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# Allen Park

## T O D A Y

*Inside*

**Playground Fun!**

**Schools'  
Social Workers  
Here to Help**

**Beautification  
Commission  
Seeks Volunteers**

2023 - First Quarter



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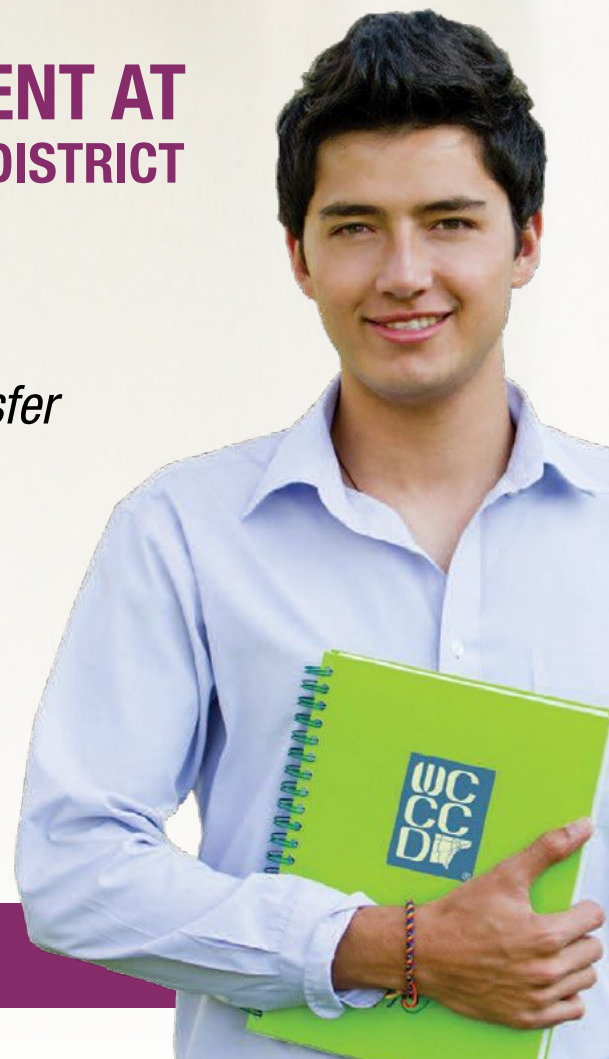
Wayne  
County  
Community  
College  
District

A background image showing a group of diverse students sitting at a long wooden table in a library or study hall. They are looking at books and papers. Bookshelves filled with books are visible in the background.

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# From the MAYOR

## Think Spring!

**W**ELCOME to 2023! We are beginning the fiscal year 2023-2024 budget process and will continue to plan and budget for capital improvements within the city to ensure our residents are well-served.

Time has flown and I am sure that my fellow council members, like me, cannot believe we are in the final stage of our term in office. There is still a lot to be done. While we had a favorable audit, it would not take much for us to lose ground. We will work to ensure that Allen Park continues to improve while remaining financially responsible.



We are also working on several projects involving American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds and anticipate that some time in the not-too-distant future Rusty the Dog will have some friends at his DPS site. Speaking of DPS, if you haven't had the opportunity to see that facility, please do pay them a visit.

Allen Park Today is mailed to every household and business in Allen Park. The quarterly publication provides important information regarding your city, as well as stories about employees, residents and businesses in our community. We welcome suggestions on what you would like to see in future issues. Copies are also available at City Hall, the library and online at [www.communitypublishing.com/allen-park-today](http://www.communitypublishing.com/allen-park-today).

Stay strong, stay healthy and think spring!

*Gail McLeod*

Gail McLeod  
Mayor



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# Elected Officials



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Mayor



**MAUREEN ARMSTRONG**  
Treasurer



**MICHAEL I. MIZZI**  
City Clerk



**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.cityoffallenpark.org](http://www.cityoffallenpark.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 DDA

**WOW City Cable Channel:** 10

**Comcast City Cable Channel:** 12

**SeeClickFix:** [www.seeclickfix.com](http://www.seeclickfix.com)

**SeeClickFix Mobile App:** Allen Park Connect

## 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/Community Center

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

**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.*





# Allen Park Street System Continues to be Improved

If the orange construction barrel is considered to be Michigan's state flower, then they are going to be in full bloom in Allen Park this year.

## Transportation and Capital Improvement Bonds

Last September, with the approval of the mayor and city council, the City of Allen Park sold Michigan Transportation Fund bonds to fund two large street improvement projects – Rosedale Boulevard from Champaign Road to Southfield Road and Reeck Road from Goddard Road to Wick Road. Additionally, Capital Improvement bonds were sold to fund a water main replacement project on Reeck Road from Goddard Road to Wick Road. These bonds will be repaid over a period of years with funds from the City's allocation of the Michigan Act 51 Gas Tax and Water Department revenue charges.

The nearly mile long section of Rosedale Boulevard suffers from ASR (Alkali-Silica Reactivity), which is commonly known as "concrete cancer". This is very noticeable condition where the concrete along the cut joints is crumbling and creating major potholes. Drivers may have experienced this condition on Northline Road in Southgate, Racho Road in Taylor, and Eureka Road in Romulus by the airport.



The contractor for both the Rosedale Boulevard and Reeck Road projects will be Hardrock Concrete. For the Reeck Road water main replacement, Hardrock Concrete is the general contractor and the contractor will be D&D Water & Sewer.

## Street Improvement Program

In late 2022, Paris Avenue from Allen Road to the dead-end east of Laurence Avenue was selected to be part of the 2023 Street Improvement Program. The contractor will be Savone Cement. Additionally, this same section of Paris Avenue was selected for the 2023 Water Main Replacement Program. The contractor for the water main project will be Bricco Excavating.

## Concrete Street Sectioning and Street Preservation Programs

The 2023 Concrete Street Sectioning Program will include sections of Meyer Avenue from Allen Road to Roger Avenue, Balfour Avenue from Ecorse Road

to Philomene Boulevard, and Cortland Avenue from Ecorse Road to Pinecrest Boulevard. The Street Preservation Program will be joint sealing the area west of Allen Road to Arno Avenue from Southfield Road to Hanfor Avenue.

## 2022 Completed Projects

The 2022 Street Improvement Program projects included the reconstruction of Park Avenue from Champaign Road to Angelique Avenue, Rosedale Boulevard from Moore Road to Wick Road, and Philomene Boulevard from Park Avenue to Colwell Avenue by Hardrock Concrete. The City of Allen Park was awarded the American Public Works Association (APWA) Downriver Branch 2022 Project of the Year for the Park, Rosedale and Philomene Road Replacement Project in the \$1 million to \$5 million category.

Other projects included Al's Asphalt Paving Company reconstructing the gravel portion of Arno Avenue from Beatrice Avenue to Warwick Avenue in asphalt. Savone Cement finished the reconstruction of Wick Road from Laurence Avenue to Rosedale Boulevard, White Avenue from Roosevelt to Allen Road, Buckingham Court at Goddard Road, and the area of Shenandoah Avenue and Cicotte Avenue. Additionally, the Water Department installed a new water main on Winona Avenue from Champaign Road to Ecorse Road.



# All Together Now – Summer Reading 2023

**R**EADING gives you wings, and this year you're

invited to spread those wings and travel the world aboard our Reading Express.



Choo! Choo!

Did you hear that? It's the "All Together Now" train and it's set to arrive at the library on Saturday, June 17 for the Summer Reading 2023 Kick-Off Party! If you're new to our summer programs, welcome! We are so glad you could join us for our maiden voyage!

If you've joined us on our previous journeys, you'll be familiar with the hybrid approach we've adopted in the last three years. This summer we're going back to our roots, with all programs and reading logs available in-person only at the Allen Park Public Library.

Travel to one of our treasured programs including the Kick-Off Party, the Carnival, and Family Fridays on the Patio, or swoop in for one of our exciting new programs including Mom & Pop Mondays, Mini Messies, and weekly scavenger hunts!

Make sure to subscribe to our YouTube channel for all new episodes of our returning virtual shows, Mad Dan the Science Man, and The Explorians. Our ever popular Take and Make Craft Bags will also continue for children, teens, and adults throughout the summer.

To participate in the reading challenge, simply track your reading to earn badges and rewards. Earn prizes for time spent reading and completing activity challenges. Reading entries are awarded for



every 180 minutes (three hours) of reading time. Prizes and completion certificates will be awarded at the end of the program. Certificates will be given to everyone that completes one whole reading log. Sign-up and reading logs may be obtained at our Kick-Off Party or at the Circulation Desk anytime thereafter.

Get your books packed and prepare to board the Reading Express! Stay tuned for further information about "All Together Now" at the Allen Park Public Library occurring June 17-July 29, 2023!

## Garden Club

Our ever-popular Garden Club will return once again this spring. Children ages 4-10, with a parent or guardian, are welcome to attend. Participants will make a craft and then spend time planting flowers in our gardens. Bring your green thumb, play clothes and gardening gloves and prepare to get your hands dirty. Gardeners-in-training will be rewarded at the end of the program with an ice cream social for all their efforts. Call the library at (313) 381-

## SAVE THE DATE

Garden Club Registration Begins  
Monday, April 24

## Meeting Dates

Tuesday, May 16  
Tuesday, May 23  
Tuesday, May 30  
Tuesday, June 6

2425 or stop by the Circulation Desk to register.

## And For Adults

### 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.

- **April 18:** *The Wedding Veil* by Kristy Woodson Harvey  
Summary: Four women. One family heirloom.



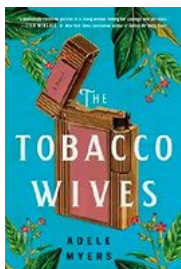


A secret connection that will change their lives – and history as they know it.

- **May 16:** *Finlay Donovan is Killing It* by Elle Cosimano  
Summary: The first in a new series, this story is authentic in depicting the frustrations and triumphs of motherhood in all its messiness, hilarity, and heartfelt moments.



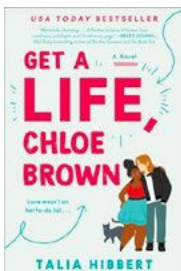
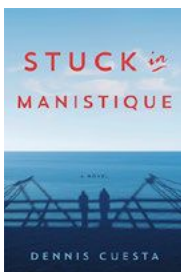
- **June 20:** *Tobacco Wives* by Adele Myers  
Summary: Shedding light on the hidden history of women's activism during the post-war period, at its heart, the book is a deeply human, emotionally satisfying, and dramatic novel about the power of female connection and the importance of seeking truth.



### Between the Covers

Between the Covers, a rom-com book discussion group for patrons 18 and up, meets the first Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.

- **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.
- **May 2:** *Get a Life, Chloe Brown* by Talia Hibbert  
Summary: A witty, hilarious romantic comedy about a woman who's tired of being "boring" and recruits her mysterious, sexy neighbor to help her experience new things.
- **June 6:** *The Flatshare* by Beth O'Leary  
Summary: What if your roommate is your soulmate? A joyful, quirky romantic comedy, this is a feel-good novel about finding love in the most unexpected ways.



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\*Online issued cards good for one month, must come into library to finalize.



### Family Fun

Saturday, June 17  
Kick-Off Party  
featuring  
Magician Jeff Wawrzcziszek  
10:30 a.m.-12 p.m.

Friday, June 23  
Zeemo the Magnificent  
6 p.m.

Friday, June 30  
Honeybees, Better  
Together  
6 p.m.

Friday, July 7  
Magician Jeff Wawrzcziszek  
6 p.m.

Friday, July 14  
Fairy Godmother of Music  
6 p.m.

Friday, July 21  
Kevin Devine  
6 p.m.

Friday, July 28  
Best of Disney Music with  
Dave Rodgers  
6 p.m.

READING LOGS DUE!  
Friday, July 28  
Carnival  
Saturday, July 29  
10:30 a.m.-12 p.m.

### Mom & Pop Mondays

Monday, June 19  
Evolution of the Beatles  
with Dave Rodgers  
6 p.m.

Monday, June 26  
7 Million Jiggawatts  
6 p.m.

Monday, July 10  
Enda Reilly  
Irish Folksongs  
6 p.m.

Monday, July 17  
Standard Time Band  
6 p.m.

Monday, July 24  
Rod & Reel:  
Better Together  
6 p.m.

READING LOGS DUE!  
Friday, July 28  
Carnival  
Saturday, July 29  
10:30 a.m.-12 p.m.



# WHY CHOOSE JUST ONE?

## Triple-sport student-athlete makes it all work

By Terry Jacoby

**M**ANY young athletes today are encouraged to "specialize" in one sport. Pick your favorite sport, dedicate yourself to it and play it every day, year round. But Cam Johnson decided he would be missing out on things he loved if he went that route, so he decided to travel three roads instead of one and has found athletic happiness and satisfaction during his still-young journey.

Still only a junior, the Allen Park student-athlete has enjoyed scoring touchdowns, hitting three-point shots from the corner and rounding the bases after a home run. Sports is for fun, and Johnson has found a way to triple his enjoyment as a Jaguar.

"I started playing football, basketball, and baseball at a young age and have always enjoyed playing

all three," he said. "Playing other sports challenges me mentally and physically and helps prepare me for the next season."

Johnson's desire to play baseball was influenced by his father.

"Since I was young, I have looked up to my dad, who played Division 1 baseball for Coastal Carolina University," he said. "I have always wanted to follow in his footsteps, playing baseball at the next level."

During the summer, Johnson plays for a highly competitive travel baseball showcase team (D-backs Elite 17u). They play against some of the best talent in the country and it's a great way to show off his skills on the diamond.

He certainly showed off his skills on the gridiron this past fall for the Jaguars, where he played slot receiver and cornerback. He had 28 total tackles, six interceptions and eight pass breakups on defense and had 21 catches, six touchdowns, and 283 receiving yards on offense and earned First Team All-Region, All League, All Downriver Dream Team, and All-Metro West Second Team.

Johnson has spent his winter months on the hardwood with the Allen Park varsity basketball team. And he's enjoying every minute of it.

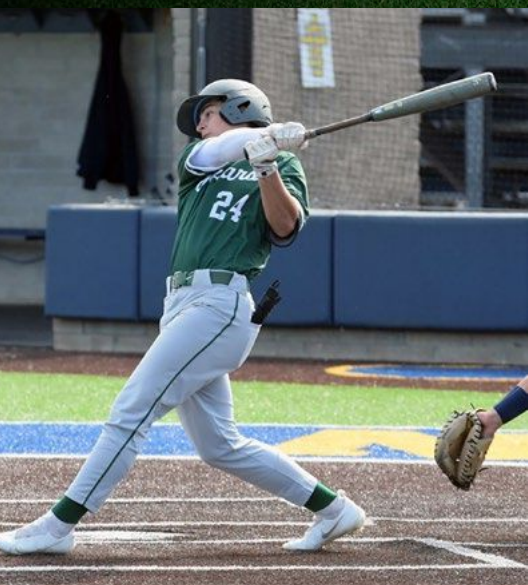
"We have a very talented basketball team this year and we have a good shot at winning a district title (in March)," he said.

And, of course, he can't wait for baseball.

"Since my freshman year, our team has had a solid young core that has been playing together for a long time," he said. "Now, as upperclassmen and leaders of the team, our goals have stayed the same as the upperclassmen before us. To win the Downriver League, make a long run in the playoffs, leave the program better than we found it, and create great memories in the process."

Cam, 17, is the son of Casey Johnson, Candice Johnson and Christina Forth, and scores a 3.92 GPA in the classroom. He hopes to play at least one sport in college and get an education. But right now he's busy juggling his three sports and keeping up those impressive grades – which isn't always easy.

"Juggling practice hours with time-sensitive homework can be hectic, but it is what I love doing," he said. "My philosophy is to keep my priorities straight and be the best I can be at whatever I am working at. In addition, having younger siblings, I try to be the best role model possible so they can see that hard work and determination pay off so that one day they can reach their own goals."





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- Joel H.

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# DEDICATION TO IMPROVEMENT

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## Allen Park's fire and police officers strive to be better by increasing their education, knowledge

By Mark Kibby, City Administrator

**I**T seems that every October for the last five or six years, there is someone from the police, fire, or city administration attending the graduation of a police officer or firefighter from Eastern Michigan University's Schools of Police and Fire Staff and Command Executive Leadership Program. The City Administration made a recommitment seven years ago to support the education and training of our police and fire staff, and this is one of the best programs available.

In 2022, Allen Park Fire Department Captain Jeffrey Hada graduated from EMU's School of Fire Staff and Command Executive Leadership Program, and Allen Park Police Department Sergeants Ilie Fetelea and Steven Segrest graduated from the EMU's School of Police Staff and Command Executive Leadership Program.

The Staff and Command programs, offered through EMU's Center for Regional and National Security, are designed to assist with career development for both current senior police and fire executives and department members interested in advancing into the upper management ranks.

"EMU's School of Staff and Command has a reputation for excellence and is supported by quality instructors and law enforcement and fire management professionals who make up the foundation of this unique educational/training program," said Program Director JillAnne M. Bauer. "The program's reputation for excellence is praised by our graduates, who have stated the knowledge, skills, and abilities learned assist them in providing quality leadership for their departments."

Program participants are in class for a one full week per month from February through October. While the intensive executive leadership program consists of 350 hours of classroom instruction, there is also a need for out-of-class study time for preparation of papers, projects, and examinations. Not only is this a big commitment by the police officer or firefighter, but also by their families.

The experience takes the police and fire officers beyond traditional operational methods and exposes

them to strategic thinking and creative and innovative problem-solving, paving the way for further advancement to senior leadership positions within their department. Both courses are split into six major topic areas:

- Leadership
- Planning and Decision Making
- Human Resource Management
- Administering the Fire Agency/Administering the Police Agency
- Critical Situations and Homeland Security
- Managing Technology for Public Safety

The Schools of Staff and Command are accredited through the North Central Accreditation process for Graduate and Undergraduate credit through Eastern Michigan University.

### Captain Jeffrey Hada

Captain Hada has worked for the Allen Park Fire Department since 1999, when he was offered a full-time firefighter/paramedic position. He currently serves as a captain in charge of a shift. Since 2016, he has been employed part-time as a registered nurse on a cardiac progressive care

unit. The challenges of nursing have helped him gain an in-depth understanding of pre- and post-hospital care. This also assists him in providing better emergency medical care, including educating the community.

He has been married to his wife Melanie for almost 10 years. They share two children, an eight-year-old boy and a five-year-old girl. His days off are mostly spent with the family, but he also likes to golf, cook, meet up with friends, and maintain a physical fitness routine.





Captain Hada's research project was "Attack Packages for the Modern Fire Environment." The study was on various nozzles and anti-kink hoses.

### Sergeant Ilie Fetelea

Sergeant Fetelea is a 23-year veteran of law enforcement and has served at the Allen Park Police Department since 2003. In July of 2020, he was promoted to road patrol shift sergeant. In addition to his responsibilities as sergeant, he is the department's Come Back Quick Response (QRT) coordinator, Peer Support coordinator, firearms instructor, armorer, member of the honor guard, citation board committee, and uniform committee. In December of 2021, Sergeant Fetelea was recognized as Sergeant of the Year by the Allen Park Police Department.

He has been married to his wife, Paulina, for 16 wonderful years and they are blessed with three daughters, Alexandria, Elizabeth, and Grace.

Sergeant Fetelea's research project was "How does the Allen Park Police Department establish a competitive and aggressive recruitment plan while retaining its new hires?" He also served as the class sergeant at arms.

### Sergeant Steven Segrest

Sergeant Segrest is 19-year law enforcement veteran who has served the Allen Park Police Department for the last 15 years. He was with the Ecorse Police Department for the four years prior. He currently serves as a firearms instructor, defense tactics, use of force, and field training officer. In addition, he serves as an instructor at both the Schoolcraft Police Academy and the MSP Undercover Narcotics School. Sergeant Segrest worked as an undercover narcotics detective with Michigan State Police Mobile Narcotics Enforcement Team, formerly known as DRANO, and still serves as an assistant team leader and sniper on the Downriver SWAT team.

Sergeant Segrest values his faith and



family, all of whom support him with his career in law enforcement. He is engaged to his fiancé, Brandie, and together they have four children – Jade, Gavin, Lily, and Makenna. He spends his time with family and friends and enjoys hunting, fishing, camping, and riding his Harley.

Sergeant Segrest's research project was "Allen Park Police Department Health and Wellness Program Fitness Standard." He also served as the class vice president.

Past participants in EMU's Schools of Police and Fire Staff and Command Executive Leadership Program:

- 2016 – Fire Chief Edward Cann
- 2017 – Police Chief Christopher Egan  
Police Lieutenant James Soden
- 2018 – Deputy Fire Chief Jeffery O'Riley  
Police Lieutenant Christopher Granica
- 2019 – Police Lieutenant William Mehall
- 2020 – Fire Captain Kenneth McLaurin  
Police Lieutenant Eron Feltz
- 2021 – Detective Zackary Nielsen

Thank you to all these police officers and firefighters for their commitment to improve the services to the residents of Allen Park.

# STATE-MANDATED CROSS-CONNECTION PROGRAM

## Helps Keep Drinking Water Clean and Safe

By Terry Jacoby

**U**NDER the Michigan Safe Drinking Water Act, the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) requires water utilities to have comprehensive cross connection programs for the elimination and prevention of all cross connections. The EGLE institutes rules to protect drinking water and to prevent cross connections that may contaminate public drinking water systems.

All communities are required to implement a program for removal of all existing cross connections and the prevention of all future cross connections.

"We want to emphasize the importance the whole community plays a part in keeping everyone's drinking water safe," said Allen Park Director of Public Service Tom Murray. "When a sprinkler system at a house doesn't have a working vacuum breaker it could allow contaminated water from the lawn to be back siphoned into the water supply and cause harm to others. This is one example of why this program is very important to our safe drinking water."

A cross connection is an arrangement of piping that could allow undesirable water, sewage, or chemical solutions to enter your drinking (potable) water system as a

result of back flow. Cross connections with potable piping systems have resulted in numerous cases of illness and even death in other parts of the country.

"The state mandated cross-connection program is set up to ensure that any potential contaminated water does not make it into our water system," said Michael O'Loughlin, water and sewer supervisor for Allen Park. "This has been in place for commercial buildings for more than 20 years and the residential program has been in place for over five years. The program is on a continuous three-year cycle (one-third of the city per year)."

Two of the things required for commercial and residential buildings are backflow devices on sprinkler systems and vacuum breakers on outside spigots.

The City Of Allen Park uses a third-party company, HydroCorp, to oversee the program. Inspections will be performed every three (3) years in different areas throughout the city. If a resident's area is subject to inspection, they will be informed one-to-two weeks prior by flyer from HydroCorp. After the inspection, if there are no repairs needed, there will be no action required. If improvements are needed, residents



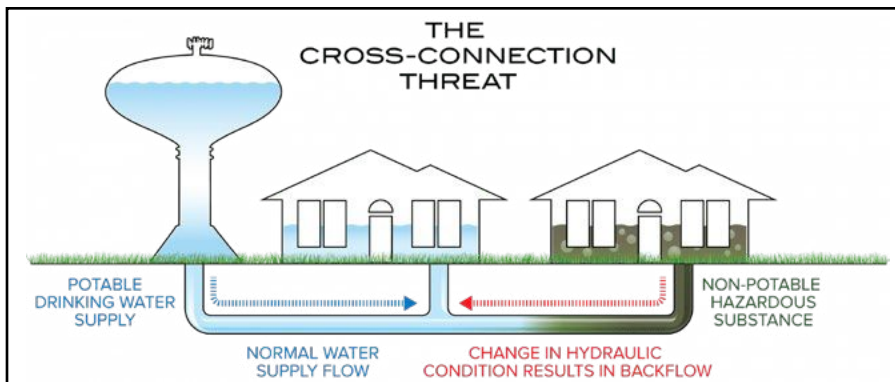
will be notified by mail.

The inspector also verifies that the needed vacuum breakers are installed on all spigots. Failure to comply with these state-mandated inspections will result in the water being shut off to that business or residential home until an inspection can be completed.

Here is an example on why these inspections are necessary.

Let's say you have a garden hose attached to your spigot and that hose is filling a swimming pool. Chemicals in that water can seep back up the hose and into a home's plumbing and from there back into the water main if there is a loss of pressure in the water distribution system. The vacuum breaker on the spigot will stop the water at that point, not allowing it to make it back into the house let alone our water system. Backflow prevention devices on sprinkler systems work the same way and stop any potential chemicals from fertilizers or other toxic material that may be on the grass from getting into the water system.

Contact HydroCorp at 844-HYDROINFO (493-7646), or [info@hydrocorpinc.com](mailto:info@hydrocorpinc.com). For more information on the law, go to Part 14 of the Michigan Safe Drinking Water Act. See page 203. EGLE has also published a Cross Connection Rules Manual.





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# Ours To Protect

## City's Water and Sewer Department does much to ensure residents have clean water, safe conditions

By Terry Jacoby

**T**HE City of Allen Park is responsible for the maintenance and oversight of 120 miles of water main and 130 miles of sanitary sewer lines. The Allen Park Water and Sewer Department's responsibilities include meter reading, meter repairs, sanitary sewer cleaning and closed-circuit television inspections, sanitary sewer repairs, storm sewer cleaning and repairs, house lead water line testing, catch basin repairs and cleaning, water main break repairs, fire hydrant maintenance and repair, pump station operations and maintenance.

"I feel it is our duty to distribute clean and safe water to our residents and the staff performs this role with pride," said Allen Park's Director of Public Service Tom Murray. "Our water and sewer employees come in to repair water and sewer breaks at all times of the night and on holidays to make sure our residents have the services they need. They work in some of the worst weather such as the one-degree weather over the Christmas weekend, when they were in the elements repairing over 12 water main breaks in that seven-day period. That is a dedicated work staff if you ask me. Putting others before their own families to provide that clean, safe water."

Murray also points out that without the city's water department, the fire department wouldn't have the means to fight a fire in an emergency.

"We need everyone to accomplish all the services our residents have come to expect," he said.

The Water Department is diligent in monitoring and getting the water tested to make sure they offer that product within the regulated standards. The staff is also trained and educated in many different parameters of offering this service to its residents.

"We have several staff members who are licensed and recognized by the State of Michigan in the operational standards of this line of work," Murray said.

Michael O'Loughlin is the City of Allen Park's water and sewer supervisor. The department currently has 10 full-time employees.

*Allen Park DPS employees (from left to right): Justin McLaughlin, Joshua Stewart, Andrew Lozon, Dalton Bachman, Seven Lozon, Eric Ostrander, and Mike Pierfederici.*

"Our two main responsibilities are to provide safe drinking water to all the citizens and ensure the Allen Park Fire Department has the water that it needs to fight fires," O'Loughlin said. "The most challenging part of our job would be responding to emergency water main breaks and fixing them in a timely manner to get residents' water back."

Daily responsibilities include:

- Replacing resident's old water meters with new ones.
- Miss Dig markings. "This is when a company is going to be doing underground work in the city and we must go to that area and mark with paint or flags where our storm, sewer and water lines run in that area so the company does not hit them while digging," O'Loughlin said.
- Commercial and residential sewer cleaning with the Gap Vac machine. This is done by jetting a line with high pressure water to clean any debris that may be in the line.
- Checking the condition of storm and sewer lines. This is done using a camera with wheels, which is lowered into a storm or sanitary line and then driven forward so they can see what is happening in the lines.
- Repairing and replacing residential water shutoff. These are usually located in front of a house or business. "We dig or hydro excavate down into the ground, usually six, feet deep and make





the repair to ensure it works properly in case an emergency shut off is needed," O'Loughlin said.

- Repairing and rebuilding catch basins on the streets to allow water from rain and melting snow not to pool up in the streets. This will allow for better flow to storm lines in the ground.
- Taking quarterly and yearly water samples that are required by the state and federal agencies. "One of these tests is lead and copper water testing to see if there are any residential lead or copper service lines that are above the state limits," O'Loughlin said. "We have a list of houses that have been verified as having lead service lines in the city and we test those houses on the list every year."

Allen Park, as a member of the Alliance of Downriver Watershed (ADW), has been formally and informally working together for several years to manage the area's water resources on a local and watershed basis to comply with federal regulations regarding the discharge of storm water. The city, along with the other entities within the Ecorse Creek Watershed, applied for National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit coverage under Michigan's Phase II Storm Water regulations. These regulations require certain "small" municipal separate storm sewer system entities to obtain a storm water permit. An initial requirement of the permit was the development of a



comprehensive Watershed Management Plan.

For information about the ADW and to view the Ecorse Creek Storm Water Management Plan please visit: <https://www.allianceofdownriverwatersheds.com/initiatives>

Wayne County Water Quality Management Division (WQMD) maintains a telephone hotline (888-223-2363) to log and coordinate response to environmental concerns of all types. The WQMD routinely receives and responds to pollution complaints from citizens, county agency staff and/or local communities either directly in the office (313-928-0550) or via referrals from the WCDOE Hotline.

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Monroe Chapel  
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Ford Chapel  
23620 N. Huron River Dr, Rockwood

Liedel Chapel  
9061 Raisin St, Maybee



Mika Wright



Ryan Wahl



Mckenzie Drysdale



Derek Welker



Tom Trouten

# SPRING IS IN THE AIR

## Information for property owners

**A**s the weather gets warmer and we start thinking about spring projects, let's work together to keep the city of Allen Park looking beautiful, safe and clean.

The following is helpful information from our Building and Code Enforcement Departments:



### Sidewalks

Property owners are responsible for maintaining the sidewalk between their property and the public right-of-way (city easement) – regardless of the cause. It is considered a hazard if a slab is raised three quarters of an inch high between slabs. Property owners will receive notification to repair this code violation within a given timeframe, otherwise, the City will repair/replace what is necessary at the property owner's expense.

Please keep bushes and trees trimmed so they do not obstruct sidewalks.

### Grass and compost

As spring rolls in and the grass starts to grow, please keep in mind



that grass height cannot be taller than six inches. This code must be maintained or the City will cut the grass at the homeowner's expense. Compost and leaf collection starts Monday, April 3. Residents are responsible for bagging or using properly marked containers. These items must be put on the city easement close to the street for GFL Environmental to pick up on your scheduled day. It is a code violation to blow your grass and leaves into the street.



### Trash and recycle carts

Trash and recycling carts can be put on the city easement the night before or by 7 a.m. of your scheduled pick up day. Carts must be at least four feet apart so the truck arms can reach each carts. Carts that remain on the easement outside of this noted timeframe is a code violation. Carts must also be stored so they cannot be seen from the street or sidewalk.

It is a violation to park cars on the street on trash pick-up day. This is so street sweepers (and snow plows in the winter) can maintain their route schedule. New signs will be installed shortly to reflect time changes for restricted parking on trash days. The new signs will prohibit parking between the hours of 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.

### Rats and nuisance animals

To discourage rats and other nuisance animals, please follow these guidelines. Not following them can result in a ticket.

- Enclose garbage or pet food containers with a tight lid.

**GFL Environmental:** (844) 464-3587  
**Building Department:** (313) 928-4441  
**Code Enforcement:** (313) 928-5363



- Clean up pet droppings daily and do not leave pet food out overnight.
- Ground feeding animals is prohibited. Bird and squirrel feeders must be at least 48 inches off the ground. Do not overfill them, and keep the area clean and tidy.
- Keep grass shorter than six inches and bushes trimmed away from the ground.
- Wood piles, lumber, building material, boxes should be at least 18 inches above the ground.
- Remove any unused yard furniture or debris that can be used as harborage.
- Address any rodent holes in your yard or storage shelters.

### Other helpful information

- Garages & Sheds – A permit is required from the Building Department in order to install garages or sheds.
- Signs – Permanent or temporary signs are not allowed on the city easement. Permanent or temporary signs require a permit from the Building Department.
- Certificate Of Occupancy (C of O) – A certificate is required for home sale and new businesses.
- Recreational Vehicle Or Boat – A recreational vehicle or boat cannot be stored in a driveway longer than 48 consecutive hours. A permit can be obtained from the Building Department for a longer period of no more than 12 consecutive days in a row.



# PUBLIC NOTICE TO CUT WEEDS AND TALL GRASS

**T**O the owners, agents or occupants of any lots or parcel of land in the city of Allen Park, you are hereby notified:

- All noxious weeds and tall grass (grass longer than six [6] inches) growing on any lot or parcel of land, in the city of Allen Park, Wayne County, Michigan, must be cut down and destroyed. Then and thereafter cut on a regular basis to prevent re-growth of said weeds and tall grass. City of Allen Park Code, Section 16-119, et. seq.
- You are further notified that beginning May 1, 2023
- that all noxious weeds and tall grass not cut shall be cut by the City of Allen Park as many times as is necessary to keep any lot or parcel in compliance with the ordinance and the cost thereof shall be charged to the property owner and shall become a lien upon the land and collected in the same manner as general property taxes against the land. City of Allen Park Code, Section 16-125.
- In addition, the failure to comply with the requirements to destroy noxious weeds and tall grass may subject you to prosecution – you shall be liable for a fine not to exceed \$100.00, plus the cost of abatement by the city listed below.
- Failure to comply with this notice shall make the owner, occupant or person having charge of said lot or parcel of land liable for the cost of each cutting and destroying same and debris removal charge of \$325.00 plus a \$75.00 administration fee per lot or parcel of land for each cutting and shall be charged and collected against the property in the manner provided by law, in addition to any other penalty provided by law. City of Allen Park Code, Section 16-126.

This notice per Ord. 02-2013, Allen Park Code

Michael I. Mizzi, City Clerk

## ALLEN PARK 2022 RESIDENTIAL SALES QUARTERLY REPORT

The figures below reflect residential sales for each quarter beginning with the last quarter of 2021 and ending with the final quarter of 2022.

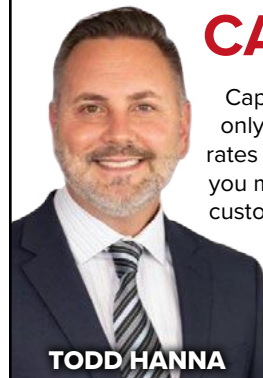
### 2022 RESIDENTIAL SALES QUARTERLY REPORT

Date	# Homes Sold	Average Sales Price	Change From Prior Year
10/1/2021 - 12/31/2021	164	\$202,222	+ \$19,146
1/1/2022 - 3/31/2022	119	\$168,499	- \$33,723
4/1/2022 - 6/30/2022	142	\$209,265	+ \$40,766
7/1/2022 - 9/30/2022	103	\$194,983	- \$14,282
10/1/2022 - 12/31/2022	83	\$175,972	- \$19,011



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# Relax AND Recreate

Allen Park is aptly named, with 19 parks waiting to serve you

By Terry Jacoby

**H**AVING the word “park” in the city’s name is only fitting, considering that Allen Park features an amazing 19 parks spread throughout the 7.1 miles of city property.

The city, with the help of Wayne County, has been able to not only maintain these great parks but continually upgrade and improve them.

One recent example is Brier Rabbit Tot-Lot, located south of Wick between Chatham and Melbourne. In 2020, Brier Rabbit received a new play structure with cushioned safety tiles.

“We will continue our collaboration with local, county, state and federal agencies to improve upon our parks and other amenities by applying for grants that will allow us to upgrade our facilities and parks,” said Parks and Recreation Director Rob Fulton. “Wayne County has been an integral part of improving our park equipment. These grants have been a part of every park improvement except Duda/Kiwanis. And our goal is to use these Wayne County grants to replace playground equipment and safety surfacing for the remainder of the parks with very old equipment.”

		BALL FIELD	BASKETBALL	FITNESS TRACK	INLINE HOCKEY	PICNIC SHELTER	SHELTER PERMIT	PLAY EQUIP.	PUBLIC PARKING	RESTROOMS	SOCCER FIELD	TENNIS COURT	VOLLEYBALL POSTS
1	BOCCABELLA MEMORIAL PARK	X				X		X					
2	THOMAS BRAND MEMORIAL PARK	X	X			X		X					
3	BRIER RABBIT TOT-LOT							X					
4	CHAMPAIGN PARK	X			X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
5	CHURCH/TELLER PARK	X						X	X				
6	COMMUNITY/JAYCEE PARK	X		.31 MI				X	X			X	
7	CUNNINGHAM MEMORIAL PARK	X				X	X	X	X	X	X		X
8	GINGER BREAD TOT-LOT							X					
9	GINGHAM DOG TOT-LOT					X		X					
10	JACK ROURKE TOT-LOT							X					
11	HAROLD N. DUDA MEMORIAL/KIWANIS PARK							X					
12	HUMPTY DUMPTY TOT-LOT							X					
13	JOHN F. KENNEDY MEMORIAL PARK	X		.25 MI		X		X					
14	MILLWARD ROTARY PARK	X	X	.27 MI		X	X	X	X	X	X		
15	GEORGE MOORE PARK							X					
16	PRETTY FAMILY PARK	X						X					
17	JOHN RIEL MEMORIAL PARK	X		.29 MI		X	X	X	X	X			
18	SUDMAN PARK							X					
19	SUGAR PLUM TOT-LOT					X		X					

Wayne County Parks millage. This was the first Community Build project by the city, with installation from Allen Park Citizen’s Civic Fund members, Lowe’s employees, city employees and residents.

## Thomas Brand Memorial Park

Located at Paris and Laurence, Thomas Brand Memorial Park includes a basketball court, ball field, barbecue, and play equipment. This park is scheduled for an upgrade within the next few years. It is also the site of the future Allen Park Vietnam Memorial and Beyond, recognizing all branches of the military that gave the ultimate sacrifice.



## Boccabella Memorial Park

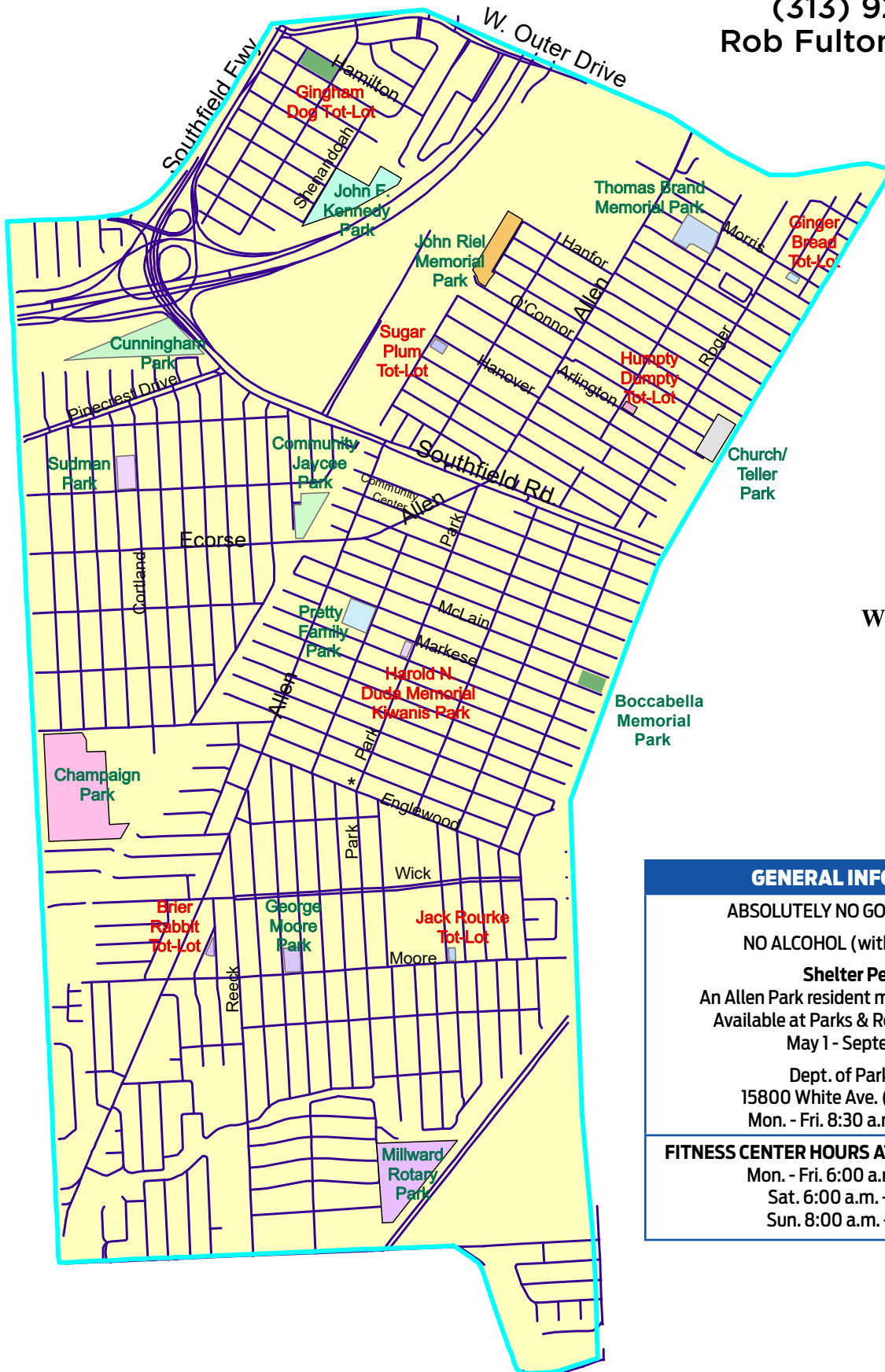
Located east of Rosedale between Regina and McLain, Boccabella Memorial Park includes a ballfield, picnic shelter and play equipment. A new play structure and small shelter was installed in 2016 and funded by the





# Allen Park Parks and Recreation PARKS AND AMENITIES

(313) 928-0771  
Rob Fulton - Director



## GENERAL INFORMATION

**ABSOLUTELY NO GOLF OR VEHICLES**

**NO ALCOHOL** (without a permit)

### Shelter Permits:

An Allen Park resident must apply in person.

Available at Parks & Rec. for a fee of \$50

May 1 - September 30

Dept. of Parks & Rec.

15800 White Ave. (313) 928-0771

Mon. - Fri. 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

## FITNESS CENTER HOURS AT COMMUNITY CENTER

Mon. - Fri. 6:00 a.m. - 9:30 p.m.

Sat. 6:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Sun. 8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

*Parks continued on page 22*





Brier Rabbit Tot-Lot (left) and Community Park (right).

**Parks** continued from page 21

### Brier Rabbit Tot-Lot

Located south of Wick between Chatham and Melbourne, Brier Rabbit includes play equipment. Brier Rabbit received a new play structure in 2020 with cushioned safety tiles. This a “must see and walk on”.

### Champaign Park

Located south of Champaign and east of Pelham, Champaign Park includes tennis courts, an inline hockey rink, barbecue, two shelters, play equipment, restrooms, volleyball court and public parking. In 2017, Champaign Park received a new play structure and was also a Community Build project. All of the participants from Boccabella participated, along with students from Allen Park High School and Baker College. The park also hosts numerous Concerts in the Park, baseball and softball tournaments, and Allen Park High School baseball and softball games.



### Church Teller Field

Located east of Roger between Euclid and Arlington, Church Teller Park includes a ball field, basketball court, play equipment and public parking. One of four parks that received new play equipment in 2015.



### Community Jaycee Park

Located east of Gahona between Philomene and Ecorse, Community Jaycee Park includes tennis courts, a walking track, two shelters, barbecue, play equipment and public parking. The park hosts many summer “Lemonade in the Shade” events.



### Cunningham Memorial Park

Located north of Pinecrest between Southfield and Buckingham, Cunningham Park includes a ball field, picnic shelter, restrooms, barbecue, play equipment, public





parking, soccer field and volleyball court. It's also home of the Allen Park Bulldogs. Grant applications continue to be submitted for an "inclusive" playground for children of all abilities.

### Ginger Bread Tot Lot

Located west of Wall between Morris and College, Ginger Bread Tot Lot includes play equipment. The tot lot is part of the 2023 playground improvement plan that will include cushioned safety tiles.

### Gingham Dog Tot Park

Located north of Cicotte and west of Larme, Gingham Dog Tot Park includes play equipment, barbecue and picnic shelter.

### Harold N. Duda Memorial/Kiwanis Park and Frankie Toth Memorial Playground

Located west of Park between Thomas and Markese, Duda/Kiwanis Park includes play equipment designed for young children and children with all abilities. Allen Park Kiwanis provided new equipment and a poured-in-place rubber surface in 2015, as well as providing the labor to sandblast and repaint the older equipment in 2016. This park has long been known as "Barney Park" for the Barney slide.

### Humpty Dumpty Tot Lot

Located east of Laurence north of Arlington, Humpty Dumpty Tot Lot includes play equipment. Humpty Dumpty is the first park the city to install cushioned safety tiles. It's been a success and has since become the safety standard. The new play structure and safety tiles were installed in 2019 as a Community Build project.

### John F. Kennedy Memorial Park

Located east of Shenandoah between Euclid and Anne, John F. Kennedy Memorial Park includes walking tracks, barbecue, picnic shelter and play equipment. Another one of the four parks to receive new play equipment in 2015, the city was awarded a grant in 2021 to expand the play structure and install cushioned safety tiles. Pandemic and supply chain issues have moved the completion to 2022.

### Millward Rotary Park

Located east of Park between Rose and Goddard, Millward Rotary Park includes a ball field, walking tracks, basketball court, barbecue, picnic shelter, restrooms, parking and soccer field. A completely 100-percent recycled play

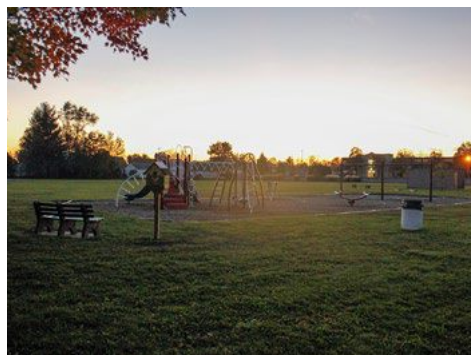
*Parks continued on page 24*



structure was installed in 2016 and the baseball field was renovated to accommodate play for older youth. It was also the location of the first Concert in the Park, which featured an ensemble from the Detroit Symphony Orchestra.

### Moore Park

Located north of Moore between Carter and Becker, Moore Park includes play equipment and is a host site for Summer Mobile Recreation.



### Pretty Family Park

Located west of Quandt and south of Regina, Pretty Family Park includes a completely renovated diamond and dugouts, as well as an enclosed fence. This was able to happen with funds from APAC, Allen Park Public Schools and Parks and Recreation. It's also another one of the four parks that received play equipment in 2015.



### John Riel Memorial Park

Located west of Arno between Hanfor and O'Connor, John Riel Memorial Park includes a ball field, an inline hockey rink, walking track, restroom, barbecue and a picnic shelter. Riel Park received new playground equipment prior to 2015 and is home to one of the annual Concerts in the Park.

### John J. Jack Rourke Family Park

Formerly Hansel & Gretel Park, John J. Jack Rourke Family Park is located north of Moore between Fox and Laurence and includes play equipment.



### Sudman Park

Located north of Philomene between Kolb and Cortland, Sudman Park includes a basketball court, barbecue and play equipment. The fourth of four parks receiving playground equipment in 2015, it's also a host site for Summer Mobile Recreation.

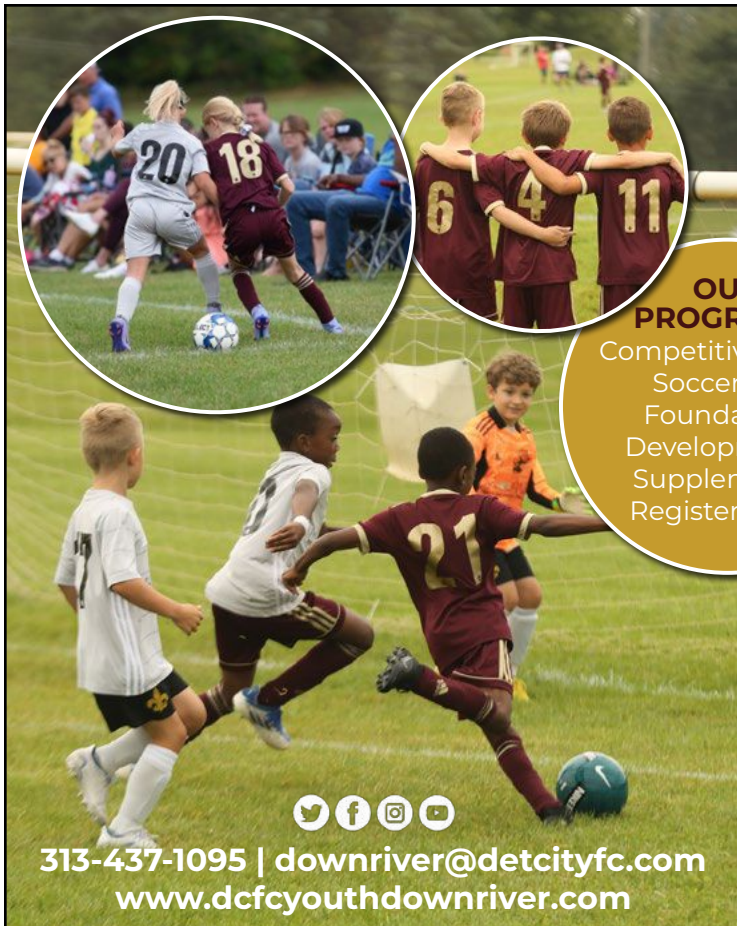
### Sugar Plum Tot Lot

Located east of Arno and south of Hanover, Sugar Plum Tot Lot includes a picnic shelter and play equipment. New playground equipment was installed prior to 2015.



John Riel Memorial Park.







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# 'A GREAT ATMOSPHERE HERE'

## New Parks and Recreation leadership brings improvements, new programs

By Angela Calabrese

**T**HERE'S some new leadership at the Allen Park Parks and Recreation Department. Led by Director Rob Fulton, he's joined by Operations Manager Kyle Kar and Facilities Manager Evan Taylor. All three men take their jobs seriously but have fun doing it.

They are all excited about the improvements happening this year at some of the city's parks, specifically the changes at the Ginger Bread Tot Lot.

The department worked in collaboration with Allen Park Department of Public Services to implement such changes as getting rid of the old play equipment and installing an ADA-accessible playground with 20 different activities to keep kids of all abilities entertained.

"There's so many things to do there," Fulton said. "We want our parks to fuel kids' imaginations."

And since the city is moving away from using wood chips as a play surface, the park will be outfitted with a rubberized surface, three-to-four inches thick.

"Safety is always our biggest concern," Fulton said.

Other improvements include replacing the scoreboard on diamonds two and three at Champaign Park. Meanwhile at Kennedy Park, residents can welcome new play equipment along with a recreation and sledding hill.

Improvements to the parks are made possible by the Wayne County Parks



Millage and grants from the Wayne County Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program.

Fulton added they are also working on redoing the Blue Star Monument at Champaign Park, which is possible through a grant.

### New leadership backgrounds

Fulton, who's originally from Metro Detroit's east side, has been a resident of Allen Park for 35 years, and has worked

for the City for 10 years. But that wasn't his original plan.

"I swore I would never work in city government," he said. "But after starting out part-time, it started chipping away at me and ultimately became a good fit."

Before becoming director, he served as deputy director. He relishes living close to where he works, making it easier to be on hand when issues arise.

"I'm only a mile-and-a-half from the office," he said.

Operations Manager Kyle Kar grew up in Taylor but went to school at Cabrini. He also worked for Cabrini before coming to the City of Allen Park. His duties as operations manager include managing many of the department's daily tasks – anything from



From left to right: Operations Manager Kyle Kar, Facilities Manager Evan Taylor and Director Rob Fulton.



creating the staff schedules to making sure the department's processes are streamlined and efficient.

He works alongside Taylor to make sure everything is ready.

Taylor, as the facilities manager, is the most "hands on" of the group. He does everything from changing the blade on the Zamboni to ordering supplies for concessions and taking care of the fitness equipment.

He grew up in Garden City and went to school there until high school, when he transferred to Cabrini. He graduated in 2020.

Taylor became aware of the position at the Parks and Recreation Department from when he was on Cabrini's hockey team, who use the ice arena in Allen Park. In his sophomore year, he started working part-time at the arena, and the rest is history.

"I started working here and I loved it and wanted to continue," he said.

Taylor balances his full-time position at the City with his studies at Schoolcraft College, where he's going to school for business administration.

### Much to do with a lean team

The Parks and Recreation Department is responsible not only for the 70,000-square-foot Community Center building, but also for the 19 parks and 13 ballparks in the community, along with running the senior transportation program.

It's a lot to handle for the three-man team, who, out of a staff of 48 people, are the only full-timers. Fulton said he's grateful for the city administration's support, along with the collaboration they have with other departments.

"We have a great atmosphere here," he said.

Since the leadership transition there have been other welcome changes.

"We now offer more senior programs, and trips outside the community," Fulton said.

Having their offices at the Community Center is helpful in other ways (besides being close to home).

"We're more engaged with each other and the community," Fulton said. "We recognize immediate needs and address them. We try and do our best."

Residents looking to add their two cents can interact with the men of the Parks and Recreation Department Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. You have a decent chance of finding at least some of them on hand in the evenings as well.

They are ready and willing to hear residents' suggestions on programming and more.

"We listen openly to the people who use the facilities and then prioritize," Fulton said.

For more information on Parks and Recreation's program, events, parks and more, go to <https://www.cityofallenpark.org/Services-Departments/Parks-Recreation.aspx> or visit their Facebook page.

# City Earns Grant for Park War Memorial Projects

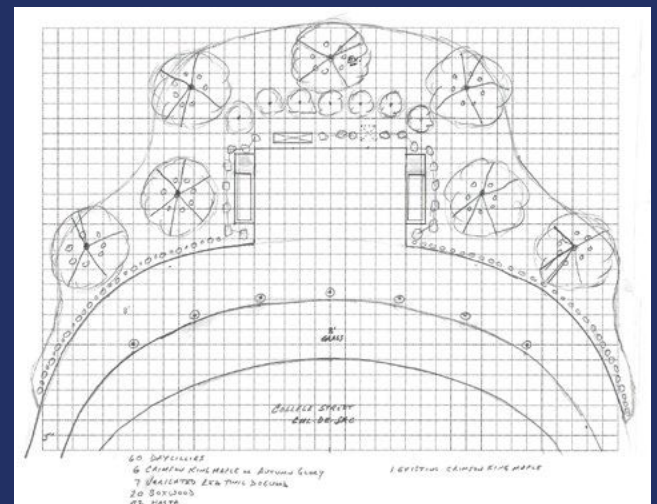
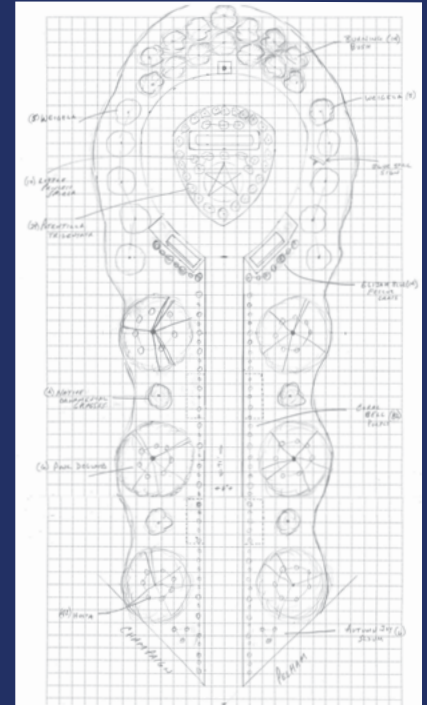
In the December edition of the *Allen Park Today* magazine, it was reported that the City had submitted a \$25,000 grant application to the Canadian National (CN) Railroad's CN EcoConnexions Grant/America In Bloom program for the Brand Park Vietnam Veterans and Beyond Memorial and the Champaign Park Blue Star Memorial projects. We are very

pleased to announce that the City was awarded the \$25,000 grant!

Approximately \$9,980 of the grant award will be allocated toward the Brand Park Vietnam Veterans and Beyond Memorial project's estimated cost of \$44,330. The remaining grant funds of \$15,020 will be allocated to the Champaign Park Blue Star

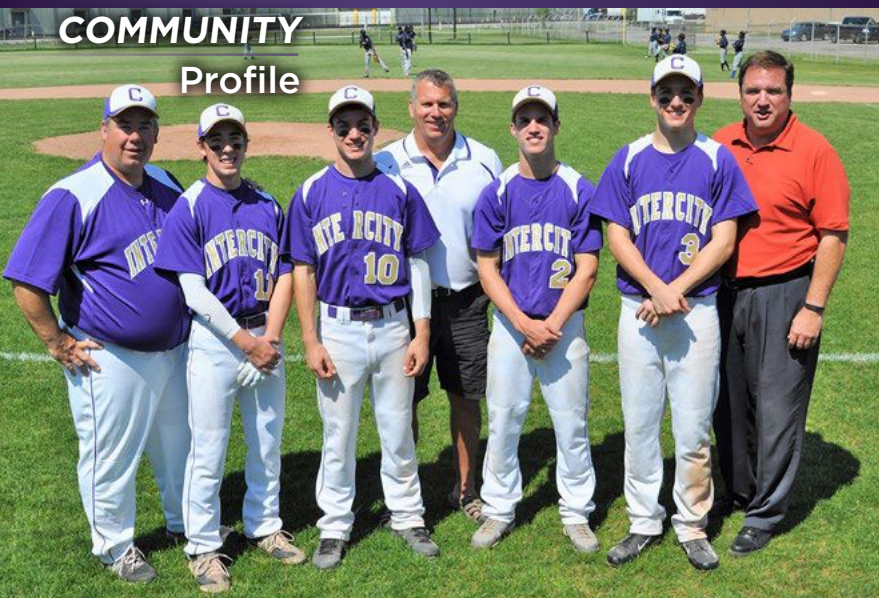
Memorial, which has an estimated cost of \$38,462. Construction is slated to start after July 1, 2023.

Donations for the Vietnam Veterans and Beyond Memorial and the Champaign Park Blue Star Memorial are being accepted at the Allen Park Parks and Recreation Department, 15800 White Avenue, Allen Park 48101.





## COMMUNITY Profile



# A Good Foundation

Former standout athletes, now coaches, look back at Inter-City Baptist's successes

By Dave Gorgon

**I**n the mid-1980s, Mark Kraatz, Tracy Fressel, Brad Myles and their teammates put Inter-City Baptist on the Michigan high school sports map with state championships in varsity soccer and basketball.

Forty years later, Kraatz, Fressel and Myles remain connected to the small Allen Park Christian school. Along the way, they coached their sons and the

sons' classmates to athletic success and now they coach alongside them on the basketball court.

As March Madness – the Michigan High School Athletic Association state tournament in basketball – was about to commence, Kraatz was guiding Inter-City's boys varsity basketball team with sons Evan and Garrett on



Mark Kraatz celebrating the winning goal (left) by jumping into the arms of Fressel and teammates in the state championship game in 1983 and in an article (above right) with sons Evan and Garrett.



Above left: Brad Myles (left), Travis Myles, Garrett Kraatz, Mark Kraatz, Evan Kraatz, Brady Fressel and Tracy Fressel in March 2013.

his coaching staff. Evan has succeeded his father as the school's athletic director.

Myles, now the fire chief in Woodhaven, is an assistant coach on the varsity girls team. His son Travis is head coach of the team and his sister Lori is another assistant. Lori also used to coach the school's softball team.

Fressel, who has been a pastor at Inter-City Baptist for 34 years, is in his second year of coaching the school's junior varsity boys basketball team. Son Brady, who played back in the day with the Kraatz boys and Travis Myles, was an assistant coach last season before stepping away due to work commitments. Fressel's wife and high school sweetheart Marcia is the team scorekeeper.

While the lengthy connection between people and Inter-City Baptist may seem amazing, those who have been close to the program are not surprised. Bob Curry coached soccer at Inter-City for 10 years, was head coach of the 1983 and 1984 state soccer champs and came back to assist Kraatz and the volleyball program years later. When Curry



thinks of the names associated with the school and its sports program, he thinks of dedication.

"They've invested a lot of their lives to the people," said Curry, who continues to live in Allen Park. "I've always felt that with this group, it's more than just the win-loss record and more than just the championships. They were invested in each other."

Inter-City Baptist, located at 4700 Allen Road, first hit sports paydirt when Mark Kraatz enrolled at the school. Kraatz's father Jim had been Inter-City's first basketball coach. Mark started playing junior varsity basketball when he was in the eighth grade and was earning varsity honors by the time he was a freshman. Before he graduated, Kraatz had played for two state championship soccer teams in 1983 and 1984 and one state championship basketball team in 1985, plus numerous league and playoff titles. He earned 12 varsity letters and All-State recognition in all three of his sports, including baseball, was a McDonald's All-American his senior year and All-Midwest in soccer his junior and senior years. He even was featured in Sports Illustrated's "Faces in the Crowd" section when he broke a national record for assists in a basketball game with 23.

"We were like 'Hoosiers,'" Kraatz said, referring to the famous movie about a small high school basketball team that upsets a powerhouse team in Indiana. "No one knew who we were. The public schools didn't want to play the Christian schools, but people always liked playing in our little gym. We'd pack it out. To this day, we still have better crowds with one-tenth of the enrollment."

Kraatz gives credit to his teammates.

"I would not have had the success I had if not for them," he said.

Kraatz would go on to play college basketball, first at Illinois State University, before transferring to San Diego Christian College, where he became a two-time All-American while playing for his high school coach, Ray Slagle, who had moved into the college ranks.

After graduating, Kraatz would return to Inter-City to teach, coach and serve as athletic director. Now working as EVP of Global Sales at Jackson Dawson, Kraatz is in his 34th year of coaching. He even calls a basketball play named "Slagle" in honor of his old coach. He coached four state championship teams in soccer, giving him seven state titles in all, including the three as a player. He was national soccer coach of the year in 2001 and 2005.

Kraatz is also a member of several halls of fame – most recently, the Michigan Soccer Coaches Association Hall of Fame, with his 550 coaching wins. He and Curry are members of the Allen Park Sports Hall of Fame.

"Coaching my children was my greatest joy," he said.

Tracy Fressel remembers being driven daily by his parents from their home in Novi to the school in northern Allen Park starting in the sixth grade.

"There's something special that Inter-City has that my

family wanted to be part of," he said. "There is a uniqueness here. The place means a lot to us."

Brad Myles, whose parents were married at Inter-City, was a member of three straight state soccer championship teams. A year younger than Kraatz and Fressel, he also played for the 1985 state champs and was also a three-sport star. Like Fressel, Myles graduated from Bob Jones University. He has been a member of the Woodhaven Fire Department for 26 years.

"Whatever we do here, we do it well," Myles said.

"Music, sports, academics – they all prepared me well for college."



Above left: Head Coach Mark Kraatz (center) with sons and assistant coaches Evan (left) and Garrett. Above right: Girls varsity Head Coach Travis Myles (center) with sister Lori and dad Brad. Bottom: Tracy Fressel, who played with Mark Kraatz and Brad Myles and still coaches the junior varsity.

Jim Kraatz said he is thankful that the boys he watched grow into men had a great experience at Inter-City along the way.

"I knew my children would get a good education and a good Christian foundation," he said. "I knew they would be around good people. I've been here since the mid-1960s. We had a solid group of people who were dedicating to serving the children and teaching them right."

Marcia Fressel, who played basketball and softball during her high school days, said her family will always be connected to Inter-City Baptist.

"We love it here," she said. "It's definitely home."



# Earth Day Cleanup

## Beautification Committee seeks volunteers to help keep city looking good

By Diane Gale Andreassi

*"To leave the world better than you found it, sometimes you have to pick up other people's trash."*

– Bill Nye

**T**HAT kind of logic is what motivates the Allen Park Beautification Commission to host Good Neighbor Saturday, April 22 – Earth Day – 10 a.m. to noon. Volunteers will meet at Allen Park High School, where groups will be assigned work locations and will be given trash bags and gloves. Everyone is invited.

### Looking to help?

There were 30 volunteers last year and Commission chairperson Cathy Collier is hoping for more in 2023. Lowe's will return as a partner by providing supplies and employees.

"A lot of credit has to go to (vice chairperson) Kyle Waligora, who organized the event's debut last year and he is back this year," Collier said. "We really want to encourage students of all ages – even adults – to come out and participate and earn volunteer hours while at the same time helping to clean up their community."

If you can't make the Earth Day cleanup, keep in mind there will be other cleanup events throughout the year. Look for announcements on the Beautification Commission's Facebook page at City of Allen Park Beautification Commission and the city's homepage at [cityofallenpark.org](http://cityofallenpark.org).

Two new volunteers, Allen Park High School senior Gisele Ford and Joshua Hancock, a Cabrini High School junior, were added to the fold after Mayor Gail McLeod launched a program inviting juniors and seniors to apply to be student commissioners for city commissions. Commission member Maureen Stauder serves as their mentor.



### Flowerbed adoptions

On another front, last year the Commission was approached by the City to begin running a new Adopt-A-Flowerbed program, where residents and businesses are responsible for planting, fertilizing, weeding, watering and maintaining flowerbeds at the Allen Park entry sites and on Allen, Pinecrest and Wick roads.



"Beautification Commission member Don Graham took on the huge responsibility of getting the program organized and up and running," Collier said.

Flowers should be planted no later than June 15 and removed no later than November 15. Artificial flowers and plants, garden ornaments and structures, or advertisements are not permitted.

"The volunteers who adopted the flowerbeds last year did a fantastic job," Collier said.

Anyone interested in adopting a flowerbed in 2023 should contact the Beautification Commission at (313) 386-7302 or [allenparkbc@gmail.com](mailto:allenparkbc@gmail.com).

### 2023 Beautification Awards

The commission will begin accepting nominations for residential and business Beautification Awards beginning June 1. This is a chance to recognize the people who go above and beyond. Winners will be announced in July. The awards, which include a lawn sign and certificate, are presented at a city council meeting in late summer.

In another effort to show appreciation to residents and businesses who work hard to make their properties beautiful, Beautification Commission member Ed Wurtzbacher has developed and designed a new program this year. The commission will begin handing out "Thank You" business cards to those people contributing to the city's beautification.

The Beautification Commission meets the third Wednesday of every month at 6:30 p.m. in the City Hall conference room. Everyone is welcome to attend.





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# Holding Their Own

## Female wrestlers don't let gender define them on the mat

By Terry Jacoby

**J**AKE Chapman stood off to the side of the wrestling mat minutes before his Allen Park wrestling team began practicing and talked about three outstanding and dedicated athletes on a team loaded with outstanding and dedicated athletes.

The Jaguars, who the week before pinned down a team district title, have three female wrestlers on their roster. The girls, two freshmen and a sophomore, wrestle against females from other schools but also occasionally take the mat against boys.

When these three very special young ladies arrive to practice, they are no longer girls. They are wrestlers. They are Jaguars. And they – and their coach – wouldn't have it any other way.

"They are all tough and never ask for any special treatment," Chapman said. "They work just as hard if not harder than anyone else. They do whatever needs to be done to help the team and are really remarkable athletes and teammates. They are hard workers and very talented. The two freshmen wrestlers have older brothers on the team so I've known about them since they were in middle school."

The two freshmen are Alyssa Campbell and Brynna Alwell. The sophomore is Adeline Tuccini.

"From time to time we do wrestle-offs and they participate in those and all three do very well," Chapman

said. "They also don't have any problem wrestling against boys in the varsity lineup when we need them to step up. They are tough enough for me to trust them in certain situations if we need to bump someone up in a weight class where we can plug one of them in and they will more than hold their own."

All three have wrestled – and beaten – boys.

"Adeline wrestled a boy who was ranked in the top 10 in the state and not only didn't get pinned but gave him a battle for six minutes," Chapman said. "And last year, she wrestled on our varsity lineup all year and was extremely hard to pin. And that can be a huge difference where you are giving up only three points instead of six."

Tuccini, a sophomore, is the veteran of the three but shrugs off any suggestions that she has been a mentor to the two freshmen.

"No, they have both been wrestling longer than me so they knew what they were doing before they even got here," said Tuccini, who takes an impressive and successful approach to wrestling. "I like wrestling because it's an individual sport. I like having my own wins and my own losses and knowing what I did wrong so I can fix it."

So, how did she get interested in wrestling?

"My little brothers (two at the middle school and one in elementary school) started wrestling so I decided to wrestle, too," she said.

Tuccini, who wrestles at 125 pounds, continued this year to fill in on the varsity lineup when needed. "It's very nerve-racking wrestling on the varsity because everyone is expecting you to lose," she said. "The goal really is to not get pinned. You don't want to give up six points so you need to be at least competitive."

The girls events are more individual matches and not team events like the boys varsity schedule.

*Freshman Alyssa Campbell (left), sophomore Adeline Tuccini (center) and freshman Brynna Alwell (right) are all members of the Allen Park wrestling team.*







When asked if she planned on wrestling the next two years at Allen Park, Tuccini didn't hesitate for one second. "Definitely," she said. "I love it."

Campbell also loves it.

"I started wrestling with my older brother (senior Jacob Campbell), who also is on our Allen Park team this year," she said. "I've learned a lot from him. He helps me with all aspects of wrestling including a lot of my moves. He's really good."

Her brother must have taught her well. Campbell wrestled at 110 pounds for the Jaguars and was undefeated late in the season in all of her matches. "We wrestle against both boys and girls and I've won all my matches against both except one girl in a higher weight class," Campbell said.

Campbell is coming off a serious injury which she admits is often in

the back of her mind when she takes the mat. "I broke my collarbone last year and it was really scary," she said. "I broke it wrestling so it can be a little nerve-racking at times when I am out there competing."

Still, she carries on and plans on continuing her wrestling career next year and beyond. "I really like it," she said. "It's my main sport."

It's also freshman Brynna Alwell's main sport. And like Campbell, she has a brother (Gryphon, a junior) on the Allen Park varsity team.

"I started wrestling after my brother started," she said. "I really liked it and have stayed with it ever since. I've learned a lot from him. It takes a lot of time and commitment to do this sport and it takes mistakes to learn."

Learning and getting better are big reasons why Alwell likes the sport.

"I like the intensity of wrestling," said Alwell, who wrestles at 140 pounds and also plays softball. "I like moving and discovering new and better ways of doing things. It's going pretty good this season. I have more wins than losses."

But the losses are just as important as the wins.

"When I lose I like to stay down for a minute and think of why I lost," she said. "It's important to understand why you lost so it hopefully doesn't happen again."

Sounds like a solid approach to the sport – and to life.

*This Page Sponsored By*



# FINDING HER *Passion*

## Teen adds self-published book to busy schedule

By Diane Gale Andreassi

**A**MANDA Abraham isn't your typical 11th grade student. She sets herself apart with a long list of intense extracurricular activities and volunteer work. On top of that she recently self-published a book, "Dear Writing," a compilation of letters to the art of writing, a journey she takes in hopes of clarification and answers to her daily thoughts, activities and problems.

Abraham said she's gotten positive feedback from people of all ages. The book was published by Writer's Republic and released in December 2022.

"There's no particular audience," she said. "I think anyone can read it, get something from it and relate to it."

The 16-year-old first-time author has a full schedule attending Allen Park High School and is dual enrolled at Henry Ford College. She manages to participate in trampoline practice and competition, even though the gym is three hours from her home – a trip she makes two or three times a week.

If that's not busy enough she is a tumbling and recreational gymnastics coach as well as a volunteer at her church, Downriver Christian Community Church, where she is a vocalist, plays piano and is a teacher.

Writing releases her creative energy.

### A life changed

The first letter in the book delves into how writing has affected her life.

"Dear Writing, What have you done to me?" Abraham wrote. She asks herself, "What was this unseen but powerful force that I couldn't seem to escape the grip of? Part of me loved it, and part of me hated it. How could it take control of my conscious mind and shape my every thought before I could even think it? Furthermore, how could I love and hate the very same thing at the very same time? Why now, why me? Moving forward meant finding answers and this was proving to be no easy task."

The letters that make up the book combine many aspects of her life from trampolines to coaching and school and singing. Along the way she shares many introspective thoughts about life.

The way all of this fits together, like pieces to a puzzle, form one common purpose and goal: a passion for living and writing.

She signs off each letter with a different note, like "Dear Writing, you bring out the best in me, Yours Truly Amanda."



### Longtime outlet

"I've always enjoyed writing," she said recently. "It's a hobby and something fun to do. I've actually written a couple of other books that I decided not to publish."

She started writing "Dear Writing" in March of 2022 and finished it four months later.

As for a profession, she said, her goal is to become an anesthesiologist.

"I try to keep writing separate from school to keep it enjoyable and on the side," she said. "It's not something I feel I have to do."

She said getting a book published has "always been something I wanted to do. It's all about finding your passion."

Go to [writersrepublic.com](https://writersrepublic.com) to buy the book. Abraham said she also expects it will be sold at book stores as well.







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# A POTENTIAL PATHWAY

## Esports sweeps nation, comes to middle school

By Diane Gale Andreassi

**A**LLEN Park Middle School is offering a new club and it's getting a lot of attention from students and parents.

Esports Club Advisor Zach Bates said quite a few students came out to learn more about the club when it launched in September 2022. Some, however, immediately turned away because they competed in sports and had time and scheduling conflicts.

### Gaining popularity

Currently there's nine eighth-grade students involved, and in March, Bates expects it will be open to seventh-grade students, as well. Allen Park has one of the first e-sports middle school clubs in the state, Bates said, adding that competitive video games are becoming more and more popular in schools. Allen Park High School doesn't currently offer e-sports.

Esports is a lot more than sitting in a basement and playing video games alone.



"They work on communication, interpersonal, leadership and team building skills," said Bates, who teaches sixth grade social studies and eighth-grade elective. "They have to work with teammates to succeed."

Bates said he hopes to have an assistant coach soon and that will free him up to offer the club on more days and to accommodate more students. Currently, the Esports Club meets on Mondays.

The school provides the equipment but students must have their own Microsoft and Nintendo accounts to participate. At this point there are no fees to join.

### Finding a niche

Esports falls in line with another club Bates started a few years ago, when he began working at Allen Park Middle School. He launched the Dungeons and Dragons Club for students who weren't drawn to other clubs or traditional sports – the ones who might have felt left out.

"This team is bringing in students to a team setting who may not have even cared to be social at school if this wasn't an option," Bates said. "Parents are thankful and they come up to me and say, 'I couldn't get him to do anything else.' I've seen a lot of growth from students. I've seen kids who didn't interact much who are now opening up with teammates."

Esports Club members compete in a league that includes 14 schools across the state. Some of the schools are more than two hours away but since it's a virtual club there's no long bus rides or car pool logistics.

Club members practiced with students from other schools when it formed in preparation for the competitive season that starts in March.

Bates said his goals are to build the confidence level of students in the club.

"I want to show them there is a future in e-sports," Bates said. "There's a misconception that they're just hanging out playing video games."

He plans to take club members on a tour of Lawrence Technological University and he expects the students will even get to play on the university's gaming system.

"There's even a degree coming up in e-sports there," Bates said. "There is a potential future in e-sports for these kids. They're learning how to operate as a unit and they're getting social and interpersonal skills. It definitely is a potential pathway for their future."







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# Here For You

## Schools' social workers provide a safe place for students

By Diane Gale Andreassi

**W**HEN students are in crisis, big or small, school social workers come to the rescue.

Sometimes they're dealing with tough emotional issues, like depression, and other times the problems are seemingly small.

"We focus on skill building, belongingness, support and filling the gaps," she said. "Families need a place to go."

A school social worker's job has become especially daunting in recent years, with COVID-19 concerns and school shootings escalating stress triggers.

"Kids are not OK right now," Payette-Linn said. "They're really struggling and we know it because they are with us six hours a day."

Depression, a high risk of harming behaviors, suicide and abuse are among the most serious issues social workers help students navigate. Often they're building bridges to help families get mental health treatment and access to other community resources.

"This coordination is vital as we help maximize resources and facilitate the best service delivery possible," said Allen Park High School social worker Kathy Weaver.

Maybe young people have the best perspective of what a social worker does. Earlier this year, Payette-Linn did a presentation on kindness and she asked students to describe her job.

"One said, 'You're a professional problem solver, and another said you're the spreader of lightness and joy,'" Payette-Linn said. "I love that that's how they see social workers. They know we're safe people and they can talk to us about things. That's the power of a social worker."

Every student, day and situation is different. Like helping a young man who was having a meltdown on Valentine's Day because he didn't have cards to pass out to his classmates.

"At the elementary school level that's a crisis," said Payette-Linn, who brought him to her office, gave him enough cards for his classmates and helped him fill them out.

There are six APPS social workers – one in each school and two in the high school – who tackle social, emotional and behavioral issues. They work behind the scenes to identify students who are struggling. Sometimes they reach out to their parents and classroom teachers to prepare plans to help them overcome, or at least address, their problems.

"I think the most important part of my job is creating a safe haven for students who come into the building with heavy emotional loads to help them feel as if their emotions are at least a tiny bit lighter and they're more confident in their autonomy to manage it," said Victoria Rose, Allen Park Middle School social worker.



Marisa Tringali, an Arno Elementary School social worker, said she believes her most important role is to build solid relationships with students and to advocate for them.

Making sure students "have the best possible day," is APPS social worker Erica Saville's goal.

"That looks different for everyone, but it usually means teaching the skills necessary to be able to participate fully at school, both socially and academically," Saville said.

In addition to her work with Allen Park students and staff, social worker Michelle Kean helped create safe spaces in the high school for students

who need to decompress and give themselves a time out. She also randomly hosts a table in the lunch room to provide information about peer support, mental health and self care.

She is a driving force behind projects like the "Leave a positive note, Take a positive note" program. Kean also started a safe group for students to share thoughts and emotions about gender issues.

She finds time to support the Peer to Peer mentoring program for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder and she started the Adult Mentor Intervention Project, linking staff members with high-risk students. Kean is known to carry treats in her pocket to hand out when she sees a student or staff member who needs a pick-me-up.

APPS social workers launch intervention meetings and tackle truancy issues. They participate in the district's safety and crisis response teams and they serve as district trainers and coaches for nonviolent crisis de-escalation. They also help staff understand students' cultural and familial factors, which may affect how they do emotionally at school.

The umbrella of responsibilities of school social workers is daunting but they're up to the challenge.

"We have a highly skilled and trained team working on behalf of our students and families," said APPS Superintendent Mike Darga.

For more information about APPS social workers go to [allenparksocialworkers.weebly.com/](http://allenparksocialworkers.weebly.com/)



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# 'Exciting Developments to Come'

## New Downtown Development Authority director loves public service, plans success

By Angela Calabrese

**M**UCH like the Parks and Recreation Department, the Allen Park Downtown Development Authority has also undergone some changes recently. Earlier this year, the DDA named Ben Hughes as its new executive director.

Along with performing the executive director duties of the DDA, Hughes will also serve as the city's director of economic development, a new position.

Hughes is a mid-Michigan native who moved to Dearborn with his family when he was a freshman in college. He earned a degree in public administration from Miami University in Ohio.

He said his family's passion for public service helped shaped him and his siblings.

"I come from a family of public servants," he said. "My dad was a school superintendent and my mom was a social worker at First STEP. My sister is a public school teacher in Troy and my brother recently retired from the City of Wayne as a sergeant in the police department. We were encouraged to have a job that allows you to earn a living while also giving back."

Hughes's love of public service dictated his career choices.

"I wanted to be in local government but not in an elected position," he said.

While attending graduate school in Albany, New York, Hughes got a job with the mayor's office. He had always intended on coming back to Michigan, but the offer was too good to pass up.

"It was a great learning experience," he said.

After spending nine years there, his next position brought him to Wisconsin, where he was a city manager for five years in two different communities. In 2010, he got the chance to return home to Michigan when he accepted a job as the city manager of St. Clair Shores, a position he held for three years.

Since 2013, he's been working in the private sector at North Star Development, which worked with the cities of

Detroit, Flint and Ann Arbor to build affordable homes for low-income individuals. It was rewarding work but he missed working in public service.

Having lived in Dearborn for many years, Hughes was already familiar with Allen Park, and he became even more acquainted with the community in 2022, when he served as a full-time substitute teacher at Allen Park Schools. He taught at Lindemann Elementary.

Now, in his position as both executive director of the DDA and director of economic development for the city, Hughes hopes to merge his love of public service with his experience in the private sector to help businesses thrive all over the city.

His first order of business? Getting to know all 463 businesses in the downtown district.

"I want to meet them and ask them," he said, "what are some things that the DDA has done well? What are some things that they haven't done well, and/or what are some things that we haven't been doing but should be?"

Hughes credits the city administration with seeing the need and making the move to create the new position.

"This is an opportunity for the city to become more economically diverse and successful," he said. "That includes the DDA as well as areas outside the DDA."

Like The Hill, where many of the city's businesses reside.

Hughes also looks forward to working with the city's other departments to help businesses thrive in the area.

"Working closely with the administration, building, fire and police – all these departments have knowledge that can help businessowners," Hughes said.

Hughes also thanks the residents for their support of local establishments, and asks that they continue to do so.

"The people who own and rent homes here have a very strong history of supporting business in the community," he said. "There will be more exciting developments to come."





# DDA Welcomes New Board Member Director

**A**LLEX Alexander has deep roots in Allen Park. His family has owned Alexander's Cleaners in the city since 1975.

Alexander, a Brownstown resident, was born and raised in Detroit and went to the University of Michigan. His dad started the cleaning business in Detroit in 1946 before buying what was then called Shamrock Cleaners in Allen Park.

Unfortunately, Alexander's father passed away shortly after the purchase, making it necessary for Alex to leave college and take over the family business. He's been running the place since, and hasn't looked back. He said the best part about it is the "great retail clientele".

When asked what brought his father to Allen Park from Detroit, Alexander said it was because the city "was a great bedroom community, with some high-profile businesses like Ford."

"It was a good business investment," he added. "Allen Park properties are always going up, and now it's becoming diverse."



Alexander's Cleaners does a robust business, and has interesting customers. Like the Detroit Lions.

Alexander's cleans all the uniforms in the organization – from the players to the coaches and staff.

They also do work for Ford Field itself, cleaning security guard, ticket taker and other

personnel uniforms during football games, concerts and other events. In addition, they clean the costumes for the Fisher Theatre in Detroit and do some work for the U.S. Army and the local high school ROTC.

Alexander, who is also a local real estate broker, saw this opportunity to serve on the DDA board as a way to "get more involved in the daily goings on in the city."

"I like meeting people and interacting with the businesses," he added.



## ALLEN PARK FARMERS MARKET RETURNS!

**S**PRING is here, and that means many things, not the least of which is the return of the Allen Park Farmers Market!

The market will open on April 21 and run through October 27, every Friday from 3-7 p.m. on Park Avenue between Cleveland and Harrison.

Expect to see such vendors as Kapolnek Farms, which offers USDA-inspected locally raised beef; Steve's Gourmet Cheese – check out his chicken soup-flavored cheese, along with his Pure Grade B maple syrup; and Peg Darnell is returning with her healing bracelets, which claim to help with everything from migraines to knee pain to arthritis.

These are just a few of the things you can expect to see at this year's Farmers Market. We look forward to seeing you there!

For more information, visit the Farmers Market's on Facebook.





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### **ST. LOUIS BLUES** **July 23-26, 2023**

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### **7-DAY ALASKA CRUISE** **Departs: August 26, 2023**

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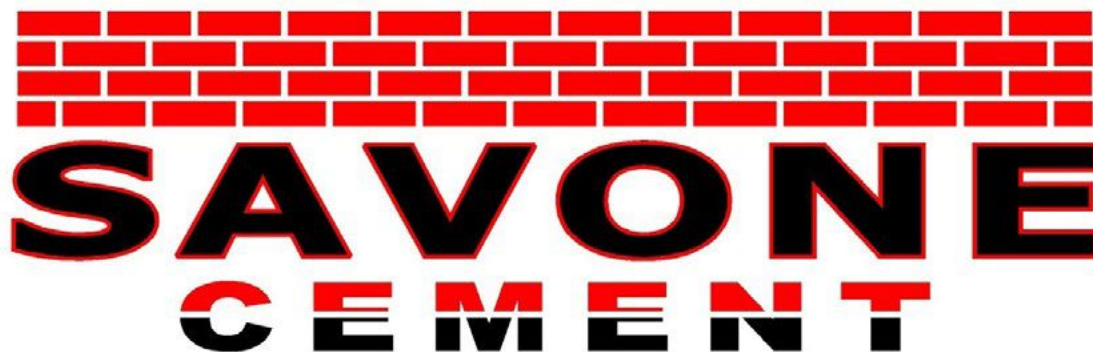
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# Be Prepared

## Help your fellow citizen by learning CPR

By Edward Cann, Allen Park Fire Chief

**T**HE tragic and unexpected sudden cardiac arrest of Damar Hamlin of the Buffalo Bills on Monday Night Football last fall has turned out to be a blessing in disguise.

On national television, the world witnessed, many persons for the first time, an event that happens every day across America. People came together in prayer, and a miracle occurred. But maybe only part of that miracle was the healing that occurred at the hospital – maybe part of that miracle was the actions taken by the trainers, paramedics and doctors on the field that night – and their preparedness and training.

The members of the Allen Park Fire Department are all paramedics, from the newest probie to the eldest chief.

Our fire department sees cardiac arrest often. Some days we get to participate in a CPR miracle, and other days the results of our actions are not as good as those of the NFL star's recovery. Often, the best results of our CPR occur when a trained bystander starts immediate, high-quality CPR. Or, when a willing individual locates and applies an Automatic External Defibrillator (A.E.D.).

Our ultimate goal when we respond to a cardiac arrest (when one's heart stops beating effectively or not at all) is to return the victim's heartbeat and circulation as quickly as possible, and to have the patient discharged from the



Hamlin

hospital with no deficit – neurologically or otherwise.

We'd like to cite the event that struck Mr. Hamlin and use it to encourage others to learn CPR and First Aid, so they could – and would – be willing to step in and get involved if someone near them has a sudden cardiac arrest.

Learn hands-only CPR (you don't need to do mouth-to-mouth!). Learn how to apply and use an AED (simple and easy, just listen to the AED's voice!) Know where local AEDs are. Know how to recognize cardiac arrest. And understand that you are covered by Good Samaritan laws, so don't be afraid to help your fellow citizen.

Here are some links to learn virtually, or to contact a certified trainer:

- [www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org) (And join Damar Hamlin's #3ForHeart CPR Challenge!)
- [www.redcross.org/take-a-class/cpr](http://www.redcross.org/take-a-class/cpr)







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As of February 2023, SEMCA's Clean Slate program has 450+ eligible applicants. It has successfully set aside 350+ convictions with over a 99% success rate. Additionally, this year SEMCA has over 120 upcoming court dates with more being added every month.

SEMCA's Clean Slate program objective is to open doors to better employment, careers, and overall quality of life for families and providers. It is common for people with a criminal record to not apply for better paying jobs or to take jobs that are not sufficient to support their families. Assisting those who have paid their dues to society, and following the procedure in current legislation, SEMCA's Clean Slate program is able to make second chances a reality.

## JOIN SEMCA'S CLEAN SLATE PROGRAM FREE LEGAL COUNSEL SESSIONS

Saturday, June 3rd, 2023 | 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. (one hour blocks)

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2. SEMCA reviews completed application and determines eligibility.
3. If eligible, you will receive an invitation from SEMCA's legal personnel to receive free legal services regarding the expungement process, including criminal history background check results, access to fingerprinting, and assistance throughout the legal process.







## Plant a Tree, Grow a Community

**H**ELLO, my name is Ron and I'm a resident of Allen Park. I'm concerned about the removal of trees in our neighborhoods. More and more street trees are being removed and not replaced.

The beautiful trees that add benefits to all our lives are going away. Trees enhance communities and neighborhoods in many ways.



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I want to ask you to join me in greening up Allen Park! Let's work together to improve our community by planting more trees to replace the ones that are going away.

If you are interested in learning more, or you have questions, you can reach out by email to me at [allenparktrees@gmail.com](mailto:allenparktrees@gmail.com).

Remember: A permit is needed to remove or plant a tree. You can find out more information about this on the City of Allen Park website [www.cityofallenpark.org](http://www.cityofallenpark.org)

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# Onward and Upward

## Cabrini undergoes leadership changes, looks to future

By Terry Jacoby

**I**T'S a happy homecoming for R.J. Chidester and St. Frances Cabrini High School and Academy. But it's so much more than that – it's a perfect match for a coach and educator who is part of the school's proud past and is now a major player in the exciting new future of the Catholic school founded in 1960.

A three-sport athlete at Cabrini (2000-2004), Chidester was recently hired as the school's new varsity head football coach along with a number of other responsibilities inside the school. He's now part of a "youth movement" at Cabrini, a member of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Detroit.

"We had a meeting with parents recently where I told them that we are

excited to be laying down a foundation of change here at Cabrini," Chidester said. "There are things physically and spiritually here that need to be brought back to life and revitalized and we have already started to lay the foundation for that.

"We have so many great parts in place and I'm excited to come back home and help create a new, fresh and welcoming environment for students, parents, families, teachers, everyone," he added.

After graduating from Cabrini in 2004, Chidester played baseball and football at Defiance College, where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree and later a master's in education.

His football coaching resume, which includes 14 years of NCAA and D3 coaching and recruiting experience, is impressive. He helped turn programs at Alma and Defiance from 1-9 to 7-3 as the offensive coordinator. His most recent stops

*Athletic Director Sara Forystek, Head of School Ryan John and football coach R.J. Chidester have St. Frances Cabrini High School and Academy moving toward a bright future.*

include offensive coordinator at Carthage College (2018-20) and tight ends coach at Lehigh University (2020-21).

There also is change, progress and renewed enthusiasm inside the school at Cabrini, including at the top. Ryan John took over in July as the head of school at Cabrini. John, who is originally from the Plymouth-Canton area, has worked in top administrative positions in schools in North Carolina and Pennsylvania, and enjoys being involved in the long-term, big-picture process including admissions, advancement, planning and business development.

It was another perfect match.

"We are fortunate to have a lot of dedicated and professional people who just want to make Cabrini the best it can be," John said. "We are all interested in marching the mantle forward as we shift and change and grow into the greatest version we can be."

John is still going through the process of gathering information and getting to know the school and the community to help best identify where and how to implant change. But some





of that change is already under way. The library has been updated and modernized into a 21st century learning space. They have done extensive renovation of classrooms in both buildings and moved the seventh- and eighth-grade classrooms over to the high school to help introduce and prepare the younger students to the high school environment.

"We are rolling out a community volunteer program to see if there are ways we can leverage the talents and the people in our community who can help the school advance itself in ways we couldn't do if we didn't have this support," John said. "We also have started a Cabrini Apprenticeship Program (CAP), where we are hoping local business partners can set up opportunities for our students to learn about teamwork, leadership and planning, and get real-life work experience."

Speaking of changes, Sara Forystek took over as the high school's athletic director last year, replacing longtime Cabrini AD Steve Dolunt. Forystek, a Divine Child and Central Michigan University graduate who received her



Master of Business Administration degree from Wayne State University, was previously the school's athletic administrative assistant.

"Cabrini High School athletics have seen great progress from the start of the school year to now," she said. "The boys' soccer team had an excellent season (11-5 record), we added girls golf, and the cross country teams had a great season with two of our athletes (Ava Teed and Chris Russelburg) breaking school records. And the football team just missed the playoffs."

The success has carried over into the winter season with strong showings from hockey, bowling and both basketball teams.

"We are looking forward to the new football coach, Coach R.J. Chidester, bringing his college football experience to Cabrini," Forystek said. "And Cabrini's Athletic Department would not be taking the steps forward it has without the help of my assistant Hunter Myers."

It looks like Cabrini is taking a lot of steps forward – from the hallways to the classroom to the athletic fields.

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# Allen Park and AROUND

## April – June

### ONGOING

- The Allen Park Farmers Market will be open every Friday starting April 21 through October 27 from 3-7 p.m. The Market is located on the corner of Park and Harrison avenues and will offer seasonal fruits and vegetables as well as products from local businesses. Visit [www.allenparkdowntown.org](http://www.allenparkdowntown.org) for more information.

### MAY

**May 20**

#### Allen Park Athletic Club Opening Day Parade

Champaign 3

9 a.m.

Parade starts at Allen Park Public Library.

**May 20**

#### Concert Knight in the Park - featuring 50 Amp Fuse

Fr. Saylor Park

6-10 p.m.

Stay tuned for more details!

### JUNE

**June 7**

#### Music In The Streets - Greg Jaqua

Allen Park Community Center  
Parking Lot

15800 White Avenue

7-9 p.m.

Sponsored by the DDA. Head to downtown Allen Park, eat outside at your favorite restaurant, bring your own chair and enjoy some tunes on warm summer nights in 2023. Visit [allenparkdowntown.org](http://allenparkdowntown.org) for more information.

**June 9-11**

#### Cabrini Fest

Cabrini Church

9000 Laurence Avenue

Festivities abound at Cabrini Church at their annual parish fest. This festival will include food and beer tents, raffles, rides, Vegas rooms and much more. Visit [cabriniparish.org](http://cabriniparish.org) for more information.



**June 15**

#### APCCF Pizza, Beer and Wine Tasting

Allen Park Community Center

Ice Rink

15800 White Avenue

6-9 p.m.

Join the Allen Park Citizens Civic Fund for a night of good pizza, cold beer and delicious wine. This will be the sixth annual pizza, beer and wine tasting hosted by the APCCF. Visit [allenparkccf.org](http://allenparkccf.org) for more information.

**June 17**

#### Library Summer Reading Kick- Off Party

Allen Park Public Library

8100 Allen Road

Stop by and register your child for the summer reading program at the Allen Park Public Library, and enjoy rides, crafts and snacks. Visit [Allenparklibrary.org](http://Allenparklibrary.org) for more information.

**June 19 - July 28**

#### Mobile Recreation

A different park every day

9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Sponsored by Allen Park Parks and Recreation. This five-week program features crafts, games and summer fun in your local parks. Mondays: Sudman Park; Tuesdays: Moore Park; Wednesdays: Humpty Dumpty Tot Lot; Thursdays: John F. Kennedy Park. Program will not run the week of July 4. Visit Parks and Recreation's Facebook page for more information.

**June 21 (rain date June 28)**

#### Allen Park Classic Car Show

Downtown Allen Park

Allen Road (enter at Roosevelt and Allen)

4-9 p.m.

Visit downtown Allen Park and check out over 250 classic cars that will be showcased in the plaza. Or, if you own a car worthy of showing off, register to enter your vehicle! Trophies and prizes will be awarded and refreshments will be provided. Visit [allenparkdowntown.org](http://allenparkdowntown.org) for more information.



**June 26**

#### Lemonade in the Shade

Sudman Park

1 p.m.

Music by Kevin Devine, in conjunction with the Parks and Recreation Department. Visit Parks and Recreation's Facebook page for more information.

**June 28**

#### Parks & Rec Summer Concert Series: Rod Stewart Tribute Band

Allen Park Community Center

Parking Lot

7 p.m.

Check out Parks and Recreation's Facebook page for more information.

PLEASE NOTE: In today's climate, event dates and times often change. Please be sure to check the event's website or Facebook page for the most up-to-date information.





## The Tim Hillmer Team

### ALLEN PARK JANUARY 2023

24 SOLD IN JANUARY

29 DAYS ON MARKET

\$157,625 AVG. SALE PRICE

\$162,858 AVG. LIST PRICE

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### ALLEN PARK FEBRUARY 2023

20 SOLD IN FEBRUARY

60 DAYS ON MARKET

\$189,873 AVG. SALE PRICE

\$198,665 AVG. LIST PRICE

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*Our family is here to help your family!*



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