

HOLIDAY SHOPPING GUIDE INSIDE!

Allen Park

T O D A Y

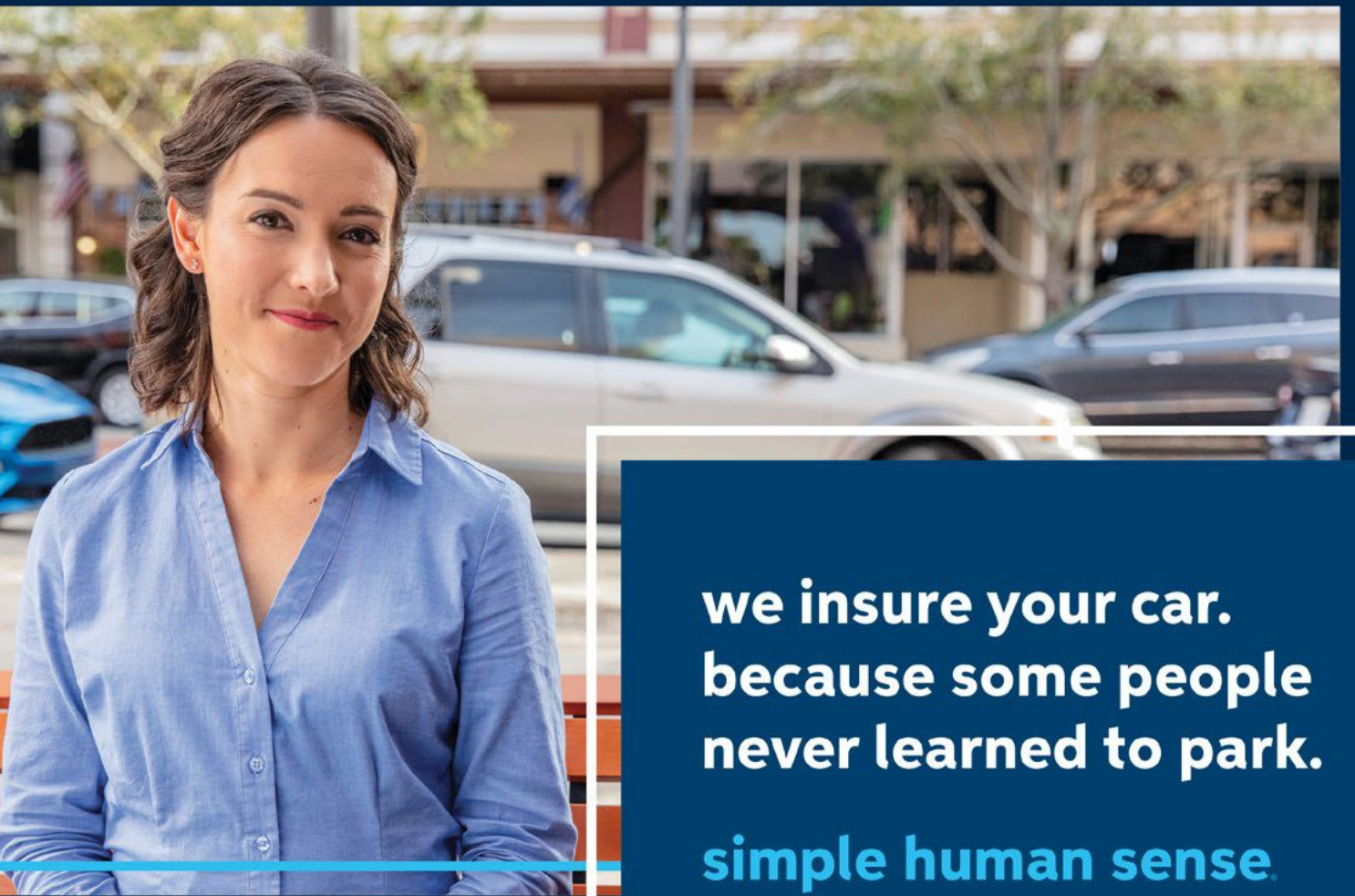
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**Winter in
Allen Park**

**Grants Transform
Historical Museum**

**Athletes of
All Abilities: Play!**

2022 - Fourth Quarter



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— ABOVE and BEYOND —

Smith Insurance Group wins best insurance agency for second year in a row

SMITH Insurance Group has once again been voted best insurance agency Downriver by the readers of Heritage Newspapers for the second year in a row.

What is an independent insurance agency?

Independent insurance agencies have contracts with many different insurance carriers. This allows an agency to focus on their clients' risk management needs, not the needs of a particular insurance carrier.

"We are focused on the client, not the insurance carrier," said Dan Smith, vice president and principal partner of Smith Insurance group. "There are no fees associated with using an independent insurance agency. We would get paid a commission on policy the same way any other insurance agent would get paid. I think it's important for the public to understand that these days."

Smith Insurance Group is one of the oldest operating insurance agencies in the entire state of Michigan. As an independent group, it has access to leading insurance companies, allowing licensed agents to provide clients with the best coverage possible for their individual needs.

Smith Insurance Group can cover all personal insurance needs, even those you may not know you need including but not limited to condo, pet, wedding, sinkhole, yacht, travel, valuable possessions and more. For businesses, the agency can help cover everything from general liability to cyber liability, special event insurance, crime insurance and more.

Invested in community

Smith, a fourth-generation owner, said that his slogan is to always give more than they take.

With that, Smith Insurance Group takes pride in

sponsoring different local charity outreaches. They sponsor different little league teams, football teams, hockey teams, cheerleading teams, various church organizations and many more.

"We're really proud that we have rarely ever turned anyone down for a donation," Smith said. "I try to help out as much as I can to give back to the community that's given so much to us."

Smith is an Allen Park resident who graduated from Cabrini High School.

"I raised my family here, my kids go to school here, I work and choose to do business here," Smith said. "I love our community."

Smith has been working with the agency since 2009. In addition to specializing in home, auto, business and life insurance, the independent agency has maintained a client-first mission for 116 years.

It's evident that Smith Insurance Group is focused on not only its clients, but also the community. One of the agency's most popular charity outreaches is Toys for Tots.

"We are a Toys for Tots drop-off location, and every year we have an overwhelming response," Smith said.

To be a part of helping children in need and to donate toys this holiday season, community members are welcome to donate new, unopened toys to Smith Insurance Group at 8258 Allen Road in Allen Park.

For more information or an insurance quote, speak with a licensed agent at (313) 278-3800 or visit getsmithinsurance.com.



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INSURANCE GROUP

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From the MAYOR

Happy Holidays!

ELECTIONS are over but change continues. The holiday season is here, and we look forward to family get-togethers and celebrations. I hope you had an enjoyable Thanksgiving and were able to spend it with family and friends. Remember, though, for some this will be a year of firsts – the first Thanksgiving or the first Christmas without a loved one. Please take a little time in your busy schedule to reach out to them.

The City continues to seek ways to improve and move forward. One of the most noticeable improvements has been to the Historical Museum. The City was fortunate to receive a Wayne County grant of more than \$300,000 in order to improve the facility. The removal of an added porch enclosure and an awning were the beginning. The removal of paint from the brick has been stunning. Many residents, who never realized the building existed, are now pausing as they drive by as the beauty of the structure is being revealed. Further repairs to the interior will be needed, including painting, but we are looking forward to the museum re-opening and having Allen Park memorabilia and history on display. There is still a lot of work to be done, including identifying and labeling items, but the Historical Commission is working on that.

Special thanks, again, to all our City employees who work on our behalf at all hours of the day and night and in all kinds of weather. Like you, I hope that winter is good to us.

May you all have a very Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and a healthy and happy New Year.



Gail McLeod
Mayor



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FELICE TONY LALLI
Mayor Pro Tem



DAN LOYD
City Council Member



MATTHEW VALERIUS
City Council Member



GARY SCHLACK
City Council Member



CHARLES BLEVINS
City Council Member



DENNIS MARCOS
City Council Member



Contact Information

Website: www.cityofallenpark.org

City Facebook: City of Allen Park – Government

Police Department Facebook: Allen Park Police Department

Fire Department Facebook: Allen Park Fire Department

Library Facebook: Allen Park Public Library

Recreation Facebook: Allen Park Parks & Recreation/
Community Center

DDA Facebook:

Allen Park Downtown Development Authority

WOW City Cable Channel: 10

Comcast City Cable Channel: 12

SeeClickFix: www.seeclickfix.com

City Departments/Location

Police Department

Non-Emergency: (313) 386-7800

Fire Department

Non-Emergency: (313) 928-0024

City Hall

Main Number: (313) 928-1400

Parks & Recreation

Main Number: (313) 928-0771

Allen Park Public Library

Main Number: (313) 381-2425

Department of Public Services (DPS)

Public Services: (313) 928-0550

Water & Sewer: (313) 928-1666

GFL: (844) 464-3587

GFL Trash/Recycling Holiday Pick Ups

Christmas Day 2022 (No delay)

New Year's Day 2023 (No delay)

Memorial Day (delayed to Tuesday through Saturday)

Fourth of July (delayed to Wednesday
through Saturday)

Labor Day (delayed to Tuesday through Saturday)

Thanksgiving Day (delayed to Friday and Saturday)

Christmas Day (delayed to Tuesday through Saturday)

*Returns will not be made for items not placed
out on the correct day.*



A Holiday Message from the ALLEN PARK FIRE DEPARTMENT

WHEN the temperature drops, heating our homes becomes a priority. For those who simply cannot afford the luxury of turning on the furnace, many resort to alternative heating sources including space heaters, kitchen stoves, or wood fireplaces. These alternatives can be extremely dangerous, making heating our living spaces the second-leading cause of U.S. home fires and home injuries, right behind cooking fires.

Space heaters are the most widely used alternative heating device. They are responsible for most home fire deaths caused by heating equipment.

Please refrain from using a space heater to heat your homes. If you or a loved one might be having a hard time paying for heat this year, please contact DTE Energy at (800) 552-1183 for assistance.

If using a fireplace, remember to have your chimney properly inspected by a licensed chimney sweep company. They not only will clean all the sticky creosote from the

interior chimney but will also inspect the mortar for cracks, which can lead to chimney fires. Logs that claim to remove creosote are not a replacement for a good chimney sweep.

Holiday cooking always brings a smile to our faces and while usually safe, can cause house fires and injuries to even the well-seasoned home chef. The Allen Park Fire Department has been busy responding to kitchen fires due to forgetful homeowners who have stored plastic containers and other items in the oven. Please remember to always check your ovens for any forgotten stored containers.



Christmas Trees are always beautiful, especially when Clark Griswold helps with the lights. If you are lucky enough to still cut down your own real tree, please remember to keep the tree properly watered and turn off the Christmas tree lights when leaving the home or before going to sleep. For those that prefer the ease and less messy artificial tree, remember to follow the recommended number of lights plugged into each other. Older incandescent lights tend to put off more heat and pull higher electrical current. Switching over to LEDs, while a bit more expensive up front, will

allow more light strings to be connected in series while drawing less electrical current, producing less heat, and putting off more light with less bulbs.



The Allen Park Fire Department will be participating in the Toys for Tots drive this year. We will be setting up tents in front of the fire department in mid-November and accepting toys through the new year. Please place any new, unopened toy in the plastic collection containers located inside the tent. We will not be accepting used toys or used stuff animals due to health restrictions.

Finally, please remember that if the weather is bad or the roads are icy, you may see emergency crews out working in the streets. Please slow down and move over a lane, keeping our crew and those they are helping safe.

Enjoy the winter months and have a happy and safe holiday season!



Library spaces are more than shelves...

Programs For Children

Hear Ye, Hear Ye!

Did you hear the news? The start time for our Preschool Storytime is changing. Beginning in January, parents and caregivers can bring their independent listeners, ages three and four, to the library on Tuesdays at 10:30 a.m., for a fun-filled hour of stories and crafts. We hope to see all your smiling faces at our first storytime of the new year on January 10, 2023!



Toddler storytimes are also returning the week of January 10. The 11-week sessions will run through Tuesday, March 21 for preschoolers and Wednesday, March 22 for toddlers.

Family Fun Saturdays

Beginning in 2023, the library invites families of all ages to join our new series of programs called Family Fun Saturdays. Join Ms. Brandi and Ms. Lauren two Saturdays per month for Family Storytime and Family Crafts. Enjoy silly stories, snacks, hands-on activities, and special guests at Family Storytime. And on Family Craft Saturdays, families can enjoy each other's company while making age-appropriate seasonal crafts. Families that craft together laugh together! Family Fun Saturdays will run through April and programs will begin at 10:30 a.m. Stay tuned to our website, allenparklibrary.org, and follow us on Instagram and Facebook @AllenParkLibrary for more information about the new programs debuting in January.



And For Adults

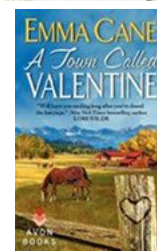
Between the Covers

The newest adult program at the Allen Park Public Library continues Tuesday, January 3, 2023. Participants of Between the Covers, a rom-com book discussion group for patrons 18 and up, will be given a list of potential books to discuss in early 2023. In the meantime, the following books have been selected:

- **January 3:** *A Season for Second Chances* by Jenny Bayliss
Summary: A charmingly quirky seaside town offers a recently separated restaurateur a fresh start and possibly a new lease on love in *A Season for Second Chances*, by the author of *The Twelve Dates of Christmas*.



- **February 7:** *A Town Called Valentine* by Emma Cane
Summary: Small towns, rugged cowboy heroes, and passion are a perfect combination when it comes to contemporary romance...



- **March 7:** *Spring Fever* by Mary Kay Andrews
Summary: The New York Times bestselling author of *Summer Rental* delivers her delicious new escapist novel about small towns, old flames, and deep secrets.



- **April 4:** *Stuck in Manistique* by Dennis Cuesta
Summary: Near the midpoint of the Upper Peninsula, along a Lake Michigan bend of shore is the town of Manistique, Michigan.



Between the Covers meets the first Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m.

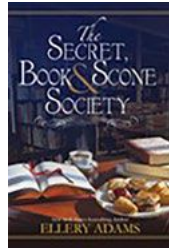
Adult Book Discussion Group

The Allen Park Book Discussion Group meets the third Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. The books alternate between fiction and mystery/suspense.

- **January 17:** *The Secret, Book & Scone Society* by Ellery Adams



Summary: A quirky club in small-town North Carolina holds the keys to health, happiness, friendship – and even solving a murder – all to be found within the pages of the right book . . .



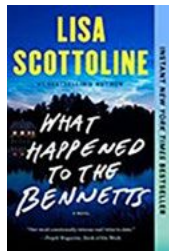
● **February 21:** *The Editor* by Steven Rowley

Summary: After years of trying to make it as a writer in 1990s New York City, James Smale finally sells his novel to an editor at a major publishing house – none other than Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis. Jackie – or Mrs. Onassis, as she's known in the office – has fallen in love with James's candidly autobiographical novel, one that exposes his own dysfunctional family. But when the book's forthcoming publication threatens to unravel already fragile relationships, both within his family and with his partner, James finds that he can't bring himself to finish the manuscript.



● **March 21:** *What Happened to the Bennetts* by Lisa Scottoline

Summary: Your family has been attacked, never again to be the same. Now you have to choose between law...and justice.



● **April 18:** *The Wedding Veil* by Kristy Woodson Harvey

Summary: Four women. One family heirloom. A secret connection that will change their lives – and history as they know it.



Library collections are more than books...

LIBRARY cards offer far more than books these days. Digital resources are available in a variety of ways through apps like Kanopy, hoopla and Libby (formerly Overdrive).

Kanopy is a streaming service with an extensive collection of narrative and documentary films, as well as TV series and kids' content. With titles available from content partners like A24, Criterion Films, PBS and more, thoughtful entertainment is easy to access. Kanopy also offers specially curated collections that celebrate communities, movements, holidays and more! Patrons are granted 10 free credits per month to access this vast range of content.

kanopy
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With hoopla, patrons with an Allen Park Public Library card can access this on-demand streaming service with more than 1,000,000 titles available. Audiobooks, eBooks, music, movies, and TV shows can be streamed from any computer or mobile device by downloading the hoopla digital app. This month, patrons can look for curated holiday collections and "Mindful New Year" resources to relax and ring in the new year right. Each Allen Park Library patron is granted eight credits per month to enjoy hoopla's digital content.

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HIGH POWERED

Allen Park's battery helped power Jaguars to a state title

By Terry Jacoby



WINNING a state championship in softball requires a lot of power, and the Allen Park Jaguars hit the road on their amazing trip last spring on a full battery*, with pitcher Morgan Sizemore and catcher Molly Hool. The two grew up together and have been playing softball together since they were just little kids.

"Working together that long certainly creates a comfort and trust level between the two," said Allen Park Coach Mike Kish. "Molly keeps Morgan focused, comfortable and in control and Morgan hits her spots, which makes Molly's job much easier."

Allen Park, coming off a loss in the previous year's state final, shut out Macomb Dakota 5-0 in the championship game on June 18 at Secchia Stadium in East Lansing. Last year's team finished 38-4-1 and also won the Downriver League.

The Sizemore-Hool battery has won 49 games for the Jaguars, with one more season to go. Both players were named to the MHSAA All-State Team as sophomores and juniors.

"We met when we were eight on our first ever travel team," Sizemore said. "It was Rage 10-U but we were eight and



Molly Hool (left) and Morgan Sizemore (right), and as childhood teammates.



nine years old. I first started pitching when I was seven years old. There was not much chemistry at first but it has grown a lot over the years that we have played together. We have just played



together for so long that it has become comfortable to play with each other."

The catcher remembers the early days a bit differently.

"There definitely was chemistry right away," Hool said. "We became closer and closer throughout our years of playing together and are great friends today."

Hool said Sizemore has helped her become a smarter catcher.

"I became comfortable enough with her to sometimes call pitches," she said.

Sizemore credits Hool for keeping her focused.

"Molly helped me by always keeping me positive and encouraging me to do my best," she said. "She also helped me fix little things when I had a problem pitching."

The two have also played together in 9-U on Rage, in 11-U through 13-U on Legacy and in 16-U on Finesse. But the Allen Park Jaguars are special.

"What makes AP softball so special is that we are so close and do everything together," Sizemore said. "We work so hard and come back stronger every time."



Hool agrees.

"The environment of our team is so special," she said. "We all play for each other and have each other's back no matter what."

Morgan, 17, the daughter of Rebecca and Jamie Sizemore, also plays golf and basketball for the Jaguars. She has committed to the University of Akron for softball.

"I chose Akron because it felt like home as soon as I stepped on campus," said Sizemore, who will study sports business. "It was an easy decision

because I have family that lives close."

Molly, 17, the daughter of Melissa and Gary Hool, also plays basketball and golf. She has decided to go to Wayne State after high school.

"I picked this school because it has a great environment and I get to play with my sisters," said Molly, whose sister, Maddie, also was All-State last year for the Jags.

But before college, there is one more trip to take as Jaguars – a few more times to play pitch and catch for Allen Park. And a chance to defend their state title.

**In baseball and softball, a battery refers to the pitcher and catcher working together.*



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Building Bridges

Fun-loving officer made a difference in the community, now teaches others to do the same

By Diane Gale Andreassi

A LLEN Park Police public information officer Det. Jim Thorburn built a lot of bridges during the 27-and-a-half years he was with the department, and he got a ton of laughs along the way.

Thorburn, who recently retired, built a Facebook page for the police department in 2013. It captured 22,000 followers in a city of 28,000 residents by getting their attention. Once, he goaded officers in other departments into taking part in a sledding competition – 20 agencies took the bait.



Yuck it up!

A doughnut-eating contest got a lot of laughs, when the two participating officers showed up and one was nearly twice the size of the other. And some of the most watched Facebook videos of Allen Park Police were of new recruits getting tased as part of their regular training.

"Social media is a super-cost-effective way for the police departments to reach out to their residents," he said. "I think I found a fun formula that was relatable to our residents."

His goal was to try to make police officers relatable by putting them in everyday situations.

"If you see an officer change a tire on the side of the road, why wouldn't we promote that kind of stuff?" Thorburn said.

The department became known for its transparency and open-door policy. Thorburn understood reporters had a job to do and he was there to help. The road went two ways and when he needed a program publicized they covered those stories, too.

Thorburn jokes that he was so good at building rapport with reporters that he married one, Jessica



Dupnack, of Fox 2 Detroit. They met when she came to town on assignments.

Teaching others

After almost three decades with the department, Allen Park gave him a lot of opportunities he may not have gotten elsewhere, Thorburn said.

"It's all that it's cracked up to be," he added.

Thorburn hit the ground running after retiring and launched a new venture teaching other officers across the country how to work with the media. He started with an online program and grew the business to in-person sessions. Thorburn tries to drive home the importance of remaining open minded.

"It's important to have relationships outside your department and it's important to establish relationships with people who don't look like you," he said. "It gives our officers a broader perspective to know more than just yourself. Have an open mind, establish relationships and work with people and not against them."



Long-lasting effects

Thorburn started his police career on patrol and became a detective. He'll always remember responding to an accident on I-94. A car was on fire and the driver and her son were thrown from the vehicle. They survived. A baby, however, was in a car seat and thought to be dead by other officers on the scene.

Thorburn and a posse of others got the baby out and gave him CPR, along with a doctor who stopped at the scene. The baby survived and his father came to the department with his son's high school pictures to show his gratitude for their heroic rescue.

"We did what needed to be done," he said. "You can make a difference sometimes."

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Friday

Friday

Thursday

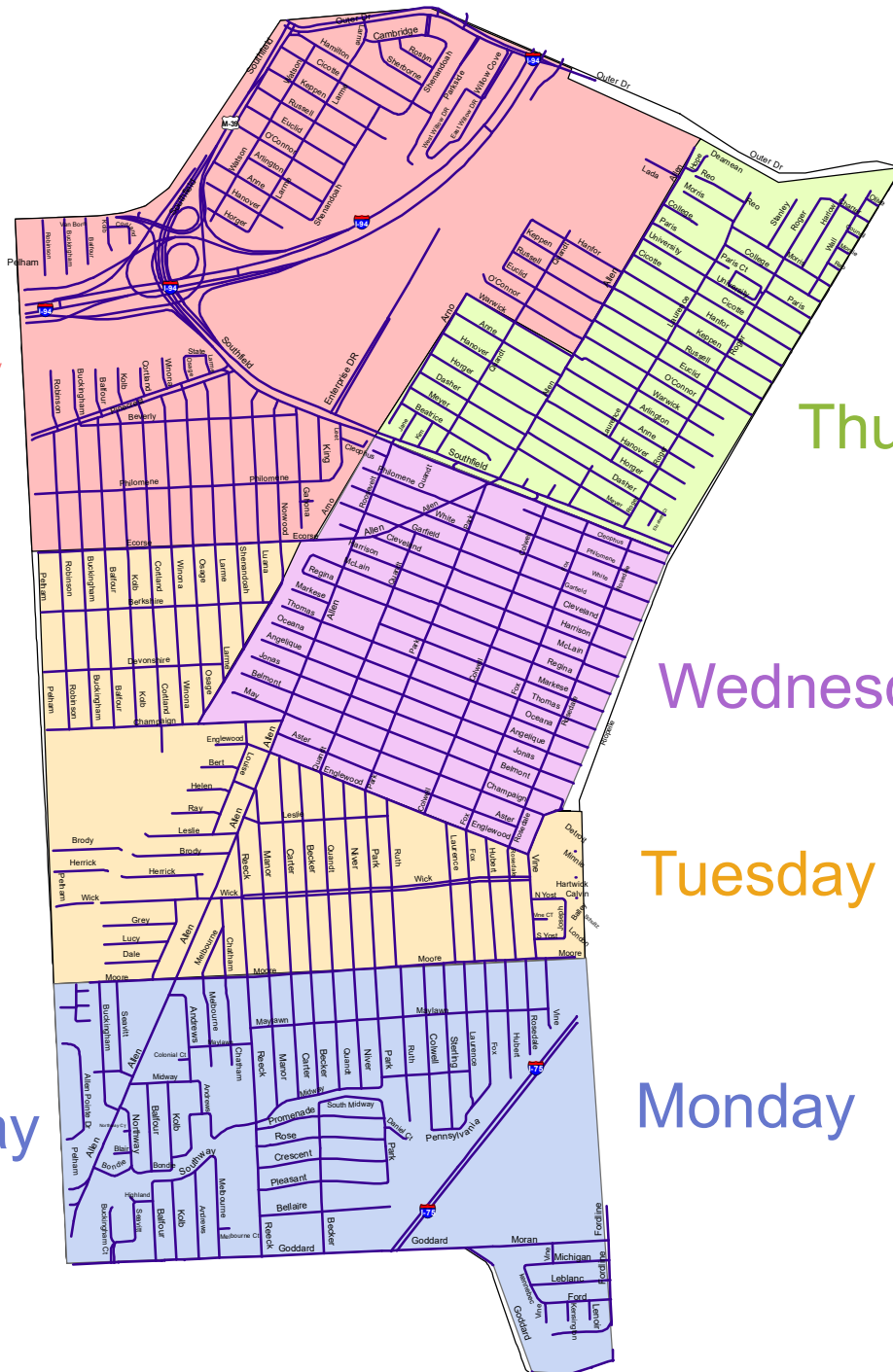
Wednesday

Tuesday

Tuesday

Monday

Monday



*Happy
Holidays
from*

TODAY

M A G A Z I N E S





Smooth Operators

City's DPS Department takes care of things so we don't have to

By Terry Jacoby

ROY Shipman is the supervisor of forestry and roads and fleet supervisor for the City of Allen Park Department of Public Services, and although he has only been a part of DPS since May, he has worked for the City for almost 14 years. And he's seen plenty of positive changes along the way.

"The facility here is so much nicer than when I first started," he said. "It's also a much more streamlined operation than it used to be. Not that it was bad before but we now have eight guys in the DPS doing the job it used to take 12 people to do. And we actually are doing more jobs."

There are currently eight full-time employees who work in the City's water department and eight who work in the DPS.



"Having all Public Services working out of the same facility has made us more efficient," said Public Services Director Tom Murray.

"We had multiple locations previously but having them all together now has been a great benefit. For example, the salt being stored at the same location as the trucks helps us get on the road faster during a snow storm. Also, having all the

equipment out of the elements helps us start a job faster in the morning by not waiting to have the hydraulics warm up from the cold. We also have the mechanics in the same facility to handle breakdowns without towing."

Another reason for the improvements over the past decade has been the City's commitment to providing the DPS Department with the best possible equipment with the latest technology, which has created a much more efficient and more effective operation.

A few of those examples have rolled into the city over the past year.

City of Allen Park Department of Public Services

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(313) 928-0550

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Deputy Director: Bill Miner

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Supervisor of Forestry and Roads:

Roy Shipman

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Supervisor of Water and Sewer:

Mike O'Loughlin

moloughlin@cityofallenpark.org



One of the new purchases the DPS has been using has had a very busy fall on the streets of Allen Park. The Spartan Leaf Pro Plus is the latest in leaf



pickup. It takes the bulk of the leaves from the curb line, which allows the street sweeper to not get over run with the big piles. This helps the speed of sweeping and means less mechanical break downs of the sweepers caused by the overloading of the machine.

"The new leaf vacuum cleans up the curbside of the road and the big advantage is it really lessens the load on the sweeper so it doesn't clog up as much and parts don't brake as often," Shipman said. "We got this at the tail end of last year's fall pickup season so this is the first full year we have been able to use it and it's worked great. There is a big difference. Before, we just used sweepers but this is a lot more efficient. It also mulches the leaves and makes them more compact so when we dispose of them it takes up a lot less room in the dumpster."

Another one of the new acquisitions is the Pelican Street Sweeper. This is brand new – a 2022 version – and replaces the one the department has used since 2010.

"It's more efficient," Shipman said. "They've made some upgrades on the sweeper and it has a better water system and is just a more efficient system."

The DPS also recently acquired a 2022 Freightliner SD 114 tandem dump truck with plow and salter.

"The new dump truck has a 12-yard box that allows us to hold more debris from sweeping and carry more salt when salting, which keeps us on the street longer with less down time," Shipman said.

The new DPS facility, located on 12 acres east of I-94 south of Outer Drive, includes a 55,800-square-foot facility with 10,000 feet of office space and a 45,000-square-foot garage and storage area. Construction on the building, which houses the city's public services, began in June 2020 and was completed about a year later. A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held in October 2021.

Department of Public Services features departments for water, sewer, roads, solid waste, building maintenance, motor pool and engineering. Responsibilities include

rubbish pick-up; recycling; composting; traffic signs, local street repairs (potholes); alley grading and dust control; tree removal and trimming; brush pick-up; boulevard grass cutting; street light outage reporting; street striping and sweeping, and snow and ice removal on local streets.





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- **The Henry Ford**
20900 Oakwood Blvd
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- **The Christmas Tree Lot**
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Lincoln Park, MI
- **Lutz Farms**
32905 Northwestern Hwy
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- **Lutz Farms**
2207 S. Telegraph Road
Bloomfield Hills, MI
- **Three Cedars Farm**
7897 Six Mile Road
Northville, MI
- **Stempky Nursery**
35174 Plymouth Road
Livonia, MI



Light Shows/ Holiday Lights

- **Holiday Nights in Greenfield Village**
20900 Oakwood Blvd
Dearborn, MI
Weekends in December
6:30-10 p.m.
Cost: \$20 - \$32

- **Albright Family Light Show**
27105 W. River Road
Grosse Ile, MI
Thanksgiving through Jan 1.
Sunday-Thursday:
6-10 p.m.
Friday-Saturday:
6-11 p.m.

- **Detroit Zoo Wild Lights**
8450 W 10 Mile Road
Royal Oak, MI 48067
November – January

- **Taylor Winterfest: Blizzard of Oz**
12111 Pardee Road
Taylor, MI
November – January

- **Wayne County Lightfest**
7651 Merriman Road
Westland, MI
November – December
Cost: \$5/car



- **Magic of Lights at Pine Knob Music Theatre**
33 Bob Seger Drive
Clarkston, MI
November – January
Cost: \$20

- **The Big Bright Light Show**
Downtown Rochester
Rochester, MI
November – January
5 p.m.-12 a.m.

**Prices, times and availability subject to change. Please check websites and social media pages for the most up-to-date information.*



Worry No More

This holiday gift guide will ease the stress of gift-giving

By Kelsi Klein

CHRISTMAS shopping can be challenging. What do you get someone who seems to have everything? How do you choose something unique? Where do you even begin?

Getting an early start on this year's holiday shopping will ensure plenty of time for shipping and give you peace of mind. No more waiting in long lines at department stores in December, the following products can be found on Amazon by searching the product and are all under \$40.



For anyone:

Reusable water bottle with filter
Reusable water bottles never go out of style. Brita bottles with filters allow you to drink filtered water

anywhere and come in plastic or stainless steel and in a variety of colors.

For the makeup lover:

LED makeup light
Anyone who wears makeup or follows a skincare routine will be impressed with a lighted mirror to use either at home or on the go. Most come equipped with different light settings and USB charging.



For the commuter:

Electric lunch box
With meal prepping becoming more and more common, there is a wide

range of electric lunch boxes or mini portable food warmers on the market to make the most of lunch, whether in the office or on the road.



For the nature lovers of all ages:

Butterfly growing kit
Nature-loving kids or adults will enjoy a kit



that includes live caterpillars and all the supplies needed to watch them metamorphosize into butterflies.

For the entertainer:

Home bar supplies
Consider fancy ice cube trays, custom glasses and home bartender kits that come with all the essential bar accessories and tools for the person who loves entertaining at home.

For the traveler:

Scratch-off bucket list map
The traveler in your life will enjoy scratching off each state, country, national park, landmark and more as they check locations off their bucket list.

For the coffee lover:

Cold brew pitcher
Cold brew coffee is becoming

increasingly popular but costs can add up at the drive through. Cold brew pitchers provide the ability to steep your own cold brew using coffee grounds from the comfort of your own home.



For the creative one:

Embroidery starter kit
There are so many options available for both embroidering beginners and those comfortable with the craft that include cross stitch kits with embroidery hoops, patterns, needles and thread for the creative person in your life.

For the gardener:

Outdoor garden tools set
For some, it's never too early to start prepping for spring. Get a kit that comes with gardening necessities including a storage tote, gloves and tools for someone in your life with a green thumb.

For the pet lover:

Custom pet portrait
There is nothing more thoughtful to pet owners than a gift that expresses the love they have for their furry friends. There are many shops that offer the ability to upload a photo of a pet that can be transformed into watercolor portraits, Renaissance-style canvases and more.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Happenings

New pickleball court!

With the growing popularity of pickleball, we are adding a fourth court in the Community Center gymnasium to accommodate our growth and love for the sport. We host pickleball on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:30 a.m. to noon. The cost is \$3 per player. No need to sign up – just show up!

Contact us for details on upcoming senior events

We continue to host programs, luncheons and trips for senior citizens. We will be adding more trips, baseball games and market trips in the winter and spring of 2023. Many dates have been set so please call (313) 928-0771 for more details.

Kennedy Park update

Kennedy Park has been renovated and much was added, including new playground equipment and the installation of a safety tile rubber floor. The playground was also made ADA accessible with the addition of a sidewalk that facilitates access to the playground. The project was funded through Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds.

Also, the Parks and Recreation Department, with the assistance of the Department of Public Services, is creating a recreational hill in Kennedy Park. It can be used as a sled hill in the winter and a training hill for running and exercising in the summer. The project was approved by the City Council in July 2022.

Pretty Family Park news

The Parks Department worked with the Allen Park Athletic Club (APAC), who donated \$10,000 to renovate the field, which included infield reconstruction as well as rebuilding of the dugouts by Parks and Rec, all new wood, and signage. Still to come are new roofs, and sections of the backstop will be replaced.

"Our success has been, and will continue to be, a collaborative effort between Parks and Recreation and community groups that promote recreation, parks and programs that our residents deserve and want. APAC and the Allen Park Citizens Civic Fund (APCCF) are amazing groups that we are excited to partner with," said Parks and Recreation Director Rob Fulton.





PARKS AND RECREATION

Learn to Skate/Novice Dates – Second Session

JANUARY

Wednesday, January 11	5:30-6:30 p.m.
Sunday, January 15	8-9 a.m. (time change)
Wednesday, January 18	5:30-6:30 p.m.
Sunday, January 22	9-10 a.m.
Wednesday, January 25	5:30-6:30 p.m.
Sunday, January 29	9-10 a.m.

FEBRUARY

Thursday, February 2	5:30-6:30 p.m.
Sunday, February 5	9-10 a.m.
Wednesday, February 8	5:30-6:30 p.m.
Sunday, February 12	9-10 a.m.
Wednesday, February 15	5:30-6:30 p.m.
Sunday, February 19	9-10 a.m.
Wednesday, February 22	5:30-6:30 p.m.
Sunday, February 26	9-10 a.m.

MARCH

Wednesday, March 1	5:30-6:30 p.m.
Sunday, March 5	9-10 a.m.
Wednesday, March 8	5:30-6:30 p.m.
Sunday, March 12	9-10 a.m.
Wednesday, March 15	5:30-6:30 p.m. (Last Day)

Ages 2-14 may register at recreation.cityoffallenpark.org.



2

ultimate sacrifice to our country while serving in Vietnam. Future plans include the addition of an eternal light monument.

At the end of October 2022, the City submitted a grant application to the Canadian National (CN) Railroad's CN EcoConnexions Grant/America In Bloom program. The estimated cost for the Brand Park Vietnam Veterans and Beyond Memorial project is approximately \$44,330, in which \$9,980 would come from the grant request.

Richard Gadigian has been working to get the ball rolling, with additional fundraising efforts that have included donations and special events like spaghetti dinners and possibly a motorcycle rally.

"Our fundraising has been regulated to word of mouth," Gadigian said. "I've been canvassing veterans' groups and giving presentations about the project."

It is the intention to dedicate the American flag pole to Dennis Durand, an Allen Park resident who died in Vietnam. Gadigian lived next door to Durand and he has often thought about the fallen soldier.

"I grew up with Dennis and over the years I kept reading about his rescue mission he was on when he was killed," Gadigian said. "It was one he volunteered for."

"The project is fully supported by the Parks and Recreation Department and we will definitely continue and follow it through to its completion as we continue to raise funds and awareness," said Parks and Recreation Director Rob Fulton.

All donations for the Vietnam Veterans and Beyond Memorial will be accepted at the Parks and Recreation Department, 15800 White Avenue.

In addition to seeking grant funds for the Vietnam Veterans and Beyond Memorial, the City's grant application to the CN EcoConnexions Grant/America In Bloom program included a request for the Champaign Park Blue Star Memorial. The estimated cost for the Champaign Park Blue Star Memorial project is approximately \$38,462, in which \$15,012 would come from the grant request.

The Champaign Park Blue Star Memorial currently consists of a double-sided marble memorial monument with overgrown evergreen shrubbery, which makes it difficult to see the monument. There is also no walkway to reach it, and the existing flagpole is in need of repair. Additionally, the corner site has standing water every

spring because of poor drainage and grading. Some ground areas are at least six inches or more below grade.

The Champaign Park Blue Star Memorial area will be improved to include a new sidewalk to access the existing memorial

monument and a new, relocated flag pole. In front of the memorial monument, a concrete star will be constructed and outlined in blue LED lights. The existing cast iron Blue Star Memorial sign will be relocated to an area closer to the memorial monument.

Park benches will be added to allow visitors an opportunity to rest and reflect. The new sidewalk will be flanked on both sides with landscape plant materials, including six Steller Pink Dogwood Trees, which will represent the five branches of the United States military, and one representing POW/MIAs. Surrounding the memorial area are a number of large and mature trees that will be trimmed prior to the start of the project.

When the Brand Park Vietnam Veterans and Beyond Memorial and the Champaign Park Blue Star Memorial are finished, visitors will find areas that offer a peaceful setting to honor veterans of all branches of military service and those who lost their lives.

The Council Community Affairs Committee includes Mayor Pro-Tem Tony Lalli, Councilman Matthew Valerius and Councilman Charles Blevins. Fundraising partners have included The Allen Park American Legion Post 409, Allen Park/Southgate Veterans of Foreign Wars, Allen Park Elks #2194, Allen Park Knights of Columbus Father Saylor Council #3774, and Vietnam Veterans of America #259.



Mindful Holidays

Avoid the stresses of the season with planning, open communication with family

By Diane Gale Andreassi

THE holidays are a time of joy for some, but for others it's the season for stress.

For many, family gatherings, reunions with friends and juggling the myriad of emotions that come with gift buying are difficult hurdles. In fact, in a 2015 survey, 62 percent of adults said they have some level of stress regarding the "happiest time of the year".



Healthy routines help

"Sometimes it's financial, the dynamics of families and the destruction of personal habits," said Shama Faheem, chief medical officer for Detroit Wayne Integrated Health Network (DWIHN). DWIHN is a community safety net for 75,000 people struggling with mental health concerns in Detroit and throughout Wayne County.

A survey conducted by the University of Michigan showed that one in five children and adults had unrealistic expectations for the holiday season. The pressure gauge is set on high. The survey also found that tension exhibited by parents affects their children.

Parents can destress their children by lowering their own tension levels. Adults who want to bring a sense of well-being to themselves and their families can start by setting boundaries for routines. Think about new activities and decide how much you will spend on gifts and parties.

"Make the choices early on rather than at the end," said Faheem, who is board certified in child, adult, community and public psychiatry.

Start by prioritizing how you're going to divvy up your spending among friends, immediate family members and other relatives. Maintaining schedules followed throughout the year, like bedtimes, for children is important, too.

"In general children do best when routines are healthy," she said. "Lack of sleep can increase anxiety."

Schedule non-screen activities for kids in winter

Think about keeping your kids moving while they're home on winter break. Plan activities, like visiting museums, to keep them moving.

"They're spending a lot of time in front of screens," Faheem said. "Figure out how to maintain their activity during the wintertime. If you're not going for a walk outside, maybe do something active indoors."

Communication is key to helping your child navigate the holiday season. Encourage conversations. Get their input and come to a middle ground about what the holiday season will look like.

"Your child should know they can come to you at any time if they aren't enjoying the vacation and they can share what is working and what is not working," Faheem said.

Consider seeking professional help if you continue to find yourself or your children struggling with the stresses of the holidays.

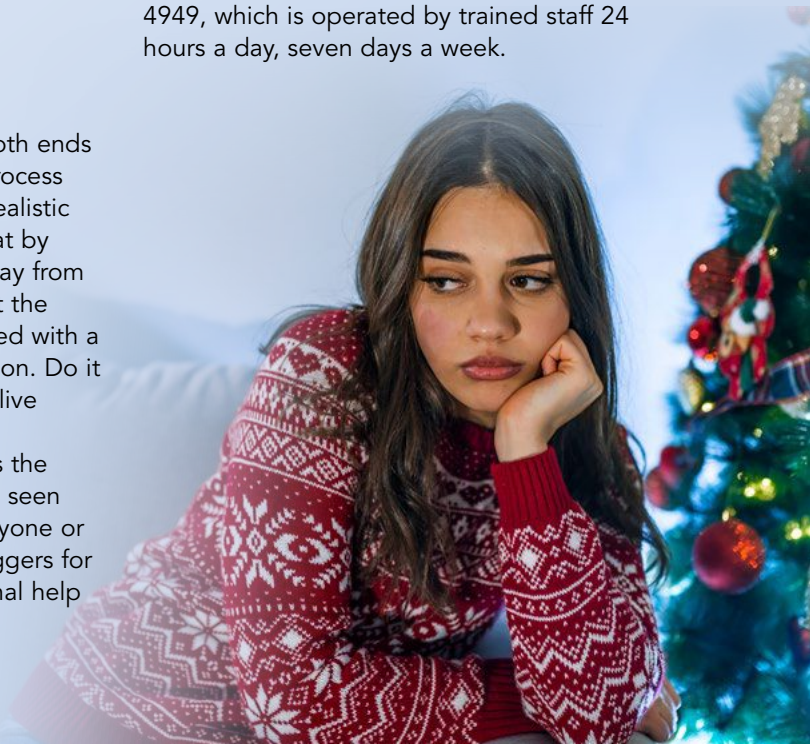
Access DWIHN services by calling (800) 241-4949, which is operated by trained staff 24 hours a day, seven days a week.



Avoid unrealistic expectations

Blood boils on both ends of the gift-giving process when there are unrealistic hopes. Sidestep that by taking the focus away from material things. Get the whole family involved with a nonprofit organization. Do it on your own if you live alone.

"Sometimes doing something for a cause lets you refocus the routine by doing something for others," she added. "I have seen people who dread the holidays because they don't have anyone or they lost someone during the holiday season. Those are triggers for depression. Try to manage it yourself or decide if professional help is needed."



Holiday Shopping

GUIDE





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- \$240,000 annual cost to purchase food

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1 LB Black Mussels
1/2 LB Noodles
1/2 LB Broccoli
Plus 4 Corn & 6 Potatoes

\$139

FAMILY FEAST

SERVING SIZE 6-8

6 Snow Crab Clusters
2 Dungeness Crab Clusters
4 LB Shrimp (Head-off)
2 LB Black Mussels
2 LB Crawfish
1 LB Sausage, 1 LB Noodles
Plus 6 Corn & 10 Potatoes

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HOOK & REEL

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LET THE GOOD TIMES Roll

Roosevelt Lanes celebrates seven decades in Allen Park with third generation of family ownership

By Dave Gorgon

In the 1940s, Ben Rossi moved from his native Bologna, Italy, to Michigan to work in the auto industry. He and a bunch of friends from Italy settled in Springwells, worked for the Ford Motor Company, and after work, enjoyed bowling at Clemente's in Lincoln Park.

Soon, Ben's friends talked him into opening his own bowling alley, and Roosevelt Lanes was born at 6701 Roosevelt in what was then the Village of Allen Park. Construction started in 1949, a liquor license was obtained the next year.

Bowling proved to be a popular activity.

At the time, Roosevelt, with its 20 lanes, was "the biggest bowling alley around," said Ben's grandson Christian Rossi, the current owner of the establishment.

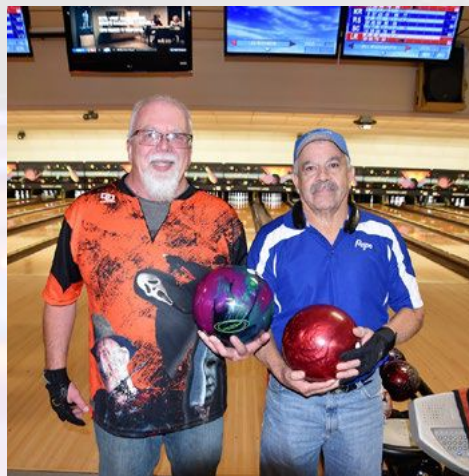
The Allen Park house hosted numerous leagues and tournaments and welcomed people who enjoyed bowling, wining and dining.

Christian said Roosevelt featured the first pizzeria in Allen Park, provided a sports bar as a gathering place and was open late for bowlers who worked the late shift. There were leagues and open bowling.

Some people – Christian and wife Jenna included – met at the bowling alley.

"There was no internet back then," Christian said. "You couldn't meet someone online. You had to go out and do something. And they came . . . this was the original social network."

Ben's son Richard took over from his father in 1972, and Christian took over from his father in 1998, relocating back to Allen Park from Arizona, where he lived and worked after his graduation with a business degree from Ferris State University.



Joe Peruski and Papo Maldonado have been bowling at Roosevelt for decades.

"My dad was looking to keep it in the family," Christian said. "He made me an offer I couldn't refuse."

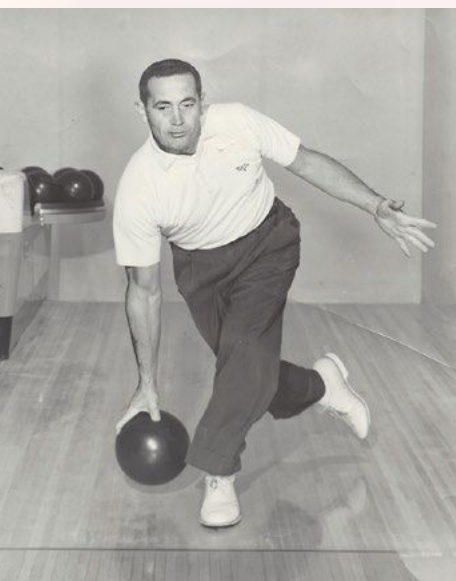
The Rossi wives have been heavily involved and their children have been part of the staff. Ben worked alongside wife Aida. Richard was there with wife Linda. And now Christian and wife Jenna operate the place.

Richard Rossi has fond memories of working for his dad and then taking over the reins. He started as a "lanes boy," emptying ashtrays (when smoking was legal at bowling alleys), sweeping floors, keeping an eye on the restrooms and providing general maintenance.

"It goes back to being a child when my father was there and watching it grow to be part of the community," Richard said. "We had many church groups, many political parties, many fundraisers for worthy organizations."

Like his dad and son, Richard also bowled in leagues at Roosevelt.

"We created a congenial atmosphere," he said. "We've always



Roosevelt Lanes founder (far left), the late Ben Rossi, enjoys a bowl. Roosevelt's bar (top right) and counter (bottom right) back in the day.



Special posters (left) depict graphics of the decades at Roosevelt past and present. A hopping Friday night (right) at Roosevelt.

catered to the wants and needs of our customers. We tried to be innovative."

Roosevelt originally had "pin boys" to set the bowling pins in place before advancing to semi-pin spotters then automatic pin spotters. The bowling alley was one of the first to have automatic scorers.

The bowling business has changed over the years. While it peaked in the 1970s, eventually there were more activities – video games and youth sports, for example – fighting for the attention of children and their families. At the start of the current decade, the COVID-19 pandemic forced the bowling alley to close for the first time in its history.

"In the old days, we had packed houses all the time," Richard said. "The future changed gradually. In my day, there was no such thing as youth soccer leagues and little league hockey. Like all sports, there is more competition these days."

While there are still leagues and open bowling, Roosevelt relies more on specialty outings to draw crowds these days. Birthday parties, "glow bowling," holiday parties and corporate events have become mainstays. Christian said hundreds of thousands of dollars have been raised during fundraising bowling events at Roosevelt.

In October, the Detroit Lions Alumni Association booked Roosevelt for a private bowling outing as part of the football team's homecoming weekend. It was a huge success, with familiar retired Lions such as Lomas Brown, Bennie Blades, Eddie Murray and dozens more reconnecting with one another and having a great time bowling.

The Rossi family has appreciated loyalty from bowlers who return year after year, plus staff members such as Ken Redpath, who has been Roosevelt Lanes' mechanic for more than 30 years, and Carrie Mayveal, who has worked the counter and has run the snack bar since 1999.

"We treat everybody like they're family here," Christian said.

Christian said Roosevelt has a great location in downtown Allen Park. It's close to the police and fire departments. And the lanes remain an attraction for people from all walks of life.

Fred Voran Jr., president of Voran Funeral Home, has bowled in leagues at Roosevelt for at least 20 years. The Vorans and Rossis have been friends for ages.

"I always love going there," he said. "They're a pillar of Allen Park. Everybody is so friendly."

Joe Peruski, who has bowled in a Sunday morning league – formerly the Moose League – for more than two decades, called Roosevelt "a very good place to bowl."

"It's just a good place to get away to have fun with friends and family," the Taylor resident said.

One of his bowling rivals, Puerto Rico native Papo Maldonado, said he looks forward to the start of the bowling season every year.

"It's a beautiful place – a family place," the retired Lincoln Park resident said. "They take care of you good. The atmosphere is great. Chris and his wife are great. It makes me come back every year."

Roosevelt is constantly updated with new bowling balls, new shoes and new chairs



Current owners (middle) Jenna and Christian Rossi with Christian's parents (and previous owners) Richard and Linda Rossi. Two of Christian's young sons (bottom) - the would-be fourth generation of Roosevelt Lanes.

for the lounge area. The wooden lanes – something unique in the bowling industry – get sanded every summer. The carpet gets cleaned regularly. Creative artwork on walls details the history of bowling.

"We've had great fun," Richard Rossi said. "Let's keep it going."



A Stunning Transformation

Grant awards make extensive renovations of historical museum possible, with more to come

THE Allen Park Historical Museum, located at the corner of Englewood and Park Avenue, is finally getting a long-awaited and much-needed restoration. The museum was built in 1888 and was acquired by the City in 2001 for \$147,500. Since that time, the 2,600-square-foot building has served as the city's historical museum, replacing a 500-square-foot room at the old city hall building on Southfield Road by I-94 that was demolished in 2017.

Over the past 20 years, there have been a number of museum improvement projects that have been paid for by the City and funds raised by the Historical Commission that are not visible to the public. Those fundraising efforts made it possible for renovations and improvements such as a new furnace, a new hot water tank, upgrades to the electrical and plumbing systems, and replacement of a collapsed sanitary sewer line. Visible improvements have included a new garage door in 2021, and a new roof that was installed in 2019 with the assistance of a grant from the Allen Park Citizens Civic Fund (APCCF) and funds from the Historical Commission and City.

In August 2021, the City was awarded \$104,000 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for Historic Museum Preservation from the Wayne County Community Development Division and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The grant was for paint removal from the exterior bricks, repairs to damaged brick and mortar, interior lead-based paint encapsulation, and removal of the enclosed porch.

Prior to Wayne County Community Development finalizing the grant award, its staff reached out to the city administration, indicating that there may be a

possibility for additional funding for the historical museum. City employees prepared an updated scope-of-work that included asbestos removal and repairs, stucco removal from the foundation, chipping paint removal from the exterior wood trim, repair of damaged wood trim, replacement of missing corbels, application of a sealant to the brick, painting of the wood trim, removal of old water pipes on the second floor, interior drywall repairs, removal of the porch aluminum awning, building two new porch overhangs, replacement of the existing porch steps, and removal and replacement of four exterior doors.

In order to cover the projects in the updated scope-of-work, the City was awarded an additional \$200,000 in CDBG funds from Wayne County Community Development and HUD in June 2022. The goal of the grants is to make the historical museum safe for the public to use.

The transformation of the historical museum started in mid-October 2022. The contractor, Industrial Painting Contractors, started by removing the enclosed porch from the left side of the museum and the aluminum awning from the right side. They then proceeded to do the sand/water blast removal of the gray paint from the bricks, exposing the natural orange/red brick color, which was definitely noticed by many people as they passed by the museum. Removal of the gray paint is something the Historical Commission has wanted to do since 2001.

Work on the interior of the museum will start shortly. The Historical Commission, led by Chairperson Nancy Knick, has been in the process of



boxing up various items so they can be moved into temporary storage units. Retired Allen Park police officer David Doss has taken it upon himself to pack up the room that was dedicated to the city's police and fire history. Doss was actively involved with the Historical Commission when the museum was acquired in 2001.

In an effort to continue the synergy created by the grant funding, the Historical Commission is looking into a few options to improve the landscaping in the front and side of the museum and in the backyard.

The museum will remain closed while the renovations continue. The Historical Commission is hopeful that these renovations will turn the museum into a site where residents and visitors will come to learn about Allen Park and its history. The Commission and city administration will soon be planning for a grand opening to occur in early- to mid-2023.

The Historical Commission will continue to utilize fundraisers, like the Christmas ornament sale, to raise funds to operate the museum and for small improvement projects.



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Leaving a Legacy

Longest-serving Board of Education member Gordon Miller retires

By Dave Gorgon

THE longest-serving Board of

Education member in the history of the Allen Park Public Schools has retired. Gordon Miller, who served 18-and-a-half years, leaves with a belief that

the school system is strong, fond memories and positive reviews from people who worked alongside of him.

Miller, a partner with his father Dennis in the downtown Allen Park law firm of Miller and Miller P.C., served his final board meeting on October 31.

He said a combination of factors were among the reasons behind his retirement from the school board seat he held since 2004. Among them, he said he wants to travel more with wife Mary, who is a teacher in the Wayne-Westland Schools, and he wants to visit family now residing out of state.

The Millers' two adult children, Ryan and Sophie, graduated from Allen Park High School and are away at college. Ryan is a senior at Ohio State University, where he majors in public policy and nonprofit management. Sophie is a sophomore at Penn State, majoring in health and human development.

Allen Park Schools Superintendent Michael Darga praised Miller for voting on many important issues, including the hiring

of "each of the current building administrators, including the past three superintendents" and "80 percent of our current staff."

With niece Alyssa (top), nephew Ethan (bottom left) and niece Gracen Kubik (bottom right).



"It is my distinct pleasure in thanking Mr. Gordon Miller for his years of service to the students, staff and community members of the Allen Park Public Schools," Darga said. "Mr. Miller served with passion, dedication and commitment. His philosophy was simple: what is best for our students should guide our decisions. We wish Mr. Miller and his family the very best."

Miller thanked community members for the positive feedback and support he received during his years on the board. He noted that people who run for a seat on the board must strive to make a difference while serving their community.

Serving on the board, he said, "has been a labor of love." When he first ran for a seat, he spoke of his belief in public education, a feeling that has never waned.

"I'm a believer in the power of public education," he said. "Even when I first ran, I wanted to be involved. It's not that you're going to make massive changes, but you hope you can make it better than when you came in. My family and I received so much from the district - I wanted to give back."

The Miller family has also been associated with sports in Allen Park. Gordon and brother Ryan grew up playing sports in the community, excelling in multiple youth and high school sports.

Miller credits the high caliber of coaching he received with making players and teams better. He mentioned individuals such as Bob Bryan, Chuck Dubois, Mike Kilburg, Jim Perry, Debbie Norman, Ed Bellas, Tom Hoover, Ron Pascuzzi, Mickey Henson, Jim Gulliver and others for providing great coaching and leadership on and off the field.

"It's hard not to be impacted like that," Miller said, noting that his father served as president of the Allen Park Bulldogs and leadership provided by him and others cannot be understated.

Gordon played quarterback for the Allen Park Jaguars football team and earned a full-ride scholarship to Eastern Michigan University. Brother Ryan would go on to play football at Ohio State.

Miller would be inducted into the Allen Park High School Hall of Fame in 2007 and the City of Allen Park Sports Hall of Fame in 2017. In addition to playing sports, he coached youth football and baseball. Many of the coaches he played for preceded him into the halls of fame.

Praise for Miller has come from around the community. Jim Perry, who went from Allen Park High to become a basketball co-captain at the University of Houston and has served the

With son Ryan (left), and daughter Sophie (right).



Downriver Community Conference for decades, saw early greatness in Miller.

"You knew he was going to be somebody," Perry said.

Perry wasn't surprised Miller became a successful school board member, saying he was called upon to make tough decisions, including how to spend bond money to improve facilities.

"He has been very dedicated to the kids of Allen Park," Perry said. "He's been very dedicated to the school district, which includes the administrators and teachers. He's been a great ambassador for us. He's going to be missed."

Frank Liberati, a long-time businessman who served on the board alongside Miller before getting elected to serve Allen Park in the Michigan House of Representatives, said it wonderful working with someone "who always had the Allen Park School District at heart."

Current school board member Dr. Jennifer Warren, who owns Allen Park Family Chiropractic, has known Miller since childhood, when she grew up around the block from the Miller family.

"Gordon was the brother to my friend Leah and even as a kid he was someone I have always looked up to," she said. "He was always kind, funny, an amazing athlete and someone people just wanted to be around. Gordon has carried these attributes with him into adulthood."

Serving more than four years on the board with Miller, "I have seen him as a leader – someone who the entire board respects," she added. "I have seen him as an advocate for our school, community, staff and students. He has collaborated to be sure we have a strong educational system and make sure our district continues to excel in our Downriver area. His character, leadership and uncompromising commitment are things I will forever be grateful for."



COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

New system will help identify kids' needs earlier, prevent struggles later

By Dr. Matthew Sokol, Director of Special Education and Dr. John Tafelski, Assistant Superintendent

As part of Allen Park Public Schools long-range strategic plan, the incorporation of a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) was identified as a top priority.

MTSS is an approach that uses data-based problem solving to integrate academic and behavioral instruction and interventions. The integrated instruction and interventions are delivered to students in varying intensities (multiple tiers) based on student need.



At this time, literacy skills at the elementary level have been a point of emphasis – given the Read by Grade 3 law – however, math skill development is now following the same procedures as described below.

The middle school and high school are in the process of incorporating the MTSS structures in place at the elementary and adapting them as appropriate for their settings.

While there are a variety of MTSS models, in Allen Park Tier 1 instruction incorporates what all students are exposed to through our core curriculum and includes whole and small group instruction.

Tier 2 instruction is intended for some students and incorporates small group or individual instruction that targets specific skills that data indicates are lacking. This targeted instruction may occur for 10-20 minutes at a time, multiple days per week.

Such students are progress monitored every other week to determine rate of improvement.

Tier 3 instruction is intended for few students and includes those with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) delivered via Special Education programs and services.

As mentioned above, data drives the decision-making process. MTSS Data



Dive meetings take place five times per year (every eight weeks) and include the reading/math specialist, a special education representative, building administrator, and central office administrator. Data, including universal screeners taken by all students three times per year, and progress monitoring data taken by those in intervention groups, are reviewed by grade level with recommendations made for maintaining current interventions for a given student or changing the plan in some way.

Grade-level dialogue meetings take place monthly with individual teachers and building administration to review current data and make necessary adjustments in Tier 1 instruction.

Child study meetings take place for students who have received at least eight to 12 weeks of targeted interventions and are struggling to progress. Such meetings may include the student's parents, reading/math specialists, general education teacher, building administrator and special education staff.

The primary goal of an MTSS approach is to intervene early, with targeted interventions, to prevent academic/behavioral struggles for our students going forward. Such an approach involves a high level of collaboration across multiple team members and APPS has been committed to this process.

We are currently building up our math intervention teams at the elementary level and supporting the middle and high schools as they continue to build their MTSS frameworks.

MTSS is yet another example of APPS's uncompromising commitment to excellence.





SCHOOL BOARD Election Results

Candidates

Jeannette MacDonald

Stephen D. Martin

Michael J. Klein

Jason M. Babbage

Votes

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3,365

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ALLEN PARK UNIFIED SPORTS:

Lessons learned for student athletes of all abilities

By Diane Gale Andreassi

ALLEN Park teacher Stella Boyer launched a new sports program that's seeing a lot of victories. Last year she had four special education students involved in Unified Sports, a program sponsored by Special Olympics. By November 2022 there were 17 special education students involved and 15 general education students who signed up to serve as partners.

Changing Lives

Whether it's on basketball and bocce ball courts or in a bowling alley, she watches students' lives change. She pitched the program to Allen Park district officials last year and Woodhaven-Brownstown also jumped onboard.

Two stories stand out among many, she said. One middle school student "was a tough cookie and gave us a run for our money. Now he's at the bowling alley with us and he will hand his partner the ball. If his partner makes a gutter ball, he says, 'Good try. Try again,' and other encouraging remarks. I love watching that. He has become a caring, sincere young man and he's a junior in high school now."

Boyer was so impressed by his transformation that she gave him his varsity letter, the first she awarded.

Sometimes the accomplishments are smaller in comparison, but they have big impacts. Like the special education student who was exuberant while he showed off his own, brand-new SpongeBob bowling ball. Everyone in ear shot made a fuss and he basked in the attention.

"He was just thrilled," she said. "He was in his glory."

The bleachers were packed the first couple of games when Unified Sports athletes hit the basketball court.

"There were a lot of kids cheering these guys on," Boyer said.



General education students take the ball down the court and Unified Sports athletes shoot the baskets. The gym kept exploding with applause and cheers with each basket made.

Meanwhile, the general education students are learning life lessons and many are getting credit for honors and service programs.

"It's rewarding for them," said Boyer, who has taught in Allen Park Schools for 31 years as a speech and language pathologist.

She went on to become an adaptive physical education teacher for special education students in the middle and high schools. Boyer is the Allen Park Schools Unified Sports coordinator. Assistant coach Andrea Alvarez recently joined the group.

At first Boyer recruited general education students to help but after the word got out about the wildly popular Unified Sports program, students began asking her to join.

"They make friends," she said. "They include them. They see each other in the halls and at lunch. It's very rewarding."



A league of their own

Students from Wyandotte, Lincoln Park and Gibraltar came to the fold, and they all compete in a newly formed Downriver league. Other Unified Sports leagues are spread throughout the state and the country.

"This is brand new to the Downriver area," Boyer said.

All students who want to be involved are included in Allen Park.

"We don't do tryouts because I don't want to deny anyone," Boyer said. "There's enough room for everyone to play."

As for the parents, they're happy to see their children involved with sports.

"They've found them something they can participate in like everyone else," she said.





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'Not Taking It For Granted'

Ashten Omodio has the rings to prove what hard work and dedication can accomplish By Terry Jacoby

T was quite a sophomore year for Allen Park's Ashten Omodio.

Winning a state title in any sport is an incredible accomplishment and one that few high school athletes ever get to experience. But Omodio celebrated two state championships last year, as a member of the school's competitive cheer team and the softball team.

If she learned anything during this incredible journey it's that state championships are earned.

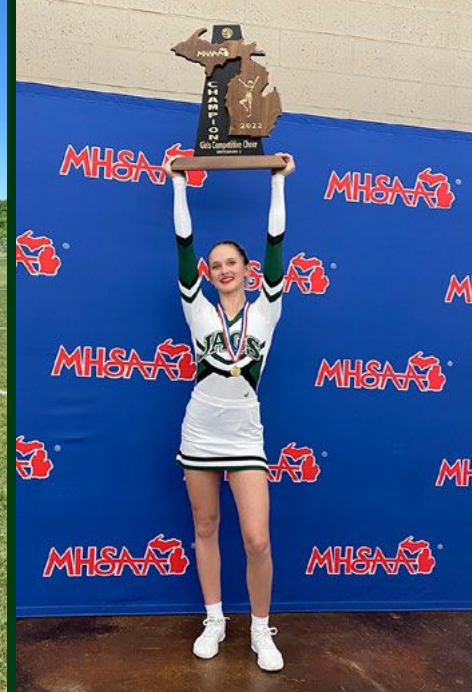
"I put a lot of dedication into both of my sports," said Omodio, now a junior at Allen Park High School. "Sometimes waking up at 5 a.m. to go to softball workouts at 6 a.m., then going to school all day, then going to a three-hour cheer practice after school, all while maintaining my grades. To say it is tough would be an understatement."

She has a 3.89 grade-point average and also is a member of Link Crew. Ashten is the daughter of Chris and Amanda Omodio, who is the food service director for Allen Park Public Schools.

Omodio, 16, said cheer and softball are obviously two very different sports requiring different skill sets.

"But one similarity is the dedication both teams put in," she said. "Even in the off seasons we were working so hard to get stronger – mentally and physically."

Omodio was around eight years old when she first



stepped into the batter's box on the softball field.

"I instantly fell in love with the sport," she said. "I have been on the varsity team since freshman year, when I was pulled up from the JV team postseason."

She said Allen Park softball is special, and there are reasons why their box score is filled with success every year.

"We train year round and we have workouts in the weight room three times a week," said Omodio, who played outfield and some middle infield for the Jags.

And then there is that special bond colored in green and white.

"We work so well as a team because we are all each other's best friends," she said.

Omodio started competitive cheer when she was in middle school.

"One day I came home from school and asked my mom if I could try out for cheer," she said. "She was confused because I had no cheer experience but went along with it anyway. I worked hard through my middle school years and I made the JV team my freshman year in high school."

Omodio made the highly competitive varsity team the following year as a sophomore.

"I knew it would be challenging to be on a state championship team but I also knew I had what it takes to be part of such a great team," she said.

She helped cheer the Jaguars to another state championship last year (21-22) – the program's third consecutive MHSAA Division 2 state competitive cheer title.

"Allen Park cheer is so amazing because we are pushed so hard to be the best," she said. "Our coaches know the hard work and dedication it takes to win and as a team we know it as well. As a strong team, you have to be able to trust whoever steps on that mat with you."

Omodio has two more years to score even more state titles. Both cheer and softball should be competitive again and setting the highest goals. Omodio isn't taking anything for granted and realizes that hard work is the only way to get there. And she has the rings to prove it.





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Preferred Rehabilitation

One-of-a-kind care given by highly credentialed professionals

By Terry Jacoby

“It would be difficult to find a day entering our facility absent of laughter or an uplifting interaction,” said Joanna Colella, co-owner of Preferred Rehabilitation Inc., in Allen Park. “Our incredible staff is the reason we are so special. They take the word caring and invested to the next level with every patient who comes through that door.”

This commitment to excellence has earned Preferred Rehabilitation a 99.9 percent approval rating.

Colella and Faye Niskar founded the practice 30 years ago with a mission from day one to “hand hold every single one of our patients as if they were family.”

Their dedication and commitment to that mission began from very humble beginnings.

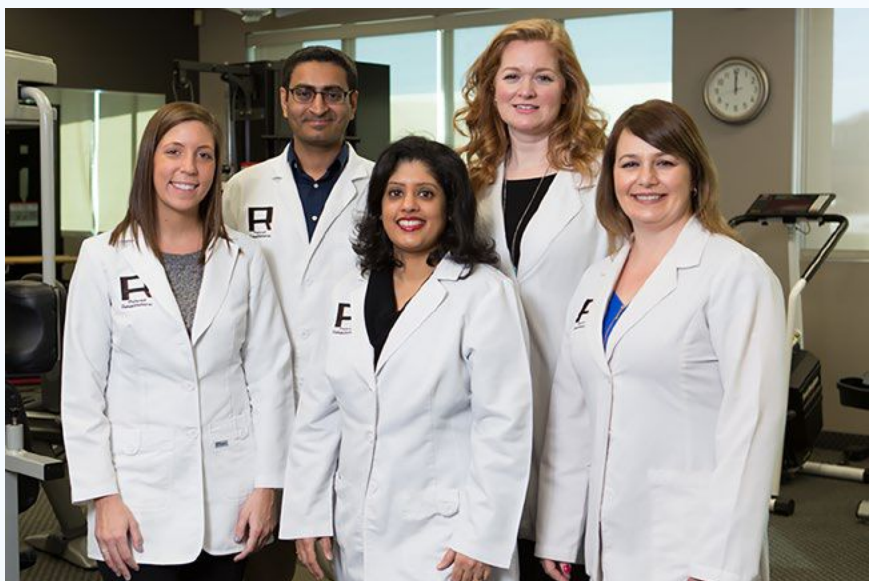
“I will never forget 30-plus years ago scrubbing toilets in a small, worn-down office space we had leased in Allen Park,” Colella said. “We were sitting on dollar store lawn chairs, placing ads in the paper to hire our medical staff. And because the remodeling wasn’t complete, we interviewed candidates at a local hotel conference room near the airport.”

Colella and Niskar have stayed true to that mission statement, and over those 30-plus years have created one of the best spine, sports and occupational rehabilitation facilities in the state, offering the latest technical advancements in rehabilitation using a multi-disciplinary approach to treating patients with pain and physical limitations caused by injuries, from soft tissue to catastrophic.

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and cutting-edge technological advances to deliver stellar rehabilitative services.

The facility also features state-of-the-art equipment including a unique specialty therapy pool, which is also used by professional athletes.

“But it all starts with treating people like people and helping everyone through the entire process – as if they were a family member,” Colella said. “We have a true integrated approach to medicine and injuries. We tackle, head on, all aspects of our patients’ care – everything from coordinating other doctors’ consultations, insurance issues, ordering diagnostic testing, transportation and much more.”

Preferred Rehabilitation has been internationally recognized and awarded the highest level of accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). They are one of only two certified outpatient facilities in the metro area with a spinal cord specialty program focus.

Preferred Rehabilitation recently revitalized their exterior with the help of a grant from the Downtown Development Authority. They were thrilled to participate in the beautification program of the city they have called their home for over 30 years.

“We empathize with what our patients are going through and want to help, to whatever degree possible, by handling all the issues surrounding their injury,” Colella said. “That is good medicine. That is how you treat people who need help. And it’s why we love what we do. Our highly credentialed staff (some celebrating their 28th and 24th year of employment with us), truly like one another and this loving, encouraging environment trickles down to each patient interaction they make. They really are one of a kind.”

Preferred Rehabilitation Inc. is located at 15636 Southfield Road. Call (313) 928-0700 or visit www.RehabHere.live for more information.



TO YOUR HEALTH!

Busting the GUT BUSTERS

Avoid seasonal weight gain by tweaking traditional holiday recipes

By Lisa Howard

IT'S officially the holiday season! While that means digging out fleeces and earmuffs, it also means enjoying holiday recipes. And even though those dishes often focus more on comfort than health, with a few tweaks, those holiday favorites can be delicious and nutritious.

Cranberry sauce ranks as a top side dish for many, and for good reason – the brightly colored berries look like edible garnets, they freeze beautifully and they contain loads of pectin, a naturally occurring polysaccharide that makes liquids gel. Pectin is particularly handy for making jams and jellies and pleasingly thick sauces. Unfortunately, due to the tartness of cranberries (it's a very low-sugar fruit), commercial versions of cranberry jelly and sauce contain very high amounts of added sugars such as high-fructose corn syrup. Even recipes for DIY cranberry sauce contain heaping amounts of white sugar. Orange and maple to the rescue! To make your own low-sugar cranberry sauce, zest and juice two (2) oranges and place the zest and juice in a medium pot with 12 ounces of fresh cranberries. Add juuust enough water to cover the cranberries, then simmer for 10 minutes. Mash with a potato masher and continue simmering for another five (5) minutes, stirring occasionally. Stir in maple syrup to taste, starting with two (2) tablespoons and adding a tablespoon or two more if necessary. Voilà!

Here's a secret everybody knows: stuffing is more popular than turkey. It's also generally made with white bread and/or boxed mixes. One quick way to add more flavor and health value is to make your own stuffing with 100 percent whole-grain bread, but an even better idea is to go with skirlie, a classic Scottish dish made by cooking oats with drippings, onions and seasonings. It's simple, tasty and far less awkward than physically inserting the stuffing into a bird, plus skirlie can easily be made vegetarian by using drippings from sautéed veggies.

Serving pilaf? Skip white rice and opt for brown, black, purple

or red rice, all of which are whole grains. Better yet, choose wild rice! It's earthier and nuttier and more hearty, making it ideal for wintertime dishes. For a colorful and tasty side, toss wild rice with toasted nuts, fresh pomegranate seeds, chopped orange sections and chopped fresh parsley.

In a 2021 survey by OnePoll, mashed potatoes edged out stuffing in popularity (46 percent to 43 percent). It's clearly worth upping the ante when it comes to making them! Leaving the skins on and not overcooking them contributes flavor and notches down on their glycemic impact, and making them ahead of time and allowing them to cool also reduces their glycemic load because the potatoes then contain more resistant starch. That's true even if you reheat them. (Preparing them ahead of time also makes party planning easier!) Alternatively, you could cook and mash sweet potatoes, winter squashes or cauliflower before stirring in butter, cheese, sour cream or whatever your favorite additions are. Bonus flavor and health points if any animal-sourced additions come from grass-fed/pastured animals. Chopped fresh herbs, roasted garlic, sautéed leeks, toasted nuts and even sofrito are all welcome additions. Potatoes are the culinary equivalent of a blank slate, so give yourself the gift of exploring your culinary creativity this holiday season!

Lisa Howard is a writer, editor and health educator who loves to share her joy of cooking delicious and nutritious foods during her community talks and culinary classes. You can find out more about her classes and recipes at www.theculturedcook.com.



Destination Downriver:

Putting a collaborative community partnership to work

IN 2018, a coalition of like-minded business and government representatives began planning for an initiative to change how the rest of the world viewed the Downriver region. With help from MSU Extension, Pure Michigan, Detroit Convention & Visitors Bureau and SWCRC, the group spawned what would become Destination Downriver.

Pure Michigan's vice president, Dave Lorenz, summed up the effort's aspirations saying, "The only wrong choice moving forward for this initiative to become an economic engine is to do nothing."

The stories that needed to be told about Downriver wouldn't happen by accident, or worse, wouldn't be told at all unless we took it on ourselves as a collaborative effort on behalf of the communities and businesses that make up Downriver.

Destination Downriver set about reshaping the narrative about an entire region.

At just over three years in operation, the coalition is publicizing the natural wonders of Downriver's abundant parklands and reclaimed shorelines, in conjunction with our 18 Downriver communities, all knitted together by Michigan's most robust trail network. Advancements and achievements that were catalysts in reshaping the area are now regularly trumpeted via Destination Downriver's integrated media partnership efforts through a variety of broadcast and social platforms.

Attracting people and positive attention to Downriver has also helped spawn new economic vitality. Destination Downriver acts as a communication platform on behalf of its local government and business partners, with aims to drive awareness and visitation while yielding opportunities throughout the entire area. As a de facto destination marketing organization (DMO), Destination Downriver is promoting communities with teamwork communication. Our initiative is a clear demonstration that working together can achieve positive results that are bigger and more ambitious than any one community could achieve on its own.

Working collaboratively isn't a simple undertaking but creating these strategic alliances via Destination Downriver has been well worth the effort. And the collegial, cooperative environment already present among Downriver's communities has fostered a spirit of participation and mindfulness that all involved are comfortable with working toward a common goal.

This synergy through collaboration is providing results that are hard to surpass. With the increased popularity of niche market tourism, we have an opportunity to present the entire region as a multi-dimensional, convenient travel option. The unique shopping, natural spaces, active outdoor and culinary attractions position Destination Downriver perfectly as an ideal micro-adventure, daycation experience.

Our job has just started and with continued engagement and support from area communities, the possibilities are as limitless as the great stories we intend to continue sharing about the people, places and spaces that make up the Downriver region.

"It's time to flip the script by collaborating, cooperating, and partnering with our neighbor communities, embracing the benefits of creating a multi-destination alliance that works to promote the greater downriver region." – Sue Trussell
Destination Downriver Co-Chair/Brownstown DDA Director



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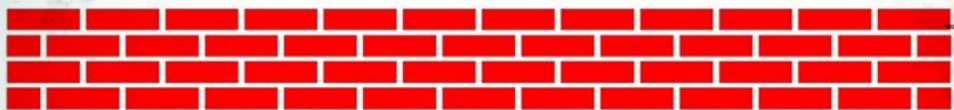
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SUSTAINABILITY AND *Style*

Consignment shop caters to teens, young adults

By Terry Jacoby

EVI Santilli grew up in a low-income home in Port Huron and got a job when she was just 12 years old delivering newspapers.

"I saved up and bought my first new pair of athletic shoes with my paper route earnings," she said.

Santilli learned a few lessons working that paper route, and one was how hard you have to work just to buy a new pair of shoes. A few decades later, Santilli owns Plato's Closet in Allen Park. Every day she sees young teens and young adults trying to find – and afford – something that makes them feel good, happy and confident – just like she felt with those new sneakers.

"I love the day-to-day interaction and deep conversations with our young customers and staff," said Santilli, a mother of five and an Air Force veteran. "I have learned so much from them. Despite me being Gen-X, I understand them and value their opinions. I believe I am a better parent because of it, and while I can now afford new, I choose not to."

Plato's Closet is recognized as the nation's largest chain of teen and 20-something resale stores, with over 480 locations in North America. They pay cash on the spot for gently used items that are currently in style and in great condition.

Santilli opened an Allen Park store in May 2010 but moved to the Allen Road location just this year after outgrowing the old space. At almost 9,000 square feet, they now have one of the largest Plato's Closet locations in the state.

In "one of the best locations" in the state, too.

"Allen Park is an amazing city to celebrate all that makes us and others unique," Santilli said. "I love the diversity in both our customer base and our staff. When you put people from different cultures together, beautiful things happen. I have a wonderful staff, who has been with me for seven years."

Plato's Closet buys clothing and accessories for all seasons, for mostly teen



and young adults. This isn't your grandmother's thrift store – they buy any like-new, current teen casual clothing, but they especially need casual shoes, boots and athletic shoes for both teen girls and guys.

"We are about what a teen is wearing right now," Santilli said. "We are not able to purchase business, mature or older styles. It is very difficult to have to turn people away after they have gone through the trouble of bringing items in. We recommend calling the store first or following us on social media to see exactly what we buy and how easy it can be."

The Allen Park store, as the move to a larger location indicates, has been a great success story. Each location is independently owned.

"There is no longer a stigma associated with buying secondhand," Santilli said. "Everyone appreciates the value of lululemon at 70 percent off and the excitement when you score the hard-to-find items like retired Jordans. However, young people also understand the importance of sustainability. They are looking for new ways to be green."

Plato's Closet Allen Park is located at 6530 Allen Road. Call (313) 278-2300 or email info@platosclosetallenpark.com for more information.



Employee Mikayla holding a purse at Plato's Closet.

CHILDREN AND CAREERS

Help them develop interests while young so they can make informed decisions later

By Tracy Willis

"WHAT do you want to be when you grow up?"

Nothing could cause more anxiety and irritation in my childhood self than that question. Why? Because it was usually followed by judgment. I wanted to be a journalist, an author, a concert pianist, or an archeologist. None of those things were deemed practical by the adults in my life.

Career education was almost nonexistent in the 1980s. Beyond taking a computerized interest inventory in high school, career education didn't happen. Today, we know a lot more about guiding and helping children discover their aptitudes and develop skills.

Start early. Young children are curious critters with sponge-like brains. If your young child is interested in dinosaurs, help them develop that interest further. Explore natural history exhibits, read picture books about paleontology and paleontologists.

Help them cultivate their passions. If you have older elementary-aged children, arrange for them to speak to someone in a related career field. Stoke the fires of their childhood passions, and while you do that, discuss what it would be like to work in that career field.

If they're interested in working with animals,



what sorts of jobs could they do? Exploring their curiosities and interests early can help them make impactful decisions later in high school, trade school or college. Think of early childhood as the age of discovery. This time in their lives is all about exploration.

Be transparent. As a teacher, I often hear my students talk about wanting to play in the NFL or the NBA. The problem is that most have no idea the amount of work and training it takes to get to that level in sports. The same can be said for students who are interested in other career fields.

When your child shows an interest in a career, help them research what it would take to be successful in it. What classes do they need? What certifications, degrees or licenses are needed? Do they have to go to a four-year university? Should they take a lot of math classes when they get older? When your child knows what is needed to realize their dreams, school subjects suddenly become more relevant and important – which is a bonus!

Make it personal. Take Your Child to Work Day is a great idea but consider branching out. If your child wants to be a professional musician, arrange for them to talk to a variety of people who work in the field of music. Consider music teachers, music therapists, city orchestra members, choir directors or recording studio engineers. The idea is to show them a broad view of careers in music.

Students who have personal experiences or connections to someone who is in the field they are interested in can make more informed decisions. It never hurts to ask about informal apprenticeships or internships. Volunteering is a great way to learn about careers, too.

Providing your child with opportunities for exploration, career information and firsthand experiences will help you avoid the high school deer-in-headlights angst as graduation time draws near. Your child will feel more confident and informed in their choices.

Tracy Willis is a 30-year veteran educator and a third-generation teacher. She has taught K-8 students in both general education and music classrooms. A former literacy coach, she has also taught undergraduate teaching candidates. Her passions include hiking and writing. She's hopelessly devoted to her pets. She currently teaches eighth grade in the Metro Detroit area.





Allen Park and AROUND

January – February

JANUARY

January 18

Senior Trip to Henry Ford Museum

9 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Sign up by January 11 to enjoy a trip to Henry Ford Museum! The bus leaves from the Community Center at 9 a.m., and at 12:30 p.m. from the museum to return for a complimentary pizza lunch. Cost is \$24.25, payable at the entrance. Sign up at <https://recreation.cityoffallenpark.org>



FEBRUARY

February 14

Valentine's Bingo

10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Allen Park Community Center
Register at <https://recreation.cityoffallenpark.org> before February 6 at the Community Center. Space limited to 15 spots.

PLEASE NOTE: We at the TODAY Magazines do our best to make sure listed event details are correct but in today's climate dates and times often change. Please make sure to check the event's website or Facebook page for the most up-to-date information.

January 29

Magic With a Twist

1-2:30 p.m.

Allen Park Community Center
Featuring John Winslow. This is a family-friendly event. Please register at <https://recreation.cityoffallenpark.org>




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Holiday RECIPES



CHRISTMAS FUDGE

Ingredients:

- Cooking spray
- 2 3/4 c. chocolate chips
- 1 (14-oz.) can sweetened condensed milk
- 2 tbsp. heavy cream
- 4 tbsp. butter
- 1 tsp. pure vanilla extract
- 1/4 tsp. kosher salt
- 3 tbsp. Christmas sprinkles

Directions:

1. Line an 8"-x-8" baking pan

with parchment paper and grease with cooking spray. In a medium saucepan over medium heat, melt chocolate, condensed milk, butter, cream, vanilla, and salt together. Stir until smooth then pour into prepared pan.

2. Top with sprinkles and refrigerate until set, 2 hours. Cut into squares to serve.



THE MOST CHOCOLATE PUDDING

Ingredients:

- 1 bar bittersweet chocolate
- 2 tbsp. butter
- 1 1/2 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 3/4 c. milk
- 3/4 c. sugar
- 1/4 c. cocoa
- 3 tbsp. cornstarch
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 3 egg yolks
- 1/2 c. whipped cream (optional)
- 2 tbsp. Chocolate shavings (optional)

Directions:

1. Combine chocolate, butter, and vanilla in a medium bowl, and set aside. Heat milk in a medium saucepan, and bring to a simmer. Whisk sugar, cocoa,

cornstarch, and salt together in a bowl. Beat the yolks in a bowl, using an electric mixer set on medium, for 1 minute. Reduce the mixer speed to low, and add the sugar mixture. Beat together until it resembles wet sand. Add half the hot milk, and whisk until blended. Transfer the cocoa mixture to the saucepan. Cook over medium heat, while continuously whisking, until thickened -- about 8 minutes. Strain into the bowl of chocolate. Let sit for 3 minutes before stirring smooth with a wooden spoon. Press a sheet of plastic wrap onto the surface of the pudding and chill for 2 hours before serving.



CRANBERRY-CHERRY COBBLER PIE

Ingredients

- 1/4 c. cornstarch
- 1 tsp. finely grated lime zest
- 1 tbsp. lime juice
- 2/3 c. plus 2 tbsp. sugar, divided, plus more for sprinkling
- 1 tsp. kosher salt, divided
- 12 oz. cranberries
- 12 oz. frozen sweet cherries
- 1 1/2 c. all-purpose flour, spooned and leveled
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1/2 c. cold unsalted butter, cut up
- 3/4 c. buttermilk or whole milk

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Whisk together cornstarch, lime zest, lime juice, 2/3 cup sugar and 1/2 teaspoon salt. Add cranberries and cherries; toss to combine. Transfer to a 9-inch pie plate.
2. Whisk together flour, baking powder, 2 tablespoons sugar, and remaining salt. Cut in butter until mixture resembles coarse meal. Add buttermilk and gently mix to form a wet, shaggy dough. Dollop mounds of dough on top of fruit; sprinkle with sugar. Bake, on baking sheet, until golden and bubbling, 50 to 55 minutes; cool slightly.

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