

# RIVER FOREST

*Proud Heritage • Bright Future*

The Village of River Forest Newsletter | November, 2023



## Safety Remains a Top Priority

*Please read Village President Adduci's letter in this newsletter addressing the Village's commitment to safety for all of our residents especially during this time of heightened fears.*

At the most recent Community Safety meeting, Police Chief Jim O'Shea emphasized that the Department continuously works to protect the entire community, not only in times of crisis. He added that although there have been no specific threats related to the Middle East violence, police patrols have been increased near places of worship. He added that in addition to churches and synagogues, the Department remains committed to working with other law enforcement agencies and maintains consistent contact with schools and businesses. Chief O'Shea emphasized that the Village condemns hate crimes, hate speech, and asks residents to stand together against all acts of hatred.

### Other meeting topics included:

- Vacation Watches provided by the Department should

be requested at least one week prior to the departure date.

- Steering wheel locks are still available for Hyundai and Kia automobiles built between 2010-2021.
- Bike helmets for bonbon coupons from River Forest Chocolates are still available for children seen wearing helmets when riding their bicycles.
- Representatives from the Community and Economic Development Association of Cook County (CEDA) shared information about various utility assistance programs.
- The AGE-u-cate Training Institute gave a presentation on training they offer to Police Departments to better understand how to work with members of the public with dementia.

Community Safety Meetings are held quarterly and **this meeting** was the last for 2023. To view future Community Safety Meeting dates, click [here](#). For any questions, please contact Officer Megan Drake at: [mdrake@vrf.us](mailto:mdrake@vrf.us).

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## From Village President Cathy Adduci

Dear River Forest residents,

**S**adly, the ongoing violence in the Middle East has hit close to home for many of our residents who have friends and relatives in this region. These neighbors, and all of us, are concerned about dangerous rhetoric closer to home. This is why the Village acknowledges the need to address any heightened fears that our residents are currently experiencing. The FBI director has stated in recent days that the agency is working with local law enforcement to mitigate any threats to our nation's security through the sharing of information to improve overall intelligence. The River Forest Police Department is actively involved and will continue to be engaged - not only with our federal authorities, but state and neighboring law enforcement agencies as well. Additionally, our Department remains deeply connected with houses of worship, schools, nonprofits and businesses in River Forest relating to proactive safety steps and measures. I want to reassure everyone in River Forest and our surrounding communities that public safety continues to be a number one priority for the Village. As mentioned in the front page article, if you see something that doesn't seem right or you feel is out of place, please call 911.

A big congratulations to our District 90 schools for excellence in education! In the State's annual Report Card, Lincoln Elementary School ranked in the top 1% for performance of all K-8 public schools in the state. Additionally, Willard Elementary School ranked in the top 3-4% of all K-8 public schools, which marks the second year in a row that Willard has earned this exemplary designation. We are all very proud of our schools, as they are one of the many things that make River Forest an attractive place to live, work, and raise a family!

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

## Holiday Housewalk

Get your tickets now for the OPRF Infant Welfare Society Holiday Housewalk and Market. It's the 25th annual housewalk and it's a special event. On Friday, December 1 and Saturday, December 2, you can tour six stunning homes in Oak Park and River Forest. There's also a fun artisan market where you can get a head start on holiday shopping. Ticket prices go up at the door.

What's more - by purchasing tickets, you help them fulfill their mission. They can continue to offer high quality, comprehensive medical, dental, behavioral health and social service support to underserved, low-income children from infancy to age 21.

To learn more and buy tickets, click [here](#).



## Park District: Tree Trimming Event

**Thursday, November 30 \*Tree Lighting will take place at 5 p.m.\***

Join the Park District in celebrating the holiday season by participating in the annual Tree Trimming event! Community businesses, organizations, and neighborhoods are invited to sponsor a tree, which will be on display along Lake Street in Memorial Parkway. A tree with lights will be provided and sponsors will bring and hang their own decorations. **Register your group** for one of the two time slots available. Individually wrapped cookies will be provided - along with Santa's mailbox and festive music!



## Upcoming Library Events

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

Below are some highlights:

**Sunday, 11/5, 2-3:30 p.m., Queen Elizabeth II: A Living History Portrayal by Leslie Goddard, Adult**  
Beloved scholar and actress Leslie Goddard returns to embody Queen Elizabeth II. In this performance, as the Queen looks back on her life, you'll get to know the woman behind the images—her sense of humor and the savvy intelligence with which she met her demanding obligations. Brought to you in partnership with River Forest Township.

**Sunday, 11/12, 2-3:30 p.m., Gangster History of Oak Park & River Forest, Adult**  
Attention true-crime buffs and those interested in local history! River Forest author John J. Binder, who researches the history of organized crime, returns to the Library for a presentation on the criminal past of the Oak Park/River Forest area. Brought to you in partnership with River Forest Township.

**Thursday, 11/16, 3:30-4:30 p.m., Mini Art Show: Clay Creations, Grades 5-12**  
Calling all aspiring artists! Come by and create something out of clay. Creations will be on display upstairs in the middle school & teen area for a month after they're put up.

**Saturday, 11/18, 11-12 p.m., Saturday Morning Bluey Party, Families**  
Join us for a special all things Bluey party! Enjoy Bluey-themed crafts, stories, and some light snacks. Bluey goodie bags will be available to take home, while supplies last.



# Village Department News

## Administration



### Daylight Saving Time Ends

Daylight Saving Time ends this Sunday, November 5. When you set your clocks back one hour, it's a great time to remember to change the batteries in your smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors. Approximately 2/3 of home fire injuries occur in homes without a smoke alarm or due to those that are not working properly. A simple test and battery change could save your life or the lives of loved ones!



### Holiday Hours

Village Hall will be closed on Thursday, November 23 and Friday, November 24 in observance of the Thanksgiving holiday. Looking towards the December holidays, offices will also be closed Friday, December 22, Monday, December 25, and Monday, January 1, 2024.

## Public Works

### November Leaf Pickup

Fall leaf cleanup is now underway! This program runs through the first week in December, and leaves should be piled near, but slightly away from the curb to ensure there is proper drainage during a rain event. Village crews will collect leaves throughout the work week based on the following schedule:

- **Monday:** Area west of Thatcher Avenue, including Edgewood and Auvergne Place, River Oaks Drive and Lake Street, as well as all streets south of the UP railroad tracks.
- **Tuesday:** All streets between William Street and Harlem Avenue
- **Wednesday:** All streets between Lathrop and Monroe avenues (north of the railroad tracks)
- **Thursday:** All streets between Park and Ashland avenues (north of the railroad tracks)
- **Friday:** All streets between Thatcher and Forest avenues (north of the railroad tracks)

A map of this schedule can be found on the Village website [here](#).

Please note, this program allows for the pick-up of leaves only. Grass clippings, brush and any other type of material should be disposed of in accordance with the Village's [refuse](#) and [yard waste](#) procedures. Anyone interested in participating in the Village's Curbside Composting Program can find additional information [here](#).

## Fire Department

### Thanksgiving Safety Tips

The Kitchen is the heart of the home, especially at Thanksgiving, but did you know that Thanksgiving Day is the Leading Day of the year for Home Fires involving Cooking Equipment? According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), Thanksgiving has more home cooking fires than any other day of the year. Please keep the following Safety Tips in mind when you are cooking that awesome meal.

1. Stay Alert in the kitchen. Don't leave anything you are cooking unattended. Use timers (on your phone) to check the progress of your food preparations. Keep flammables away from any heat source.
2. Deep frying your Turkey OUTSIDE. If you are deep frying your turkey do it outside on a flat stable surface away from anything that may catch fire. Make double sure your turkey is thawed and thoroughly dry prior to frying it. Any kind of excess moisture can cause the oil to splatter that can cause severe burns.
3. Be extra careful with food contamination. Make sure to wash your hands before and after handling food. Use a meat thermometer to ensure the turkey and all other dishes are properly cooked. Don't leave food out too long before refrigerating.
4. With friends and extended family coming to visit, keep the house clean. Avoid slips and falls by making sure your house is clear of clutter. Immediately clean up any spills so nobody can slip.
5. Practice Knife Safety. Make sure to handle all cutting utensils with care. Clean the kitchen as you go and don't leave any sharp objects and utensils out if you're not using them.
6. Have the parking situation figured out before the big day. Let your guests know where to park prior to the holiday. Have someone outside to assist with parking. It may be a good idea to park on the same side of the street so traffic and emergency vehicles can get down your street.
7. Secure your home. Burglaries happen a lot during the holiday season. A security system/doorbell camera can be a big deterrent when you are not home. Leave lights on or set them to timers to come on at different times of the evening. Have your neighbors park their car in your driveway...(giving them a spot to park so their friends and family can park on the street for their holiday get-together).

For more information on Holiday Safety, please call the River Forest Fire Prevention Bureau at **708-714-3562**.

The River Forest Fire Department wishes everyone a Happy Thanksgiving Holiday.





# Organizations Serving River Forest



## Township

Many Township services and programs are returning to meeting in-person. To learn more, visit [RiverForestTownship.org](http://RiverForestTownship.org), the River Forest community calendar at [rfhappenings.com](http://rfhappenings.com), or email Supervisor Carla Sloan at [supervisor@riverforesttownship.org](mailto:supervisor@riverforesttownship.org).

### Join "Parent University" on November 15!

Parent University (Parent U.) is coming up Wednesday, November 15, starting at 6 p.m., at Oak Park and River Forest High School. This free event is open to parents and caregivers of students attending River Forest, Oak Park, and surrounding area schools. Parents of both public and private schools are invited to participate. Parent U. will focus on nurturing students' mental health in this fast-paced world and parents can gain knowledge and learn about tools to support their child's mental wellness journey. Topics include Helping Your Teen Get Organized and Navigating Conflict with your Teen. Registration is recommended. For more info and to register, click [here](#) or use the QR code.



### Mental Health Committee and Youth & Family Services Committee Openings

River Forest Township is seeking River Forest resident volunteers to serve on the Mental Health Committee (MHC) and the Oak Park and River Forest Youth & Family Services Committee (YFSC). Committees meet in-person monthly (except for in July, August and December); the MHC meets the first Tuesday and the YFSC meets on the first Wednesday. Committees review grant applications, conduct site visits, and make funding recommendations to the Township Board of Trustees. Experience in these fields is recommended, but not required. For more information or to apply, contact Supervisor Carla Sloan at [supervisor@riverforesttownship.org](mailto:supervisor@riverforesttownship.org) or call 708-366-2029 ext. 11.

### Second Installment Property Tax Bills Available Online

The 2022 Second Installment Property Tax Bills are due December 1 and will be mailed in early November. Taxpayers are now able to view, pay and print out a copy of their property tax bills on the Cook County Treasurer's website by clicking [here](#). The Treasurer's Office suggests that residents review their exemptions, and if any are missing, please reach out to the [River Forest Township Assessor](#).

## Park District

### Youth Basketball League Registration: The last day to register for the 2024 Youth Basketball League is Friday, November 17 at noon.

The practice season will start after winter break and the game season will follow. Coaches will contact players with all pertinent information and schedules after the coaches orientation is held. Volunteer coaches are needed for all teams to be able to play. **\*Please remember:** The league is GRADE BASED and NOT AGE BASED, so children should be registered for the grade division they are currently enrolled in.\*

[rfparks.com](http://rfparks.com) | 708-366-6660

## Library

### November Events & Holiday Hours

**Holiday hours:** The library will close at 5 p.m. on Wednesday, November 22, and will be closed on Thursday, November 23. The Library will reopen for normal business hours on Friday, November 24.

Everyone at the Library wishes you a Happy Thanksgiving!

Visit the Library's [Calendar](#) to see everything that's coming up!

### Multi-age Events:

**Wednesday, 11/8, 7-8 p.m., Illinois Libraries Present: A Taste of Love with Maya-Camille Broussard of Justice of the Pies (virtual)** Get inspiration for your Thanksgiving pies by joining this virtual program: Join Maya-Camille Broussard, star of Netflix's Bake Squad, and owner of Chicago-based [Justice of the Pies](#) for a demo from her kitchen just in time for Thanksgiving. She will share her love of pie, the stories of those that inspired her, and some tips and tricks to help you make the perfect Thanksgiving pie. **Registration is required.**



### Friday, 11/17, 7-8:30 p.m., Family Trivia Night, 10 to Adult

Families are invited to test their knowledge at a fun evening of competitive trivia! The Library will serve pizza at this after-hours event. **Advanced registration is required.** When you register, please indicate the number of people on your family's team - and make sure at least one person on your team has a smart phone to enter the answers!

# Organizations Serving River Forest



Oak Park and River Forest High School



Roosevelt Middle School



Willard Elementary School



Lincoln Elementary School

## District 200

### OPRFHS Named to Advanced Placement Honor Roll

Oak Park and River Forest High School (OPRFHS) has been named to the College Board's Advanced Placement (AP) School Honor Roll, earning a silver distinction!

The honor roll recognizes four levels of distinction—platinum, gold, silver, or bronze—that are based on three criteria: 1) increasing college-going culture, 2) providing opportunities for students to earn college credit, and 3) maximizing college readiness.

OPRFHS's overall silver recognition is based on the following results for students graduating in the class of 2023:

- Silver status for College Culture: 59% took at least one AP exam during high school. The criterion for gold is 65%.
- Gold status for College Credit: 47% scored a 3 or better on at least one AP exam during high school. The criterion for platinum is 50%.
- Gold status for College Optimization: 12% took five or more AP exams during high school, with at least one of the five taken during 9th or 10th grade. The criterion for platinum is 15%.

In additional AP news, 363 students received AP Scholar Awards across three categories.

- 155 students received the AP Scholar Award, for receiving scores of 3 or higher on three or more AP exams.
- 72 students received the AP Scholar with Honor Award, for receiving an average score of at least 3.25 on all AP exams taken AND scoring 3 or higher on four or more of these exams.
- 136 students earned the AP Scholar with Distinction Award, for receiving an average score of at least 3.5 on all AP exams taken AND scoring 3 or higher on five or more of these exams.

College Board has 40 different AP classes available, and OPRFHS offers 27 of them across an array of subjects that include Literature and Composition, Economics, Music Theory, Studio Art, European History, Computer Science, Physics, and Spanish.



## District 90



### D90 Schools Earn Top Designations from the State of Illinois

On October 30, the Illinois State Board of Education published the Illinois State Report Card, an annual evaluation of all schools that provides each school with a rating called an individual Summative Designation.

District 90 public schools earned two Exemplary designations and a Commendable designation, which are the top two of the five leveled designations available.

Lincoln and Willard Elementary Schools earned Exemplary designations, reflecting overall performance in the top 10% of all K-8 schools throughout the state. Roosevelt Middle School earned a Commendable designation, demonstrating improved achievement on the Illinois Assessment of Readiness over last year in both English Language Arts and Math, as well as exceptional performance on the Illinois Science Assessment. If you'd like to learn more, please explore the Illinois Report Card [here](#).

Notably, the overall Summative Designation index score for Willard 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 Willard has earned the Exemplary designation. The overall summative designation index score for Lincoln indicates performance in the top 1% of all K-8 public schools in the state. Congratulations to the entire school community for being recognized for the extraordinary teaching and learning underway at D90 schools.



## River Forest Sustainability

### Be More "Green" With Electric Heat Pumps

When upgrading your HVAC system, there are many benefits - both financially and environmentally - in switching to an electric heat pump. Heat pumps can be used to heat and can fully replace a conventional air conditioner. During colder months, much of the heating can be shifted from an existing furnace or boiler to a heat pump.

These pumps can be used in a variety of HVAC configurations, whether you have gas or electric heat, radiators, or forced air. They can also be installed to replace a central air conditioning unit or be used to replace an entire HVAC system.

Heat pumps can reduce costs to heat and cool your home and run more efficiently than gas or electric furnaces. This results in an overall reduction of energy consumption, as well as reduced natural gas consumption, if used to supplement or replace a gas furnace. Additionally, residents can take advantage of federal tax credits to offset the cost of purchasing a heat pump. Information on available tax credits can be found [here](#).

When looking to install a heat pump, be sure to select an HVAC contractor who has experience with heat pumps, and always make sure your contractor is **licensed** with the Village.

## Business Spotlight



**Gagliardo Group**, in River Forest is a real estate agency with more than 40 licensed realtors who are highly recognized in the area and among the most knowledgeable in the field. In addition to home listings, they also offer home evaluations and concierge services. To learn more, click [here](#).

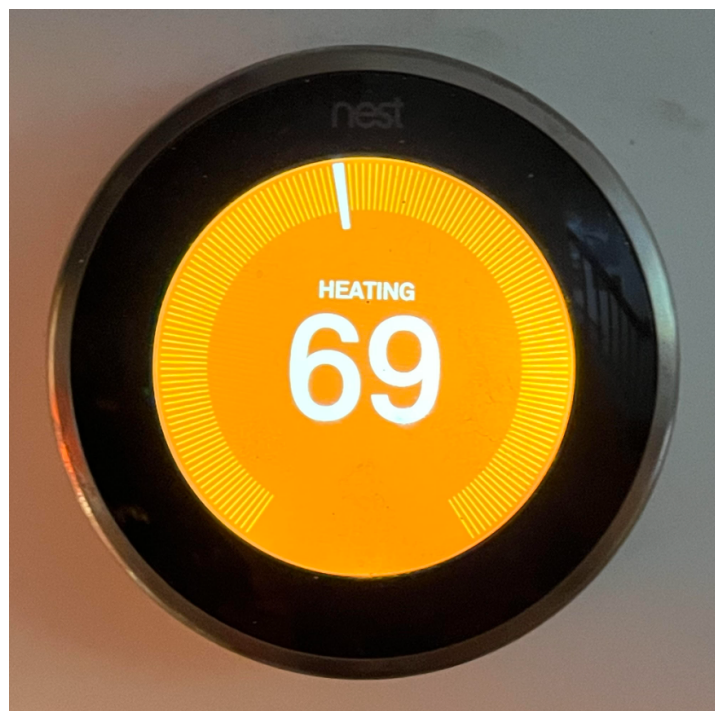
If you'd like for your business to be featured, email [info@vrf.us](mailto:info@vrf.us). Visit the Shop River Forest web page on the Village's website [here](#).

## Energy Assistance Program

River Forest Township can assist income qualified residents with their gas, electric, and water bills by providing applications for available energy service benefits - which will be available through August 15, 2024. To help the most vulnerable populations within the communities first, there will be two priority periods where only select households will be eligible to apply before the program is offered to all eligible Cook County residents.

Applications for the first priority group were already accepted in October - and included households with a senior resident (60+), person(s) with a disability, and families with children under the age of six. The second priority group can now apply for benefits (eligibility began on November 1) and includes households that are disconnected from one or both utilities or those that have received a utility disconnection notice. Both priority groups are also eligible to apply for furnace repair or replacement. The furnace assistance program will be available until May 31, 2024 or until funds are exhausted. Beginning Friday, December 1, all eligible Cook County households can apply for benefits and assistance.

For more information, or to schedule an appointment to apply, please email [River Forest Township](#).



# Giving Back

As the Thanksgiving holiday draws near, please keep your neighbors in need in mind. **Beyond Hunger** formerly the Oak Park River Forest Food Pantry currently serves more than 40,000 individuals and their primary source of food collection comes from donations. Consider becoming a **Beyond Hunger** donor and drop off items Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Donations may be dropped off at the delivery window, which is located near the children’s play area.

The Community of Congregations is preparing to serve more than 800 families during their annual Holiday Food and Gift Basket Drive. Volunteers are needed to sponsor a family over the holidays where they shop for gifts, wrap them, and then drop them off the week of December 4. Donations are also accepted. For more information on this program, please click [here](#).

Save a life this holiday season! Trinity High School has partnered with the Rotary Club of Oak Park-River Forest for a blood drive at the **High School** on Wednesday, November 29 from noon - 6 p.m. The U.S. is currently experiencing an emergency blood shortage and blood donations help replace blood loss as a result of surgery or injury. To learn more or make an appointment, click [here](#).

Community of Congregations is a collection of faith-based organizations located in western Chicagoland that join forces for the greater good, and to encourage compassion and equity. Good Shepherd Lutheran Church is one of the member congregations, and is requesting assistance through the following needs to serve 100 migrants that had no place to sleep and have been taken in by the church:

- Cleaning supplies: disinfectant and alcohol wipes, paper towels, hand soap and trash bag liners
- Food starting as early as Friday, November 3
- A church or organization that can provide showers and laundry (transportation may be necessary)
- Good Shepherd’s Associate Pastor, Kerstin Hedlund is the contact person regarding these needs, and can be reached at [kerstin@goodshepherdlc.org](mailto:kerstin@goodshepherdlc.org).



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.