an increase in the annual tax levy of 2.1%, which is the amount permitted under tax-cap laws. This would increase the annual taxes of a \$400,000 market value home by approximately \$68. However, the Board also approved applying for one of the new Property Tax Relief Grants from the State of Illinois. If the grant is approved, which would lead to a tax abatement from the district, the net reduction in taxes would be approximately \$212 for the District 200 portion of the tax bill for a \$400,000 market value home. [Click here](#) to read more.

Board approves most significant facilities project in 50 years

The Board of Education approved moving forward with designing the first construction project to result from the Imagine OPRF facilities master-planning process. [Facilities Master Plan Project 1](#) comprises renovation/construction that includes 76 classrooms, Special Education spaces, and a student resource center, among other components. The total estimated project cost is \$32.6 million. Funding will come from existing cash reserves, thereby avoiding a tax increase to property owners and preserving the district's debt-free status. [Click here](#) to read more.

GREEN NEWS

Need a New Year's Resolution?

Make a resolution to start composting! Compost all yard waste, holiday decorations, and food waste in one convenient cart. No more bags. You can sign up by [clicking here](#). Pick up days in January are Tuesday January 15, and Tuesday January 29.

Want to know what is going on in your Village?

The next Park District Board Meeting is Monday, January 21, 6 PM at the Depot, 400 Thatcher. Plans for artificial turf at Keystone Park will be discussed among other agenda items.

Next Sustainability Commission Meeting

The next meeting of the Sustainability Commission will be Tuesday, January 8, 2019 at 7 PM and held at Village Hall, 400 Park Avenue. All are welcome to attend.

PARK DISTRICT SPOTLIGHT

[Click here](#) for registration information.

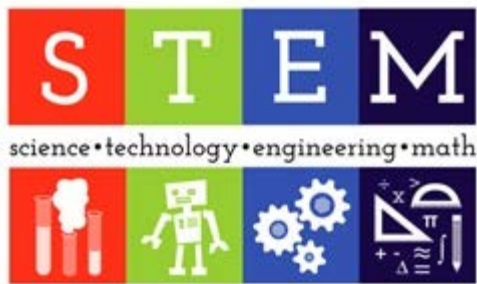
Rock-In 2019!



Friday, 1/18, check-in 7 PM-7:15 PM, doors locked 7:15 PM-9 PM, check-out 9 PM.

Enjoy a night of fun with your friends! Play dodgeball and basketball, Karaoke & DJ entertainment, Candy Bar BINGO, and inflatable games! Pizza will be provided. Pre-registration is required. No drop-ins accepted. This event is at Roosevelt Middle School and is for River Forest 5th - 7th Graders. The cost is \$15 per person and the registration deadline is Wednesday, January 16 at 4 PM. This event will fill up, so register early!

STEM-Fest



Thursday, 1/24, 6 PM - 8 PM

Northern Illinois University STEM Outreach is bringing their traveling science museum to the River Forest Park District! Come and get your hands on their interactive science stations and learn about exploring the world around you! This event will be at The Depot and is for all ages (with an adult). The cost per household is \$30 for residents and \$38 for non-residents. (Please, no strollers.)

Safe Sitter Essentials with CPR

Sunday 1/27, 9 AM - 3 PM, ages 11 - 15

Safe Sitter® prepares students to be safe when they are home alone, watching younger siblings, or babysitting. Students learn lifesaving skills such as how to rescue someone who is choking and helpful information like what to do if there is severe weather. The lessons are filled with fun activities and role-playing exercises. Students even get to use CPR manikins to practice CPR and choking rescue! Currently, 202 River Forest youth trained in this program!

RIVER FOREST LIBRARY SPOTLIGHT

The River Forest Public Library offers programs for all ages. Here are some highlights of upcoming programs. Visit our website at www.riverforestlibrary.org for a

complete listing of library events.

Programs for Children

Wednesday, 1/9, 10-10:30 AM, Story Time at Fresh Thyme Farmers Market, Birth-6 years

Join River Forest Public Library staff for stories, songs, rhymes, and a snack at Fresh Thyme Farmers Market. **This program is held at Fresh Thyme Farmers Market (7501 W North Ave, River Forest, IL 60305)**

Wednesday, 1/9, 4-5 PM, Ready Readers, Grades 1-4

Get ready to read *Soupy Saturdays with The Pain and The Great One* with crafts, activities, and a snack based on the book by Judy Blume. Listen to a librarian read the first chapter, and then check out a copy to finish reading at home! [Advanced registration required.](#)

Wednesday, 1/16, 4-4:45 PM, Snack Attack, Grades K-4

Learn how to make a fun seasonal snack at this after school cooking program. In January, we will taste test grains and make funfetti oatmeal. [Advanced registration required.](#)

Wednesday, 1/23, 4-5 PM, Ozobot Battles, Grades K-4

Learn to code mazes for Ozobot mini-robots. Then watch the ozobots race along tracks you've created. Supplies will be provided. [Advanced registration required.](#)

Monday, 1/28, 4-5 PM, Amazing Artists: Henri Matisse, Grades K-4

Learn about world famous artist Henri Matisse, and create your own art piece inspired by his unique style. Supplies will be provided. [Advanced registration required.](#)

Saturday, 1/26, 9:30-10 AM, Saturday Story Time, Birth-6 years

Wake up and head to the Children's Room for stories and songs. This is a fun weekend story time for kids ages birth through 6 with a caregiver.

Programs for Tweens

Thursday, 1/17, 3:30-5:30 PM, Pages to Pictures: *The Lightning Thief*, Grades 5-8

Which is better? The book or the movie? Check out and read a copy of this month's title from the circulation desk and joins us as we watch the film and compare!

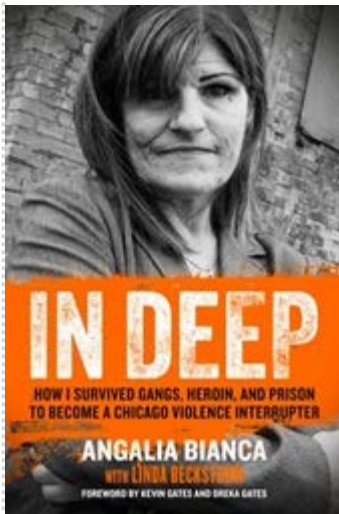
Monday, 1/21, 2-3:30 PM, Harry Potter Family Feud, Grades 5-12

Hogwarts houses will compete to see who knows more Wizarding World lore in our first ever Family Feud style game show. [Advanced registration required.](#)

Thursday, 1/24, 3:30-5 PM, Solo Wars, Grades 5-12

Toss, topple, stack, and flip your way to glory in the ultimate Solo cup competition. [Advanced registration required.](#)

Programs for Adults



Thursday, 1/17, 7-8:30 PM, Angalia Bianca Author Event, Adult

Local author and activist Angalia Bianca shares stories from her new book, *In Deep: How I Survived Gangs, Heroin, and Prison to Become a Chicago Violence Interrupter*. Angalia overcame a life of addiction and crime to become an advocate for violence prevention and helping others. She has won humanitarian awards from many local, national, and global organizations and has been featured in *The Chicago Tribune*, *Wall Street Journal*, *BBC News London*, *CNN*, and more. Join us to meet her and co-author Linda Beckstrom!

Friday, 1/18, 12-2:30 PM, Film Lover Fridays, Adult

Join other movie lovers on the 3rd Friday of every month to watch popular and entertaining films! This season we're showing courtroom dramas! Today we'll be watching *To Kill A Mockingbird*. Bring a sack lunch to enjoy before the film starts. Light refreshments will be served. Brought to you in partnership with River Forest Township.

Wednesday, 1/23, 10-11 AM, Social Stitching, Adult

Do you enjoy knitting, crochet, cross-stitching, or sewing? Then join us on the 4th Wednesday of the month to socialize while you stitch! Bring your own materials. Light refreshments will be provided.

**EVENTS CO-SPONSORED BY THE RIVER
FOREST PUBLIC LIBRARY AND RIVER
FOREST TOWNSHIP**

Monday, 1/7, 10-11 AM, Coffee Monday

Come to the library on the first Monday morning of every month for coffee, breakfast snacks, and conversation. Rahman Burton, the Mobility Outreach Coordinator for the Regional Transportation Authority Chicago, will discuss the RTA programs for older adults and individuals with disabilities and then help those interested over 65 sign up for or renew their reduced fare card.

Wednesday, 1/9, 10-11:30 AM, Connect With Tech

Are you a local senior who wants to get more out of your smartphone, eReader, tablet, or personal computer? Would you like to explore better ways to connect electronically with family?

Concerned about internet safety? Then join us for Connect with Tech, which helps beginner tech users in a small, intimate group setting. Bring your questions and devices, or use one of the laptops provided. No need to sign up, just drop in anytime during the session to learn.

Sunday, 1/13, 2-3 PM, The Swedish Art of Death Cleaning, Adult

Explore the cultural phenomenon and decluttering trend named Swedish Death Cleaning with author Jeanne Roppolo and discover how to downsize in a memorable and joyful way. A loved one wishes to inherit nice things from you; not all things from you. Give your family the gift of a clean, organized, and simple life. Learn about fun projects that can be started at any age. Why wait?

Sunday, 1/27, 2-3:30 PM, Art and Architecture of Ancient Egypt, Adult

In this lecture from The Oriental Institute, using some of the masterpieces of Egyptian art, including some artifacts in the Oriental Institute Museum, we will discuss a few simple rules of thumb to keep in mind when exploring the Egyptian gallery of a museum. We will also explore the most important features of Egyptian architecture, so you can understand the original contexts of much of what you see.

TOWNSHIP SPOTLIGHT

Winter Sibshops Start January 19

Sibshops, a program specially designed for siblings of those with special needs, disabilities and health challenges, meets on the **first and third Saturdays, 11:30 AM-1:30 PM**, at Thrive Counseling Center, 120 S. Marion St, Oak Park. Winter session starts **January 19**. For 1st-7th grade siblings. Lunch is provided. Choose the sessions you are able to attend.

Facilitators lead fun activities, focused on sharing siblings' experiences and ideas, including crafts, games and lunch prep. Fee is \$10 per session; need-based scholarships are available.

Registration is required in advance; for more info or to register, call River Forest Township at 708-366-2029 or email supervisor@RiverForestTownship.org.

Strengthening Families Program Starts February 12

Looking for a healthier family life in 2019? *Strengthening Families* is a 12-week program for families where you can learn effective parenting skills, healthy communication, conflict resolution, and stress management skills. This free program is for families with children ages 7-17; dinner is provided; childcare is available. Meets **Tuesdays, February 12 – May 7, 6 PM – 8 PM**, at River Forest Township, located at the River Forest Community Center, 8020 Madison St, River Forest. Call 708-410-0615 to register.

Senior Wellness Groups Promote More Meaningful Living

Seniors: Gather with other older adults to share and learn ways to enhance meaningful living, including mental wellness and longevity. Senior Services of Oak Park and River Forest Townships is partnering with Concordia University to host a free 8-week

wellness group at Concordia in the Christopher Center, 7400 Augusta Ave., room #263. **Tuesdays, January 29 – March 19, 3:30 – 4:30 PM or 6:30 – 7:30 PM.** For more info or to register, contact River Forest Township Supervisor Carla Sloan, 708-366-2029 or supervisor@RiverForestTownship.org.

Memory Café Open House on January 22

Join us for the Memory Café Open House on **Tuesday, January 22, 1:30 -3:30 PM** at Senior Services of Oak Park and River Forest Townships, 130 S. Oak Park Ave, Oak Park. Memory Café is a welcoming place for individuals with memory changes and their care partners. Cafes provide a chance for conversation, food and enjoyable activities. They also offer a great opportunity to volunteer as a speaker, greeter, craft leader, etc.

Starting in February, Memory Café will meet regularly on the third Tuesday of each month, same time and location as above. For more info, contact Township Senior Services at 708-383-8060 or memorycafe@oakparktownship.org.

Funding for Persons with Developmental Disabilities: Presentation on January 30

Attorney and expert Robert H. Farley, Jr. will share “how to be successful in obtaining funding for a developmentally delayed person”, **Wednesday, January 30, 6 – 8 PM** at OPRF High School. Learn about the state “waiting list”, guardianship, SSI, effective strategies to overcome obstacles in the system, and more.

For parents, caregivers, those diagnosed with disabilities, and other interested parties. Hosted by Oak Park Community Mental Health Board in partnership with OPRF High School. RSVP to Pleshette at pdavis@cmhb-oakpark.org. Respite care provided; contact Pleshette for details.

Shared Housing Panel Discussion on January 19

Arbor West Neighbors will host a panel discussion related to Home Sharing Options for Older Adults, **Saturday, January 19, 1:00 – 3:00 PM** at the Oak Park Public Library. Local experts will share ideas on this progressive concept for aging together and aging in place. For more info, contact Betsy Kelly at betsyk121@gmail.com.

Seniors: Come Play Pickleball

Pickleball is a paddle sport for all ages and abilities and is the fastest growing sport in America! It combines elements of tennis and ping pong, with rules which are simple to learn. Seniors are invited to play indoors at a specially designated time at the Tennis and Fitness Centre of Oak Park River Forest, 301 Lake Street (Lake and Ridgeland), Oak Park, **Wednesdays, 1-2:30 PM.** Cost is \$10 for non-members/\$6 for members; equipment rental is free. **All levels are welcome, including beginners. Open to non-club members. Bring your friends; no need to register in advance.** Contact River Forest Township Supervisor Carla Sloan 708-366-2029 or cbsloan.rftownship@gmail.com with questions.

Come Sing with Encore Chorale

Oak Park-River Forest Encore Chorale, for singers age 55 and up, will start its winter/spring rehearsals on **Tuesdays, starting January 29.** Encore is conducted by local resident and musician,

Linda Crabtree Powell.

The local Encore group, now 90 strong, is part of the largest chorale organization for older adults in the country. All are invited to join this musically talented group; no audition is required. Rehearsals are Tuesdays, 9:30-11 AM at 19th Century Club, 178 Forest, Oak Park. For more info, contact Linda Crabtree Powell at crabtreepowell@gmail.com. Need-based scholarships for River Forest resident Encore members are available through River Forest Township.

Volunteers Needed to Assist with Income Tax Prep

River Forest Township supports a local initiative by Triton's RSVP Program to provide free income tax preparation for low-moderate income seniors (age 60+). To become a volunteer tax preparer for this Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) program, contact Kay Frey, kayfrey@triton.edu, 708-456-0300, x3603.

Free training sessions for volunteers will be held on Saturdays, January 5 - February 2, 8:30 AM – 3 PM, at Triton. For more info or to register for the training, call 708-456-0300, x3835 or 3603.

Tax Counseling for Low-Moderate Income Seniors

Triton's RSVP Program is once again offering free income tax preparation for low-moderate income seniors (age 60+), offered at multiple locations in surrounding communities.

Starting the last week in January, call 708-456-0300, x3895 to see if you qualify and to make an appointment. Time slots fill very quickly.

"Support4U" App for Middle and High School Students

The "Support4U" phone app is available to all middle and high school students in Oak Park and River Forest. Support4U is a mental health-related prevention and support resource, by which students can text licensed mental health clinicians for assistance or guidance on such issues as anxiety, depression, substance use, suicidal ideation, eating disorders, bullying, or any other mental health-related topic.

Support4U is anonymous and available to students 24/7. We thank Districts 90, 97 and 200 for their support of this program on behalf of their students.

Please share this information with D90 and D200 students! Students can download the app or text 844-670-5838. D90 students will text "SAFE" and D200 students will text "CARE".

Support4U is sponsored by River Forest Township, Community Mental Health Board of Oak Park Township, the Oak Park-River Forest Community Foundation, NAMI, and the Oak Park-River Forest Rotary Club.

For more information, please contact your school administration or Supervisor Carla Sloan at supervisor@riverforesttownship.org.

Support Group for Those Who Have Lost a Loved One to Suicide

A monthly drop-in support group is held monthly in River Forest for adults aged 18 and over who are suffering the loss of a loved one to suicide. The group is run by LOSS (Loving Outreach to Survivors of Suicide) and is led by a licensed clinical social

worker. **Group meets on the third Monday of each month, 6-8 PM. Next meeting is January 21.**

The previously held teen group is no longer meeting in River Forest. However, if anyone you know is interested in participating in a teen group, please contact the number below.

Hosted by River Forest Township (located at the River Forest Community Center), 8020 Madison Street. Please call 312-655-7283 for more information and to register, or visit www.catholiccharities.net/loss.

All are welcome to try the group. LOSS is a completely non-denominational program of Catholic Charities.

Join the Great Neighbors Program

A local partnership, consisting of Arbor West Neighbors, Little Brothers Friends of the Elderly, and Senior Services of Oak Park and River Forest Townships, is introducing the **Great Neighbors Program** in the River Forest and Oak Park community. Through this program, which fosters "intergenerational connectedness", River Forest and Oak Park residents aged 18+ can volunteer to become a "Friendly Neighbor" to a senior in their neighborhood.

One or more "Friendly Neighbor" volunteers will be matched with a senior, with whom they will connect and share on a regular basis. Brief training and screening are required. The time commitment is flexible.

Great Neighbors is a program of Little Brothers Friends of the Elderly and has had much success in Chicago!

If you are interested in becoming a "Friendly Neighbor" to a senior, or if you are a senior and would like to connect with other adult neighbors on a more regular basis through this program, please contact Supervisor Carla Sloan, 708-366-2029 or supervisor@riverforesttownship.org.

Arbor West Neighbors Hosts Walking Groups

Seniors: it can be more motivating and fun to walk with others! Arbor West Neighbors invites you to join its walking group. In good weather, meet at 8 AM every Monday for a one-hour walk or in snowy weather, walk indoors at the Oak Park YMCA, Fridays at 9 AM. Email Liz Swan to join the walker list easwan@gmail.com and receive email updates about location and weather.

AWN is also looking for seniors to join a Cardio Walking Group of brisk walkers. If interested, call or text Laura Bruzas at 312-666-9979.

"SHIP" Senior Health Insurance Counseling

Free Senior Health Insurance (SHIP) counseling is available at the River Forest Township offices on the **first Friday of each month**, located at the River Forest Community Center, 8020 Madison Street, 2nd floor. SHIP counseling is held on the other Fridays at Township Senior Services, 130 S. Oak Park Avenue, Oak Park. Call 708-383-8060 to schedule an appointment.



