

RIVER FOREST

Proud Heritage • Bright Future

The Village of River Forest Newsletter | December, 2023



Enjoy the Holidays in River Forest

There are family-friendly events on the horizon to help you get into the holiday spirit this season! Please see below for more information.

Triton College is showcasing a wonderful display of holiday lights and trees! Trees on display are decorated and personalized by Triton College departments and community partners. There will be photo opportunities on campus for residents to take selfies or group photos. The holiday drive-through will be open to the public beginning Friday, December 8, 2023-Tuesday, January 2, 2024. To learn more, click [here](#).

The Library is hosting an event for adults, entitled **"Tis the Season: Holiday Traditions from Radio's Golden Age"** that will take place on Sunday, December 10 from 2-3:30 p.m. Steve Darnall, host of the popular radio show "Those Were the Days" on WDCB, will share holiday traditions from radio's

golden age. From Jack Benny's annual shopping trips to Lionel Barrymore's portrayal of Ebenezer Scrooge, this festive presentation will spur the imagination and spread a bit of Yuletide spirit and is brought to the Library in partnership with River Forest Township.

The Kiwanis Club of River Forest & Oak Park is sponsoring their annual "Light Up the Night" event on Saturday, December 16, and have assembled luminary kits for purchase. Each kit is \$10, and includes 10 white paper bags, 10 plain wax candles, sand, instructions and helpful hints. Proceeds will benefit local youth. Email kiwanisclubrfop@gmail.com for more information.

Village offices will also be closed Friday, December 22, Monday, December 25, and Monday, January 1, 2024 in observance of the upcoming holidays. Have a happy holiday season from the Village of River Forest!

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From Village President Cathy Adduci

Dear River Forest residents,

As a reminder, the Village’s annual “Rake to the Street” leaf pick-up program will conclude on Friday, December 8. When raking your leaves, ensure you rake onto the street, leaving the curb exposed, where Village crews will collect them. Please remember not to mix grass clippings, brush, or any other type of yard waste with your leaves (or advise your lawn care service). Village crews will collect leaves only, beginning at 7 a.m. The leaf collection schedule found [here](#).

I encourage residents to make a New Year’s resolution to be more sustainable this year. One way to accomplish this is by decreasing the amount of organic waste sent to landfills by signing up for the Village’s composting program. The program is voluntary and subscription-based. Residents who take advantage of this program will receive a cart and an under-sink collection bucket. To learn more or to subscribe, click [here](#).

Last month, the Village Board directed the Zoning Board of Appeals to consider new zoning changes for our commercial districts. The proposed changes are designed to attract new developers, by better aligning with current market standards. The proposed amendments resulted from several months of work done by the Economic Development Commission and the Village’s planning consultants. The Village continues to explore ways to attract new development, which is imperative in order to expand our tax base and stabilize property taxes.

The holiday season is a wonderful opportunity to spend time with friends and family, to enjoy holiday celebrations and seasonal events, and look forward to the new year. I wish all of our residents a safe and happy holiday season, and a bright and successful 2024!

Sincerely,

Cathy Adduci, Village President
Village of River Forest

Village Board Trustees



Erika Bachner



Kathleen Brennan



Lisa Gillis



Ken Johnson



Robert O’Connell



Respicio F. Vazquez

Village Clerk



Jonathan Keller

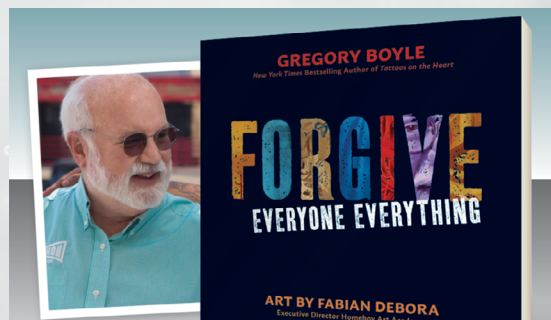
To contact the Village Board to submit a comment or question, click the button below

[Contact the Village Board](#)

News Around Town

Dominican University Special Event

Dominican University, in partnership with The Well Center for Spirituality, is hosting a presentation on how to “Forgive Everyone Everything” with Fr. Gregory Boyle, SJ on Tuesday, December 5 at 7 p.m. in the **Lund Auditorium**. The evening will feature stories of kinship, healing and forgiveness. Tickets are \$10 and can be purchased **at the online box office**.



Holiday Gift Drive

Village Hall is an official drop off location for the Sarah’s Inn Holiday Gift Drive. The nonprofit organization is in need of toys, books and gifts for 300 children and teens impacted by domestic violence to help make their holidays a bit brighter. Their goal is to distribute more than 1,000 gifts (3-4 per child) throughout the course of the donation drive. Please note their deadline for donations is coming up soon - it runs through this coming Monday, December 4. For more information, click [here](#).



Enjoy the Sled Hill at Keystone Park

When weather permits, the sled hill at Keystone Park, located at 400 Keystone Avenue and 7920 Central Avenue, is open daily:
 Monday-Friday, 7 a.m. - 7 p.m.
 Saturday and Sunday, 7 a.m. - Dusk

Please walk up the side of the sled hill to get to the top. The sled hill is unsupervised, so sledding is at your own risk.



Library Events

Visit the Library’s [Calendar](#) to see everything happening at the Library!

Below are some highlights:

Wednesday, 12/6, 7 p.m., Lori Gottlieb: Surviving the Holidays, Adult

On Wednesday, Lori Gottlieb, a New York Times bestselling author of “Maybe You Should Talk to Someone” and co-host of the “Dear Therapists” podcast will present “**Surviving the Holidays**” at the Library on December 6 starting at 7 p.m. Gottlieb will lead a thought-provoking conversation about mental health in anticipation of the winter holiday season. She will share tools to help in everyday life and as you prepare for the holidays. **Registration required.**



Lori Gottlieb New York Times bestselling author

Saturday, 12/16 through Sunday, 12/17, Experience The Nutcracker at home!

Get in the spirit of the season with a recorded virtual performance of Tchaikovsky’s The Nutcracker performed by the United Kingdom’s internationally renowned Royal Ballet. The ballet, a holiday staple for all ages, can be viewed Saturday, December 16, and Sunday, December 17. **Registrants** will receive an email with a special link to the performance.



Royal Ballet Nutcracker

Village Department News

Police Department

Beware of Scams

The Police Department wants residents to be aware of scams that are perpetrated through phone calls, emails, and through fake offers. Learn more below about these scams and review tips to avoid becoming a victim, and be sure to report any scams to the Federal Trade Commission.

Imposter Scams: Calls are made by scammers claiming they are from the IRS or Social Security Administration saying you owe money, that they are utility company representatives and need to verify payment information or they will threaten to shut off service. Callers tell individuals to send money via wire or prepaid debit or gift cards.

- **Tips:** Do not answer if the caller is unknown or trust a name or number at face value—scammers can “spoof” numbers to make them appear legitimate. Do not share personal information over the phone, send money, or pre-paid cards.

Email Scams: Scams include fake emails from your financial institution asking for sensitive account information or offer you savings on phone service or other utilities. Emails or pop-up messages ask for passwords or personal identification numbers, and others say you have won the lottery or can get a “free” gift but must pay for shipping, processing, taxes or other charges.

- **Tips:** Do not click links or open attachments if you do not know who sent them, or provide personal or financial information to unsolicited messages. Always be aware of the email address that requests are coming from.

Grandparent Scam: Callers impersonate grandchildren or a law enforcement officer that has detained a grandchild and claim they are in trouble and need money immediately to get out of jail, pay a hospital bill or leave a foreign country.

- **Tips:** Resist the urge to act immediately and be sure to verify the caller’s identity by asking specific questions only they would know. Also, check the story with another family member, even if the caller asks you to keep it a secret.

Home Repair Fraud: Callers or visitors to a home offer home repair work for much less than market price, and provide only a phone number or PO box number. These individuals will demand cash or full payment before work is completed and refuse to provide references or proof of insurance.

- **Tips:** Obtain estimates for proposed work and compare them, and do not give personal information out. Do not allow unsolicited work on the spot, and do obtain a written contract—without any blank spaces. Before hiring anyone, visit Consumer Reviews or the Better Business Bureau to learn about the history of a business.

For more information, please call the Police Department at 708-366-7125.

Cyber Safety Meeting

The Police Department will be hosting a **Cyber Safety Presentation** in the Village’s **Community Room** on Tuesday, December 12 from 5:30 - 6:30 p.m. This presentation is open to all parents and community educators to learn about your rights and responsibilities in the digital age. It will help those who attend to understand potential risks and how to navigate them, crucial tips and strategies to keep your family safe online and more! For additional information, please call 708-366-7125.

Fire Department

Keep the Wreath Red

The holiday season is here, and the Fire Department is providing a friendly reminder to keep your home and loved ones safe and happy through the “Keep the Wreath Red” fire safety program. Now through Saturday January 7, 2024, a wreath with red holiday lights will be hung at the Fire Station, 400 Park Avenue, and if a fire occurs anywhere in the Village that is caused by holiday decorations (trees, lights, cords, candles, burning wrapping paper in fireplaces, etc.), the red bulbs will be changed out with white bulbs.



The Fire Department offers the following fire safety tips to “Keep the Wreath Red”:

Check illuminated decorations to ensure they are in good condition; dispose of light strands with frayed or cracked wires and replace with UL approved devices.

- Outside cords should be approved for exterior use and inside cords should not be placed under carpets or throw rugs. Power strips should be used inside whenever possible.
- Keep live trees watered frequently. The water level should cover the tree stem by at least two inches and should be checked daily. If the needles fall off readily when the tree is moved, remove the tree from your home. Always turn off the lights when you leave or go to sleep and NEVER use lighted candles on trees.
- Use extreme caution while using candles and be sure to extinguish them when you leave a room or go to sleep. Use sturdy candle holders and trim candle wicks to keep the flames small. During power outages, use flashlights or battery-operated candles instead of candles.
- Have the chimney cleaned regularly. Christmas wrapping paper and tree branches should NEVER be burned in your fireplace. Both can burn rapidly and cause a chimney fire or flames can extend out of the firebox and into your home. Make sure the chimney flue is open before using the fireplace.

The Village will have a “used light” bin again this year on Central Avenue behind Village Hall for all old light strands, please see the back page for more information.

For questions about the Keep the Wreath Red safety program, call the Fire Prevention Bureau at 708-714-3562.



Village Department News

Sustainability

Public Works

Prepare Your Home for Cold Weather

As we head into the winter months, it's important to make sure that your home is prepared to withstand extreme temperatures that typically occur. The weather, ice and snow can cause substantial damage. Below are some tips to prevent this from occurring:

Window Drafts: Winter drafts can drive energy bills sky high if not addressed in a timely manner. By reducing air drafts, you can lower your home's energy costs by up to 20% per year. There are many products available for this purpose such as shrink film, temporary caulking and various weather stripping products.



Ice Dams: Clogged rain gutters or downspouts can lead to ice dams which may damage roofing and lead to leaking in interior spaces. Making sure gutters and downspouts are clear and able to flow water away from the home.

Frozen Pipes (Exterior): Many homeowners don't realize that hose bibs are susceptible to freezing as they may be holding water at a location exposed to sub-freezing temperatures. Freezing water in a hose bib can rupture piping and lead to excessive water leaks inside or outside the home. The best way to prevent this is to disconnect and store hoses for the winter, and to close off and drain hose bib lines if possible. There are also products available to insulate a hose bib if the line cannot be drained.



Frozen Pipes (Interior): If your interior pipes and/or faucets are located on an exterior wall that is not properly insulated, they may be at risk of freezing during extended periods of extreme cold. Oftentimes, opening cabinets (i.e. under a sink) may allow more heat into the area and can prevent freezing. Allowing faucets to "slow drip" can also prevent freezing due to the constantly moving water, though this should only be exercised during extreme events to minimize excessive water usage.

Sustainable Holidays Gifts

Environmentally responsible holiday shopping can take many forms. Some people pledge to buy nothing during Christmas and instead donate their holiday budgets to families in need. Others set out to buy gifts they know the recipient wants or needs to avoid waste. They shop at local, small businesses and choose durable, repurposed, easily repairable and upcycled items.

Thoughtful gifts that affirm a commitment to the planet include:

- ♻️ Bicycles and comfortable hiking shoes to encourage slow transportation and healing walks in nature.
- ♻️ Solar-powered devices and chargers in support of renewable energy.
- ♻️ Consumable items and foods that won't clutter the home or a landfill.
- ♻️ Services and experiences that don't need to be gift wrapped.
- ♻️ Donations to environmental charities that are meaningful to the recipient.

Individuals can also consider gifts that encourage loved ones to grow their own fruits, vegetables and herbs; plant trees in their backyards; and nurture flowering plants that support bees, butterflies and other pollinators. Green-thumb gifts include herb planters, wildflower seed packets, garden tools, utility gloves and vegetable-growing instruction books.

Reusable gifts make it easy and fun for recipients to be kind to the planet year-round by reducing our dependence on single-use, nonbiodegradable plastic that pollutes the environment and harms aquatic wildlife, and include:

- ♻️ Straws made of stainless steel; organic bamboo reusable cutlery or silicone muffin tins.
- ♻️ Water bottles and insulated containers made of stainless steel or glass.
- ♻️ Food bags, wraps and bowl covers made of beeswax, silicone, cotton or canvas.
- ♻️ Zero-waste shampoo, conditioner and body wash bars.

Eliminating wrapping paper, bows, and ribbons from the holiday equation is a great zero-waste lifestyle choice. Gifts can just as easily be wrapped in fabric, scarves and cloth napkins, or presented inside a reusable gift bag. Another alternative is to use wrapping materials and greeting cards that are biodegradable. Avoid papers with plastic glitter, foil and other decorations that may contain non-biodegradable, petroleum-based elements. When recycling, remember to remove tape, bows and ribbons.

We can all work together to reduce waste and pollution to be good to our planet!



Organizations Serving River Forest

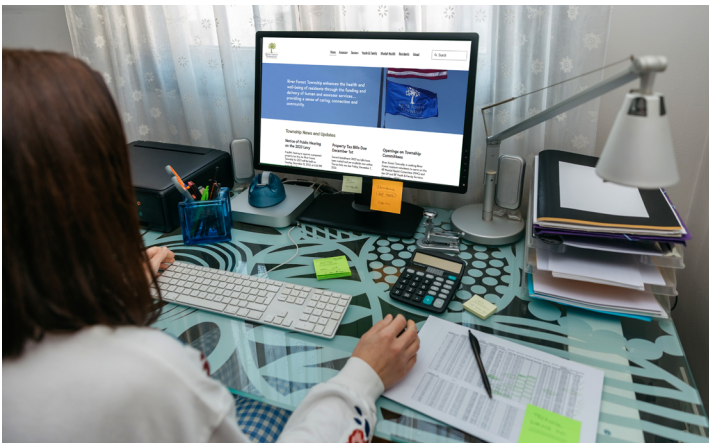


Township

To learn more about Township programs and services, visit RiverForestTownship.org, the River Forest community calendar at rfhappenings.com, or email Supervisor Carla Sloan at supervisor@riverforesttownship.org.

Township Launches New Website

River Forest Township is excited to launch its new website! The website address is the same as before at RiverForestTownship.org with a new, clean look and easier navigation for users. Learn about the many human services and programs the Township offers and funds, as well as resources provided by the Township Assessor's Office. Sign up on the website to receive the Township's email updates and newsletters, so you can stay current on all that's happening in our community.



New Mental Health Resource Guide in Mailboxes Soon!

The new Resource Guide for Mental Health and Disabilities Services is being mailed to all River Forest households and businesses in the next couple of weeks. Please be on the lookout for this guide containing local and regional service providers, help lines, support groups and advocacy organizations. Keep this resource handy, as you or someone you know may need this valuable information. Contact supervisor@riverforesttownship.org or call 708-366-2029 x11 for additional copies.

Openings: Township Mental Health Committee, Youth & Family Services Committee

The Township is seeking River Forest resident volunteers to serve on the River Forest Mental Health Committee (MHC) and the Oak Park and River Forest Youth & Family Services Committee (YFSC). This is a wonderful way to serve your community!

Committees meet in-person monthly (except July, August and December); the MHC meets 1st Tuesday evenings; YFSC meets 1st Wednesday evenings. Committees review grant applications, conduct site visits, and make funding recommendations to the Township Board of Trustees. Experience in these fields is helpful but not required. For more information or to apply, contact Supervisor Carla Sloan at supervisor@riverforesttownship.org or 708-366-2029 x11.

Park District

Constitution Park Outdoor Ice Rink

When weather permits, the ice rink is open daily 9 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., December 1, 2023 through March 1, 2024. Use of the rink is divided during the day between free skate and hockey use, and please note that the ice rink is unsupervised and skating is at your own risk. The Park District will begin making the ice rink when weather is at, and forecasted to be below 30 degrees for a high, and below 20 degrees for a low. It typically takes three to five days to make ice, depending on the weather.



Anytime is a good time to purchase a gift card from the Park District! Gift cards are available in any amount and can be purchased, in person, at the Depot, 401 Thatcher Avenue.

rfparks.com | 708-366-6660

Library

November Events & Holiday Hours

Holiday hours: The Library will be closed for the holidays on Sunday, December 24, Monday, December 25, Sunday December 31, 2023 and Monday, January 1, 2024.

Visit the [Library's Calendar](#) to see everything that's happening with events and activities for all ages. Below are some highlights:

Monday, 12/11, 4-4:45 p.m., STEM Club, Grades K-4

Join us for our monthly STEM program for kids. This month's activity is holiday ornament magnet painting. [Advanced registration required.](#)

Thursday, 12/14, 3:30-4:30 p.m., Hot Cocoa Mixer, Grades 5-8

Love hot cocoa? Come learn how to make your own hot cocoa mix and bring home your own custom creation! [Advanced registration required.](#)

Sunday, 12/17, 2-3 p.m., Live Author Event with Abraham Josephine Riesman, Adult

New York Times bestselling author (and Oak Park native) Abraham Josephine Riesman discusses her two books: "Ringmaster", a biography of pro wrestling impresario Vince McMahon, and "True Believer", a biography of Marvel Comics creator Stan Lee. Get your books signed by the author and find out why these two titans of American pop culture are worth learning about - even if you aren't a fan of wrestling or superheroes.

Friday, 12/22, 3-4:30 p.m., Holiday movie at the library, Grades K-8

Start the holiday break from school with a winter-themed movie at the library! Light snacks will be provided.

Organizations Serving River Forest



Oak Park and River Forest High School



Roosevelt Middle School



Willard Elementary School



Lincoln Elementary School

District 90

D90 Schools Named "Best" by U.S. News & World Report

U.S. News and World Report has selected Lincoln and Willard elementary schools, and Roosevelt Middle School as the "Best Elementary and Middle Schools" in the state for 2024, with all schools ranking in the top 101 schools among all public elementary and middle schools in Illinois. The determinations are based on publicly available data from the U.S. Department of Education. Learn more [here](#).

Also this fall, two Exemplary Designations and a Commendable Designation were given to D90 schools, which were the top two of five designations given by the Illinois State Board of Education. Willard's index score indicates performance in the top 3-4% of all K-8 public schools in the state and marks the second year in a row that the school has earned the Exemplary Designation. The index score for Lincoln indicates performance in the top 1% of all K-8 public schools in Illinois. Learn more [here](#).



Fourth Graders at Willard Elementary created Dia de los Muertos skull drawings with chalk and colored pencils in art class with Ms. Parker.



Lincoln Elementary students honored Veterans during the annual Veterans Day Assembly on November 13.



The River Forest public schools Cadet Band performed in full costume with Mr. Brek Hufnus at the Fall Concert at Roosevelt.

District 200

OPRFHS Tradition of Excellence Awards

Since 1983, Oak Park and River Forest High School (OPRFHS) has presented the annual Tradition of Excellence Awards to alumni who have made outstanding contributions to society through their personal and professional pursuits. The 2023 winners were honored in November at a student assembly, where they shared some words of wisdom with current Huskies.

Scyla Murray Baielli (class of 1986) was a college athlete, winning the 100-meter Gateway Conference title in 1991 at Western Illinois University (WIU). She earned numerous accolades for the NCAA Championships, the 1991 U.S. Olympic Festival, the 1992 Indoor National Championships, and the U.S. Olympic Trials. In 1996, she was honored as the Gateway Conference Athlete of the Decade for indoor track.

For the past 25 years, Baielli has worked as an English teacher and track coach at OPRFHS. She won the Most Inspirational Teacher Award from WIU in 1998 and was inducted into their Hall of Fame in 2005. During the award ceremony, Baielli humorously advised students, "If you have to use the washroom, use it when you need to use it. Don't wait." In other words, she advised students to live in the moment.

Kamilah Forbes (class of 1994), an award-winning theater and television director and producer, currently serves as the executive producer at the Apollo Theater in Harlem. A Howard University alum, Forbes won the 2019 National Black Theatre Festival Larry Leon Hamlin Producer Award and an NAACP Image Award. Forbes directed HBO's 2020, "Between the World and Me," an adaptation of Ta-Nehisi Coates's bestselling book. Nominated by President Joe Biden, Forbes became a member of the National Council on the Arts in 2022.

When asked for her advice to students, Forbes said, "What job you are going to get is less important than what your purpose is. Find and sit in your purpose."

Samuel Hunt is widely recognized for his recurring roles on the NBC series "Chicago Fire" and "Chicago P.D.," as well as for his role in a season of the Fox series "Empire." Moreover, he is known for his lead performance in the film "Unbroken: Path to Redemption." His earlier credits include roles in "Days of Our Lives," "Killing Lincoln," and "NCIS: New Orleans."

Hunt shared that his theater journey began after he didn't make the OPRFHS soccer team sophomore year and was looking for something else to do. His advice to students? "Fail...a lot," he said. "Whatever you do, fail. Fail big. It's going to create space for you to have other experiences."

Holiday Light Recycling

The Village continues to partner with Elgin Recycling, Inc. to provide an easy way to responsibly dispose of old and unusable holiday lights. Residents can drop off holiday lights for recycling in a receptacle clearly marked for this purpose behind Village Hall under the train overpass. This bin will be available through January 15, 2024.

Accepted items include: Wire, string, holiday lights and extension cords. Items that will not be accepted are live trees, artificial trees, wreaths, garland, ornaments, figurines and inflatables. Elgin Recycling takes the lights and cords. The strands are separated, baled and sent to be chopped or shredded and sold as a commodity to foundries and mills across the United States. To learn more, click [here](#).



Follow the Village on Social Media



Sign Up For Email and Alerts



River Forest Events



Village Contact Information

Village Administration
708-714-3563

Village Administrator
Matt Walsh

Finance Department
708-714-3524

Director Rosemary McAdams

Fire Department
708-714-3560
Chief Tom Gaertner

Public Works and
Development Services
708-714-3551

Police Department
708-714-3540
Chief James O'Shea

Emergency
Services
Dial 911

400 Park Avenue River Forest, IL 60305
708-366-8500
708-366-3702 (fax)
Monday 8 a.m. – 7 p.m.
Tuesday- Friday 8a.m. – 4:30 p.m.