



ALL GOOD THINGS CLOSE TO HOME



FIREFIGHTERS USE BUDDY SYSTEM TO LIFT YOUNG SPIRITS

Last year, a routine call to transport a child with cancer to the hospital led a crew of Oak Forest firefighters to wonder how they could have a greater impact on the lives of these young patients and their families.

“We wanted to interact with these kids outside of an emergency situation,” said Oak Forest Firefighter Kurt DeGroot. “We knew we wanted to lift their spirits. When I was a kid I wanted a fireman to come to my house and hang out with me. So, that’s where we started.”

Their first stop was in December to deliver gifts to a local family. The firefighters learned about 6-year-old Ryne’s battle with cancer through Operation North Pole — a volunteer-based organization that works with Chicago hospitals to provide a day of fun and fantasy for families who have children battling life-threatening illnesses.

The firefighters had so much fun playing air hockey with Ryne and his siblings that they went back for a rematch a few days later. They also invited the family to the fire house for dinner and a tour.

“It was a very humbling and inspiring experience,” said Firefighter Tom Jonkman. “The look on their faces as we pulled up to the house with lights and sirens blazing is something I will never forget.”

Soon after their visits with Ryne, the firefighters met Julieta, a second-grader battling serious health problems. Julieta and her brothers enjoyed a Pie Face showdown with the crew. This heartwarming yet hilarious home visit motivated the firefighters to officially

create Project Fire Buddies, a program similar to Operation North Pole to encourage and inspire children and their families affected by cancer in Oak Forest.

Although the crew’s first two buddies haven’t hit double digits yet, their most recent buddy, Brianna, is in her teens. The 15-year-old Andrew High School student underwent a full knee replacement in April — just two weeks before Consolidated High School District 230’s

Relay for Life event at Carl Sandburg High School. The annual event draws hundreds of people who gather as teams to help raise funds for the American Cancer Society. Several teams at this year’s relay were organized to show support for Brianna. But, she wasn’t sure she would be able to attend. That’s where her Fire Buddies stepped in.

“We are used to having fun with younger kids who just love the fire truck,” DeGroot told the *Patch*. “But Brianna is 15, so we didn’t want to embarrass her or do something that would be awkward for her. But we got together and found that bringing her there in the fire truck would be something special for her, and also not take anything away from Relay for Life.”

Once they arrived at Sandburg, the event went smoothly and all teams dedicated to Brianna were “cheering her on” as she entered, DeGroot said.

In less than a year, Project Fire Buddies has touched the lives of three local children. Help us expand the program. If you know of a potential buddy, call 708-687-6050.



Oak Forest firefighters give Brianna and her family a lift to Relay for Life at Carl Sandburg High School.

Celebrating 30 Years of Oak Fest

Oak Fest celebrates its 30th season from June 29 through July 4 at 159th and Central Avenue.

This six-day event is packed with family fun. From concerts to crafts there's

something for everyone to enjoy. There's also a carnival for kids of all ages — even the adult ones. Carnival mega passes will get you access to all rides during the entire festival and are \$60 in advance or \$75 at the festival grounds. There are also daily ride pass specials throughout the week. Don't forget to head to the craft fair or check out the craft beer tent! For more information or to purchase mega passes, food tickets or raffle tickets, please visit www.oakfest.com.



JUNE 29

The 30th season kicks off at 6 p.m., with bingo and the carnival. Harper's Grove takes the stage at 6 p.m., followed by Sugar Rush at 7:30 p.m. Be sure to stick around because there will be a Salute to Hometown Heroes fireworks display presented by the Oak Forest Veterans Commission at 9 p.m.

JUNE 30

Doors open again at 6 p.m. with food vendors, bingo and the carnival waiting to delight guests. Sh'Bang will take the stage at 6:30 p.m., followed by a performance by Anthem, a classic rock experience to see and hear. Go beyond the traditional realm of classic rock with this one-of-a-kind cover band.

JULY 1

Family Fun Day starts at 3 p.m. with performances by local children's groups. Don't miss 10-year-old Skylynn Grayer of *Little Big Shots* fame open the day by singing the National Anthem. Have a child with special needs? Come early for the special needs kids only time from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. Show off your tossing skills at the bean bag tournament, which starts at 4 p.m., registration opens at 3 p.m. Chix Pix Stix performs from 7 p.m. to 9:15 p.m. And don't forget to head over to the watermelon eating contest, which starts at 6:30 p.m. Hairbanger's Ball will take you into the night with their rocking sounds starting at 10 p.m.

JULY 2

Start the day off with a vroom with a car and bike show at 11 a.m. Bingo and carnival begin at noon. If you like music, you will love what's in store today. 13 Tikis will take the stage at 11 a.m., followed by Cadillac Groove at 1 p.m. The Flex Group visits Oak Fest with a set at 4 p.m., followed by April's Reign at 6 p.m. Then The Boy Band Night closes things out at 9 p.m.

JULY 3

Be sure to rest up in the afternoon because the fun begins again at 6 p.m. with bingo and the carnival. Heart to Heartbreaker opens at 6 p.m., followed by everyone's favorite tribute band, Infinity, at 9 p.m.

JULY 4

Get your Fourth of July holiday started with the carnival and bingo at 3 p.m. Enjoy great music starting with The Millennials at 3 p.m. and 3rd Degree and Friends at 6:30 p.m. Dusk is when the real magic happens! Be sure to grab a spot to watch the best fireworks display in the Southland.

Water, Sewer Rates Increase

After a two-year rate freeze, the City of Oak Forest increased its water and sewer rates on May 1 to cover the cost of operations as well as a 1.7 percent increase from its suppliers – the City of Chicago and the Village of Oak Lawn. According to revenue policies, the city's water and sewer fund must be a self-supporting one.

The water rates will increase from \$8.05 per 1,000 gallons to \$8.38 per 1,000 gallons for the first 25,000 gallons used (Tier 1), and from \$9.05 per 1,000 gallons to \$9.42 per 1,000 gallons for usage above 25,000 gallons (Tier 2). The quarterly water base fee will remain \$15. The sewer rate will increase from \$1.77 per 1,000 gallons to \$1.88 per 1,000 gallons.

The total increase for Tier 1 water and sewer charges will be \$.44 while the total for Tier 2 charges will be \$.48. The following table calculates the quarterly impact on a sample utility bill at different usage rates:

Sample Bill	Total	Increase	Percentage
5,000 Gallons	\$66.33	\$2.23	3.37%
20,000 Gallons	\$220.33	\$8.93	4.05%
30,000 Gallons	\$328.18	\$13.58	4.14%



from the MAYOR

I recently received a call from Firefighter/Paramedic Kurt DeGroot, who is an Oak Forest resident and one of the founders of Project Fire Buddies (see front page). Kurt expressed his concern that many students start the school year with no backpack or supplies. Quite likely, more than 200 young people who attend school in Oak Forest begin their year at a disadvantage in their efforts to do well in school. Since our conversation, Kurt has solicited the help of Administrative Assistant Megan Maney, Firefighter Gary Kasper and Firefighters Union Local 3039, the Forest Ridge PTA, and the Oak Forest Rotary Club to implement the "Fill the Pack Drive."

Throughout this summer, leading into the 2017-2018 school year, Kurt and his team will collect all types of school supplies, backpacks and monetary donations to meet the goal set for this drive — 15 supply-filled backpacks for each of the 10 wonderful public schools in Oak Forest that serve our residents so well: Lee R. Foster Elementary, G. Kerkstra Elementary, Ridge Early Childhood Center, Jack Hille Middle School, Scarlet Oak School, Arbor Park Middle School, Morton Gingerwood School, Fieldcrest School, Fierke Education Center, and Oak Forest High School.

The following suggested donations may be dropped off at the fire station at 5620 James Drive, the fire station on 167th Street west of Cicero Avenue, and at City Hall throughout the summer:

- Notebook paper packs
- Dry erase markers
- Paper towels
- Pencils
- Folders
- Zip-Lock bags
- Pens
- Binders
- Highlighters
- Markers
- Spiral notebooks
- Watercolor paints
- Crayons
- Rulers
- Backpacks (new and gently used, no wheels)
- Scissors
- Pencil cases
- Glue sticks and bottles
- Kleenex

Of course, cash donations are welcome. Checks should be made payable to the Forest Ridge PTA. Please direct any kind of monetary donations to Administrative Assistants Megan Maney or Lisa Alfaro in the office at the fire station on James Drive. A receipt will be provided for all monetary donations.

Please keep in mind it costs about \$45 to supply one child with a backpack filled with supplies. Some families simply cannot afford this and their children will not be as prepared as other more fortunate children to do well in school. Please work with me and pull together as a community to help make this outstanding effort a success. Help give all children the chance to be successful at the one place where they will be preparing themselves for the future challenges they will face — school.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Megan at mmaney@oak-forest.org, Kurt at kdegroot@oak-forest.org or the Mayor's Office in City Hall at 708-687-4050. I sincerely thank you for your consideration to help in this effort.

I wish all of our residents, especially our children, a happy and healthy summer. I hope you get outside to enjoy our parks, the forest preserves and other recreation areas. Please be cautious as you drive throughout town and be aware of our children as they walk, ride their bikes, or run around our neighborhoods.

Have a wonderful summer!

Henry L. Kuspa, Mayor

Forest in Bloom

Awards presented by the Streetscape Commission

ENTER ONLINE AT WWW.OAK-FOREST.ORG

Entries Due
July 1



Laura Clemons
1st Ward Alderman
708-903-1845

All Good Things Close to Home is what our town is all about. Summer is the time to really get out and take advantage of all the good things available to us this time of year.

The Oak Forest community pool is open for business! The pool is a gem that is tucked right into our neighborhood. Come take a look as the facility received a much needed facelift and membership fees are easy on your wallet. Stop by and check it out on Aldersyde Road in the Gingerwood subdivision. The facility is available for private parties so plan to celebrate graduations, birthdays, sports team parties' poolside this year! Call 708-363-0682 for more information.

Check out the variety of programs available to you through the Oak Forest Park District. Choose from several day camp programs, gymnastics, fitness programs, and golf lessons for young and old(er). Call the park district for more information at 708-687-7270.

The 30th anniversary of Oak Fest is this year! The fest runs from June 29 to July 4 and the committee has LOTS of entertainment planned to commemorate the history of this long running and very popular family festival! Don't miss the BEST fireworks show in the south suburbs on July 4!

Stay safe, and celebrate the summer right in your own backyard. Enjoy *Living Oak Forest*.



Diane Wolf
3rd Ward Alderman
708-207-8392

I don't know about you but when I see one of our Living Oak Forest ads on the side of a CTA bus, inside LaSalle Street Station or on a billboard on I-294, I am overcome with pride in my hometown.

The simple yet eye-catching posters and digital platform displays capture your interest by focusing on recreation, housing and transportation. The idea is to encourage potential homebuyers to visit LivingOakForest.com so that they can see for themselves that *All Good Things are Close to Home* in Oak Forest.

The ad campaign is part of a comprehensive, three-year marketing plan that includes ads on CTA buses, trains and platforms and, on the Metra side, at LaSalle Street Station. We also have digital billboards on I-80 and I-294 and a new mobile strategy to capture folks who are out and about downtown. In addition, we continue to drive interest to the Living Oak Forest website through social media, including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

The digital nature of the campaign allows us to switch out our message whenever we want to and customize it depending on traffic conditions or weekend events. That's pretty cool. Ultimately, our goal is to raise the city's profile and give potential homebuyers reason to check us out.

We can all work to achieve that goal by sharing Living Oak Forest on social media and encouraging our friends and family to do the same.



Paul Selman
4th Ward Alderman
708-687-4050, x1013

I'm glad to be part of such a dynamic city. Here are a few of the activities I've participated in since the last FYI.

Electronics Recycling: Thanks to the Green Steps Commission

for hosting this environmentally friendly way of disposing of my old, dysfunctional tablet.

Council Meetings: Thanks to all the residents who make use of the citizens participation time so that council members know the good things and the improvement opportunities in Oak Forest.

Shredding Event: The Friends of the Acorn Public Library District brought a shredding truck to the library parking lot and I knew my obsolete, sensitive documents were safely disposed of.

The American flags were flown at half-mast on May 6 in honor of Sergeant Joshua Rodgers. I encourage you to learn why flags have been lowered by visiting www.halfstaff.org.

Stamp Out Hunger: Thanks to residents who donated more than 21,000 pounds of food, letter carriers who picked it up and the St. Damian Food Pantry volunteers who sorted and delivered it. Families in our community benefit from your generosity.

Memorial Day: It is always a pleasure to attend our ceremony. The VFW does a fantastic job, and all involved bring honor to the memories of our service members who died while on active duty.

Let me know what you've been up to in town.



Jim Emmett
5th Ward Alderman
708-705-6895

In January, the Chicago Police Memorial Foundation and PAWS Chicago launched a public art project called K9s for Cops. As part of the initiative, hundreds of painted fiberglass

German Shepherd statues will be displayed along Chicago's Magnificent Mile from July 23 through Labor Day to memorialize Chicago's heroic fallen officers while supporting their families.

Thanks to Oak Forest Police Officer Jason Vodnik, a former K9 handler, and the Oak Forest Police Association, I'm proud to report that we have acquired one of these statues as a tribute to our own K9s — Dakota, Orry and Pitt. After Labor Day, the statue will come home to be displayed at City Hall.

Although Officer Vodnik did a lot of the leg work to acquire the statue, he would not have succeeded if it weren't for the support of our community. Mayor Kuspa and Alderman Clemons were instrumental in gaining the public's support for this initiative. Because of the generosity of our residents and business owners, we were able to quickly raise the \$2,000 necessary to acquire the statue and the \$500 necessary to bring it home to Oak Forest. Even our school children, who have many fond memories of our K9s held blue jeans fundraisers and art sales to help us reach our goal.

I also want to recognize resident Tom Ceska, a professional artist who donated his time and talent to ensure our K9 statue will stand out among the others. I can't wait to see the finished product!



James Hortsman
6th Ward Alderman
708-687-5307

Congratulations to all of our local graduates. I hope they enjoy the parties, family gatherings and activities that go along with this wonderful milestone. Now that the school

year has come to an end, let's make sure we are watchful for the safety of our children this summer time.

In summer, we need to be vigilant in our neighborhood to call the police if we see any strange or usual activities going on in town.

The odd and even watering rules are in effect. Sprinkling is allowed from 7 to 11 a.m. and 7 to 11 p.m. on the odd/even basis. If the last digit in your street address is odd then you may sprinkle only on odd numbered calendar days. If the last digit in your address is even then you are restricted to sprinkling on even numbered calendar days.

The Public Works Department also has started the latest tree replacements in the parkways. If you need a tree replacement, call Public Works at 708-535-4090.

This is the time of year for home improvements! As you can probably see, many folks around town are repairing their homes, roofs, fences, pools, and cement. Building Department inspectors also are busy doing their inspections of these repairs. If you have any questions for them, don't be afraid to stop and talk to them.

Hopefully, all is going well. However, I look forward to assisting you if any issues come up. Please contact me at 708-687-4050, ext. 1015 or 708-687-5307 or jhortsman@oak-forest.org.



Denise Danihel
7th Ward Alderman
708-535-0911

School's out for summer! Please slow down and drive carefully as our little ones are riding their bikes, scooters, skateboards, and walking on our sidewalks and streets.

Oak Fest is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year. Congratulations to the organizers as well as current and past volunteers, who do a wonderful job year after year. As a former volunteer, I know what goes into making Oak Fest a great entertainment venue that is a summer destination not only for our residents but for visitors, who come here for the carnival, food and, most importantly, the fireworks! Hopefully, the weather will cooperate and we will be able to gather with friends, catch up with neighbors, and celebrate the Fourth of July with the region's best fireworks show!

Our McDonald's is closed until September, but it will be back bigger and better to serve your needs. The new, more modern restaurant will be a nice addition to the 159th Street corridor.

In other construction news, I'm happy to report that Linden Avenue from Maple Drive to Forestview Drive will be repaved as part of this year's Road Program.

I know many of you are upset about recent crimes that have occurred in and around our community. Please be aware of your surroundings wherever you may be — whether it's in town or elsewhere. If you feel something isn't right, please report it to the nearest police station. We can never be too careful.

Sign Up for Citizens Police Academy

The Oak Forest Police Department is accepting applications for its Citizens Police Academy, a 12-week program designed to provide residents a working knowledge of law enforcement and police department operations. The program is free of charge and is limited to 25 students.

“Citizens will gain important insight into how law enforcement officials perform their duties and how the department serves the community,” said Community Programs Officer Todd Arthur. “The purpose of the academy is to foster better communication between citizens and law enforcement through education.”

According to Arthur, the academy will create a nucleus of well-informed citizens who possess greater insight into police practices and services. Graduates of the academy will be encouraged to share their knowledge and experience with other community members as opportunities arise — creating a win-win situation for the police department, participants and community.

The class will meet every Monday from 7 to 10 p.m. at the police department from September 11 through November 27. The academy will be both informative and educational, with some classes allowing hands-on participation.

Applications are available until September 6 at the Oak Forest Police Department, located at 15440 Central Avenue, or online at www.oak-forest.org. All applicants must be 18 years old or older.

For more information, contact Officer Todd Arthur at 708-687-4050, ext. 1219 or tarthur@oak-forest.org.

Water Conservation

Odd/even sprinkling rules are in effect until September 15. Sprinkling is allowed from 7 to 11 a.m. and 7 to 11 p.m. on the odd/even basis. If the last digit in your street address is odd then you may sprinkle only on odd numbered calendar days. If the last digit in your address is even then you are restricted to sprinkling on even numbered calendar days.

Water conservation is required for suburban communities using water from Lake Michigan. These rules apply regardless of rainfall trends and are intended to keep Great Lakes water sustainable to serve the millions of residents that rely upon this natural resource.

McDonald's Closes for Major Remodel



The McDonald's at 5441 W. 159th Street is closed as it begins a major remodeling project that is expected to be completed by mid-September. Once completed, the new restaurant will boast a side-by-side drive thru and a brand new dining room with state-of-the-art amenities.

Construction Can Impact Drainage

Planning on building a garage, retaining wall or fence? Building Commissioner Mike Forbes reminds residents to consider how such structures might impact a drainage easement or natural drainage.

“When setting out to improve their properties, residents don't always consider how those improvements might impact the flow of water around their properties or those of their neighbors,” Forbes said. “But, it can have a big impact, especially if storm water has no place to go and begins to pool around homes or in backyards.”

Per City Code, it is unlawful to erect a structure, change the grade of any soil, or plant grass, shrubbery or other vegetation that affects drainage. The Building Department will not issue a permit if, in the commissioner or city engineer's opinion, the construction will interfere with the proper and efficient flow of water. If a project is given the green light to proceed, the commissioner will evaluate the finished project to determine if the drainage has been impacted. If the drainage has been interfered with, the property owner must correct the situation.

To read the entire ordinance, visit the city's website at www.oak-forest.org, click on Government, City Code, and search for Code 152.31. For more information, please contact the Building Department at 708-687-4050.

Upcoming Events

National Night Out

The Oak Forest Crime Prevention Commission will host the 21st Annual National Night Out on Tuesday, August 1 at 6 p.m. on the grounds of the City Hall campus. National Night Out is a community effort to strengthen neighborhood spirit and encourage police-community partnership. This year's event is designed to give residents the tools and confidence they need to prevent crime from occurring in our community. The event regularly features guided tours of the Oak Forest Police Department; the opportunity to Dunk-a-Cop for Special Olympics Illinois; and free giveaways and raffles.



American Day Parade and Old Times Picnic

The Oak Forest Veterans Commission will host the 6th Annual I Am An American Day Parade on Sunday, September 3 at 11 a.m. on Central Avenue between 151st Street and 156th Street. The patriotic parade will lead to the Oak Forest Park District's Old Times Picnic — a fun-filled event for all ages that has become an Oak Forest tradition. Families are invited to decorate their bikes, wagons or strollers and help lead the parade, which steps off from Jack Hille Middle School.



Fire Chief Jack Janozik Retires After 25 Years

After 25 years of service, Oak Forest Fire Chief Jack Janozik will retire on June 29.

"We will certainly miss Jack and all of the experience and wisdom 25 years with the same department brings to an organization," said Mayor Hank Kuspa. "We are grateful for his service and wish him well in retirement."

Janozik was hired by the City of Oak Forest in 1992 as a paramedic/firefighter. During his early years with the department, Janozik honed his skills in administering basic and advanced life support at emergency scenes, recording patients' vital signs, assessing injuries to prioritize medical procedures, and administering first aid and artificial respiration. In 2009, he was promoted to the rank of lieutenant and began overseeing the activities of firefighters, including all training, preparedness and emergency situations. He also served as the director of the Fire Prevention Bureau — implementing ordinances and changes in the fire code and coordinating inspection



Jack Janozik

of fire safety systems at local businesses. In 2014, Janozik was appointed to the position of deputy fire chief. Two years later he was appointed fire chief.

Throughout his tenure with the department, Janozik has received two merit awards from the city and earned recognition from the Office of the State Fire Marshal. Currently, he is pursuing two associate's degrees in fire service management studies and emergency medical services/paramedic studies from Moraine Valley Community College. He also serves as a member of the Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS) 24 Safety Officer Response Team.

The City Council will honor Janozik at its meeting on June 27 at 8 p.m. at City Hall.

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Resident Feedback

Please send your comments, suggestions, compliments, or questions to:
City of Oak Forest, 15440 Central Avenue,
Oak Forest, IL 60452.

City of Oak Forest

- Mayor – Henry L. Kuspa
- City Clerk – Dave Neuman
- Treasurer – JoAnn Kelly

Aldermen

- 1st Ward – Laura Clemons
- 2nd Ward – Richard Simon
- 3rd Ward – Diane Wolf
- 4th Ward – Paul Selman
- 5th Ward – Jim Emmett
- 6th Ward – James Hortsman
- 7th Ward – Denise Danihel

City Officials

- City Administrator Troy Ishler
- Finance Director Colleen Julian
- Fire Chief Jack Janozik
- Police Chief Tim Kristin
- Public Works Director Rich Rinchich
- Economic Development Travis Bandstra
- Building Commissioner Mike Forbes
- EMA Director Robert Small
- Taxpayer Advocate Guy Gattone

City of Oak Forest

15440 Central Avenue
www.oak-forest.org
www.livingoakforest.com

Office Hours

Monday – Friday: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Select Saturdays: Visit website

City Phone Numbers

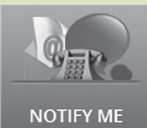
- City Hall 708-687-4050
- Police non-emergency 708-687-1376
- Fire non-emergency 708-687-6050
- Public Works 708-535-4090
- Animal Control 708-705-5690

FYI is published by the City of Oak Forest for residents, business owners and friends of the city. 🌿

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 Comcast 19, WOW 6, U-Verse 99