



WINTER 2020

New Trier Township Courier

News from Your Township Government

Members of Daisy Girl Scouts Troop 47008 Collect Goods For Our Food Pantry



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From the Supervisor



Caring In Action, the new service theme launched by your township in 2019 captures the spirit of our work. For many with nowhere to turn, “safety net” programs like emergency financial assistance, referrals to mental health partners, youth and senior services are just a few of ways we show concern for residents in need.

Our concern for neighbors also extends to helping individuals and families in crisis. The township food pantry serves many single parents, the disabled, elderly and veterans all trying to make ends meet. At Thanksgiving and the December holidays we served a combined 300 meals to area families and residents of group homes. Clearly the township doesn't do this alone. During the fall we realized a massive outpouring of goods and funds backing the food distributions and Caring Neighbors gift programs. Our volunteer corps came through again, quietly lifting, toting and smiling as they helped others.

Your board of trustees was also focused on addressing the key concerns facing residents of New Trier Township. The successful launch of our Educational Forum series provided five live, expert presentations by township grantees and government officials. The topics covered Psychotherapy for Older Adults, Navigating Federal Government Services, Telepsychiatry/Walk-In Clinic at the Josselyn Center and Demystifying Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Program and Know Your Legal Rights, a session on immigration law and domestic violence with the North Suburban Legal Aid Clinic. Maribeth Stein, Outreach Coordinator and

Constituent Advocate for Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky led a Medicare event at the township hall, helping many individuals grappling with Medicare Prescription Drug plan enrollment.

Since many residents are unable to attend our live Educational Forums, the New Trier Township Podcast offers long-form interviews with experts in social services, government, law and community leadership. All episodes are available for free download or online streaming at <http://newtriertownship.libsyn.com>

Caring for residents also included partnership programs with Bernie's Book Bank, a Lake Bluff based non-profit that collects and distributes children's books to at-risk kids across Illinois. In conjunction with the Village of Glencoe, Winnetka Presbyterian Church, Valerie Wilson Travel and community groups, the township's 3,000 Books in 30-Days summer collection drive netted over 9,000 books.

While several Illinois legislators fixate on the “cost savings” associated with the elimination of township government, we plan to continue caring, being good stewards of your tax dollars, delivering services and working with local agency partners along the North Shore. We'll continue connecting income qualified individuals with professional services that build confidence, improve life and strengthen our communities, because we care.

My best wishes for a prosperous 2020.

Alan Goldberg
Supervisor
New Trier Township

NEW TRIER TOWNSHIP Caring in action



Support Matters at The Warming House Youth Center

Unless you were really looking for their building, one could walk by and not notice the unassuming little green cinder block structure that resides at Howard Park in Wilmette. Built decades ago as a warming house for ice skaters and later transformed to the Warming House Youth Center of Wilmette, the center has become a beacon of support, a place where pre-teens/teenagers can go and be themselves.

In a recent podcast interview with Cynthia Doucette, Executive Director, she reflected on her 20-years with the organization, sharing “the connections made and latitude the board provides to make mistakes and learn from them is unparalleled.” She went on to share that seeing teens evolve into amazing adults is part of the satisfaction she receives from her job. During the podcast she read a note that a Warming House “graduate” sent, one that helped articulate the outcome of her work:

Over the years I continued to look back on the individuals who really helped me remain focused, stay out of trouble, and get me to where I am today, you being one of those people. So in short, thank you for being someone young adults and teenagers can look up to. Your role in the Wilmette community is super important.

Cynthia offered her viewpoint on whether being a teen in 2019 is more difficult than it was thirty or forty years ago. “There is a tremendous amount of academic pressure and social competition...the pressure to get in to college has grown tremendously. A lot of the core issues are the same in adolescence; everything that makes a teenager insecure is now at their fingertips through technology. News is transmitted with light speed, so if you're left out of the party you know it immediately on Snapchat.”

The Warming House Youth Center, a township grantee provides a supportive environment where teens can confide things, have fun, make friends and just feel safe. The center serves sixth and seventh graders on the weekends, so they can meet the staff and become familiar with the programs available. Older students in grades 8-12 can spend time there six days per week.

To learn more about the Warming House Youth Center visit warminghouse.org



To hear the complete interview with Cynthia Doucette, visit SoundCloud.com, type New Trier Township in the search box and select episode 24.



When Crises Happen, Your Township Is The Safety Net



At the 2019 Annual Town Meeting Trustee Elliott Robbins shared a story that may seem out of place or unusual in an area with as much wealth as New Trier Township. Trustee Robbins recounted a story about a young Winnetka family that clearly moved him. A young couple with two children (one child has Autism) decided that securing the best education for their children would be their top priority. Due to the extraordinary reputation of Winnetka schools, the couple put all their savings on the line to buy a “fixer upper” in the western fringe of New Trier Township. Life was going

bridge residents through trying circumstances such as these. “Many people in our communities live a paycheck or two away from disaster. Our safety net financial assistance program and food pantry helped this family make ends meet until the young man could return to work,” stated Trustee Robbins. Assistance programs and other services delivered by local township grantee agencies connect neighbors facing mental illness or other concerns with appropriate help. “A little bit of

“A little bit of help can make all the difference and really strengthen our communities”

help can make all the difference and ultimately strengthen our communities,” said Trustee Robbins.

Mr. Robbins added, “When people talk about eliminating township government, it’s a good idea to look at your tax bill. This small portion of the tax levy allocated is one half of one percent or \$50-150 per bill in the township. To me, this is a small investment in keeping families together and lives secure.”

along well until the father suffered a massive heart attack requiring emergency bypass surgery. With a couple of months of recovery ahead and the sole supporter sidelined, things were touch and go for this family.

A friend suggested they reach out to New Trier Township for emergency financial assistance; public funds set aside to help



To hear Trustee Elliott Robbins speech at the 2019 New Trier Township Annual Town Meeting, visit our SoundCloud.com channel and select episode number 16.

Dial-A-Ride

Getting around during the cold, hazardous winter months can be a challenge for many township residents. Our Dial-A-Ride program is a curb-to-curb ride service for township residents ages 18 to 64 with a disability or over the age of 65.



In order to qualify for Dial-A-Ride, you must have a permanent address in New Trier Township. For eligibility as a person with a disability, you must also present either a copy of an SSI or SSDI award letter, or the certification of a physician.

Qualified residents can register by visiting the Township office. As a convenience, you can download the Dial-A-Ride application form from our website, visit NewTrierTownship.com, select Resident Services and then Discounted Taxi Service. The link to the Dial-A-Ride PDF application can be downloaded, completed and returned to our office.

Neighbors Provide Holiday Hope

This past holiday season broke records, as a blend of township funds, monetary and food donations from the New Trier Township community provided holiday meals to 292 of our food pantry clients and residents of several group homes serving the developmentally challenged.

The amazing people of the North Shore provided tremendous support, including donations from Jewel Osco on Green Bay Road in Wilmette and The Grand Food Center in Winnetka. Lad & Lassie, a Wilmette retailer, promoted a food drive and raffled off a Patagonia jacket as an incentive to donate to the pantry. Area scout troops, students, local business owners, faith groups, and many volunteers helped our pantry with goods and donated labor.

For decades our **Caring Neighbors Program** has aligned neighbors in need with wonderful community members that

want to help children of township pantry clients enjoy the holidays. A total of 94 children from 40 families received gifts from 44 amazing supporters. Donations were received from individuals, families, religious groups, financial institutions, community groups and scouting organizations.

Ninety-three senior citizens residing in subsidized housing received holiday gift cards to purchase food, helping them make ends meet and enjoy a dignified holiday meal.

As it has been since our humble beginning in 1850, township residents rise to the occasion, making sure our most vulnerable neighbors have the essentials and

know they are part of the community. The record level of generosity this past fall makes our Caring In Action motto even more meaningful. We thank you one and all.



ASSESSOR NEWS

2019 was a busy, productive, and sometimes confusing year. County Assessor Fritz Kaegi ran on a platform of transparency and repairing inequities in the assessment process. As a result many longstanding procedures were altered, some a little, some a lot, some for the better, some where the jury is still out.



Jan Churchwell

One surprise was that Assessed Values for many properties decreased substantially. Despite the reductions, the 2019 Reassessments moved up by the increasingly predictable 20+% on average, and township residents responded by filing over 9,000 appeals with the County Assessor's Office. Given that New Trier Township has fewer than 22,000 properties total, this is an impressive figure (it set a record for the township).

Receiving results was delayed by not only by the volume of appeals but also by the news that a well-known resident had been paying taxes on a house that had been demolished and replaced with a much larger one. Assessor Kaegi decided to hold up decisions until the property could be properly reassessed and a new, correct tax bill issued.

Besides this anomaly, summer brought the usual run of people needing corrected tax bills because their Exemptions had mysteriously disappeared. Again, Assessor Kaegi went to Springfield about this problem, and there is a new law

stating that Sr. Citizens will no longer have to apply for the Sr. Exemption every year. The form will be redesigned and should be available on line in early 2020.

After Tax Bills were paid, residents began preparing for appeals to the Board of Review. Those decisions were mailed out shortly before Thanksgiving, and we expect the Township will be fully certified for 2019 by the end of the calendar year.

We have seen an uptick in people inquiring about what else they can do if they did not receive the relief they hoped for, and, yes, there is a further option: An appeal to the Property Tax Appeal Board ("PTAB").* Appeals to PTAB are free. The Board is about two years behind in adjudicating cases, but if relief is granted, the appellant can receive a substantial refund.

Deputy Len Shifflett and I present two "Tax Calendar" seminars annually, the first in January and the second in November. Our objective for these presentations is two-fold: To give you a month-by-month rundown of the County Assessor's and the County Treasurer's processes and to review the components of each item for you. We invite you to join us.

We look forward to continuing to help you with assessment and property tax questions in 2020.

*Of course, property owners can always file a complaint in Circuit Court, but this involves filing fees and probably attorney fees too.

Jan Churchwell
New Trier Township Assessor



For more information about the New Trier Township Food Pantry, visit NewTrierTownship.com, select Resident Services and click Food Pantry.

Partnership Prevents the "Heat or Eat" Decision



For the fourth consecutive year New Trier Township and the North Shore Senior Center continued a valued partnership, working together to provide home energy grant assistance to income eligible households through the Low -Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). These grant dollars provide much needed support, helping residents pay critical utility bills, particularly heat during the harsh winter months.



On December 10th LIHEAP counselors were able to help 8 applicants who were approved for LIHEAP grants totaling \$3,633.70 the average grant of \$452 helps recipients pay heating and electric bills assuring safety and comfort.

Offering the township office as a LIHEAP satellite application facility began in 2016 when community members with limited transportation options reached out, indicating they were unable to reach the Senior Center in Northfield to apply for assistance.

If you know someone having difficulty keeping their heat on, please phone the North Shore Senior Center at (847) 784-6040 to speak with a professional counselor.

We're Collecting Children's Books Year-Round

Your township office serves as a year-round collection point for Bernie's Book Bank, a Lake Bluff based non-profit that collects and distributes children's books to at-risk kids throughout Illinois. Many Illinois families lack discretionary funds to purchase books, and Bernie's addresses this need by supplying 12 books to each child twice every school year.

New Trier Township began its partnership with Bernie's Book Bank in 2016 and has collected over 15,000 books during summer collection drives alone. Supervisor **Alan Goldberg** stated, "Bernie's is making a real difference getting children prepared for school by reading at home. If our work collecting helps even a few children out, I'm behind this 100%. We've seen the generosity, and I hope more partners will join us this summer to set a new record."

Our summer book drive is scheduled from July 7- August 7, 2020. Stay tuned to our social media channels and website for partner collection point updates. Individuals and groups interested in collecting children's books, as a service project in conjunction with the township should contact **Jack Macholl** via email jmacholl@newtriertownship.com



Important Dates and Deadlines

Township Board of Trustees Meetings,

February 18, 2020

March 17, 2020

All at 7:30 p.m.

Please check the website to verify as dates sometimes change due to unforeseen circumstances.

Annual Town Meeting - April 14, 2020

at 7:00 p.m. at The Takiff Center, Glencoe

Low-Income Home Energy

Grant Application Event - January 22, 2020

Summer Camp Scholarship Applications -

Available January 27, Due April 24, 2020

Karen McCormick, Chief of Staff for State Representative Robyn Gable will be at the Township the second Thursday of each month from 10:30-noon, helping residents with concerns over State services. **February 13, 2020 & March 12, 2020**

Shivia Mohsenzadeh and Mike Powers share office hours, representing State Senator Laura Fine at the township the second Tuesday of each month, from 10:00 a.m. until noon. If you need help with Illinois government services, expert help is nearby.

Get Township News in Real Time

Your Township Government provides local news and information every other Friday via *The Dispatch*, our e-Newsletter. Our **Notify Me** service on the township website let's you select news of your liking via email or text. Sign-up is easy and free, just visit www.newtriertownship.com, select News and Information, and look for the Notify Me link, make your selections and we do the rest.

On social media you can find us on Twitter, visit **@NTTGov**. Our Facebook page is New Trier Township, please "like" us to receive updates on your Facebook feed. We also have a variety of videos on our You Tube Channel **NewTrierTwp** and informative podcast interviews on our SoundCloud.com channel. You can sign-up to receive podcast episodes by searching for New Trier Township and clicking follow at the SoundCloud.com website.

We're now on Apple Podcasts, just search New Trier Township and you can stream or download individual episodes of our local interviews. If you have an Alexa unit, just say "Alexa play the New Trier Township Podcast on Apple Podcasts."





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Your Elected Officials- The Closest Form of Government to the People



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SUPERVISOR



Jan Churchwell
ASSESSOR



Jerome Hoynes
CLERK



Gail Schnitzer-Eisenberg
TRUSTEE



Stefan Mozer
TRUSTEE



Elliott Robbins
TRUSTEE



John Thomas
TRUSTEE

Since its humble beginnings in 1850, township government has served as the closest form of government to the people. If you have ideas to share on ways we can improve life in New Trier Township, we encourage you to attend Township meetings and events. Working together we'll keep our communities strong – let's make some great things happen.