

# RIVER FOREST

*Proud Heritage • Bright Future*

The Village of River Forest Newsletter | March, 2023



## Participate in the Traffic Survey

The Village is interested in hearing from residents – both from a motorist and pedestrian perspective – regarding any traffic-related concerns throughout River Forest. Information is being collected through a survey that was launched in mid-February, and residents are encouraged to complete it by mid-March in time for the next Traffic & Safety Commission meeting. The goal of the survey is to identify specific areas where traffic control measures could ultimately be implemented. Feedback is invited regarding areas where speeding is observed, where there are potential pedestrian and bike safety issues, parking suggestions or concerns, and any other information that can help the Village improve overall traffic throughout town.

While the survey is completely anonymous, residents are asked to leave an address, or at minimum, a street name and/or block number so a heatmap can be created to better understand areas where a higher concentration of issues or concerns may be present. Data gathered through the survey will be used in an upcoming Village-wide Traffic Study to help target potential locations where traffic control measures may be needed. This survey is the first step in gathering resident suggestions and preferences for new traffic control measures, and to address speed and other traffic concerns. If you would like to leave your feedback, click [this link](#) to take the survey, which should take less than 10 minutes to complete.

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## From Village President Cathy Adduci

Dear River Forest residents,

I invite you to participate in our traffic survey that is currently available online. Your participation is very important, because it can help to guide a full traffic study planned for later this year aimed at reducing traffic-related concerns throughout the Village. While there is no hard deadline to complete the survey, it would be helpful if you have concerns, to share them prior to the next Traffic and Safety Committee meeting on March 15 at 7:30 p.m. in the Community Room at [Village Hall](#). The survey can be completed in less than 10 minutes, and a link to it can be found [here](#). You are also welcome to attend the Traffic and Safety Committee meeting to share your thoughts on how we can improve traffic flow and reduce or eliminate any safety concerns for both motorists and pedestrians.

At this week's Village Board meeting, Jan Novak Dressel was honored with a proclamation for receiving the 2023 "Heart of Our Villages Award" from the Historical Society of Oak Park and River Forest. Jan has also received the Lifetime Volunteer Award from the Illinois Association of Museums, has served on the Historical Society of Oak Park and River Forest board, and was among the neighbors who live on Bonnie Brae and started the LemonAid Fundraiser that raises money for children's charities. Congratulations to Jan for receiving these awards and for her exemplary work in our community!

At the Board meeting, I was also pleased to present the State of the Village Address for 2023. We have accomplished a great deal over the past year, and I enjoyed sharing our achievements. Please watch the video [here](#)

Lastly, March is Women's History Month and a time to reflect on the historic contributions that women of every race, class and ethnic background have made in our community and our country. As the first female President of River Forest, I am proud of the women who paved the way for equal opportunity and for women to be in leadership roles.

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



Pictured left to right: Sergeant Michael Fries, Officer Lissette Barcenas, Chief Jim O'Shea, and Deputy Chief James Greenwood.

## Police Department Welcomes New Officer

Officer Lissette Barcenas graduated from the Chicago Police Department's Metro Academy on February 17, 2023. Officer Barcenas grew up in Chicago and earned her Bachelor's Degree in Criminology, Law and Justice from the University of Illinois at Chicago and was assigned to the Field Training and Evaluation Program. Congratulations to Officer Barcenas as she begins her career in law enforcement with our Police Department!



### River Forest Park District

# SUMMER Camps



fun guide

*Resident*

Registration:  
Monday, 2/27

*Non-Resident*

Registration:  
Monday, 3/20

rfparks.com

## Summer Camp Registration is Open!

Don't hesitate to register, because Park District summer camps fill up fast! The Spring Fun Guide will be posted online by Monday, March 13 and resident registration begins on Monday, March 20. View the [River Forest Park District Summer Camp Fun Guide](#) to learn more.

*Eggstravaganza!* **VIP BUNNY EXPERIENCE**

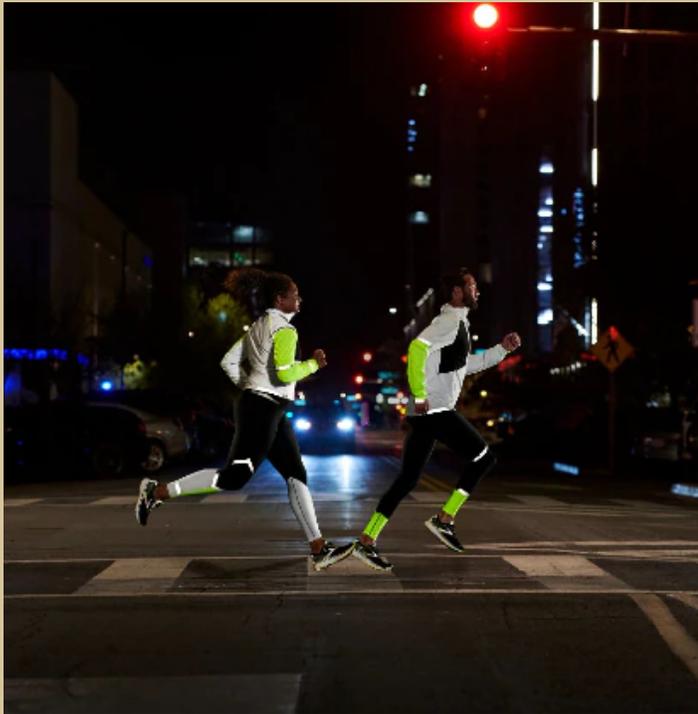
SATURDAY, APRIL 8 • TIMESLOTS START AT 8 AM  
THE DEPOT • \$70 PER FAMILY • BRING A BASKET

Bunny Meet & Greet • Private Egg Hunt • Face Painter  
Balloon Twister • Goodie Bag • Donut

Ages Newborn-10 • River Forest Residents only • Pre-Registration Required:  
8am: 4245.3551 • 8:40am: 4245.3552 • 9:20am: 4245.3553 • 10am: 4245.3554

# Village Department News

## Police Department



### Tips for Exercising After Dark

As we look towards spring and temperatures begin to warm up, many residents will choose to exercise outside. The Police Department reminds residents to take a number of steps to stay safe when you're out after dark, in addition to at dawn and dusk:

- **Pay Attention:** Make note of your surroundings, including cars and pedestrians. Music should not hamper your ability to hear what is going on around you.
- **Stay Visible:** Wear bright and vibrant colors - such as yellow, orange or white - and choose high visibility fabrics when possible. Adhere reflective tape to gloves, hats and shoes, or use wearable LEDs.
- **Stick to Well-Lit Areas:** So you can see and be seen.
- **Switch Up Your Route:** Avoid predictability by choosing new routes and/or times.
- **Joggers, Stay on the Sidewalk:** State law requires pedestrians to use sidewalks when they are provided, with some exceptions. Learn more [here](#).
- **Use an App:** If you get lost or need help, running Apps have a variety of features including: GPS, emergency contact lists, safe running routes suggestions, and one-touch messaging.
- **Bring A Friend:** When possible, buddy up with a friend.

### Bicycle Safety Tips

State law requires all bicycles be equipped with a white front-facing headlight, and red rear reflector, or light that is visible from at least 500 feet. While bicyclists generally have the same rights as motorists, they also have the some responsibilities to keep themselves safe:

- Come to a complete stop at stop signs and red lights.
- Be mindful of your speed.
- Ride your bicycle defensively.

If you have any questions or comments, contact Crime Prevention Officer Ben Ransom via email at [bransom@vrf.us](mailto:bransom@vrf.us) or call 708-714-3543.

## Fire Department

### March is Severe Weather Preparedness Month

On any given week, the weather in our area could include blue skies, thunderstorms, a torrential rainfall or heavy snowfall among other weather conditions. While the changing weather may be second nature to many Illinoisans, as we head into spring, it's important to pay close attention to severe weather threats. As part of Severe Weather Preparedness Month, the Illinois Emergency Management Agency and the National Weather Service (NWS) have teamed up to help us all be better prepared when severe weather strikes. The NWS provides the following safety tips:

- Watch and listen to weather updates when severe weather is forecasted.
- Identify a safe place to be, before a storm arrives.
- Familiarize yourself with the various weather watches, warnings or advisories. Learn more about the difference between these terms [here](#).



NWS is responsible for issuing severe weather watches, warnings and advisories to alert the public when dangerous weather conditions are expected. Recently, the NWS added two new terms to the emergency list; the Tornado Emergency and Flash Flood Emergency notifications. In these rare situations, a violent tornado or significant flood are confirmed, and create an imminent danger to life and property. In these cases, residents should act immediately and follow safety instructions provided.

The Fire Department and NWS, along with state and local emergency management officials, strongly encourage people to have a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration All Hazards Weather Radio with battery backup. These radios can be programmed to receive alerts for specific counties and even parts of counties, to keep you and your family ready and apprised of impending weather.



# Village Department News

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## Public Works

### Electric Aggregation Program Notices

In the coming weeks, River Forest residents and small businesses may receive a letter regarding the Village's Electric Aggregation Program. The program provides eligible residents and small businesses with electricity that supports renewable energy projects and offsets CO2 emissions at no added cost to residents. Customers receiving the letter will be enrolled automatically to receive electric supply from MC Squared Energy Services, LLC (mc2), the Village's current contractor - unless they choose to opt out by following the instructions contained within the letter.

mc2 will provide eligible residents and small businesses with electric supply pricing equal to the monthly ComEd published rate during the remaining term of the electric aggregation program, which runs through September 2024. For those that do not choose to opt out of this program, mc2 will automatically process the enrollment and acquire Renewable Energy Credits on behalf of the Village, based on past electric consumption. There are no enrollment fees or early termination fees, and your billing and service will remain the same. Through this program, you will continue to receive a monthly invoice from ComEd.

This municipal electricity aggregation supply program will not impact your participation in any community solar program. The community solar generation credits provided by ComEd are independent of this aggregation program.

If you wish to opt-out, you have twenty-one days from the date on the notice to opt out. You may opt out by calling 888-423-1390, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. or by returning the card enclosed with the written notice by March 29, 2023. For more information, email [RiverForest@mc2energyservices.com](mailto:RiverForest@mc2energyservices.com) or call the number listed above. The Village encourages you to contact mc2 first before contacting the Village with any questions. **Please note:** any solicitor who comes to your door or calls, is not associated with the Village, mc2 or ComEd.

The screenshot shows the mc2 website header with the logo and tagline "where energy comes from". Below the header is a navigation menu with links for "About Us", "Electricity 101", "Community Solar", "Resources", "My Account", and "Contact". A large green banner features the text "It's Easy to Be Green with mc2" and a choice between "Wind" and "Solar" energy options. A "Learn More" button is visible. At the bottom, there is a green banner that says "Save 20% on Community Solar. Click Here to Join the Reservation List."

# River Forest Sustainability

### Electronic Waste Home Collection - Sign Up by March 15

Residents in the Village's waste collection program, provided by Lakeshore Recycling Systems (LRS), can now sign up to have e-waste collected from their home and there is no additional charge for this service. Requests must be received by 5 p.m. on March 15, 2022 for collection on your regular pick-up day the week of March 20 through March 22 2023. This service is available twice each year. The next e-waste collection will be September 18 - 20. LRS will collect up to seven (7) accepted items (total), with no more than two (2) TVs or computer monitors per collection, per household.



### Here's how it works:

1. Click on the Electronic Waste Pick-Up link in the upper right side of the [LRS webpage](#).
2. Once you have filled in your address and selected the items you have for collection, click submit and a submission confirmation will appear.
3. Materials must be placed in the front of your home at the curb near the parkway no later than 7 a.m. on the collection day. Items are collected on your regular pick up day the week of collection
4. Collection does not take place in the alley due to the nature of the materials.
5. Small electronic items may be placed at the curb in a brown paper bag or a small cardboard box.
6. Mark the box or bag with a marker as E-Waste so crews can easily see them.



# Organizations Serving River Forest



## Township

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

### Thrive Talk for Seniors: Aging Fearlessly:

Thrive Counseling Center and River Forest Township are partnering to present a Thrive Talk, "Aging Fearlessly: Are you Embracing Who You Are Now?" Julie Bach, LCSW, PhD and Gerontology Coordinator/Associate Professor in the School of Social Work at Dominican University, will discuss adjusting mindset, focusing on positives and helping to answer "what do you want your life story to be now?" This event will take place on Monday, March 20 from 6 - 7 p.m. at Brookdale Senior Living, 1111 Ontario Street in Oak Park. Call 708-383-7500 x415 to register.

### Seniors: Assistance with Income Tax Returns:

Do you need help preparing your income tax return? Free assistance is available to those with low-moderate incomes. Call 708-771-7737 to schedule an appointment with an AARP Volunteer at the Mohr Center in Forest Park (located at DesPlaines and Jackson). Appointments are held on Mondays and Tuesdays between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. through April 11.



Triton College's Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) also offers free tax services for low-moderate income seniors. Call 708-456-0300 x3895 to schedule an appointment near you.

## From the Township Assessor...

### Exemption Applications Delayed Until Late Spring

January through March is when homeowners would normally fill out their exemption forms. This year, the Cook County Assessor has stated that all exemption forms, including the Senior Freeze application, will not be available under later this spring. The Township Assessor's office will email out a notification via Constant Contact when the Exemption Application forms become available. [Sign up here to receive Assessor notifications!](#) You can also follow the [Cook County Assessor's website](#) for updates.

### [Cook County Assessor Exemptions Information](#)

### 1st Installment Tax Bills - New Due Date: April 3, 2023

First installment property tax bills will be mailed around February 1, 2023 and will have an extended penalty-free due date of April 3, 2023. First installment tax bills are estimated tax bills and are 55% of the total amount you paid in property tax from the prior year. Exemptions are not listed on this tax bill. You can download and pay your bill [here](#).

[riverforesttownship.org](https://www.riverforesttownship.org) - 708-366-2029 x11

## Library

[Visit the library website to see everything happening at your library.](#) There's something for everyone at the library!

### Short Story Writing Contest for Ages 10 and Up During March

Do you like creative writing? Adults and teens are invited to submit an original short story for the chance to win a prize and have their story published on the library website. There will be one adult winner and one teen/tween winner. Stories should be no longer than 2,500 words. To enter, please email your story to [reference@riverforestlibrary.org](mailto:reference@riverforestlibrary.org) by Friday, March 31. The applicant's full name and contact information should be provided with the submission and winners will be chosen in April. Need help getting started? Stop by the reference desk for a list of writing prompts and guidance!



### Family Music Concert with Little Miss Ann Saturday, March 4 at 2 p.m.

Join the library and make your Saturday extra fun by dancing and singing along with award-winning Chicago kid's musician, Little Miss Ann! This awesome concert is great for families! [Advanced registration is required.](#)

### Leslie Goddard Returns with Julia Child: A Living History Portrayal Sunday, March 5 2 - 3:30 p.m.

Actress and scholar Leslie Goddard returns to bring legendary French chef and television star Julia Child to life. As Julia, Leslie will discuss everything from her relationship with husband Paul Child - to the mishaps of cooking on TV. Bon Appetit!



[riverforestlibrary.org](https://www.riverforestlibrary.org) | 708-366-5205

# Organizations Serving River Forest



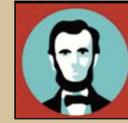
Oak Park and River Forest High School



Roosevelt Middle School



Willard Elementary School



Lincoln Elementary School

## District 200

### OPRFHS Principal Wins Principal of the Year Award

Oak Park and River Forest High School Assistant Superintendent/Principal Lynda J. Parker has been named the West Cook Region High School Principal of the Year by the Illinois Principals Association (IPA). IPA's Principal of the Year program recognizes outstanding middle level and high school principals based on selection criteria that includes creating a student-centered culture focused on wellness and equity, and an innovative, results-oriented learning environment with collaborative leadership.

Ms. Parker's nomination praised her commitment and authenticity; "Lynda goes very far to show kids her love for them and her genuine interest in their lives and well-being," Director of Employee Relations and Recruitment Janel Bishop wrote. "This is a school with approximately 3,400 students, and this is the first time a person in her role has been so well-known and well-received by students in my 23 years working here. Lynda holds great importance in the voice of the students."



Since the return to in-person learning, a particular focus for Ms. Parker has been addressing holistic wellness issues. Students at schools across the country, including OPRFHS, report higher rates of sadness and depression. Ms. Parker has overseen a number of initiatives to address these issues, including monthly Wellness Workshops for all students aimed at creating a culture of warmth throughout the school, and new student engagement activities that celebrate positive behaviors.

"I am thrilled that Lynda's positive efforts for the students in this school are being recognized in such a public way," Superintendent Greg Johnson said. "In education, we don't work for the public accolades, but it's so gratifying to see excellent work being recognized. I can't think of anyone else who's more deserving of this award."

## District 90

### D90 Kindergarten Information Night & New Full-Day Kindergarten

Please share this information with any River Forest family with a child who will be 5 years old by September 1, 2023. The District 90 (D90) Kindergarten Information Night will be held on Wednesday, March 15 at 6:30 p.m. at Lincoln and Willard Schools. Families residing north of Chicago Avenue should plan to attend the Willard program, while families who live south of Chicago Avenue should attend the Lincoln event.

Kindergarten Information Night provides an opportunity for families to learn more about the D90 Kindergarten program. There will be live presentations from Kindergarten teachers, the principal, and other staff who teach and support students. Kindergarten registration for the 2023-2024 school year starts March 16. For more information about registering a child for kindergarten, please visit the D90 website at [district90.org/about/kindergarten-registration](http://district90.org/about/kindergarten-registration) or call the Registrar at 708-771-8282.

In addition, the D90 Board of Education recently approved the expansion of its current kindergarten model to a full-day program, which will begin at the start of the 2023-2024 school year.

This decision by the Board of Education comes after an extensive review of relevant educational research, data sources, D90 finances, school facilities, a community survey feedback, as well as communication needs. The first day of class for new and returning students will be Thursday, August 24, 2023.

### Roosevelt's Samantha Stearns Named as Finalist for Teacher of the Year

Congratulations go to Roosevelt Middle School's Samantha Stearns, 8th grade Social Studies Teacher, for being selected as one of the 13 finalists for 2023 Illinois Teacher of the Year from the Illinois State Board of Education! This award is not the only one Ms. Stearns has received this school year, as the Gilder Lehrman Institute also named her the 2022 Illinois History Teacher of the Year. Please congratulate Samantha Stearns on this prestigious recognition!



Congratulations  
**Samantha Stearns**

2023 Cook County Co-Regional  
Teacher of the Year  
Roosevelt Middle School

# Snow Safety

**Snowmageddon!!! Snowpocalypse!! The Polar Vortex, whatever you call it, could be dangerous if you're not prepared.**



There is no end to the terms we use for “a really big snowstorm,” which we have now been using nearly every winter. A simple Internet search will give you the Top 10 Snowiest Cities but we all think that we live in the snowiest. The Chicagoland area receives approximately 36 inches of snow every year. In recent years a large weather service has even been naming snow storms, maybe to give them more character!!

With really big snow storms – and even every day, run-of-the-mill snowfalls – comes a risk of injury or even death by shoveling. Injuries from shoveling ranged in age from teenagers to 75. Nationwide, snow shoveling is responsible for thousands of injuries and as many as 100 deaths each year.

So, why so many injuries and deaths? Shoveling snow is just another household chore, right? Not at all, says Harvard Health Executive Editor Patrick J. Skerrett.

“Picking up a shovel and moving hundreds of pounds of snow, particularly after doing nothing physical for several months, can put a big strain on the heart,” Skerrett wrote

- The River Forest Fire Department and The National Safety Council recommends the following tips to shovel safely.
- \* Employ the services of a snow shoveling company or neighborhood teen.
  - \* Do not shovel after a heavy meal or while smoking.
  - \* Take it slow and like any exercise, stretch and warm up for 5-10 minutes before you begin.
  - \* Shovel only fresh, powdery snow; it’s lighter.
  - \* Push the snow rather than lifting it.
  - \* If you have to lift it, use a small shovel or only partially fill the shovel and bend at the knees.
  - \* Keep the shovel close to your body making it easier to push or lift.
  - \* Keep your feet apart and have a strong stance. Lift with your legs, not your back.
  - \* Do not work to the point of exhaustion. Take frequent breaks and don’t overdo it. Stay Hydrated!!
  - \* If a large snow is expected, start shoveling early and keep up with the snow. It’s easier and less of a strain to shovel 1-2 inches rather than 7-8 inches or more after the snow stops falling.
  - \* Avoid twisting and turning while moving the snow.

**Most of all... If you develop chest pains or shortness of breath, Don't Wait... STOP shoveling and call 911.**

Don't pick up that shovel without a doctor's permission if you have a history of heart disease. If you feel tightness in the chest or dizziness, stop immediately. A clear driveway is not worth your life.



Follow the Village on Social Media



Sign Up For Email and Alerts



**River Forest Events**



## Village Contact Information

Village Administration  
708-714-3563  
Interim 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  
**Director Jeff Loster**

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.