



## CPS Plans To Reopen



By Dr. R. Pletsch

The Chicago Public Schools are once again preparing to reopen. First for those that chose to return and then to all students. The dates and plans have been sent to the families of CPS students that the Board has current information for. Therefore, I am writing this short article to inform the rest of the public -- I know people who never read an article about CPS because they feel it does not affect them. We are hoping for change in 2021. We have several vaccines for Covid-19 and many people are tired of constantly being told what to do. We are Americans. We told the Brits to get out. We told the South no more slavery. We saved the world twice. We gave freedom to many by having the Communists "tear down that wall". As a people, we are used to making our own decisions. 77,000 families returned forms to CPS saying their children are ready to return to the classrooms. Students in Pre-K and cluster programs who chose to do so, are scheduled to begin in person classes on January 11th. The others will be given a little more time and school will be open for all on February 1st. Ultimately, the par-

ents will make the decision on whether to send their children or not. Those that wish to learn more, the district plans for in class, transportation, and safety, may contact FamilyServices@CPS.edu

There are also potential problems with reopening schools. As you know, there is now a group of people who feel they must react to everything. I will not say anything about the Chicago Teachers Union other than if it interests you, read their press releases on the internet. The newest group involved is the City Council. The last I heard 38 aldermen are against opening the schools. All groups always use science as their reasoning. The truth is there is so much information out there you can find someone to agree with whatever you want them to say.

Reopening is an issue that has many nuances according to the individual parents, as they worry about their own kids. There are numerous published articles about how it is not healthy for children to be out of school and that there are districts that have successfully remained open in the in person setting and have never closed.

Those of us who no longer have children in the public schools should let parents with children have the biggest voices. The rest of us should not try and force our opinions down their throats "just because you know you are smarter than those parents" or you have other political agendas like not liking some of the politicians. Some people are always against whoever is in power 100% of the time.

Mom and Dad no matter who you voted for you probably don't agree with that person 100% of the time. But that's life. Make up your own mind and if school is open full time, and you are still afraid to send your kids, think of what's best for your own.

## Pappas Releases Property Tax Study



M. PAPPAS

"Vote!"

Cook County Treasurer Maria Pappas released a study which reveals the 50 properties in Chicago and the suburbs with the largest property tax increases from 2000 to 2019.

The report is a new chapter in "The Pappas Study," that shows the county's tax bills virtually doubling over 20 years, an increase that is nearly triple the 36 percent rise in the cost of living index.

"If you don't exercise your right to vote, then you have no right to complain about how property taxes have climbed since 2000," Pappas said, noting the low percentage of the voting-age population that participates in elections.

"The Pappas Study" is dedicated to former Chicago Tribune editorial page editor John McCormick and former editor R. Bruce Dold for their efforts to make Chicagoland a better place to live.

The residential properties with the largest property tax increases from 2000 to 2019 are:

In Chicago, a condominium on East Lake Shore Drive, where the tax bill jumped 1,890 percent, from \$6,731.71 to \$133,954.83

In the suburbs, a two-story residence on Ardsley Road in Winnetka, where the tax bill grew 1,174 percent, from \$53,014.39 to \$675,486.36.

The commercial properties with the largest property tax increases from 2000 to 2019 are:

In Chicago, an office building at 300 E. Randolph st., where the tax bill rose 141 percent, from \$8,140,176.71 to \$19,599,942.28.

In the suburbs, a shopping center at 1000 E. Woodfield Road, Schaumburg, where the tax bill rose 53 percent, from \$12,847,013.47 to \$19,633,920.16.

"There is a solution to the problem of skyrocketing taxes," Pappas said.

Less than 29 percent of the voting-age population in the Chicago has cast ballots in elections held since 2011, Pappas said. In the suburbs, the percentage is just 26 percent.

Every property owner can see how much their property taxes have grown by visiting cookcountytreasurer.com. Just follow these steps:

Select the purple box labeled "Your Property Tax Overview".

Enter your address or Property Index Number (PIN).

Select the tab on the left that says "20-Year Tax Bill History".

See an interactive map that shows how property taxes billed have increased in Chicago wards and suburbs since 2001.

The report also breaks down the 50 largest residential and commercial property tax increases in each of Chicago's wards.

The report analyzed the property tax bills for PINs which did not change property tax classifications from 2000 to 2019. For residential properties, the report analyzed properties with only a Homeowner's Exemption and excluded properties with other property tax exemptions, such as the Senior Citizen Exemption, which affect the change in tax bills.

## Forest Preserve Plans Nature Events

The Forest Preserve District will conduct an open nature play time at the Dan Ryan Woods Visitor Center, 87th and Western ave. on Fridays through Jan. 29th from 12 to 4 and Wednesdays through Jan 27th from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Registration for timed entry is required with Jessica.Becker@cookcountylife.gov or (312) 415-2970.

Nature in Spanish will be presented on Facebook Live from Sand Ridge Nature Center on Saturday, Jan. 9th from 9 to 10 a.m. Participants will learn some common nature words and phrases in Spanish as they explore a different nature topic each month. Beginners are welcome. Contact: (708) 868-0606 or sandridge.naturecenter@cookcountylife.gov.

A Zoom presentation on Urban Wildlife in Cook County will be available Tuesday, Jan. 12th at 6 p.m. A representative from the Forest Preserves will talk about what draws wildlife like coyotes, raccoons, and foxes into urban environments, how they survive in cities, and how people should respond to them. Email scain@blueislandlibrary.org to register. For more information, contact (708) 386-4042 or experience.nature@cookcountylife.gov.

A Self-guided Walk and Talk will be available at the Dan Ryan Woods Visitor Center, 87th and Western ave. on Saturday, Jan. 16th at 10 a.m. A Forest Preserve

staff person will greet you at the trailhead. Information signs will be placed along the trail. For more information, contact (312) 415-2970.

Wellness in the Woods: Nature Meditations and Mindfulness will be presented on Facebook Live from Sand Ridge Nature Center on Monday, Jan. 18th at 1:30 p.m. Practicing meditating and mindfulness can help alleviate cold weather blues. For more information, contact (708) 868-0606 or sandridge.naturecenter@cookcountylife.gov.

I'm a Scientist: Water in Winter will be featured on Facebook Live from Little Red Schoolhouse on Thursday, Jan. 21st at 10 a.m. Participants will be investigating and conducting an experiment that demonstrates how winter weather effects water. Visit the Little Red Schoolhouse Facebook page a week prior for a list of the materials needed to follow along at home. For more information, contact (708) 839-6897 or little.red.schoolhouse@cookcountylife.gov.

A Zoom presentation on Winter Survival: Mammals Edition will be conducted on Saturday, Jan. 23rd at 1 p.m. Ages 12 & up will learn how some of the mammals in Cook County are surviving the winter. Registration is required with Crabtree at (847) 381-6592 or Crabtree.Nature.Center@cookcountylife.gov.

## Friends Of Parks Honor Volunteers



Friend of the Parks announces the 2020 Volunteers-In-Parks Winners. In lieu of the annual awards reception, each VIP winner will be receiving a social media tool kit to promote their award, and \$100 to promote their work.

The Park Activation Innovation Award went to the Unity Park Advisory Council. The PAC has hosted free events from 1987 and just completed a virtual fundraiser for activities.

To maintain the safety this summer, they did not host the very popular ART in the Park, but engaged their neighborhood artists at a local arts collective, AnySquared.

Mila Marshall, host of Living Chicago received the Isolation Inspiration Award. Her social media posts feature Jackson Park's Wooded Island and its Yacht Club youth programs, the zip lines at Bemis Woods, Morton Arboretum, Burnham Wildlife Corridor, and South Shore Nature Sanctuary.

The Stewardship Award went to West Ridge Nature Park PAC. Diligent volunteer stewards continue to monitor the native plants and maintain the walking areas of the nature preserve. The PAC advocated with the Chicago Park District to close the park down for a time because many visitors were going off the paths and trampling the nature areas.

Deloris Luca of Golden Gate Park received the Individual Volunteer Award. In addition to organizing the annual clean-up and mulching for Golden Gate Park on Earth Day, she has coordinated distribution of donated food to neighbors in need and is the founder of the We Keep You Rollin' Bike and Wellness group.

Friends of the Bloomingdale Trail received the Park Advisory Council Award. The 606 Trail has become a popular destination with activities like stargazing, trail runs, night parades and plant scavenger hunts.

Keith M. Kelly, president of the Garfield Park PAC earned the Individual Advisory Award. The poet, musician, cultural activities, and youth development practitioner has been a consistent voice about the inequitable investment of the park.

The Community Group Award was presented to Neighbors for Environmental Justice. This set of VIPs was formed a few years ago in response to an asphalt

plant next to their neighborhood park in a dense community area. Air monitors have been installed in the neighborhood to track the pollution from this plant, neighborhoods are encouraged to report instances of four smells and permit processes related to the company's operations are being tracked.

The Park Advisory Council Advocacy Award was presented to Clarendon Park PAC. This PAC fought hard to local community center that is the park field house renovated. Popular programming leads to a high level of community participation. A unique, hand-built, model railroad is used to engage students in STEM programming.

The Outstanding Park District Employee Award went to Jason Steger, Montrose Natural Area. Steger served as the Park District's Natural Areas Manager for the past 13 years, as he coordinated stewardship days and meetings to maintain over 60 natural areas. Projects include the McCormick Bird Sanctuary, Burnham Wildlife Corridor and establishing the natural area at Park 538 which runs along the North Branch.

"Smoky Sakurada" Friend of Friends of the Parks Award went to Pete Leki, Nature Along the Lake Partner Teacher, Waters School. A longtime educational partner of Friends of the Parks' Nature Along the Lake environmental education program, Pete's experience as an ecology educator and former works professional, makes him a walking library of information about the beauty of environment and lakefront. For many years, he has brought children from his Public School classroom on Nature Along the Lake field trips to expose youth to nature and the environment in the outdoor classroom setting of the Montrose natural areas.

## City Offers Free Mulch

The Bureau of Forestry of the Department of Streets & Sanitation offers free mulch at 2342 S. Ashland ave.

Bring a shovel and bags or other containers during working hours on weekdays from 6:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

## City To Activate Speed Cameras

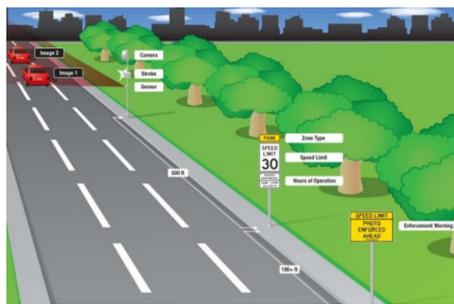


Photo Image by City of Chicago

Speed cameras located near schools and parks in the City of Chicago will begin ticketing drivers for going 6-10 miles per hour over the limit starting in March.

Beginning on Jan. 15th, drivers going 6-10 mph over the limit in "Children's Safety Zones" will receive a warning by mail. After March 1st, speeders will be issued a \$35 ticket.

Over 11 mph will receive a \$100 fine. Areas which have a speed camera are marked by signs and usually have a limit of 30 mph. Those found near schools are generally enforced from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. while those in park zones are active from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m., 365 days a year.

Mayor Lori Lightfoot included "enhanced fine enforcement" changing the cameras' limits as part of a budget which aimed to address the city's \$1.2 billion shortfall.

## Online Yoga At Conservatory

Garfield Park Conservatory, 300 N. Central Park ave. will conduct free virtual adult yoga classes on Saturdays, Jan. 9th - 23rd; Feb. 13th - 27th and March 6th and 20th from 9 to 10 a.m.

This class works to lengthen, strengthen and stretch the body while clearing the mind. Reduce stress while improving strength and flexibility through visualization, focused breathing, and yoga postures with modifications for all levels.

Beginner to advance yogis are welcome to join. Pre-registration is required at <https://garfieldconservatory.org/events/>. This class is free, donations are welcome to help offset programming costs.

## BrightonParkLIFE.com

To complement our weekly edition The Brighton Park-McKinley Park Life has launched a website. On it can be found general information about us, recent and past issues, advertising information. Send neighborhood interest stories, student accomplishments, civic organization events to brightonparklife@aol.com.

## Heating Repair Grant Program

The Emergency Heating Repair grant program is available to income-eligible Chicago homeowners for service to repair or replace their furnace or boiler heating system. Limited funds are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

The Open Enrollment Period is now until April 1st. Application packages are available by calling 311 by request through CH1311 app. or visiting [www.chicago.gov/housing](http://www.chicago.gov/housing).

Maximum gross income for 2020 is \$58,000 for 2 people. Add \$7,000 for each additional person.

The program is open to Chicagoans who own and occupy a 1-to-4 unit residential property within the city limits. The property must be inhabitable condition and not a risk of foreclosure. Commercial and mixed-use properties do not qualify.

For more information, call (312) 744-3653 or [doh@cityofchicago.org](mailto:doh@cityofchicago.org).

## City Facility For Recycling

Dispose of your household chemicals responsibly and recycle your old computers by dropping them off at the City's permanent Household Chemicals & Computer Recycling Facility at 1150 N. North Branch Street (two blocks east of the Kennedy Expressway at Division Street).

When thrown out with our garbage, household chemicals and computers, which often contain hazardous substances, such as lead, mercury, and PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls) can contaminate air, soil and water. Through proper disposal methods or recycling, these hazardous substances are reprocessed and reused in an environmentally-responsible manner.

A range of items are accepted including household cleaners, oil-based paints, solvents, cell phones, compact fluorescent light bulbs, computers and related equipment. It does NOT accept business/commercial sets.

## AHCA Cancels January Meeting

The Archer Heights Civic Association meeting has again been cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions that only 10 people can attend. Because election of officers could not be held, all officers have agreed to serve in their position for another year.

The Annual Raffle will take place at the civic office on Jan. 13th with President Tom Balega and 2 other officers as witnesses.

## 6,839 New Cases Of COVID-19

The Illinois Department of Public Health reported 6,839 new confirmed and probable cases of coronavirus disease (COVID-19), including 126 additional deaths.

Cook County fatalities were 1 female 40s, 5 females 60s, 7 males 60s, 5 females 70s, 5 males 70s, 3 females 80s, 4 males 80s, 2 females 90s and 3 males 90s.

Currently, IDPH is reporting a total of 991,719 cases, including 16,959 deaths, in 102 counties. Laboratories have reported 87,083 specimens for a total 13,617,454. As of last night, 3,905 residents were in the hospital with COVID-19. Of those, 800 were in the ICU and 457 were on ventilators.

The preliminary seven-day statewide positivity for cases as a percent of total test from Dec. 29th to Jan. 4th is 8.5%.

## Brookfield Zoo's Facebook Live Chats



Chicago Zoological Society's animal care staff will once again present its "Bringing the Zoo to You" Facebook Live chats on Mondays through Fridays while Brookfield Zoo is closed in January and February. The weekday chats are a way to keep the zoo and its amazing animals connected to the public during its temporary closure before reopening to guests on March 1st. The chats became popular when the zoo was previously closed from mid-March through June to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

Animal care specialists at Brookfield Zoo will share interesting and fun facts about many of the animals as well as answer questions from viewers. Upcoming educational and entertaining chats will feature an update on Pistachio, a Kemp's ridley sea turtle who arrived at the zoo this past fall; Humboldt penguins; North American river otters; snow leopards; Rainsin, a Hoffman's two-toed sloth; and orangutans.

Those who cannot tune in, can access "Bringing the Zoo to You" videos on Brookfield Zoo's

Facebook page and YouTube channel.

The live chats, the Chicago Zoological Society's education staff is also producing weekly videos called "Bringing the Play Zoo to You," which are geared towards young children. Play partners will present a different theme each week that highlights ways kids can explore nature, learn about animals, and do fun activities from home. Posted on Brookfield Zoo's Facebook page and YouTube channel every Thursday, each of the videos are available in both English and Spanish.

## Online Renewal For Motorists

Secretary of State Jesse White is offering a renewal program for drivers online via E-Check.

Go to [www.cyberdriveillinois.com](http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com) for these services: renewing a vehicle registration; obtaining a duplicate driver's license or ID card and renewing a driver's license with the Safe Driver Renewal program.

## Shedd Aquarium Closed To Visitors



Shedd Aquarium is temporarily closed, but digital doors will remain open and full of ever-evolving fun videos, experiences and programs. By participating in any of the paid virtual programs, you are directly fueling the aquarium's mission and helping to support animal welfare, conservation research and ongoing virtual education efforts.

Meet sea otters, penguins, or sea lions from home during a Virtual Animal Encounter. Two links for \$69.95, share this experience with a friend or family member.

Families can log-on from the comfort of their home for "Zzzs Under the Seas" a Virtual Slumber Party with Shedd for \$125 per household. Explore all aspects of aquatic life, including up-close looks at animals at Shedd in their habitats or behind-the-scenes, and participate in hands-on activities, games and more. The next morning, enjoy breakfast with the belugas and yoga with the fishes.

Virtual Aquarium Adventures for grades K-5 will cost \$39.95. Meet animals up close, explore Shedd Aquarium habitats and participate in hands-

on activities, games and more.

A free program, "Sea Curious" designed by kids will answer a question about animals by exploring and having adventures at the aquarium. There are 9 aquatic animal videos, 3-5 minutes each. Video topics range from "do animals play?" to "What do animals eat?"

A free program "Stay Home with Shedd" for grades 3-5 will feature underwater biology and aquatic biodiversity.

There are 4 aquatic animal videos, 10-15 minutes each, 3 student activity packets, 1 companion educator guide and 3 activity packets on biodiversity & conservation.

Swim with Sharks in 360 features sharks at Shedd Aquarium's Wild Reef and in the crystal-blue waters of The Bahamas.

Underwater Beauty Live Cam will discover the dreamlike patterns of angelfishes, wrasses, tangs and butterflyfishes.

Virtual Reality Penguins will explain how the aquarium cares for rock-hopper and Magellanic penguins. Download the app to start exploring.

## Obituaries

**MARIO RUBEN ASCENCIO** passed away on Dec. 9th at the age of 49. He was the father of Joseph Santoyo, Jocelyn Ascencio, Ruben Ascencio and Jake Ascencio; son of Antonio Ascencio and Arturo Ascencio; brother of Maria Calderon, Maria Quintero, Lola Ascencio, Alicia Martinez, Rosalba Ascencio and Jesus Hernandez. Visitation was held at Szykowny Funeral Home, 4901 S. Archer. Interment was at St. Marys Catholic Cemetery.

**CIRO CASTRO**, passed away on Dec. 30th at the age of 59. He was the son of late Ciro & Bertha Castro; father of Daisy (Carlos Jimenez), Oscar (Perla), and Sandy (Leonardo Marin); brother of Ignacio, Hector, and Eligio; grandfather of 3. Visitation and Funeral Mass was held Jan. 6th at Immaculate Conception Church. Interment was at Queen of Heaven Cemetery. Arrangements were entrusted to Ocwieja-Robles Funeral Home, 4256 S. Mozart.

**GRACE ELAINE ECKHART** of Brookfield, passed away on Dec. 9th at the age of 87. Arrangements were entrusted to Szykowny Funeral Home, 4901 S. Archer. Interment was at Mt. Hope Cemetery.

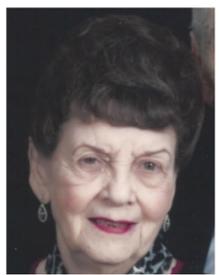


**JOSE RUIZ**, passed away on Dec. 29th at the age of 60. Visitation was held at Szykowny Funeral Home, 4901 S. Archer. Funeral Mass was held at St. Bede the Venerable Church. Interment was at St. Casimir Cemetery.

### Harley Honored

Tahje Hartley, Senior, Exercise Science was named to the Fall 2020 Dean's List at Missouri Valley College. The requirements are a 3.3 or higher grade point average; at least 12 graded hours for the semester and no "D", "F" or "Incomplete" grades for the semester.

**HELEN S. MADUZIA** (nee Komenda), age 92, wife of late Walter J. Maduzia; mother of Bernadette (Andrew) Reschke, Anne Ayala (nee Maduzia) and Leo (Veronica); grandmother of Phillip, Brian (Kimberly), Michelle (Erik) and Eric; great-grandmother of Helena, Samantha, Alexandra, Logan, Elliana and Nolan; sister of Bernice Koskee. Funeral services were held at St. Bruno Catholic Church. Interment was at Resurrection Cemetery. Funeral arrangements were entrusted to Szykowny Funeral Home, 4901 S. Archer.



**FLORENCE A. RYBSKI** (nee Rogala), wife of late Matthew C. Rybski, daughter of late Matthew & late Agnes (nee Tomaka) Rogala; sister of late John (Rose) Rogala; cousin and godmother of late Michael L. Maciejewski; aunt of Joseph (Lorraine) Rybski, Richard (Linda) Rybski, Barbara (Erik) Beaver, Anthony Jr. (Cecelia) Rybski and Shirley Carchedi. Visitation was held Jan. 2nd at Zarzycki Manor Chapels, 5088 S. Archer. Mass was celebrated at St. Richard Church. Entombment was at Resurrection Community Mausoleum. Florence was a former member of St. Richard's C.C.W. & Golden Agers, Daughters of Isabella and P.N.A. Youth Camp.

### Free Food Distribution

The community is invited to partake in a free food distribution at Our Lady of Fatima, 2751 W. 38th pl.

Every Saturday from 10 am. to noon, while supplies last.

For walk-ups, enter through Pershing rd. alley behind the Acero - Sandra Cisneros's school.

For drive-ups, enter through California - 38th pl. and food will be placed in your trunk.

## Library Schedules Online Zoom Events

The Chicago Public Library has scheduled Online events via Zoom.

A knit and crochet circle meets on the 2nd and 3rd Mondays of each month from 6 to 7:45 p.m. All skill levels are welcome, all you need is needles and yarn. Register by 10 a.m. the day before the event.

Live one-on-one homework help is also available online everyday from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. through Brainfuse. Students in early elementary through advanced college prep can get help with: specific homework questions, improving study skills, writing papers, ACT and SAT test prep and learning English as a second language. Use Brainfuse on any connected device or at home with your library card.

Songs and poems written during the writing circle will have the opportunity to be showcased in a virtual openmic. Register by noon on the day before at chipublib.org.

The Chicago Public Library will conduct online Creative Write About It! Writing Club via Zoom on Tuesdays, through March 16th from 4 to 5 p.m.

Woodson Regional Library and the Real People Realty will be hosting a free financial planning vision board workshop via Zoom on Wednesday, Jan. 13th, 6 to 7:30 p.m. Register by 1 p.m., Jan. 13th.

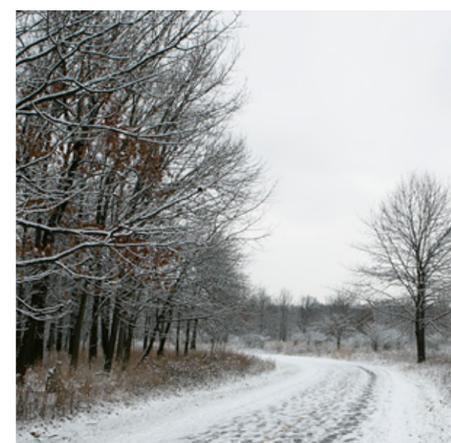
The staff of the Thomas Hughes Children's Library will conduct a 30-minute story time for children 3 to 5 and their caregivers on Fridays through Feb. 5th and Feb. 19th and 26 from 10 to 10:30 a.m. Register by 9 a.m. the day before the event.

Homework Help with a Virtual Teacher in the Library will be available on Sunday, Jan. 10th from 1 to 3 p.m.; Sunday, Jan. 17th from 1:30 to 3 p.m. and Thursdays, Jan. 14th and 21st from 4:30 to 6 p.m. Students in kindergarten through 12th grade should register at least 24 hours in advance.

The staff of the Thomas Children's library will conduct 30 minutes of moving and grooving on Mondays, Jan. 11th and 25th and Feb. 8th and 22nd from 10 to 10:30 a.m. The program is suitable for children ages 0 to 7 and their caregivers.

Register for events at chipublib.org.

## Forest Preserves Invites Visitors



The Forest Preserves of Cook County invite all to Renew & Rejuvenate this winter. Preserves remain a refuge and a resource to get out of the house and get into nature, with all that offers, including proven benefits to mental and physical health.

Participants may take a walk, find a new scene, watch for native wildlife,

and try ice fishing. Before you go, check out the interactive web map at fdcc.com web map to find nearby locations, site closures, amenities and more on your computer or phone.

### Virtual Class For Citizenship

Brighton Park Neighborhood Council is offering free citizenship classes via WhatsApp. To register, call Adrianna Morales at (773) 540-4033.

Dear Lord,  
In the coming of the New Year 2021. Please Embrace Your Loving Arms around Everyone in the World. Especially my Family and Friends. Please Keep us always Protected, Secured, Loved and Blessed.  
Amen CM

## Ice Skating Ribbon Open at Maggie Daley



At Maggie Daley Park, 337 E. Randolph st. skaters can experience "alpine in the city" as they lace up their ice skates and follow a path twice the length of a lap around a traditional skating rink. Complementing the skating ribbon are places to enjoy a cup of hot chocolate and rent skates. Skate with your own is \$5. Skates are available in child's size 8 through men's size 12. Rental for standard lockers \$5, locker \$8 - per day. Make reservations at maggiedaleypark.com.

### Moratorium On Utility Shut-Offs

Attorney General Kwame Raoul reminds residents that state-regulated electric and natural gas utilities are prohibited from disconnections through March 31st.

Customers should explore their options to manage their bills over the winter and avoid having a large balance become due in the spring. Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program application period is open until June 20th, or until funding is exhausted. Utility customers may be eligible for LIHEAP funding if their household income in the last 30-day period is at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. Many households that were not previously eligible may now qualify if they are now unemployed or underemployed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Call the Illinois LIHEAP Hotline at 1-877-411-9276 or visit the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity's website to determine eligibility or to find an agency that can help with applications.

Regulated electric and

gas utilities are offering extended bill payment options, including up to 24 months to pay amounts past due as well as bill assistance to customers who are facing financial hardships.

"The Original"  
**CROSSTOWN**  
GARAGE DOOR SERVICE INC.  
5212 S. Archer Ave. (773) 284-1100  
www.crosstowndoorservice.com

**DIRECT CREMATION**  
**\$1,800** For Families That Don't Desire Visitation  
Ocwieja-Robles Funeral Home and Cremation Service  
4256 S. Mozart (773) 254-3838  
(Corner of Pope John Paul II Dr. & Mozart)  
Serving the community since 1964

**St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta Catholic Parish Welcomes You**  
Both Churches are Handicapped Accessible  
**Masses at St. Barbara**  
Bridgeport — 2859 S. Throop  
Saturday, 5 PM.  
Rosary: Sunday, 5:30 AM  
6 AM & 9:30 AM Sunday Masses  
**Weekday Schedule (Chapel)**  
Tue., Thurs., & Sat. 8 AM Mass  
**Masses at St. Therese**  
Chinatown — 218 W. Alexander  
Sunday Masses  
8AM & 10:30AM in English  
**Weekday Schedule**  
Mon., Wed., & Fri. 8 AM Mass  
Check out our newly remodeled and air conditioned Church!  
St. Barbara: 312-842-7979 St. Therese: 312-842-6777 School 312-326-2837  
This Sunday, January 10th, Mass on Facebook/YouTube at 10:30 a.m. in English  
**THURSDAY BINGO at ST. BARBARA POSTPONED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE** B3266

## CHICAGO HEAT ORDINANCE MANDATES INDOOR TEMPS FOR RENTAL UNITS

DAY 68° | NIGHT 66°



chi.gov/heat

## Information for Borrowers Struggling with Debt During the COVID-19 Pandemic



### EVICITION INFORMATION

Governor Pritzker has issued an Executive Order that says this protection is available to Illinois residents through 1/9/2021. To qualify for this protection, tenants must show:

- They expect to earn no more than \$99,000 in annual income for calendar year 2020 (or \$198,000 if filing taxes jointly) or had not been required to report any income in 2019 to the IRS or received a stimulus check from the CARES Act.
- They are unable to pay full rent or housing payment due to substantial loss of income, loss of hours or work, a lay-off, or extraordinary out of pocket medical expenses.
- They are using their best efforts to make timely partial payments.
- Eviction would likely make the tenant homeless or forced to live in close quarters with new people or a shared living setting.

Tenants who do not owe rent are not required to submit a declaration form to their landlords. Eviction enforcement can only be applied if a tenant has been found to "pose a direct threat to the health and safety of other tenants or an immediate and severe risk to property."

### MORTGAGE INFORMATION

If you have a federally-backed mortgage (FHFA, HUD, or VA loan), you have the right to request forbearance (meaning you can temporarily pause your mortgage payment). This relief can last for up to 180 days and can be extended for up to 180 days.

You must call your mortgage servicer to request this relief- it is not automatic. Your mortgage servicer is the company you pay each month for your mortgage. If you're not sure if you have a federally backed mortgage, your servicer will also be able to tell you.

- If you need help, call now. The deadline to request forbearance is:
  - o FHFA forbearance must be requested by 1/31/2021.
  - o HUD loan forbearance request has been extended to 2/28/2021.

**IMPORTANT:** When your forbearance period is over, you will still owe any missed payments. When you call your mortgage servicer, ask about repayment options.

If you have a federally-backed mortgage, you currently cannot be foreclosed upon, but be aware that this moratorium may be ending soon.

- FHFA foreclosure moratorium ends 1/31/2021.
- VA foreclosure moratorium ends 2/28/2021.
- HUD foreclosure moratorium ends 2/28/2021.

If you do not have a federally-backed mortgage, your home can be foreclosed upon and there is no guarantee of forbearance relief. Call your mortgage servicer to discuss any options they may have available. Need help? Contact a HUD-approved housing counselor. [www.hud.gov/states/illinois](http://www.hud.gov/states/illinois)

### STUDENT LOAN INFORMATION

Federal student loan borrower relief has been extended until 1/31/2021. This includes interest being waived on all loans, collections on defaulted loans is halted, and loan payments are suspended (all federal student loans have been put in forbearance). This is automatic- borrowers do not need to call.

**IMPORTANT:** When the forbearance period is over, you will need to pay back any missed payments. This will not need to be paid in one lump sum. Call your servicer today to discuss repayment options. You can also visit [www.studentaid.gov/loan-simulator](http://www.studentaid.gov/loan-simulator).

Private student loan borrowers need to contact their servicer to discuss if any relief is available. Questions? Need further help? Call the Federal Student Loan Support Center at (800) 557-7394.

EMISSIONS FAILURE SPECIALISTS \* GUARANTEED RESULTS  
**Autotime** GET READY FOR WINTER AND DRIVE CAREFREE!  
COMPLETE AUTO SERVICE  
3430 W. 47th St.  
773/376-4264  
Master Auto & Truck Technicians  
Certified In All Areas Of Repair!  
ACDelco  
Mon. - Fri. 6 a.m.-6p.m.  
Sat. 6 a.m. -12 noon  
• TOWING SERVICE



## City Services For Winter Season

The Office of Emergency Management and Communications, Department of Streets and Sanitation, Department of Family and Support Services, Peoples Gas, other City departments and sister agencies reminded residents about the City's available services during the winter months and provided residents with tips to stay safe during inclement weather.

The OEMC coordinates response efforts to emergencies and works with the National Weather Service to monitor conditions throughout the year.

For additional winter weather preparedness tips, visit [chicagov.gov/oemc](http://chicagov.gov/oemc).

The Department of Streets and Sanitation manages more than 9,400 lane miles of roadway, maintains a fleet of over 300 snow vehicles and has 400,000 tons of salt stationed at 19 salt piles throughout the city.

Chicago's annual winter Overnight Parking Ban is currently in effect and will be enforced through April 1, 2021, daily from 3 a.m. to 7 a.m., regardless of snow. Violators will face a minimum \$150 towing fee, a \$60 ticket and a storage fee of \$25 per day. Vehicles in violation will be towed to Pounds 2 (10301 S. Doty Ave) or 6 (701 N. Sacramento Ave.).

Chicagoans can visit [www.chicagoshowers.org](http://www.chicagoshowers.org) for a map of streets impacted by the ban. Motorists can visit [www.chicagoshowers.org](http://www.chicagoshowers.org) or call 311 to find out if their vehicle was towed.

The Chicago Department of Public Health reminds residents to get a flu shot. The combination of flu and COVID-19 could overwhelm healthcare settings.

Department of Family

and Support Services Warming Areas are posted at [Chicago.gov/FSS](http://Chicago.gov/FSS).

The Department of Water Management reminds residents to prevent frozen pipes and keep a trickle of water running. If pipes freeze, do not use candles or any open flame to thaw them. Use a hair dryer or heating pad. For more info, visit [www.chicago.gov/water](http://www.chicago.gov/water).

The National Weather Service in Chicago suggests keeping an eye on the forecast even 3-5 days out and consider how the expected conditions will impact you and how you can prepare.

Motorists should take extra precautions to winterize vehicles and have necessary supplies on-the-go.

Peoples Gas agreed to voluntarily suspend residential disconnections through April 2021. From Dec. 1 to March 31, the annual winter moratorium will protect residential customers from natural gas disconnections. Additionally, extended payment arrangements and financial assistance for relief to customers are available amid the pandemic. Learn more by visiting [PeoplesGas.com/payment-bill/assistance](http://PeoplesGas.com/payment-bill/assistance) or call (866) 556-6000.

Peoples Gas customers who are having trouble paying their bills and meet the specific household income guidelines may be eligible for a grant. The Share the Warmth program, which is administered by the Community and Economic Development Association, provides heating grants to limited and fixed-income households. Eligible customers can receive grants of up to \$200 on their bills.

## Snowfall Fun At Brookfield Zoo



Photo Captions—credit Jim Schulz/Chicago Zoological Society

Several of Brookfield Zoo's animals enjoyed the first major snowfall of the season, especially Hudson, one of the zoo's polar bears, who kept rolling around in the snow. Amur leopards, Sasha and his mother Lisa also were playful in their outdoor habitat. Hudson, a 14-year-old polar bear at Brookfield Zoo, thoroughly seemed to enjoy the Chicago area's first major snowfall of the season.

## Garfield Conservatory Winter Flower Show

Garfield Park Conservatory, 300 N. Central Park Ave. will conduct a 30-minute virtual tour of the 2020 Winter Flower Show: Gratitude on Saturday, Jan. 9th at 10:30 a.m.

This tour will include a variety of camera angles and a wealth of information about the growing habits and care that go in to poinsettias, the history of flower shows and much more.

Pre-registration is required, \$5 per registration link. <https://garfieldconservatory.org/event/virtual-tour-of-winter-flower-show-gratitude-2/>

An introduction to Air Plants for ages 18 and up will be held on Saturday, Jan. 30th from 11 a.m. to 12 noon. The fee is \$20.

Greenhouse Coordinator Emilia Areliano will

review the basics of air plants and demonstrate display options that do not rely on glue. Air Plant Kits will be available for purchase. Register at <https://garfieldconservatory.org/event/intro-to-air-plants/>

A Virtual Sustainable Seed Starting Class will be conducted on Saturday, Jan. 23rd from 11 a.m. to 12 noon.

Greenhouse Coordinator Emilia Areliano will review components in standard seed starting and potting soil mixes and explore sustainable alternatives. Materials will be available for purchase. The fee is \$20. Register <https://garfieldconservatory.org/event/diy-sustainable-seed-starting-and-potting-mixes-virtual-class/>

## New City Laws Now In Effect

Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot, along with various City Departments and agencies, is informing residents, workers and businesses of new local laws, regulations and deadlines that they should be aware of in 2021. These new laws include: the implementation of important protections for Chicago's workers; regulations to reform the shared housing industry to ensure safe and responsible operation; the extension of relief measures for businesses; the legalization of Accessory Dwelling Units in pilot areas; the implementation of new revenue sources that help close an historic budget gap without overly burdening any one group and policy changes to Automatic Speed Enforcement to enhance public safety.

"As we enter 2021 with renewed hope, the City is working to implement new laws passed this year that make our city safer, more equitable and more sustainable," said Mayor Lightfoot. "These laws affect everyone from workers and small businesses to travelers and homeowners, and we want to make sure that everyone is aware of the regulations and deadlines that affect their lives."

### Minimum Wage

The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the importance of Chicago's workers, and their essential role in keeping our city running and our residents safe. It is more important than ever to ensure that workers have the protections and financial stability that they deserve. On July 1, 2021, as a fulfillment of an ordinance passed in 2019, hundreds of thousands of Chicagoans will get a raise. On that day, Chicago's minimum wage will increase to \$15 an hour at large businesses and \$14.50 an hour for workers at businesses with 20 or fewer employees. Also on July 1, the minimum wage for tipped workers will increase to \$9.00 an hour, with employees required to make up the difference if base wage plus tips do not equal \$15.00 an hour. This effort, styled as the "Fight for \$15", was the culmination of years of efforts on the part of organized labor and workers' rights advocates, and pushed to resolution through Mayor Lightfoot's efforts to bring businesses of all sizes to the table.

### Shared Housing Reforms

In September 2020, City Council passed an ordinance that reforms the regulation of the Shared Housing industry in Chicago. As part of this landmark ordinance, a series of new regulatory measures will come into effect on April 1, 2021 that will ensure public safety and accountability within the industry. As part of this new regulatory structure, Chicagoans that use platforms like Airbnb or HomeAway among others to rent their residential units will now need to apply directly with the Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection and pay a new \$125 registration fee. This will improve the City's ability to ensure regulations are being met and take enforcement when necessary against problem locations.

### Accessory Dwelling Unit Legalization

Starting May 1, 2021, Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) will be legalized in five areas around the city, increasing access to safe, affordable housing for thousands of Chicagoans. Under this new program, attics, basements and coach houses will be lawfully permitted in these zones and the Department of Housing will launch a three-year evaluation period to report on ADU activities and make recommendations for a permanent citywide policy. These areas include: North zone covering parts of the West Ridge, Edgewater, Uptown, Lake View, North Center, and Lincoln Square community areas; Northwest zone covering parts of the Albany Park, Irving Park, Avondale, Hermosa, Logan Square, West Town, Near West Side, and East Garfield

Park community areas; West zone covering parts of the East Garfield Park, West Garfield Park, North Lawndale, and South Lawndale (Little Village) community areas; South zone covering parts of the Ashburn, Auburn Gresham, West Lawn, Chicago Lawn, Washington Heights, Roseland, Chatham, Greater Grand Crossing, Englewood, West Englewood, Washington Park, and Woodlawn community areas; and, Southeast zone covering parts of the South Chicago, East Side, South Deering, and Hegewisch community areas.

### Extension of Business Relief

As thousands of Chicago businesses continue to deal with the significant impact of the COVID-19 crisis, the City has moved to give further relief to businesses by extending critical relief efforts and renewal dates into 2021. As a part of these measures, all existing Sidewalk Cafes will be now be able to operate until May 1, 2021 without needing to renew or pay a renewal fee. Additionally, all business and public vehicle licenses with an expiration date between March 15, 2020 and June 15, 2021 will be considered active and will not need to pay a renewal fee until July 15, 2021. Licenses will have until July 15, 2021 to renew without paying a late fee.

### Vehicle Fuel Tax and Cloud Tax

In order to close an historic \$1.2 billion deficit, the City's 2021 pandemic budget relied on a number of revenue sources and cost savings designed to minimize the burden on any single business sector or resident. Among those will be a series of modest increases in taxes and fees that come into effect on January 1, 2021. This includes an increase in the Vehicle Fuel Tax by \$0.03 per gallon on non-aviation purchases. To fill up a 12-gallon gas tank, motorists will see an increase of approximately \$0.36. Additionally, there will be a 1.75 percentage point increase to the cloud tax which is applied to computer leases of cloud software and cloud infrastructure. This tax aligns with the tax imposed on all other lease, rental or use of rented, personal property currently taxed at 9 percent.

### Parking Meter Rates

Consistent with legislation passed last year and in accordance with the calculation therein, the parking meter rates for the \$2-per-hour zone will increase by a quarter to \$2.25 per hour on January 2. Rates in the \$4.50 and \$7.00 zone remain unchanged. Through the hard work in managing this contract of over the years, the City will begin to generate revenues off the parking meter contract for the first time since its inception.

## Anifer Honored



Cook County Clerk Karen A. Yarbrough made a holiday presentation to Mary Ann Anifer, one of Cook County's longest serving election judges (59 years), who also serves as a crossing guard at Conrady Junior High School, Hickory Hills.

## "Get Hired" Website

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and Illinois Department of Employment Services launched Get Hired Illinois – a new portal designed to connect workers with available job and career training opportunities.

Residents will have free access to online workforce development courses via a partnership with Coursera. With Illinois facing record unemployment as a result of COVID-19, the Coursera partnership and Get Hired page will serve as important measures in the efforts to get people back to work.

Residents and employers may access [www.illinois.gov/gethired](http://www.illinois.gov/gethired).

The new portal blends

resources to provide a one-stop-shop for job seekers and employers – providing information on job opportunities as well as unemployment resources. The page is designed to be user friendly for job seekers of all levels and backgrounds and allows employers to upload jobs, virtual career fairs and training opportunities.

Coursera provides workers looking for new employment opportunities additional resources for professional development. After completing the online programs, participants will have the opportunity to continue their studies at a local community college or university, or to connect with employers through their local workforce boards.

## ELECTRIC AND GAS DISCONNECTIONS ARE STOPPED

Call for financial assistance or to get reconnected:

ComEd. (800) 334-7661

PEOPLES GAS (866) 556-6001



CHICAGO.GOV



## GROWING HOME

## EMPLOYMENT TRAINING PROGRAM

Growing Home is a paid 12-week training program that builds skills for job readiness and success through a comprehensive, engaging and supportive workforce development curriculum. Based in Chicago's Englewood neighborhood, Growing Home combines lessons on work readiness, environmental literacy, psychological self-sufficiency, and ongoing post-graduation career success. Additionally, program participants have opportunities to earn professional certifications, access to free legal consultation for record sealing and expungement, and the support of a case manager available to provide referrals for supportive services.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Growing Home is prioritizing health and safety and operating the Job Training Program virtually. This means that all classroom-based aspects of the program are currently facilitated online (via Zoom), but that options for in-person components are re-evaluated regularly in accordance with health and safety protocols.

### HOW TO APPLY:

Please visit [www.growinghomeinc.org/opportunities](http://www.growinghomeinc.org/opportunities) to learn more about the program and to submit an online application. Call us at 773-434-7144 ext. 3 with any questions about the program or application!

Last day to submit an application for Cohort 1: Wednesday, Jan 13th, 2021

First day of work for Cohort 1: Monday, February 1st, 2021

Missed the deadline? Call or visit our website for info about future Cohorts!

The Growing Home Job Training Program is based at 5814 S. Wood Street, Chicago, IL 60636. Phone: 773-434-7144 ext. 3.

### IMPORTANT INFO

#### EMPLOYMENT DETAILS:

- pay is \$14/hr, paid every 2 weeks
- minimum 20 hrs/week

#### TO QUALIFY, YOU MUST:

- be a Chicago resident
- be age 18 or older
- be currently unemployed
- have basic reading and math skills
- be able to complete a written application
- be comfortable with basic computer and internet navigation

#### REQUIRED DOCUMENTS:

- Due to the various funding sources of the Growing Home Job Training Program, all participants MUST provide the following documents to be eligible for enrollment:
- Social Security Card for self
  - Valid Photo ID w/Chicago address for self
  - Social Security Cards and Birth Certificates for any dependent children
  - Social Security Card and Photo ID for legal spouse if married and not separated
- \*clearly legible copies acceptable for all required docs

## Celebrating 55 Years

Recently on Chicago's Best - see us at Find out about our catering specials at [www.palermosof63rd.com](http://www.palermosof63rd.com)

**PALERMO'S** Of 63rd Street  
3751 W. 63rd St. • (773) 585-5002  
Call after 3 p.m. - Se Habla Espanol

21014 S. La Grange Rd, Frankfort IL (815) 464-5300  
2893 East US Highway 30, Merrillville-Hobart, IN (219) 940-3599  
(Between Home Depot & The Room Place)

<p><b>Pick-Up or Delivery</b></p> <p><b>\$150 Off</b></p> <p>Any Palermo's Lrg. Pizza or Free 1 Liter RC</p> <p>•Thin •Deep Dish •Stuffed</p> <p>Good at Chicago or Frankfort</p> <p>Limit one coupon per order. Exp. 1/31/21</p>	<p><b>Pick-Up or Delivery</b></p> <p><b>\$250 Off</b></p> <p>Any Palermo's Ex. Lrg. Pizza or Free 2 Liter RC</p> <p>•Thin •Deep Dish •Stuffed</p> <p>Good at Chicago or Frankfort</p> <p>Limit one coupon per order. Exp. 1/31/21.</p>
---	--

**Carry-Out Only**

**Catering Package** Starting At **\$695** person

30 people minimum or by the tray for any amount of people.

Call for details.

Not valid with any other offer. Exp. 1/31/21.