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# Village View

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## B-MAC EDITION

Volume 14 | Number 6 | March 17, 2020

Blue Island, Midlothian, Alsip, Crestwood

### Alsip prepares for coronavirus

by Jan Glaz

At the Village of Alsip Board of Trustees meeting March 2, Mayor John Ryan announced he had recently taken part in a conference call with 85 city and village mayors in regard to taking precautions to prevent the spread of coronavirus. It was determined that emergency first responders, public works employees and all those who's job requires contact with the public need to make sure they have ample supplies to protect themselves.

Ryan stated: "The Village is stocking up on preventive protective items, employees will be washing their hands more frequently, and hand

sanitizers are being installed throughout the Village Hall."

He added: "I received a message from the Illinois Municipal League (website: www.iml.org) to remind everyone that this is the time for businesses, schools and others to begin preparing for a possible spread of the virus.

"The Center for Disease Control (website: www.cdc.gov) officials request that personal meetings be replaced with video or telephone conferences and everyone should increase their tele-networking options in order to reduce physical contact. The

World Health Organization (website: www.who.int) has declared the Coronavirus a public health emergency of international concern. We will be posting further information on our Village website: www.villageofalsip.org and social media."

**In other official business:** Alsip trustees agreed to have M.E. Simpson perform a Water Distribution Leak Survey for a sum not to exceed \$19,500, and they approved a request to purchase and have installed two Weil Ejector Pumps for the lower level of the Police Department from Birk Plumbing at a cost not to exceed \$22,987.

### Crestwood abides by Property Tax Cap

by Jan Glaz

Residents in the Village of Crestwood will be asked to consider whether the village should adopt "home rule." Home rule gives local residents increased ability to find local solutions to local issues. A municipality is automatically "home rule" when its population exceeds 25,000 residents, with fewer than 25,001 residents may elect by referendum to become home rule entities.

Tax caps refer to the Illinois law that prohibits a non-home rule community such as Crestwood from increasing property taxes by more than the increase in the consumer price index, or 5%, whichever is less.

At the Board of Trustees meeting March 5, officials considered and approved a Resolution requiring the Village of Crestwood, Cook County, Illinois, to abide by the Property Tax Cap if the Village becomes Home

Rule. Thus, if home rule is approved by the voters, the village's share of a resident's property tax will be no greater than what it would be if Crestwood remained a non-home rule community.

In other official business, bids received for the Playfield Phase II Sanitary Sewer Rehabilitation were announced as: Performance Pipelining, Ottawa, IL, \$1,830,244; Insituform Technologies USA, LLC, Chesterfield, Missouri, \$2,039,267.60; and VisuSewer of Illinois, LLC, Bridgeview, IL, \$2,273,824.60. The board approved the bid award at the recommendation of Farnsworth Engineering, to the low bidder Performance Pipelining, 1551 W. Norris Drive, Ottawa, IL, in the amount of \$1,830,244.

**Mark your calendar:** The Kiwanis Club of Crestwood and of the City of Oak

Forest is seeking members for their local chapter of the Kiwanis Club and cordially invite anyone interested to a meet and greet event being held Wednesday, March 25, at 6:30 p.m., at Beggar's Pizza, 15600 S. Cicero Avenue, in Oak Forest.

The Kiwanis Club of Crestwood and Oak Forest serves children and families in Alsip, Blue Island, Country Club Hills, Crestwood, Midlothian and Tinley Park through initiatives that include fighting hunger, providing warmth in the cold months of the year, and encouraging camaraderie and fun. Club meetings take place every first Wednesday of the month at 6:30 p.m., at the Elks Lodge #1596 located at 4428 W. Midlothian Turnpike, in Crestwood. Those looking to attend the 'meet and greet' are asked to please register by calling President Tim Geraci.



Pictured (L to R) Trustee Pat Hanlon, Trustee Rich Lewandowski, Supervisor Eamon McMahon, Clerk Katie Elwood, Trustee Kelly Sexton-Kelly.

### Worth Township appointment approved

The Worth Township Board of Trustees unanimously voted to appoint Trustee Eamon McMahon as the new Township Supervisor at the March special meeting.

### Moraine Valley extends spring break, shifts classes online

Moraine Valley Community College is extending students' spring break through March 22. All classes will resume on March 23 in an online format for a minimum of four weeks, ending April 19.

Currently, there are no known or reported cases of exposure to COVID-19, commonly known as the coronavirus, on campus, and no students or employees have tested positive for the virus. The move to online courses is precautionary.

While face-to-face classes will not be held, the college's main campus in Palos Hills and locations in Blue Island and Tinley Park will remain open for business operations and student support services. Students needing access to support services or resources that cannot be had online may choose to receive them in person.

All college-sponsored events between now and April 19 are cancelled; some events may be rescheduled. The college's Fine and Performing Arts Center will communicate information about its shows directly with patrons. The Health, Fitness & Recreation Center is open and will communicate any changes directly with its members.

College officials have been monitoring the local situation with COVID-19 and are following all recommendations and guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and state and county public health departments. The college has a high standard of cleanliness for its facilities but will continue to take additional measures to ensure a clean environ-

ment for the benefit of its students, employees and the community.

### Free home energy upgrades

The Chicagoland Vintage Home Association administers the ComEd Energy Efficiency Program energy upgrades offering, providing free weatherization services with an emphasis on attic and sidewall insulation, air sealing, health and safety measures, and installation of energy-saving products to income eligible homeowners of vintage homes in Cook County.

This is a pilot program that is limited to residents of Oak Forest, Midlothian, Lansing, Posen, Crestwood, Thornton, Calumet City and Blue Island.

Go to our website for future information and Application at <https://www.chicagolandvintagehomes.org/apply> or call our office at 312-675-0300 x14 to see what hours we are open. Our office is at 53 W. Jackson Blvd., Ste. 740, Chicago, IL 60604.



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# Village View

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## FAR SOUTH EDITION

Volume 18 | Number 6 | March 17, 2020

Mokena, Oak Forest, Orland Park, Tinley Park

### Tinley Park adds 5% tax at self-storage facilities

by Jan Glaz

Officials in the Village of Tinley Park voted March 3 to adopt an Ordinance that will create a self-storage accommodations tax of 5% on the gross rental or leasing charge of self-storage facilities doing business in Tinley Park. Village Trustee Diane Galante provided details.

Galante reported, effective April 1, upon the privilege of renting or leasing self-service storage facilities in the Village of Tinley Park a tax rate of 5% will be levied on the gross rental or leasing charge. The tax is in addition to any and all other taxes. Self-storage facility units do not pay sales taxes; thus, many communities including Alsip, Countryside, Chicago Heights and Morton Grove have enacted this type of tax.

The 5% tax will be collected by the self-storage facility Owner from the Occupant when collecting the price, charge, or rent to which it applies. Any self-storage facility that fails to timely pay all taxes is subject to pay a penalty equal to the 5% of any unpaid tax and pay interest on any past due balance at the rate of 1% per month.

In addition, if the facility fails to timely file a tax return as required by the Ordinance the facility will pay a penalty equal to 5% of any tax due during the period covered by the tax return. Failure to comply will be grounds for the suspension or revocation of any license or permit issued for the self-storage facility.

Any person found guilty of violating any provision of the Ordinance may, in addition

to any tax or penalty due, be assessed a fine of not less than \$100 and not more than \$750. Each day a violation continues to exist will be considered a separate offense.

Occupants that have entered into a rental agreement prior to April 1, and pre-paid their accounts are exempt as well as a governmental body or nonprofit, including but not limited to bona fide religious, charitable, labor, business, fraternal, educational or veterans' organizations that operate without profit to their members.

### Orland Park grants Gelato business request

by Jan Glaz

The Orland Park Board of Trustees on March 2 granted a Special Use Permit at the request of petitioner, Maram Baker, to allow for the operation of an Italian gelato restaurant, Mastic Pistachio Gelato, 14404 John Humphrey Drive, within 300 feet of a parcel zoned for single-family residential use.

The 1,280-square-foot tenant space leased by Mastic Pistachio Gelato is located within the Horton Center, 14404-4438 John Humphrey Drive. Horton Center devotes 25,600 square feet for retail and 13,000 square feet for offices, at the northwest corner of 144th and John Humphrey Drive, two blocks East of LaGrange Road. Mastic Pistachio Gelato is a welcome addition in the Horton Center, the restaurant's exact opening date has not been announced.

**Meeting endnotes:** Trustees voted in favor of replacing two unmarked

police vehicles with the purchase of two 2020 Ford Utility Police Interceptors from Currie Motors of Frankfort, Illinois. Orland Park staff reported that due to the long lead time on orders for these specially built vehicles, completed vehicles are in high demand.

Currie Motors had two vehicles ready to deliver. The purchase of the two available units include; one with cast alloy wheels at a cost of \$33,479, and one with steel wheels at a cost of \$33,064. The total cost for both vehicles is \$66,543.

**Mark your calendars:** Chicago White Sox, Inc. requested a license to sell raffle tickets at the CJ Wilson Mazda car dealership in Orland Park, 8910 West 159th St. from March 26 through Aug. 31, and the board of trustees agreed. The purpose of this raffle is to help benefit the many charities that the White Sox Charities, Inc. supports. The drawing will be at 1 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 3, at Guaranteed Rate Field.

### Oak Forest saves \$14,125 property maintenance cost

by Jan Glaz

On March 10th the Oak Forest City Council authorized a payment of \$10,756 to the South Suburban Land Bank and Development Authority (SSLBDA), 17730 Oak Park Avenue, Tinley Park, for holding costs on two city properties, 15644 Cicero Ave. and 16800 Kilpatrick Ave. Oak Forest City Administrator, Colleen Julian, provided details in regard to the payment.

"The City recently ap-

proved a reacquisition of 15644 Cicero Avenue and 16800 Kilpatrick Avenue from the SSLBDA. They have held the Cicero and Kilpatrick properties since 2014 and 2016, respectively. The City owes the SSLBDA for holding costs it incurred during this period.

"The invoice for legal \$5,000.00 and insurance of \$5,746.00, a total of \$10,756.00. The South Suburban Land Bank and Development Authority initially indicated that the city would owe maintenance costs in the amount of \$14,125.00 but waived the cost and also waived costs for staff time."

The South Suburban Land Bank and Development Authority (SSLBDA) facilitates the redevelopment of acquired properties through strategic partnerships with developers, community organizations, lenders, and local governments to improve the quality of life, stabilize the tax base, and enhance economic activities that promote sustainable, healthy, and stable communities in a manner consistent with a municipality's plans and priorities. For further information in regard to the SSLBDA please visit their website at: [www.sslbda.org](http://www.sslbda.org)

**City council postscript:** Aldermen adopted an Ordinance amendment in regard to the City's Fire Lane Schedule. Fire Chief, Patrick Duffy, stated, "From time to time the Fire Department will be making adjustments to the Fire Lane Schedule. This ordinance amendment will be adding several areas that Fire Lane signs are posted but lack reference in the current Fire Lane Ordinance.

Streets referenced in the current Fire Lane Ordinance include: Laramie Avenue, 147th Street to 149th Street, West side of street; Keating Avenue, 155th Street to 156th

Street, West side of street; 156th Street, Waverly Avenue to Cicero Avenue, North side of street; 156th Street, Lamont Avenue to Cicero Avenue, South side of street; 157th Street, Lamont Avenue to Cicero Avenue; and 149th Street, Forest Edge Street to 5131 149th Street, South side of street.



Kathleen Pyznarski, Mokena Administrative Assistant

### Mokena welcomes new Administrative Assistant

by Jan Glaz

Mokena officials voted at the March 9 Village Board of Trustees meeting to ratify the appointment of Kathleen Pyznarski to the position of Village Administration Assistant. The position became available as the result of the retirement of long-time Administrative Assistant Judi Frieling. The Village advertised internally, as well as in the media, on job boards at Joliet Junior College, Moraine Valley Junior College, and St. Francis University. The position was also posted with the Illinois Municipal League, on Comcast

Channel 6, and on [www.mokena.org](http://www.mokena.org).

The posting resulted in 158 applicants including three internal candidates, 21 received initial interviews and six from the initial interview were chosen. The remaining six applicants were interviewed by a panel consisting of the Village Administrator Kirk Zoellner. From that interview the top two candidates participated in a final skills testing. Following the skills testing it was determined that Kathleen Pyznarski possessed the skills and qualities best suited for the Administrative Assistant position. Kathleen thanked the Village and received congratulations from the Mayor and Board of Trustees and a round of applause from all present at the board meeting.

**In other news:** Trustees accepted a request from Jeff Graefen, on behalf of Atlas Bobcat, for a Special Use Permit for the outdoor storage of compact contractor equipment, the use of an existing nonconforming pole sign along I-80, and construction of a 4,000 square foot building addition, and landscaping relief on property located at 8100 W. 188th Street, Mokena.

A bid award to Groundskeeper Landscape Care of Mokena met with unanimous board approval for landscape paver installation on Front Street in the amount of \$50,556.80. The paver installation project includes excavation, disposal, preparation of base, installation of brick pavers, and restoration of areas on the north side of Front Street from Mokena Street to Division Street, along with the "node area" on Front Street at Division Street.



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## SOUTH SUBURBAN EDITION

Volume 21 | Number 6 | March 17, 2020

Chicago Ridge, Worth, Palos Hills, Palos Park, Palos Heights

### Chicago Ridge OKs possible dispensary spots

by Matt Mayer

Officials at the past Chicago Ridge Board of Trustees meeting unanimously approved an ordinance amending Article VII titled Cannabis Retailer of Chapter 14 titled Business of the municipal code of the Village of Chicago Ridge which sets limits on the amount cannabis dispensaries and related businesses in the village. The passage of the ordinance allows for three dispensaries in the village with a \$20,000.00 licensing fee for each dispensary for the first year and \$5,000.00 for subsequent years. One cultivation center will be permitted, with the same licensing fees.

Two craft growers will also be allowed, and one cannabis infuser license will be permitted for a facility that directly incorporates cannabis concentrate into products such as edible gummies. Two processing organizations and one trans-

porting organization will be allowed with the licensing fees for these four categories of \$10,000.00 for the first year and \$5,000.00 for subsequent years.

In other business, a resolution for \$143,983.39 for customary billing expenses was approved as well as a payment to GWA for financial services for January 2020. A resolution authorizing the Village of Chicago Ridge's application for Community Development Block Grant funds for resurfacing for \$400,000.00 was also approved.

A resolution authorizing the Village of Chicago Ridge's application for Cook County's Invest in Cook Grant Funds for the Ridgeland Avenue streetscape improvements for \$5000.00 was approved. An ordinance amending Section 12-23 (codes adopted; exceptions) and Article II (building and technical codes) and Chap-

ter 12 (building and building regulations) of the village code of Chicago Ridge was also approved.

A fire department request to hire three full time firefighters/paramedics was approved as well as a remount of a 2014 Road Rescue ambulance with Fire Services Inc. for \$126,903.00, plus an additional 10 percent for unforeseen issues.

A Current Technologies proposal for the replacement of two computers in the village hall for \$3,187.36 was approved as well as an expense reimbursement to Bryan Kryszewski for \$400.00 and an expense reimbursement to Marlene Thoma for \$123.24.

**The following businesses were approved:** Allstate Insurance, a storefront at Chicago Ridge Mall; Trendsetters Cuts, a storefront in Chicago Ridge Mall; and All on Target, a storefront in Chicago Ridge Mall.

training school to operate as a B-1 Special Use within a Business District, located at 6501-6503 W. 127th Street and the council granted Jeffery Williams request.

The City of Palos Heights is collecting food and household donations to support "April Food Day". The event ends on March 31, 2020 and is sponsored by "The United Way of Metro Chicago" to promote awareness of food pantries. All items collected will be distributed to 10 food pantries and shelters throughout the Chicago Southland. For additional information on accepted donations please visit: [www.palosheights.org/CivicAlerts](http://www.palosheights.org/CivicAlerts) or phone City Hall at 708.361.1800.

came before the City Council for approval. 2nd Ward Alderman Jack Clifford, prior to approval, invited Barbara Gabriello to address the City Council in regard to the purpose of their request. Barbara stated, "The new attached garage is already built but where the garage stands is out of City Code and must be moved back to where the original garage stood back when the house was built." City officials voted to allow the residents petition and the garage will be repositioned.

**In other news:** Alderman Clifford requested approval for a petition filed by Jeffery Williams on behalf of Joseph Cannella, Managing Partner of Palos Heights Properties, LLC, to allow a martial arts

### Palos Heights resident builds garage against code

by Jan Glaz

City of Palos Heights residents Barbara and Clark Gabriello, filed a petition with Palos Heights to allow a 3'8" Side Yard (or a 6'4" relief of the 10-foot standard) along the west property line adjacent to a new detached garage, and a 5'11" Rear Yard (or a 4'1" relief of the 10-foot standard for a detached garage) adjacent to a new detached garage, located at 6819 W. 127th Street.

On March 3, Barbara and Clark Gabriello's petition



Pictured (L to R) Trustee Pat Hanlon, Trustee Rich Lewandowski, Supervisor Eamon McMahon, Clerk Katie Elwood, Trustee Kelly Sexton-Kelly.

### Worth Township appointment approved

The Worth Township Board of Trustees unanimously voted to appoint Trustee Eamon McMahon as the new Township Supervisor at the March special meeting.

### Moraine Valley extends spring break, shifts classes online on March 23

Moraine Valley Community College is extending students' spring break through March 22. All classes will resume on March 23 in an online format for a minimum of four weeks, ending April 19.

Currently, there are no known or reported cases of exposure to COVID-19, commonly known as the coronavirus, on campus, and no students or employees have tested positive for the virus. The

move to online courses is precautionary.

While face-to-face classes will not be held, the college's main campus in Palos Hills and locations in Blue Island and Tinley Park will remain open for business operations and student support services. Students needing access to support services or resources that cannot be had online may choose to receive them in person.

All college-sponsored events between now and April 19 are cancelled; some events may be rescheduled. The college's Fine and Performing Arts Center will communicate information about its shows directly with patrons. The Health, Fitness & Recreation Center is open and will communicate any changes directly with its members.

College officials have been monitoring the local situation with COVID-19 and are following all recommendations and guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Preventions, and state and county public health departments. The college has a high

standard of cleanliness for its facilities but will continue to take additional measures to ensure a clean environment for the benefit of its students, employees and the community.

### Barb O'Connor of Palos Heights Kiwanis Club gives check to Center

Barb O'Connor of the Palos Heights Kiwanis Club presents Center, executive director Dave Sanders a \$1,000 donation check for camp scholarships at The Center's.

"A Night to Linger" camp scholarship benefit at the Palos Country Club recently.

This was The Center's eleventh annual benefit for the purpose of sending more children to summer camp, who would otherwise not be able to afford to attend.

The Center is located at 12700 Southwest Highway, Palos Park, Illinois 60464 or call for more information 708-361-3650.





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# Village View

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## SUBURBAN EDITION

Volume 46 | Number 18 | March 17, 2020

Burbank, Evergreen Park, Hickory Hills, Justice, Oak Lawn

### Evergreen Park softball teams win 2 state titles

by Matt Mayer

The Evergreen Park Girls Little League All-Star softball team, which consists of local girls ages 8 to 10, won the state title and the Evergreen Park Girls 16-year old All-Stars Softball team won the state title last summer in the Senior Division. Both teams were honored by Mayor James Sexton and the board at the past Evergreen Park Board of Trustees meeting. Coaches, parents, friends and relatives were in attendance. The teams play their games at Yukich Field at 8900 S. Kedzie Avenue.

"We built those fields about 20 years ago. Maybe we should have built those 20 years earlier but I'm glad we did build them. This is great for the girls and the community. It's always a good Saturday or Sunday night when we get a call for a police escort for the girls coming back after winning a state championship," said Sexton.

Sexton also praised the first FantaSciFest, which was a one-day event held on February 22 at the Senior Center. The event consisted of fantasy, pop culture and comics. Glenn Pniewski, the Public Relations Coordinator and Evergreen Park Theatre Department Director, helped to organize the event. Pyiesha Allen, Youth Department Director, also took part in organizing the inaugural event. "You know you were successful when they talk about it being an annual event," added Sexton.

In other business, a resolution regarding a request

to Cook County for Community Development Block Grant, CDBG, funds for program year 2020 in the amount of \$318,000.00 for the sewer lining program was approved.

In other matters, the Fraternal Order of Police, Evergreen Park Lodge No 27, will host a Fish and Sports Show on Friday, March 20 from 7:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. at Bourbon Street. Advance tickets may be purchased at the Evergreen Park Police department. The Lions Club will host their 67th Annual Pancake Breakfast at Evergreen Park High School on March 28 from 7:00 a.m. to noon.

St. Bernadette Parish will host a Lenten Fish Fry in the school hall on Friday, April 3 from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. The Annual Family Easter Happenings will be held at the Community Center on Saturday, April 4 from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Green yard waste pick-up begins on Monday, April 6.

St. Bernadette will be hosting a Dueling Piano Event from 6:00 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. in the School Hall on Saturday, April 18. The Memories to Go Event will be held at Yukich Field on Saturday, May 2 from 9:00 a.m. to 2 p.m. The Village of Evergreen Park's Independence Day Parade will be held on Friday, July 3 at 6:30 p.m.

The village is offering free tax return preparation for seniors and disabled adults by appointment only, form limitations apply. Circuit Breaker Program and property tax freeze assistance are also available. For additional information and to make an appointment, call 708.422.8776.

The following business licenses were approved: The Whitening Clinic, offering



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teeth whitening instructional sessions, at 3830 W. 95th Street, Suite 101 and Dollar Plus, a dollar store at 8734 S. Kedzie Avenue.

### Oak Lawn approves design agreement for Southwest Highway Corridor

by Matt Mayer

Officials at the past Oak Lawn Board of Trustees meeting approved a resolution for a professional design agreement with Teska Associates, Inc. for \$12,000.00 for the Southwest Highway Corridor study. A resolution appointing Del Galdo Law Group LLC as village prosecutor was approved as well as a resolution regarding the Fourth of July Parade along 95th Street commencing at 10 a.m.

In other business, a resolution waiving the competitive bidding requirements and authorizing the purchase of five police Ford Utility Po-

lice Interceptors from Hawk Ford for \$38,756.00 was approved. An ordinance authorizing and providing revenue bonds not to exceed \$20,000,000.00 for the Regional Water System for the purpose of construction improvements to the existing regional system was also approved.

A Planning and Zoning Board referral granting a special use permit and parking variation for a residential use at 9724 S Southwest Highway was approved along with an ordinance granting a special use permit and a parking variation for a residential use. A Planning and Zoning Board request for a parking variation for a medical office (urgent care facility) and a restaurant (Wings) in the Oak Lawn Promenade retail center at 6334 W. 95th Street was approved as well as an ordinance granting such variance.

A resolution approving an intergovernmental agreement between the village and Oak Lawn-Hometown School District 123 for a two button activated solar powered school crossing signs

for northbound and southbound 52nd Avenue at Oak Center Drive was approved.

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from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and state and county public health departments. The college has a high standard of cleanliness for its facilities but will continue to take additional measures to ensure a clean environment for the benefit of its students, employees and the community.

### Stickney Twp. Senior Centers temporarily closes

Illinois older adults are among the highest risk population group for becoming seriously ill from COVID-19. Locations where seniors gather such as congregate meal sites and senior centers may increase the risk of transmitting COVID-19 and community spreading of the virus. Stickney Township Office on Aging is taking a proactive stance to close our buildings to the public.

All Stickney Township Senior Center locations will be closed, including the Louis S. Viverito Senior Center at 7745 S. Leamington in Burbank, the Stickney Senior Center at 6721 W. 40th St in Stickney and the Central Stickney Senior Center at 4949 S. Long Ave in Central Stickney. All social services, adult protective services and information and assistance will continue to function normally at this time.

This is entirely a precautionary measure. Our number one priority is to do everything we can to help protect the health and safety of all older adults, their families and our community.

For More Information, Contact: Stickney Township Office on Aging, (708) 636-8850.

# Covid-19 Virus is serious because the experts have no control over it

by Annette Dixon

Many people have been receiving letters from many agencies regarding the Covid-19 pandemic asking us to understand the need for us to isolate ourselves for at least 14 days. I, too, would like to mention this in this issue of Village View Publications.

This is the first time I have experienced, the President, Mayor of Chicago, Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago, Theaters, Museums, Lyric Opera, Chicago Symphony, Cultural Center, Universi-

ties, National Sports Teams, Casinos, asking us to take caution and telling us that they will be closed to the public until further notice. Both Catholic and Public School Systems are closed until further notice. If you are over 60 years of age, we are asked not to socialize for a couple of weeks and that may mean shopping unnecessarily.

Friday, the 13th I decided to go to the south suburbs and spend some money shopping. I first used the

Oak Lawn Post Office and was shocked to hear so many people mentioning their inconvenience because of this Virus. In Chicago Loop, no one is mentioning it, maybe because of our population, there could be pandemonium taking place.

I then went to the Dollar Tree store in Chicago Ridge and again, too many people were talking loudly about how they are affected by this virus. No one appeared to be sick but inconvenienced.

One woman mentioned she was laid off of work for two weeks and can't pay her rent, but could pay \$23. for her stuff that didn't appear to be medicine nor food or paper products, sanitizer nor anything immediately necessary, so what was she looking for. Another woman asked for a manager and purchased all the stock room cases of toilet paper. Therefore, leaving no surplus for others to purchase. A reminder, it's only a \$1 for four rolls of paper. Look

how many people will be out of supplies until maybe next week or more.

I then went to Chicago Ridge Mall and shopped at two stores for some winter items and luck out. Got my car washed and gassed, all in Chicago Ridge. So I still give back to the South Suburbs monthly.

Our Crisis is that 15 customers decided to pull their ads out of this issue, but assured us they will be with us next issue. How many people did I men-

tioned so far who are inconvenienced and still out with the public.

Remember this is the time to spend some money if you have it. Businesses are counting on your help. So my last stop Friday was Jewel Osco in Chicago. Last minute needs for the week. Now I can hopefully stay in at least for one week, which would be my Lenten penance. God Bless our customers and God Bless our Staff and of course, you the reader.

## State to give unemployment benefits to workers affected by coronavirus

Gov. J.B. Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) announced they are taking additional steps to support workers and families impacted by COVID-19. The administration will file emergency rules this week to clarify that individuals unemployed due to COV-

ID-19 can generally qualify for unemployment benefits to the full extent permitted by federal law.

"The state of Illinois faces unique challenges as we work to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19," said Pritzker. "To protect people across the state, it's imperative that all workers stay home if they're feeling sick or have come in contact with someone who has COVID-19. In order to overcome the unique challenges, we're facing, we've had to come up with innovative solutions and hope the federal government will support this endeavor as we

continue to grapple with this public health crisis."

If an individual is off work through no fault of their own, they can seek unemployment insurance benefits from IDES. The emergency rules, once filed, will provide assistance to individuals who may be restricted in the type of work they can perform due to COVID-19. The administration is also asking Congress to waive interest on any federal loans that Illinois and other state Unemployment Trust Fund accounts might require due to added strain from the outbreak, as well as maintaining the full federal unemployment tax credit for employers in states that may require those loans.

spread of the new coronavirus, the Cook County Treasurer's Office, will remain closed indefinitely, Treasurer Maria Pappas said.

"We have not had a case of the coronavirus in our office and I want to keep it that way," Pappas said. "While it is of surpassing importance to protect our employees and visitors to the building from this virus, it is important to continue serving taxpayers."

In the meantime, key personnel will work remotely to collect tax payments, issue refunds and perform the other office functions, Pappas said. Further aspects of our plan include:

The Office continue to accept payments at cook-countytreasurer.com, where more pay than at Chase branches.

Mail and payments continue to be accepted at the Chase lockbox, community banks and Chase branches,

ensuring that distribution of tax revenue to taxing districts is not interrupted.

Taxpayers seeking answers to questions regarding property taxes can contact us via the website. Questions are answered by email by staff working remotely.

Callers to 312.443.5100 remain able to use the automated menu to answer basic questions. They will be directed to the website should they need additional information.

The website is available in more than 100 different languages. Visitors can download informational brochures in 24 languages.

## It's property assessment appeal time

We wish to inform the residents of Palos Township

that the time period to file a property assessment appeal application at the Palos Township location will be through April 17.

Palos Township is located at 10802 S. Roberts Road, Palos Hills, IL. The hours are Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The cutoff date for the appeal is Friday, April 17, 2020 at the township due to preparing and entering all documentation before the April 24, 2020 deadline at the Cook County Assessor's Office.

If you want to file an appeal after the Palos Township location deadline (between April 18 through April 24), you can do so at Bridgeview Courthouse at 10220 S 76th Ave, Bridgeview, IL 60455 or file it yourself online at cook-countyassessor.com. If you need comparable properties, please call Heather at 708-598-4449 and they will be made available to you.

## Pappas closes office

To help protect taxpayers and employees against the

## Letter to the Editor

Just a reminder for you to double check your Candidates before you vote for them. Don't make a mistake and vote for the sweet talker who will make promises but forget to keep them. You want Candidates that will use their brains and do a good job for us and our country. Candidates that will work hard for you and not only the rich ones since they don't need any help. Candidates that are willing to help the seniors not only the young ones. It's a shame the Candidates are divided into Democrats and Republicans because if they weren't, we all could vote for the ones we could really trust. Too many people vote without thinking and that is why our country is run by those that only help the rich and forget about the poor. Your vote can help to place men and women that will help you and our country. Someone that will abolish the free freebies for Immigrants. No matter who they are they should support themselves just like everyone else has too. Chosen Candidates should help out our country first before aiding other countries. We have many in our own country that are in need of shelter, food, clothes and medical attention. When our Twin Towers were destroyed did, we get help to rebuild it from other foreign countries? Hell no! So why do we keep helping other foreign countries when we need help in our own? We were once a rich country but after helping out so many countries we are getting poor and no one will be there to help us out. It seems the rich Candidates always win because they have the money to spend for publicity but the poor guy who can't afford to make his name well know is probably the one that would do us all good and make us proud. Keep your eyes and ears wide open and read about all the Candidates. Check them out thoroughly leaving no hidden skeletons that might appear after they won the election. May God help us to choose the right Candidates and make our country proud again. Maybe we can even get factories back in our own hometowns and enjoy eating the food grown here in our United States. It's up to you so VOTE because your vote counts.

Burbank, IL

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## Dust your ducts

(NAPSI) When you breathe a sigh of relief after giving your home its annual thorough cleaning, you may be breathing in more dust, dirt, and pollution than you realize, unless you've also gotten the HVAC system cleaned.

Through normal living, people generate a great deal of contaminants, such as dander, dust, and chemicals. These get pulled into the HVAC system and re-circulated five to seven times a day, on average. Over time, this causes a build-up of dirt in the duct work.

Some people are more sensitive to these contaminants than others. Allergy and asthma sufferers, as well as young children and the elderly, tend to be more susceptible to the types of poor indoor air quality that air duct cleaning can help address. Also, some homes

may be more susceptible to certain pollutants, including places with pets, smokers, or remodeling projects.

Fortunately, it's easy to deal with. The experts at the National Air Duct Cleaners Association (NADCA) say HVAC systems should be inspected and cleaned regularly by a reputable, certified HVAC professional.

The ones who are NADCA members possess general liability insurance, are trained and tested regularly, sign on to a code of ethics, and must clean and restore your heating and cooling system in accordance with NADCA standards, so they provide a high level of security.

For further facts on having healthy air in a healthy home, visit [www.BreathingClean.com](http://www.BreathingClean.com). To find a NADCA member nearby, go to <http://nadca.com/en/prosearch/all> and enter your zip code.

## Understanding Parkinson's disease

(NAPS) About 60,000 people are newly diagnosed with Parkinson's disease (PD) each year. Nearly 50% of those newly diagnosed with Parkinson's and their care partners leave the doctor's office following a diagnosis without educational resources or information on what the future holds.

The Parkinson's Foundation aims to connect with those newly diagnosed with PD earlier and more fre-



If you or a loved one is ever diagnosed with Parkinson's, you should know you're not alone.

quently to provide ongoing support throughout their entire journey with the disease. Newly Diagnosed: Building a Better Life with Parkinson's Disease, is a new program designed to arm

people who are newly diagnosed with the knowledge, tools and resources they need to navigate life with the disease.

The Parkinson's Foundation also offers educational

programs that focus on care and research; digital resources; topical podcasts; and an online community to connect with others living with the disease and care partners and be part of a network of support.

If you or a loved one has been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, you are not alone. Call the toll-free Parkinson's Foundation Helpline at 1-800-4PD-INFO (473-4636) or email [Helpline@Parkinson.org](mailto:Helpline@Parkinson.org). Order your free Newly Diagnosed kit today at [Parkinson.org/NewlyDiagnosed](http://Parkinson.org/NewlyDiagnosed).

## Brookfield Zoo remains open with limited access

The Chicago Zoological Society (CZS), based on the guidance set forth by state and local officials, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and consistent with the Forest Preserves of Cook County and the Chicago Botanic Gardens, has made the decision to close all indoor public spaces within and events at Brookfield Zoo effective March 14 through at least April 1, the zoo said Friday. This includes all indoor animal exhibits, the Discovery Center, restaurants and gift shops. Food and merchandise will be available for purchase only at outdoor walk-up locations and mobile food and merchandise carts.

During this time, guests may still enjoy the outdoor spaces, which include over 200 acres of walkways and

paths, where zoogoers can view outdoor animal habitats. Public restrooms will be open during this time and will be cleaned and sanitized regularly.

All events and animal programs, including but not limited to dolphin presentations and viewing areas, keeper chats, Zoo Goes Blue for Autism, Penguin Encounters and Poolside Penguin Feedings are cancelled. Those who have already made reservations or pre-purchased tickets, should watch for an email with information on how to receive a refund, reschedule a reservation for the animal programs, or exchange tickets for a future date. All non-essential staff has been asked to work remotely. Additionally, staff is continuing to monitor this situation daily and is prepared to take fur-

ther precautions, as necessary.

During this time with limited access to indoor animal viewing and programming admission to Brookfield Zoo will be free, but parking fees still apply. "The health and safety of our guests, volunteers,

staff, and animals remains of paramount importance.

As an extension of the Forest Preserves of Cook County, we felt it was important to find a responsible way to allow guests to enjoy our outdoor green space," said Stuart Strahl, president and CEO of CZS.



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## Pritzker to file federal waiver to expand Medicaid coverage

During the administration's daily press briefing on the state's response to the coronavirus pandemic, Governor JB Pritzker announced that his administration will file a federal waiver to expand Medicaid coverage as COVID-19 continues to spread and affect the daily lives people across the nation.

Building on the state's earlier measures to help working families through the expansion of unemployment insurance and calls for utilities to halt shut-offs and late payment fees, the Pritzker administration started working on the waiver application as soon as the federal government declared a national emergency and activated the Stafford Act.

If the federal waiver is approved, the state will be able to expand Medicaid services through the addition of new medical providers, increased access across the state and ramped up services to many of the state's most vulnerable populations.

## Please give blood

Everyone is looking for ways to help those in need as our state and our country work to combat the Coronavirus. The number one thing you can do is stay home, especially if you feel sick. If you are healthy, please consider donating blood to help those who need it.

In recent days, more than

600 blood drives have been canceled across the country, meaning there will be 18,000 fewer blood donations. This has caused a critical shortage where patients cannot get the blood supply they need.

To address this crucial issue, the American Red Cross here in Illinois is hosting blood drives across the state for healthy people to donate blood and help save lives.

If you are not immunosuppressed and do not feel sick, visit [redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org) to find the closest drive near you.

If you feel sick at all, please stay home.

## Let work incentives work for you

(NAPS) If you receive Social Security disability benefits and want to work, Social Security Work Incentives can allow you to keep your healthcare (Medicare and Medicaid) and, in some cases, cash benefits as you begin working. These Work Incentives are designed to encourage and support beneficiaries who want to return to the workforce or work for the first time.

There are more than 20 Work Incentives. Eligibility varies based on the type of disability benefit an individual receives, Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Here are just a few examples:

**Trial Work Period (TWP)** (SSDI recipients only). Individuals can test their ability to work for at least nine months in a roll-



Benefits counseling, resume writing help, job opportunities and assistance transitioning to the workplace are all available to people who receive Social Security disability benefits and want to work.

ing five-year timeframe. During their TWP, they receive full SSDI benefits no matter how much they earn as long as their work activity is reported and they have a disabling impairment.

**Medicaid While Working, Section 1619(b)** (SSI recipients only). If they meet certain qualifications, beneficiaries can continue to receive Medicaid after they start working, even if their earnings (alone or in combination with other income) become too high for an SSI cash payment.

**Continuation of Medicare Coverage** (SSDI recipients). Medicare coverage for SSDI beneficiaries continues while they are working and receiving SSDI benefits. When SSDI cash benefits stop because of work, beneficiaries can keep their Medicare coverage for at least 93 consecutive months (seven years and nine months) after the end of their TWP.

For more information about Work Incentives, see Social Security's free pamphlet, Working While Disabled: How We Can Help

(No. 05-10095) or the Red Book (No. 64-030), the guides to employment support programs. Find them online at [ssa.gov/pubs](http://ssa.gov/pubs) and [ssa.gov/redbook](http://ssa.gov/redbook).

You can also learn more about Work Incentives while receiving free services and supports through Social Security's Ticket to Work (Ticket) program. The Ticket program supports career development people ages 18 through 64 who receive Social Security disability benefits and want to work. In addition to benefits counseling, through the Ticket program, beneficiaries can find help writing their resumes, finding job opportunities and transitioning to the workplace.

Ready to get started? Call the Ticket to Work Help Line at 1-866-963-7842 or 1-866-833-2967 (TTY) Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. ET. A representative can answer some of your questions and send you a list of service providers. Or search for providers online at [choosework.ssa.gov/findhelp](http://choosework.ssa.gov/findhelp).

## How to save time and money this tax season

(NAPS) Tax season is upon us, and you should have received all the documents needed to file your taxes and (hopefully) get a refund. To help reduce the stress that comes with filing taxes, Glinda Bridgforth, a leading financial expert who explores the emotional and cultural factors that block financial success, identifies a few ways to save time and money this tax season:

1. Get organized. Whether you visit a tax professional or do it yourself, gather all documents ahead of time, such as your employer W-2s and any 1099 forms you may receive for interest income, retirement plans, or gig work such as driving for Uber. Don't forget to check your online accounts where you might need to download tax documents.

"Avoid the panic and stress that comes from disorganization," says Bridgforth. "Also, look at last year's return, which can serve as a good guide."

2. Start (and finish) early. Don't wait until April. Starting the process early will let you get organized, and have more time if you need it. Filing early will not only help you get your refund faster, it may also help you avoid tax-related identity theft since you will already have filed using your own Social Security number before someone else tries to. Speaking of identity theft...

3. Watch out for scams. Where there's money there's a con, and criminals have become very good at exploiting tax season. Be wary of threat-

ening phone calls from "IRS agents" and phishing e-mails "from the IRS" seeking your personal information. Also, while all tax preparers and DIY websites aim to minimize taxes and maximize refunds, beware of promises for more than your fair share. Unscrupulous "tax preparers" entice unsuspecting taxpayers with hopes of a high refund, only for them to lose it all. The IRS just launched "Identity Theft Central" ([IRS.gov/identitytheft](http://IRS.gov/identitytheft)) to help taxpayers report identity theft and learn how to protect themselves against crimes.

4. Get all your tax breaks. Did you get married? Have children? Change jobs? Take all the deductions you deserve.

"Even if nothing has changed in your life, you may have missed credits in the past that you're entitled to," notes Bridgforth. "For example, according to the IRS, one in every five eligible workers fails to claim the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)."

5. Look for tax prep discounts and promotions, then use direct deposit. The full service tax prep companies, as well as the DIY websites, are competing for your business, so be sure to shop around and look for coupons or rebates to find the best deal. Many free options are also available to those who qualify. Just go to [IRS.gov/freelfile](http://IRS.gov/freelfile) to check eligibility.

If you direct deposit your federal tax refund into your Green Dot account, not only will you get it faster, you'll be entered in the Green Dot Extreme Tax Sweepstakes for a chance to win one of fifty \$1,000 prizes. Details and official rules can be found at [greendot.com/ExtremeTax](http://greendot.com/ExtremeTax).

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## 'The Pillowman' by Martin McDonagh, directed by Laura Alcala Baker

By Kathryn Moery

The play opens with a frozen moment in a stark room where a man sits with a pillow-like blindfold over his head, eerily portending the implication of the drama's title. The story unfolds

with the interrogation of this man, Katurian (Martel Mannin), by an investigator, Tapolski (Cyd Blakewell), a self-proclaimed "good cop" who alleges that he is responsible for the disappearance of three children.

We learn that in this totalitarian dictatorship, the prisoner is an author of fairy tale-like stories of coercive child abuse, for which he is being connected to these disappearances. Although he is randomly and viciously

beaten by the "bad cop," Ariel (Gregory Fenner), who is impassioned by a personal hatred of child abusers, Katurian stoically denies his involvement, until he weakens when Tapolski threatens that his stories will be destroyed.

To further force a confession, the prisoner is told that his mentally disabled brother will be arrested and beaten until he confesses. Indeed, the screams of the brother are heard, after which the scene switches to a holding

cell where the two prisoner brothers are united.

During this darkened scene, childlike Michal (Jay Worthington), asks his older brother to tell him his favorite stories written by the brother, and like a loving parent, the older brother tells several of them, including the title story, "The Pillowman". During the telling of the stories, in a trance-like staging, the stories come to life through the wizardry of puppetry, powerfully performed by the

four member ensemble, who also forcefully inhabit the personas of the characters they play in the drama.

It is through the telling of these stories, the horrors of the brothers' abused childhood are revealed, and the thin line between fantasy and reality is crossed with the brothers' murderous confessions to each other, and the suffocating events on stage, which morbidly parallel the existentialist themes of self-destruction for the sake of

self-preservation at the core of the stories that Katurian wrote.

The play closes when Katurian's search to answer his question "What would be a happy ending?" ends, as he does what they want to "preserve (his) stories."

The play runs through March 29 at The Gift Theatre, 4802 N. Milwaukee, Chicago. Tickets are \$40-\$50, available by calling 773-283-7071, or [www.thegifttheatre.org](http://www.thegifttheatre.org).

## Summertime living is easy with plant-based butter-ed foods

(NAPS) From blueberry pies with flaky buttery crusts to grilled buttered corn on the cob, summer is filled with delicious foods that bring people together. Now summertime eating is getting a makeover by swapping that pat, dab or dollop of regular dairy butter with dairy-free Plant Butter.



Plant-based diets also tend to be healthier because they are rich in fiber, good fats and added nutritional, like vitamins.

The trend toward plant-based eating has become a full-fledged food movement! With prominent foodies (chefs, celebrities, and authors) sharing their personal stories of switching to plant-based diets for taste, health, and better-for-the-environment reasons, more and more consumers are embracing delicious, nutritious foods derived from plants.

Plant-based foods are showing up in grocery stores across the country, including the dairy aisle. Like Country Crock Plant Butter, which is a dairy-free, plant-based butter that tastes like dairy butter. It's made from plant-based oils and features avocado oil, olive oil, or almond oil in sticks and tubs. It's gluten-free, kosher, and is suitable for vegan diets as it's stamped "Certified Plant Based" through the Plant Based Food Association.

What's a plant-based diet? It's focused on foods mostly made from plants—not just vegetables and fruits, but also nuts, seeds, whole grains, legumes and beans.

So what about a dessert to round out that summer BBQ? A berry swirl butter cake made with Country

Crock Plant Butter is easy to make and delicious. It is sure to stir up some talk when folks find out it's made with Country Crock's dairy-free Plant Butter! Try more recipes on [countrycrock.com](http://countrycrock.com)

### Berry Swirl Butter Cake

**Makes:** 8 servings

**Prep Time:** 15 minutes

**Cook Time:** 30 minutes

#### Ingredients:

1 cup (2 sticks) Country Crock Plant Butter, softened (you can use Country Crock Plant Butter with Olive Oil, Avocado Oil or Almond Oil)

1 cup granulated sugar  
4 large eggs  
1/4 cup milk  
1 tsp. vanilla extract  
1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour  
1 tsp. baking powder  
1/2 cup seedless raspberry jam

#### Steps:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease 9-inch square bak-

ing pan and line with parchment allowing extra to hang over the sides. Grease parchment.

2. Beat Country Crock Plant Butter with sugar in large bowl with electric mixer until light and fluffy, about 3 minutes.

3. Beat in eggs, one at a time, then milk and vanilla. Add flour and baking powder and beat on low speed just until blended. Pour batter into prepared pan.

4. Stir jam until smooth. (If jam is thick, microwave 20 seconds then stir until smooth). Drop dollops of jam all over the top of cake and use a knife to swirl the jam through the surface.

5. Bake 30 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into center of cake comes out clean. Let cool for 20 minutes before lifting cake out of the pan to cool completely.

**Learn More:** For more facts, tips and recipes, go to [www.countrycrock.com](http://www.countrycrock.com).



## Andrew David MacDonald, When We Were Vikings (Simon and Schuster 2020)

During Women's History Month, we celebrate all kinds of women: abolitionists and astronauts; politicians and princesses; Supreme Court Justices and soul singers; teenagers who mobilize to save the environment and risk their lives to give girls access to education.

Emerging Canadian novelist Andrew David MacDonald's *When We Were Vikings* introduces us to another kind of hero(ine): Zelda, born on the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum to a single alcoholic mother who died of cancer, leaving Zelda's care first to an abusive uncle, and eventually to Zelda's good-hearted brother, Gert, who "scares a lot of people because of his shaved head and tattoos, especially the tattoo of the skull on his forearm... and because he doesn't dress like someone who works at a bank or has a real job.

He wears jeans and tight black shirts." Tragically, for Gert and Zelda and the young woman they both love, he deals drugs.

Zelda is not only the protagonist but also the narrator, a literary device that brings us to understand and care about how a developmentally disabled but plucky young woman literally sees the world. She's "into Vikings" and, like many of her intellectual peers, knows virtually everything about her favorite subject and regularly emails an elderly professor who wrote the definitive text about Vikings.

Zelda shares her life with her psychologist, Dr. Baird, "who's not like other doctors," but is a good listener who "doesn't wiggle and squirm" when she proffers the most intimate and dangerous and hopeful details of her life.

Dr. Baird shows Zelda an article about the recent discovery of an ancient Viking grave with the remains of a woman warrior. "Dr. Laird was showing me the Viking to show that I could be powerful. I think you have more in you than you think, Zelda."

We discover that she does, in a modern saga that keeps us terrified and interested; through it we come to respect oft-forgotten members of our tribe and understand and appreciate the people who care for them.

Lorraine Schmall  
Delhi, India  
March 2020

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email: [swim@olsalightning.org](mailto:swim@olsalightning.org)      [www.olsalightning.org](http://www.olsalightning.org)

**Oak Lawn Community High School Pool**




Pearl Jam's Mike McCready is one of thousands of supporters who partner with youth in foster care through Treehouse.

## 5 Foster Care Facts

(NAPS) When a child or youth is placed into foster care, their safety and well-being become the shared responsibility of the community. Organizations such as the nonprofit Treehouse are an important part of the solution.

Staff and volunteers work to provide childhood experiences everyone deserves, connection to resources and a successful launch into adulthood.

With close to half a million youth in care throughout the country,

numerous challenges remain. Here are five things to know so you can take action.

### 1. PTSD for Youth

There is emotional trauma in both being removed from home and the uncertainty that follows. PTSD for youth who have experienced foster care is twice the rate of war veterans.

### 2. School Challenges

Students in foster care change housing placements an average of three times, and with each move, they lose about six months of academic progress. High school graduation rates for youth in care are about 50% nationwide, and less

than 3% earn a bachelor's degree.

### 3. Racial Disparities

Children of color are far more likely to enter the foster care system than their white peers. They are more likely to be removed from their home, stay in care longer and are less likely to return home.

### 4. After Foster Care

Across the country, close to 26,000 young adults exit foster care each year. Nearly all lack the community network necessary for a supported launch into adulthood. More than a third will experience homelessness at some point by age 26.

### 5. Partners in Hope

Treehouse's Graduation Success program is dramatically increasing high school graduation rates—with 77% of participants completing school. Through a number of programs, youth partner with Treehouse from birth to well into their 20s.

Visit [www.treehouseforkids.org](http://www.treehouseforkids.org) to learn more or make a donation. Your donation supports Treehouse programs from Holiday Magic, which provides thousands of kids a meaningful holiday gift. You can even honor someone you know who has been impacted by foster care.



You can get paid to talk and blog about your favorite pastime, whether it's video games or just about anything else.

## Hobbies that may make you money

(NAPS) In the gig economy, many people take hobbies such as playing video games, travel or food and turn them into very lucrative side hustles.

For example, the eSports market started as a community of online gamers and is now estimated to be a \$1 billion industry with investors including ESPN and YouTube.

### Four Steps Toward Fun And Profit

So how do you take your passion and turn it into cash? Here are four tips to see if you can turn your hobby into a generous source of income.

**Search Popularity:** It's important to know how popular your hobby is to assess whether there's moneymaking potential. One way to gauge popularity is by looking at whether people are searching for it on Google. A free online tool, Wordtracker, can help you look at how many people are searching your hobby and items similar to your hobby. For example, if you search "food," it shows that approximately 7.4 million monthly searches are done on food. This is definitely a passion you should explore to make money.

**Explore Social Fandom:** Another way to determine whether your

hobby can be a money-maker is to look at communities on such social networks as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn. You can search #food, #travel and so on or look for groups related to your hobby. See how many members or followers these top groups or most popular handles have to determine your potential fan base.

### Test Your Concept:

Once you're certain there's interest, it's time to test the market and see what sells. It's quite easy to start your own eCommerce website or blog using platforms such as WooCommerce or WordPress. And if you're not very tech savvy, that's OK. There are companies such as Liquid Web that can fully manage and host your website or blog so you don't have to worry about security or the site going down.

### Finally, Share Your Website:

Let it be seen by those superfans you find on social media and your fellow hobbyists. Make it fun and enjoyable. Set goals each month and see how you do. Try new ideas, attend events, and talk about your website with everyone you meet.

And that's how you can enjoy turning your hobby into cash.

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**Did You Know?**

(NAPSA) With early diagnosis and treatment, heart disease and the other problems of diabetes can be prevented or delayed, says Grif-

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fin P. Rodgers, MD, director of the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK). Learn more at niddk.nih.gov.

Questions of humanity and intrigue are explored in four books: "Rival's Break" by Carla Neggers; "Ditch the Act" by Leonard Kim and Ryan Foland; "Merged" by Jim and Stephanie Kroepfl; and "Love, Faith and a Pair of Pants" by Herb Freed. Learn more at www.BookTrib.com.

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Certain changes in behavior in an older relative may indicate a need for long-term care. If you're an FLTCIP enrollee you can contact an FLTCIP care coordinator at www.LTCFEDS.com to gather important information about the different care options that may be available.

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stitute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases at <https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/clinical-trials>.

Getting new toys for your kids or grandkids on holidays, birthdays or any time can be fun but it's wise to watch out for counterfeit brands of toys that may not be tested for safety. Learn more at The Toy Association's reliable resource for families at [www.PlaySafe.org](http://www.PlaySafe.org).

There's nothing quite like the taste of fresh strawberries. And, that same fresh strawberry taste and the health benefits can be enjoyed during the chilly months when you select frozen strawberries. For more

information and recipe ideas, visit: [www.californias-trawberries.com](http://www.californias-trawberries.com).

When a child or youth is placed into foster care, their safety and well-being become the shared responsibility of the whole community. Treehouse provides thousands of meaningful gifts to youth in care during the holidays. Visit [www.treehouseforkids.org](http://www.treehouseforkids.org) to make a donation this holiday season.

At [www.booktrib.com](http://www.booktrib.com) you can find great reads, including, "The Tutor," a romance; domestic humor in "As Long As It's Perfect"; "Killing Pat Garrett," a wild west whodunit; and, in praise of gratitude, "Best of No Small Thing: A Mindful Approach to Gratitude."

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