



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,

Welcome to February.

I hope you all have fared well during what has been our area's coldest snap in years.

Starting in January and continuing into February, the Board of Trustees and I will be discussing the budget for the upcoming fiscal year starting May 1st. At our last meeting on January 28th, we began this process by looking at the Capital Improvement Plan, which identifies major capital projects and a corresponding funding source for projects that are \$10,000 or more. The next task will be looking at our overall budget, which accounts for all revenue and expenses used to fund traditional services like police, fire, public works and administration.

An important source of revenue - but not our only source - is property taxes. One topic I continually receive feedback on is the River Forest property tax bill. By now, you should have received the first installment of your property tax bill for 2018. If you have questions regarding your 2018 tax bill, I suggest you contact our River Forest Township Assessor, Pam Kende at 708-366-2787 and she will assist you.

While no one enjoys cutting the check to the Cook County Treasurer's office, it is important to understand what the Village does to ensure that our community remains a desirable place for people to live while not taxing you out of River Forest.

All of our programs and services are provided with these guiding principles in mind:

- Providing a safe community.
- Making decisions that protect our property values.
- Working to stabilize property taxes.

These guiding principles are why the Village must focus on economic development in order to strengthen the tax base.

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Approximately half of the property in River Forest is non-taxable, and River Forest is landlocked with very few opportunities to create new development. We must do what we can to get the highest and best use out of each property while maintaining our small-town charm.

In order to create opportunities, we have approved tax increment financing districts for the Madison Street and North Avenue corridors. Projects such as the mixed use development at Lake & Lathrop and the senior living facility at Chicago & Harlem help strengthen our tax base and stabilize our property tax bill – and bring amenities to the village.

Our continued commitment to our guiding principles and core values, in conjunction with using sound economic development strategies, will enable the Village to create more assessed valuation. This will benefit the entire community for the long term.

Compared to our neighbors, River Forest has a low overall tax rate, demonstrating our strong value to our residents. For instance, in 2017, a home assessed at \$500,000 in River Forest will have an overall tax bill that will be approximately 15 percent **lower** than a comparable home assessed at \$500,000 in Forest Park.

2017 Property Tax Rates (Payable in 2018)

- Chicago – 7.266 (major pension and school funding TBD)
- River Forest – 9.884
- Oak Park – 12.204
- Elmwood Park – 10.596
- Forest Park – 11.381
- Riverside – 11.157

River Forest's lower property tax rate is complemented by all of our wonderful community assets such as strong public safety, walkable neighborhoods, award-winning schools, beautiful parks, a historic public library, and many convenient transportation options. These strengths, coupled with a lower property tax rate, are what creates great value for the residents of River Forest.

Information other than property taxes:

I am excited to promote the River Forest Community Calendar, now live at RFHappenings.com. This online calendar is the work of the River Forest Collaboration Committee: representatives from the Village, District 90, District 200, River Forest Township, River Forest Public Library and River Forest Park District. The calendar is a great example of how working together makes for a stronger, better informed community. I shared this [initiative](#) with mayors from around the country during the recent [Mayors Innovation Project](#) in Washington D.C. and this initiative was well received. Thanks to all of you who made this happen.

[Emergency](#)

[Notification](#)

[Sign-up](#)



River Forest has joined the [Dementia Friendly America](#) network of communities. After holding a Dementia Friendly River Forest kick-off meeting in 2018, the Village of River Forest and the Township, along with Loyola University Health System, were designated the champion organizations to coordinate the group's continued work. Dementia Friendly River Forest will partner with the library, plus home care and social services to help develop initiatives, which will be rolled out in the coming months. The Center for Gerontology at Concordia University Chicago will track their progress and share their findings with the community. The group is looking at innovative ways to reduce stigma, support persons living with dementia, and provide aid to their families. Dementia Friendly River Forest will be exploring the development of the "River Forest Care Corps" in order to provide opportunities for volunteers to offer respite care. This will be important work in which I hope you will all be engaged.

Later this month, I will be delivering a State of the Village report to the Board of Trustees.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Cathy'.

Cathy Adduci
Village President

P.S. Congratulations to our very own River Forest resident, Jack Kwan, son of Dr. Tony and Helen Kwan, who was a contestant on the Titan Games this past month.



Special Message from the River Forest Fire Department

With cold temperatures, it is important to keep fire hydrants from leaking, which could cause them to freeze if not repaired. Please report any [leaking fire hydrants](#) to the River Forest Public Works Department 708-366-8500 ext. 358.

The Fire Department would also like to remind you to keep an eye out for [falling ice](#) as the weather warms up.

Special Message from the River Forest Police Department

Community Crime Prevention Meeting

On January 23, River Forest Police Department held its Quarterly Community Crime Prevention meeting at Village Hall. We had special guest speakers from our partnership organizations at Positive Youth Development and Dementia Friendly River Forest. We addressed several other topics including recent crime trends before ending with a Q & A session. All are welcome to join our next meeting, scheduled for Wednesday, April 24 at 6 PM. If you would like to view the slideshows and bulletins that were presented at our past meetings, they are available at www.vrf.us/crimeprevention.

Carjackings

Our neighboring communities have had an uptick in carjackings recently. Though there is no way to predict who will be victimized, taking preventative measures will help protect you and your property. Remember to keep your doors locked, be aware of your surroundings, and notify the River Forest Police of anything suspicious. Distractions inside the vehicle can hamper your ability to see dangers outside. In the event of a carjacking remember this: Your car can be replaced, YOU CAN'T! For more crime prevention safety tips on carjackings, see our informational pamphlet [here](#).

Don't Get Left Out in the Cold

With winter in full effect, motorists are more likely to leave running vehicles unattended. The River Forest Police Department

knows this, and so do car thieves. Unattended vehicles with keys in the ignition are prime targets for roaming thieves looking for a good opportunity. Additionally, many proximity key fob vehicles with push-start ignitions can be driven away without the key fob in the vehicle. Whether you're warming up your car in the morning or running into the gas station for a pack of gum, make sure your vehicle is secured properly and cannot be driven off without you, even if that means turning off the car. Recent studies show modern cars do not need to "warm up" and it can cause more harm than good. So, as nice as it is to return to a warm car, if leave your car running and unattended, you may return to find yourself left out in the cold.

Special Message from District 90

Families Can Register Their Youngsters for Kindergarten

Do you have a youngster (or know one) who will be five years old on or before September 1, 2019? If so, it's time to begin the kindergarten registration process. **To help families prepare, Willard and Lincoln will host a Kindergarten Registration and Information Night on Wednesday, February 6.** Kindergarten registration assistance starts at 6:30 PM and the program begins at 7 PM. The program will include presentations from kindergarten teachers, the school nurse, the principal, and leaders from the PTO. The evening will also feature a tour of classrooms. Families who reside north of Chicago Avenue should attend the Willard program, while families who live south of Chicago Avenue should attend the Lincoln event. Registration for Kindergarten begins on Friday, February 1. For more information about Kindergarten registration, please visit [the District's website](#) after February 1.

Parent/Teacher Conference Sign-up

It's time for District 90 families to sign up for Parent/Teacher Conferences! Registration for Parent/Teacher Conferences is now open and closes on Wednesday, February 20, at 10 PM. Families can sign up online to schedule a conference time with teachers by visiting [the District's website](#). Parent/Teacher Conferences will be held on February 28 and March 1.

Community Feedback Night

The District 90 Board of Education has scheduled a Community Feedback Night on Tuesday, February 5 in the Roosevelt Middle School Auditorium at 7 PM. The goal of this meeting will be to hear further community input about potential changes to the Roosevelt school schedule.

GREEN NEWS

Take Care When Placing Items out for Pick-Up

Please note when putting out greenery for pick up or any organics, do not place these items in plastic bags. In addition, all plastic tags, containers, wire frames, non-organic decorations and lights should be removed. The compost facility cannot process the material if it is contaminated by the above listed materials.



River Forest is one of 22 Communities in Illinois to Join SolSmart

SolSmart is a program that provides assistance to municipalities to promote and streamline solar installations. To read more, see this [article](#) and [press release](#) and look for more information on the Village's Sustainability Page soon.

Mark Your Calendars for the One Earth Film Fest March 1-10, 2019

There are 6 films being screened in River Forest for all ages. For the complete list of films visit <https://www.oneearthfilmfest.org>.

- **Monday, 2/28, 7 PM, *Living the Change*, Dominican University.** Members from the River Forest Sustainability Commission will be at the film to discuss/answer any questions you have about sustainability programs in River Forest and practices you can put in place to help the environment.
- **Saturday, 3/2, 7 PM, *Dreaming of a Vetter World*, Good Earth Greenhouse.** Note: Farmer Thatcher will be speaking at the screening. What a great opportunity!
- **Saturday, 3/9, 9:15 AM, *Earth + Sky Friends*, Thatcher Woods Pavilion (ages 3-8)**
- **Saturday, 3/9, 11 AM, *Backyard Wilderness*, Thatcher Woods Pavilion (ages 6-13)**
- **Saturday, 3/9, 4 PM, *Inventing Tomorrow*, Thatcher Woods Pavilion (great for teens and students in "green clubs")**
- **Sunday, 3/10, 10:30 AM, *Call of the Forest*, Thatcher Woods Pavilion.** Note: A guided forest walk with forest therapist Kim Ruffin begins at 10 AM.

Start Cleaning Your Closets Now...

Save the date: Saturday, May 4, 2019 from 8 AM-1 PM is the River Forest Recycling Extravaganza. Start cleaning but save items such as corks, CDs, keys, school supplies, books, and electronics. More details to follow. Please contact julie@4moller.com with questions.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Sustainability Commission will be Wednesday, February 6, 2019 at 7 PM and held at Village Hall, 400 Park Avenue. All are welcome.

Special Message from the River Forest Township Assessor

By now you should have received your first installment property tax bill. If you haven't received your tax bill, the Township Assessor can help you receive a duplicate tax bill. This bill is 55% of the total amount of taxes you paid in the previous year. All exemptions and changes to your 2018 assessment will be taken into account on your second installment tax bill that usually comes out in July.

The River Forest Township Assessor is assisting seniors with their Senior Exemptions. All seniors must file for their Senior Exemptions every year. They have extended the deadline for filing your exemption. If you would like help completing your forms please call the Township Assessor at 708-366-2787 for an appointment during the week or our walk-in hours are Thursday from 10 AM – 12 PM. For new homeowners, we are able to assist you with the homeowner exemption paperwork.

River Forest is in the last year of a tri-annual assessment period. River Forest Township will be open for appeals with the Cook County Assessor starting on Wednesday, February 6 for 30 days. Appeals are filed on-line at the Cook County Assessor's website: www.cookcountyassessor.com. We can assist you in finding comparable properties. Please leave your name, address, phone number twice, please speak slowly and clearly. We will create an appeal packet for you.

Pamela Kende, River Forest Township Assessor
Direct phone number: 708-366-2787

PARK DISTRICT SPOTLIGHT

[Click here](#) for registration information.

School's Out Programs for Children

Monday, 2/18, Superhero Engineering with LEGOs, ages 5-6

Monday, 2/18, Harry Potter Master Engineering with LEGOs, ages 7-12

Friday, 3/1, Lunch with LEGOs, ages 5-10

Monday, 3/4, Mardi Gras Kid's Cooking Festival, ages 6-10

Dodgeball

Starts 2/14, ages 7-11

Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu/Judo

Starts 2/20, ages 5-15

Programs for Adults

Wednesday, 2/6, Hearts! ages 21+

This art-based workshop is a reflective and gratitude-based experience to acknowledge and honor who and what we love and hold in our hearts. Most materials are provided. Participants are given the option to bring copies of small personal pictures or mementos to use in their art making process.

Fridays, 2/15-3/22, Beginning Photography, ages 16+

RIVER FOREST LIBRARY SPOTLIGHT

The River Forest Public Library offers programs and resources 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, 2/6, 4-5 PM, Ready Readers, Grades 1-4

Get ready to read *How to Train Your Dragon* with crafts, activities, and a snack based on the book by Cressida Cowell. Listen to a librarian read the first chapter, and then check out a copy to finish reading at home! [Advanced registration required.](#)

Tuesday, 2/19, 2-3 PM, Dog Man Party, Grades K-4

Unleash your inner hero as we celebrate *Dog Man*, Dav Pilkey's hilarious series featuring the worthy crime-biting canine. [Advanced registration required.](#)

Wednesday, 2/20, 4-4:45 PM, Snack Attack, Grades K-4

Learn how to make a fun seasonal snack at this after school cooking program. In February, we will taste test vegetables and make cucumber roll-ups. [Advanced registration required.](#)

Monday, 2/25, 4-5 PM, Amazing Artists: Georgia O'Keefe, Grades K-4

Learn about world famous artist Georgia O'Keefe, and create your own art piece inspired by her unique style. Supplies will be provided. [Advanced registration required.](#)

Children and Teens

Thursday, 2/14, 3:30-5 PM, I Heart Robots, Grades K-8

The robots are coming! Drop on by and show your robot love in exploring Cubelets, Ozobots, Sphero, and more!

Teens

Thursday, 2/7, 3:30-4:30 PM, Teen Tasters, Grades 5-12

Try out a variety of unique foods from a different country each month in this fun taste test program. [Advanced registration required.](#)

Thursday, 2/28, 3:30-5 PM, Bad Art Afternoon Challenge, Grades 5-12

Bring out your tacky side and create the worst art to win a prize! [Advanced registration required.](#)

Adults

Wednesday, 2/6 & 2/20, 1-2:30 PM, Great Decisions at River Forest Community Center, Adult

Join us for an exciting series of discussions about international issues. Stop by the library to check out a briefing book. Attend all 8 sessions in the series or come to individual sessions of interest. Topics: 2/6, Refugees and Global Migration, 2/20, The Middle East. **This program will be held at the River Forest Community Center, 8020 Madison Street, River Forest.**

Saturday, 2/9, 1:30-3:30 PM, Foreign Film Forum, Adult

Join us to watch the German film *Young Goethe in Love*. Snacks will be served.

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

Sunday, 2/3, 2-3 PM, Sunflower Chamber Orchestra Concert, All Ages

Join us for an afternoon of beautiful music by the Sunflower Chamber Orchestra—a children's orchestra located in River Forest!

Wednesday, 2/13, 10-11:30 AM, Connect With Tech

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.

Saturday, 2/16, 2-3 PM, The Codebreaker and the POW: A Family Legacy of WWII

Author Sue Baugh describes how her father, born in Manila, became a codebreaker for the US Navy and helped crack Japanese codes before the Battle of Midway, while her grandfather fought on Corregidor Island and survived three years in a Japanese POW camp. She reveals the heroic efforts it took to defeat Japanese forces and liberate the Philippines.

Sunday, 2/24, 2-3 PM, Unforgettable! Music of the '50s

The '50s come alive in this cabaret highlighting the musical styles of the era! Rock out with the hits of Elvis, Bill Haley and the Comets, Chuck Berry, and Jerry Lee Lewis. Croon the soaring songs of Dean Martin, Frank Sinatra, Nat King Cole, and Doris Day. Bop along to Rockin' Robin, Sh-Boom, Wake Up Little Susie, and Yakety-Yak. Hear the fascinating stories behind the music and artists while swaying to the hits!

Wednesday, 2/27, 10-11 AM, Social Stitching *NEW!*

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.

TOWNSHIP SPOTLIGHT

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, RF. 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 RF Township Supervisor Carla Sloan, 708-366-2029 or supervisor@RiverForestTownship.org.

Memory Café Meets Third Tuesdays

Join us for the Memory Café on the **third Tuesday of each month, 1:30-3:30 PM** at Senior Services of Oak Park and River Forest Townships, 130 S. Oak Park Ave, Oak Park. Next meeting: February 19. 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.

For more info, contact Township Senior Services at 708-383-8060 or memorycafe@oakparktownship.org.

Informative Talks for Parents of Children with Developmental Disabilities

Expert Sherri Schneider of Family Benefit Solutions, Inc. presents "House of Benefits" how to apply for and obtain benefits for your child with a disability, such as SSI, Medicaid, etc. **Wednesday, 2/13, 6-8 PM**. Learn what benefits are available, in a fun and innovative way.

Attorney Robert H. Farley, Jr. will share "how to be successful in obtaining funding for a developmentally delayed person", **Wednesday, 3/6, 6-8 PM**. Learn about the state "waiting list," guardianship, effective strategies to overcome obstacles in the system, and more.

Talks will be held at Oak Park and River Forest High School. For parents, caregivers, those diagnosed with disabilities, and other interested parties. Hosted by OP 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.

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 OPRF, 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 RF Township Supervisor Carla Sloan 708-366-2029 or cb Sloan.rftownship@gmail.com with questions.

Come Sing with Encore Chorale

Oak Park-River Forest Encore Chorale, for singers age 55 and up, rehearses on **Tuesdays, 9:30-11 AM** at the 19th Century Club. Encore is conducted by local resident and musician, Linda Crabtree Powell. The winter/spring session has just begun, so sign up soon!

The local Encore chorus, 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. For more info, contact Linda Crabtree Powell at crabtreepowell@gmail.com. Cost is \$175. Need-based scholarships for RF resident Encore members are available through River Forest Township.

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.

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 February 18.**

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.



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