

Talk of the TownshipSM



Newsletter of Moraine Township, Illinois

Vol. 6, No. 2 - Winter 2012

Talkin' Briefly About Our Services

Year-end reports to the Board regarding the year 2011 include these statistics:

- **Food Pantry:** In 2011, each month we served over 90 households—from Highwood (35), Highland Park (57) and some miscellaneous—plus 230 to 290 individuals at our Food Pantry. Thank you to residents donating as families, to the Postal Workers collection day, and those directing their organizational food drives to help us stock our Pantry with nonperishables.
- **Transportation:** In 2011, our two Moraine Door-to-Door paratransit vans made a total of 3,869 rider trips (plus 592 caregivers accompanying some users at no extra charge), traveling 43,825 miles, serving our seniors, disabled and other low-income residents, primarily to medical appointments within a 15 mile radius. We charge just \$4 per ride, and in case of real need, waive even that fee. The real cost per ride is far higher. In FY11-12, fares for low income riders to medical appointments were offset by a generous \$35,000 grant from the Healthcare Foundation of Highland Park. Fares collected contributed about \$12,000 and the remainder of the costs for this highly valued personal service are borne by the township.

Qualified residents may reserve a seat 48 hours in advance, for trips weekdays between 8:30am and 4:00pm. Those interested in learning more about this service may call our dedicated line at (847) 432-3000, or consult our website. ■

Boundaries Change In Lake County Moraine Formerly 30, Now 22 Precincts

Undoubtedly, our residents are aware that the U.S. Census of 2010 tracked population density changes, resulting in alterations to various voting districts. There have been ample press reports about boundary changes within our state, and locally, Lake County Board districts have been redrawn. But it may come as a surprise that the County also revised political precinct boundaries within the 18 Lake County townships. Moraine was no exception.

The County Clerk's office redistributed certain voter services in response to Census data. And, as Township Clerk Ellen Gussin has been reporting, the increased number of opportunities for citizens to vote ahead of actual election days has also been having an impact. Provided with convenient Vote By Mail and extended in-person Early Voting options, the number of people actually needing to be serviced at local precinct voting locations has declined on official election days. Therefore, precincts—and along with them, polling places—have been consolidated. Moraine Township, formerly with Precincts #200 to 229 (30 precincts) now has just 22 precincts (#203-224). Township geographical boundaries, of course, have not changed at all.

To obtain more details, including viewing the new maps, stop by our office or consult Moraine's web pages for Clerk, the "About" page and its links, and "Boundaries" page, linked from our home page at <http://morainetownship.org>. ■

Talkin' About:

- ▲ *Township Service Achievements*
- ▲ *Political Boundary Changes*
- ▲ *AssessorTalk: Quad Impact*
- ▲ *ClerkTalk: Vote March 20*
- ▲ *Board: Grants, Latino Advisors*
- ▲ *Utilizing Our Website*
- ▲ *Board Meeting Times Altered*
- ▲ *Calendar*
- ▲ *Contact Us*

Mission

Moraine Township government administers public funds to provide responsive, efficient and compassionate services and support for residents in need.

Our boundaries include all of Highwood, most of Highland Park, and small portions of Deerfield and Lake Forest. The Township officially provides general assistance to individuals; property assessment services in the Assessor's office; election and record-keeping functions in the Clerk's office; and operates two cemeteries, Mooney and Daggitt, in Highland Park.

Calendar

Moraine Township Board of Trustees meets in the Township Office
 777 Central Avenue, Highland Park
 2nd Thursdays of the month at 5:30 pm
 &
 4th Thursdays of the month at 7:00 pm
 This meeting is recorded for cablecasting.
 NOTE NEW START TIMES

~ Of Special Interest ~

Spotlight on Nonprofit Agencies

Agencies receiving Township grants discuss their services & community needs at meetings 4th Thursdays. Attend our regular meeting in person or watch us on Cable Channel 10
 Thursdays at 12:30 pm, Saturdays at 6:00 pm

Moraine Township Grant Application
 Next Deadline: February 1, 2013

Talk to the Township

Township Office (847) 432-3240
 Supervisor (847) 432-3240
 Clerk (847) 432-3240
 Assessor (847) 432-2100

Van Line (847) 432-3000

Fax (847) 432-2178

Email info@morainetownship.org

Mari Barnes Super@morainetownship.org
 Ellen Gussin Clerk@morainetownship.org
 Patty Powers PPowers@lakecountyil.gov
 Dwayne Douglas TrusteeDouglas@morainetownship.org
 Bryna Gamson TrusteeGamson@morainetownship.org
 Margoth Moreno TrusteeMoreno@morainetownship.org
 Jackie Schechter TrusteeSchechter@morainetownship.org

<http://morainetownship.org>

SuperTalk: Mari Barnes



This issue is a brief roundup highlighting some of our activities over the past six months, and a reminder of the kinds of services you can expect from Moraine. As a cost-cutting effort, so that more funds can be put directly into services, this issue is shorter than usual. We hope that residents will use our website for links to helpful resources and more details about our functions. You are encouraged to also drop by or call us with questions.

Local taxpayers can share our pride in knowing that Moraine Township actively fulfills its role as the community's safety net. Unfortunately, because of the protracted recession, people who never thought they'd be in need of help or direction are coming into the office. And that's what we're here for: first stop guidance into the options for assistance that government (and generous donors) can provide. Our *General Assistance* Manager Paula Peddle has been seeing new faces, and fielding inquiries about sources of supplemental support, from utility bills to medical resources. In an emergency, of course, Moraine covers basic food, shelter and safety needs, but most of our clients are assisted with information about what's available and how to apply for it. Our *confidential services* have been helping residents newly faced with mounting bills and loss of income.

The Food Pantry is well-utilized, as you've read on page one. We are always happy to receive unexpired nonperishable items for our clients, and provide a list of suggestions on our website. Some items may surprise you. Access through the home page.

Records Manager Shannon Mosier has been loading detailed information into our new customized cemeterly database. Her work is enhanced by the "archaeological" survey report we received, so eventually, we will have a comprehensive, up-to-date record.

Our Phyllis Santullano Holiday Gift Drive this year served 497 children. For the first time, we distributed right from the Township Office on Central, and that worked out very well. Moraine staff this year got directly in touch with parents so we were certain they were interested in participating; we'd discovered in the past that some families put on the list by local schools had not been aware and did not need to be or want to be recipients. Also, over the past few years, we've invited other groups to work with us to meet goals of list nonduplication, in the interests of fairness, and not exhausting or confusing generous donors in the community.

Along those lines of gaining efficiencies, we continue to work in cooperation with other governments. I attend monthly meetings with other Lake County township Supervisors, *sharing innovative ideas*. We work cooperatively with our constituent cities for resource sharing, including utilizing Highland Park's *bulk purchase gasoline* for our Door-to-Door vans. In February, we cut costs and wear and tear on our copying machine (as well as going more "green") by *implementing electronic grant application submissions*. Moraine continues to be well-represented at *regional meetings seeking to improve transportation options* throughout the County. (In fact, you will find increased information on our website's "Transportation" page, with links to loads of information about getting around the entire metropolitan area by public transport.)

We are proud to report that the Healthcare Foundation of Highland Park recently informed us that they *will increase their grant award* for the coming fiscal year (April 1)

concludes on back page

AssessorTalk: Patty Powers Busy Quadrennial Reassessment Period

Our office was busy with the "quad" reassessments for 2011 while property owners were paying second installments on 2010 last fall. Assessors are obliged to consider sales from the most recent three years (in this case 2008, 2009 and 2010) when appraising property values for the present one. In addition, every four years, we make adjustments to boundaries of "neighborhoods" (nearby and similarly-sized groupings of homes), and tweak certain other factors, to evenly reflect market changes. Rarely are property owners thrilled with the results, especially when, contrary to their expectations in a down market, their property appraisal has gone up, or not down enough. So, it came as no surprise to us that a record 2,773 appeals were filed last fall.

As always, our office staff has worked hard to be fair, and in some cases have agreed with the property owners presenting objections. We work with all to supply requested information, and try to explain the reasons why a home on one side of the township is not going to have the same value as another similar one in an entirely different neighborhood. We have spent a great deal of our time these past few months at Board of Appeals hearings.

As residents and taxpayers ourselves, we often wish the facts of the matter were not so, but sympathetic as we may be, assessors must work by the book. All of us are affected if property values go down: taxing bodies request what they need to operate, and all of us



pay more to make up for those lowered property appraisals.

We would like to remind property owners of opportunities to reduce a part of their tax burden by being certain that the information on the assessment notice is accurate, and that they have signed up for all the exemptions to which they may be entitled. Much information is available on our website's Assessor page, linked to County resources. ■

CommunityTalk View From the Board

Moraine Trustees act as liaisons to two key citizen advisory committees, one for Grants and one for Latino affairs.

Every February 1, the Citizen Grant Advisory Committee starts its work reviewing between 20 to 25 proposals from a variety of nonprofit agencies providing services to Moraine Township residents. This winter is no exception.

Says co-liaison Trustee Jackie Schechter, "We have several key local agencies hurt badly by the recession, and piled on by lost support from the State of Illinois and even the United Way, which changed funding priorities."

"In advance of finalizing next year's budget, the Board has already made an unofficial commitment to ensure that our most vulnerable local agencies will be covered, even if we must take the funds from our reserves. This is that 'rainy day' for which funds were saved," adds co-liaison Trustee Bryna Gamson.

Trustees Dwayne Douglas and Margoth Moreno are co-liaisons to the Township's Latino Advisory Committee. Their recent efforts have focused on finding solutions to gaps in resources for that community. Financial literacy is on the agenda. Several grantee agencies may cooperatively fill those needs. ■



ClerkTalk: Ellen Gussin Vote in the March 20 Primary

Many registered voters in Moraine Township will find themselves voting at a new location as of the March 20 Primary due to changes in precinct boundaries and consolidation of polling places. Every registered voter in Lake County should have received Voter I.D. cards with revised boundary and jurisdiction information on them. If you misplaced or did not receive your card, contact the County Clerk at VoterRegistration@lakecountyil.gov or call them at (847) 377-2410.

New voters/residents may register at our office before February 21. In person Early Voting begins on February 27 at Lake County's North Shore Health Center in Highland Park, except for Moraine Lake Forest residents, who now will go to their City Hall (Early Voting only).

Regarding political jurisdictions, although redrawn, our U. S. Congressional District throughout Moraine Township remains #10, along with Illinois Representative District 58 and Illinois Senate District 29. However, Lake County Board/Forest Preserve District boundaries were changed; all of us formerly in #22 or #23 are now in the new #11th District.

Moraine provides many relevant links online to Lake County government's extensive website (direct <http://lakecountyil.gov>). Their GIS maps department posts detailed maps from political to environmental at <http://www.lakecountyil.gov/Mapping/Pages/Default.aspx>. The County Clerk's pages provide a wealth of information on voter services and election information, including what's on your ballot. Check them out—and be sure to vote! ■

SuperTalk....continued from page 2

to \$40,000, underwriting Moraine Door-to-Door paratransit van rides to medical appointments for low income seniors and disabled residents. On behalf of the hundreds of residents we serve each year, thank you, Healthcare Foundation!

The Board of Trustees voted a capital grant of \$50,000 to Family Service to cover remodeling costs of their new **Nuestro Center**, which opened in November. The community can take great pride in knowing their tax dollars are working to improve education, socialization and health of our neediest neighbors, who are becoming stronger, contributing citizens because of this investment. They can always use more volunteers. The new location is 742 Sheridan Road in Highwood.

Please note that the Board meeting times have changed slightly to 5:30pm and 7:00pm. See page 2 for details.

“Talk” to you again next summer! ■

Talk Back/Volunteer

We welcome feedback on any or all of our programs in Moraine Township. If you have a comment or question about something you’ve read in this issue of *Talk of the Township*, contact the Supervisor’s Office at (847) 432-3240 or email Super@morainetownship.org.

If you are interested in joining our efforts in public service – for brief or on-going tasks – also contact the Supervisor’s Office. We are always looking for volunteers to serve on Citizen Advisory Committees, in the following or other developing *ad hoc* capacities:

- Food Pantry/ Pantry Plants
- Grant Advisory Committee
- Latino Advisory Committee
- Senior Services
- Transportation
- Township History Project



Moraine Township
777 Central Avenue
Highland Park IL 60035
 ph 847.432.3240 • fx 847.432.2178
 Van Reservations 847.432.3000
 Assessor’s Office 847.432.2100
 email info@morainetownship.org
 http://morainetownship.org

PRSR STD
 US Postage
 PAID
 Permit No. 31
 Highland Park IL

Annual Santullano Gift Drive Held at Township

Santa (volunteer Peter DeBellis) joins veteran Moraine Door-to-Door paratransit van driver Ken Shaw, Scheduler/Receptionist Grizell Toledo, Records Manager Shannon Mosier (wearing festive antlers) and Supervisor Mari Barnes as they prepare to meet excited families coming to pick up donated gifts. The Drive was relocated this year to the Township office.



(at left) Donor Frank Lomoro from Sunset Foods smiles for the camera as he drops off one of his “Secret Santa” presents.

Gift Cards brought in by Alicia Margolis from the Holiday Women’s Networking Luncheon of the Highland Park Chamber of Commerce were also welcomed by our client families.

Remember, the Food Pantry can use your nonexpired nonperishables at any time for weekly distribution.

