

19th WARD Quarterly

A Publication of the 19th Ward Youth & Community Foundation
Matthew J. O'Shea

NOVEMBER 2024

Registration Now Open for a Thanksgiving Family Tradition – The Beverly Hills Turkey Trot 5K, Presented by CIBC

The Beverly Hills Turkey Trot 5K Run and Family Walk, presented by CIBC, returns to the 19th Ward community on Saturday, November 30th, beginning at 9 a.m. at 9200 S. Hamilton Avenue. Now in its 16th year, this annual family tradition has become one of the most anticipated events in the area, with over 2,500 participants expected to run or walk the beautiful tree-lined streets of the historic North Beverly neighborhood. Proceeds from this year's 5K will once again benefit the John McNicholas Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation and the 19th Ward Youth and Community Foundation.

Runners and walkers of all ages and levels can register now for the 5K Run or Walk, Team Registration, or the untimed Family Walk, by visiting the19thward.com. Participants must register by October 31st if they would like to upgrade to a hooded sweatshirt during the registration process. **Please note that you must select the sweatshirt option during registration.** Otherwise, you will receive a long-sleeved t-shirt at packet pick-up. All participants who register by 5 p.m. on November 28th but after the October 31st deadline, will receive a Beverly Hills Turkey Trot long-sleeved event t-shirt.

Registration Fees:

- **5K Run Adult:** \$35 until 7 p.m. on Nov. 29th in-person, then \$40 on Nov. 30th
- **5K Run Youth:** \$30 until 7 p.m. on Nov. 29th in-person, then \$35 on Nov. 30th

- **5K Walk Individual:** \$35 until 7 p.m. on Nov. 29th in-person, then \$40 on Nov. 30th
- **5K Walk Family (limit 4 shirts and one goodie bag):** \$80 until 7 p.m. on Nov. 29th in person, then \$85 on Nov. 30th

Note: **Family pricing is under the 5K Walk – Individual.** After you select sign-up, you will be taken to the registrant page; go to the bottom of the page where it reads *Multi-Person Pricing and select Family Registration (3-4 registrants)*; \$80 Family registration includes one goodie bag.

Online registration will close at 10 a.m. on Thursday, November 28th. In-person registration will be available on the day of the race.

The 5K will be chip-timed on a CARA certified 5K course, while the family walk will be untimed. Runners will be divided by age and gender according to CARA recommended guidelines, with awards given for each age group.

Packet Pick-Up Dates & Locations:

- **Saturday, November 23rd:** 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. at CIBC, 3040 W. 111th Street
- **Monday, November 25th:** 1-5 p.m. at CIBC, 3040 W. 111th Street
- **Friday, November 29th:** 1-7 p.m. at Running Excels, 10328 S. Western Avenue
- **Saturday, November 30th:** 7-9 a.m. on race day at the Christ the King School Gym



16th ANNUAL
Beverly Hills Turkey Trot
5K RUN & FAMILY WALK
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2024

Proud Sponsor
CIBC



"We are thrilled to host the 16th annual Beverly Hills Turkey Trot, and look forward to welcoming everyone," explained Matt O'Shea, 19th Ward Alderman and founder of the 19th Ward Youth and Community Foundation. "Our community looks forward to gathering for this race on Thanksgiving weekend and raising funds for two organizations that do so much for the neighborhood," O'Shea said.

The 19th Ward and the Original Pancake House – Beverly will host a pancake breakfast immediately following the race at 10:30 a.m. Admission is \$5 per person or \$25 for a family. The John McNicholas Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation, also known as Live Like John, is one of the beneficiaries of this year's race.

For more information on the 16th Annual Beverly Hills Turkey Trot 5K, please visit the19thward.com or call (773) 238-8766.

Dunkin' Donuts Now Open at 1943 W. Monterey

The 19th Ward is excited to announce that the new Dunkin' Donuts located at 1943 W. Monterey is now open. This \$2M project replaces a blighted parcel of land that was owned by the City of Chicago for some time. We are pleased to add this location back to the property tax role. The project grew from a partnership with the Old Morgan Park Civic Association and surrounding neighbors. The owner of this location ex-

plained, "We're thrilled to finally open our brand-new Dunkin' on this city owned lot in Morgan Park. This has been a five-year journey, and we're proud to bring new jobs to the area and continue to be part of this amazing community for over thirty years." This location is a unique drive thru only location and also offers a walk-up window for customers. It is open daily from 4 a.m. – 9 p.m.



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Being Beverly's neighborhood bank means more than just offering solid banking solutions. It means doing our part to give back to the local charities and social organizations that unite and strengthen our area. We're particularly proud to support the 19th Ward Youth Foundation and its commitment to providing quality recreational opportunities for children.

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95th Street – Phase Four of Streetscape Slated to Begin

The fourth phase of the 95th Street Streetscape project is scheduled to begin in the spring of 2025. This phase builds on the success of the first three phases that began at Western Avenue and extended to Wood Street. The scope of work includes full width roadway resurfacing, new curb and gutter, new sidewalk with parkway pavers, pedestrian refuge islands, site furnishings including bike racks and waste containers, new shade trees, new decorative street lighting with energy efficient LED lights, light pole community iden-

tifiers, in ground sidewalk planters, enhanced stamped crosswalks and ADA ramps, and a new Major Taylor Trail bike lane connection across 95th Street.

The contractor on the project is Pan-Oceanic Engineering Company, Inc. AECOM will provide construction engineering services. On site construction will begin in the spring of 2025 once the weather allows. The construction is expected to last for approximately eight months. The project budget for both design and construction is \$5.9 million.



Citizen Utility Board to Host Virtual Presentations

Alderman Matt O'Shea, Senator Bill Cunningham, State Representative Mary Gill, and the Citizens Utility Board (CUB) will host virtual presentations on Tuesday, December 3rd from 1-2 p.m. and on Thursday, December 5th from 6-7 p.m. There is no cost to attend the webinars. **Please reserve your spot by visiting the19thward.com.**



Tuesday, December 3rd at 1 p.m.

Understanding Cable Options & Reducing Robocalls

CUB will present the different choices in the TV market, suggest ways to reduce your cable costs, discuss whether or not to keep cable, offer alternatives to satellite or cable, and discuss streaming services available to consumers. In addition, CUB will discuss the different types of robocalls, advise how to avoid common robocall scams, discuss call-blocking services and explain what they mean for your pocketbook. They will also discuss new proposed federal legislation.

Thursday, December 5th at 6 p.m. – Home Energy Savings

Are you concerned about the rise in utility prices? Please join CUB for information about how to reduce your energy usage. This event is designed to help you better understand the ins and outs of your bill and avoid utility scams. The discussion will also cover programs designed to save you money and energy. Please have your utility-related questions ready. Please visit citizensutilityboard.org for money-saving advice and consumer tips.

Cunningham Urges Constituents to Claim “Seed Money” for College Savings Plan

New parents have an opportunity to start saving now for their child's future – and collect a quick 50 bucks just for signing up, State Senator Bill Cunningham announced.

The Illinois First Steps Program is open for any child born after January 1, 2023, who signs up for the state's college savings program. The state will provide \$50 in seed money to all new enrollees.

“The cost of college is becoming a big burden on working families,” Cunningham said. “One of the best ways to relieve that burden is to start saving for your child in a tax-sheltered, interest-bearing account as soon as possible, even if you can only afford to contribute a small amount of money.”

The First Steps Program is administered by State Treasurer Michael Frerichs. It is designed to encourage Illinois residents to participate in the state's Bright Start or Bright Directions college savings initiatives. Both allow parents or guardians to establish 529 accounts for their children's education, including college and vocational training programs.

“Illinois First Steps helps place families on a path to start planning early for their child's education,” Frerichs said. “Saving now means

money for the child's future university, community college, trade school, or apprenticeship will be available when that child is ready to pursue additional education or training.”

To qualify for the \$50 seed deposit, parents or legal guardians must be Illinois residents at the time of birth or adoption, the beneficiary child must be born or adopted after January 1, 2023, open a 529 college savings account with Bright Start or Bright Directions, and claim the seed deposit before the child's 10th birthday.

Parents can open a Bright Start account at brightstart.com and submit a claim for the \$50 First Steps seed deposit during the enrollment process. Parents who already have a BrightStart account for their eligible child can go to <https://brightstart.com/first-steps/claim/> to submit a claim. Bright Start is accessible and affordable, with no minimum contribution, minimum balance, or annual fee. Parents who prefer to work with a financial advisor can claim their \$50 deposit by visiting the Bright Directions website, <https://brightdirections.com/first-steps/>. Additionally, Bright Start and Bright Directions offer tax benefits for Illinois taxpayers.

The First Steps Program was created by the state legislature in 2019. In this fiscal year's budget, the state set aside \$2.5 million to fund seed money for each enrollee. Treasurer Frerichs' office coined the name Illinois First Steps and launched the program last year. The Treasurer's Office has promoted First Steps by sending postcards and letters to Illinois parents who had a baby on or after January 1, 2023, and by educating financial advisors around the state about the benefits of the program and encouraged them to claim their \$50 seed money.

“Of course, a mere \$50 doesn't sound like much when you consider how expensive college and other education costs are,” Cunningham said. “But we think the real benefit of the seed money is it draws attention to the program and promotes the idea of saving and investing, for both parents and their kids. Just socking away a few dollars a week and letting it earn interest and grow tax free can make a real difference for the financial stability of



families.”

Cunningham lauded Treasurer Frerichs for revamping the state's 529 plans by working to reduce fees and ensure more investment dollars go directly to college savings. These changes and smart investment strategies by the Treasurer have helped the plans grow from \$7 billion in assets in 2015 to over \$17 billion in assets today.

A list of Frequently Asked Questions about Illinois First Steps is at brightstart.com/first-steps.

Gill Named to House Public Transit Working Group

State Representative Mary Gill has been appointed to a recently announced House Public Transit Working Group by House Speaker Emanuel "Chris" Welch, D-Hillside. The objective of the group is to help focus policy discussions regarding the future of the region's public transportation networks.

"Our community is served by multiple agencies that residents depend on to get to work and for daily life needs," Gill said. "If there are to be any serious conversations about the future of these systems, it's critical that our community is properly represented. I've heard from residents about the challenges and opportunities of our network, and I look forward to sharing their voice in these working group discussions."

The House working group will include 15 state representatives from across the Chicagoland area, and is intended to take a close look at existing public transit operations and potential avenues to improve. Gill's district is currently served by Metra, Pace, and the Chicago Transit Authority, which are all overseen in certain respects by the Regional Transportation Authority.

"How these agencies are currently governed and work together will be a focus for me," Gill said. "At the end of the day, we want to ensure that residents have access to an effective, world class transportation system. I want residents to continue to share their thoughts on this topic with my office and me, and I'm looking forward to beginning these working group conversations very soon."

For more information, please contact RepMaryGill@gmail.com



Peace by Piece: A New Fiber Art Community in the 19th Ward

Local resident, Eileen Quirk Rowan, is excited to announce the creation of Peace by Piece. Eileen serves as moderator of the group. This is a new community fiber group offering a forum where members of the community with an interest in needle arts like knitting, crochet, needlepoint, cross stitch, tatting, and other hand stitching can gather in a friendly, non-commercial setting to work on personal and charity projects at no cost. The goal is to foster relationships and refer community partners and charities to cross promote the fiber group with the small businesses in the neighborhood. The kick-off meeting took place at the Beverly Branch Library on November 6, 2024. The group will meet each Wednesday afternoon from 12:30-2 p.m. at the Beverly Branch of the Chicago Public Library, 1962 W. 95th Street.

Peace by Piece is open to anyone, and attendees are asked to bring their own projects and supplies to the library for fellowship, show and tell, and shared mutual interests. Participants are welcome to work on their own projects to keep or donate to one of the collaborative charities. There is no registration or fee required. Eileen can help refer beginners needing lessons to local organizations and



businesses. The Beverly Branch library offers crochet lessons on the 2nd Saturday of every month (registration is required). Miss Purl, located at 1824 W. 95th Street, is a vibrant yarn store located in our community. Miss Purl provides knitting and crocheting classes and workshops as well as yarn and supplies. Please visit her website, misspurlchicago.com, for more information. Fabric and buttons to complete projects are available at The Quilter's Trunk, 10352 S. Western Avenue, or through their website, thequilterstrunk.com.

Please direct any questions to Eileen at peacebypieceknits@gmail.com.

15th ANNUAL 19TH WARD CHILDREN'S FILM FESTIVAL

MONDAY, DECEMBER 30th

10 am

IF

2 pm

INSIDE OUT 2

\$1 per ticket
first come first serve basis

Dear Parent:

On Monday, December 30th, the 19th Ward Youth Foundation will host the 15th Annual Children's Film Festival at the Beverly Arts Center. Admission is \$1 per person, per film, and includes the movie and snacks during the show. Tickets will be issued on a first come first serve basis and space is limited.

The Film Festival will feature a 10 am showing of *If* and a 2 pm showing of *Inside Out 2*. I hope that you and your family can join us for a fun day at the movies! Parent chaperones are appreciated.

Please note, this year there will be no reservations. Tickets can be purchased the day of the event.

Sincerely,
Matt
Matthew J. O'Shea

Alderman Matt O'Shea's

Holiday DODGE BALL TOURNAMENT

Open to all 19th Ward Elementary School students.

Register at
www.the19thward.com
by December 22nd.

Players will be grouped by age and randomly assigned teams.

Rosters and schedules will be e-mailed to parents on Monday, December 23rd!

For more information, please contact
mattoshea@the19thward.com or (773) 238-8766.

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(Qualtrics XM Institute Q3 2023 U.S. Consumer Benchmark Study)

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The Department of Streets and Sanitation Launches Backyard Composting Program

The Department of Streets and Sanitation is offering a new Backyard Composting Program. Each ward receives an initial supply of twenty bins. The department hopes to distribute up to 40 more per ward later in the year. Residents can complete an online form by visiting www.chicagorecycles.org to request a free backyard compost bin. Once a ward receives 20 requests, the ward superintendent will deliver the bins to the resident's homes. A waiting list is in place for bins requested once the 20 have been distributed.

In compliance with the municipal code, the bin features a fully enclosed container on all sides and on the bottom with no opening greater than a quarter inch. This is designed to keep rodents out. Residents are encouraged to only add raw fruit/vegetable materials and yard waste like fall leaves and grass clippings to the compost bin to

further prevent attracting rodents. The bin is equipped with an 80-gallon capacity and a snap-together assembly with a twist-locking lid, a harvest door, and a base.

The Backyard Composting program allows residents to compost their fruit/vegetable scraps and yard waste in their own backyards, significantly reducing their household waste. Backyard composting keeps these organic materials out of the city's waste stream and enables residents to create soil-enriching compost for their own use. By composting instead of landfilling these organic materials, residents will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and help the city meet its climate action plan and waste strategy goals.

Please contact recycling and material management at dsscomposting@cityofchicago.org with any questions or concerns.



Reduce waste AND fight climate change. Request a FREE backyard compost bin from the City of Chicago at chicagorecycles.org



Misericordia's Christmas Pop-Up Shop Returns to Beverly Arts Center

While Thanksgiving Day may feel like it's late this year, Christmas comes early to the 19th Ward when Alderman Matt O'Shea opens his popular pop-up shop featuring items from Misericordia's Hearts & Flour Bakery. This year, some items from Misericordia's Heartstrings Gift Shop also will be available.

Since 2018 (except for 2020), volunteers fill the Atrium Gallery at the Beverly Arts Center, 2407 W. 111th Street in Chicago with baked goods, greeting cards designed by residents and other small gifts. Shoppers are welcome from 12 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. on Friday, Novem-

ber 22nd and from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. on Saturday, November 23rd.

More than 80 Misericordia residents who have intellectual and developmental disabilities benefit from working in the bakery. They are preparing some of south siders favorites including heart-shaped brownies, Irish soda and flavored breads, a variety of cookies, peppermint bark, fudge, spiced pecans, pretzel trees, toffee, caramel corn, and Cajun crunch.

To volunteer or request more information about this two-day sale, please contact the 19th ward office at (773) 238-8766.



19TH WARD DOCUMENT SHREDDING

Please note, this event is for document shredding only.

We will not have electronics recycling or expired prescription drug drop off available.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2024
9:00 A.M. - 11:00 A.M.
CROSSWINDS CHURCH
10835 S. PULASKI RD.

This service is provided free of charge, but is open to 19th Ward residents only. Documents are shredded onsite.

Only documents that are loose can be shredded; please remove any staples or binders before you arrive.

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Featured Holiday Merchandise

Food & Drink Specials

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More Info: mpbhba.org

Morgan Park Beverly Hills Business Association Offers a Variety of Holiday Events

The Morgan Park Beverly Hills Business Association is excited to offer a variety of holiday events to help make the upcoming holiday season more festive. They will kick things off with Holiday Bingo. This game offers participants a chance to play bingo while shopping in the 19th Ward this holiday season. Local residents can pick up bingo cards from participating businesses beginning on Saturday, November 30th, Small Business Saturday. Residents can also print a card from the Morgan Park Beverly Hills Business Association website, mpbhba.org. Participants can shop through December 31st and turn their cards in to the Beverly Review by January 5th. Holiday Bingo is sponsored by the Morgan Park Beverly Hills Business Association, the 95th Street Business Association, and the Mt. Greenwood Community & Business Association. Please visit any of their websites for a list of participating businesses.



p.m. Highlights include sales, specials, and festive activities from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., an evening holiday crawl until 9 p.m., a festive trolley offering complimentary transportation along the holiday road, and treats for trolley ticket holders. The trolley is free, but if you purchase a \$5 pass, you'll receive an exclusive mug filled with goodies from Markland-Hubbard Gourmet Provisions. **Please visit mpbhba.org/holiday-road for more details.**

Holiday Road

The MPBHBA and local businesses are excited to offer Holiday Road, a festive day of shopping and family fun featuring holiday activities, specially priced merchandise, and delicious food and drinks along Western Avenue on Saturday, December 7th from 9 a.m. – 9

Holiday Hurrah

Businesses in the 99th and 103rd Street business districts are planning a festive day of holiday shopping on Saturday, December 14th. The event will feature family-friendly crafts and activities, shopping for the holidays, and tasty beverages and snacks. **Please visit mpbhba.org/holiday-hurrah for more details.**



Local Businesses Encouraged to Decorate Their Storefronts

Businesses are encouraged to join in the holiday spirit by decorating their storefronts this holiday season. Residents can vote for the best decorated businesses in Beverly/Morgan Park from December 1st – December 31st by visiting mpbhba.org.

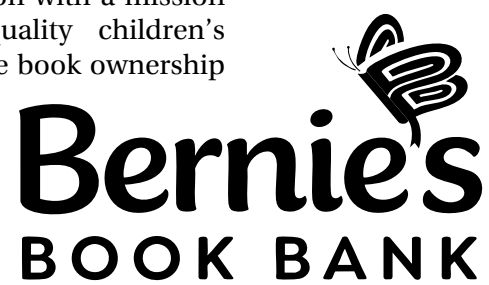
Alderman O'Shea to Host a Used Children's Book Drive

This December, Alderman Matt O'Shea is hosting a used children's book drive in conjunction with Bernie's Book Bank, a non-profit organization with a mission to distribute quality children's books to increase book ownership among underserved children throughout Chicagoland. Beginning on Monday, December 2nd, residents are asked to drop books off at the 19th Ward Office, 10400 S. Western Avenue. The last day to drop off books is Friday, December 13th.

books include Little Golden Books, Don't Let the Pigeon, Who Is/Who Was, Diary of a Wimpy Kid, Captain Underpants, Judy Moody, and Percy Jackson.

Please only donate gently used books in good condition for children from birth to age 12. Please note, only children's books will be accepted. We are unable to accept workbooks, textbooks, or reference materials.

For more information about Bernie's Book Bank, please visit berniesbookbank.org.



Transforming children's stories

The most frequently requested

Gratitude Energizes Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences Students and Chefs

Even though the 12th annual Thanksgiving Dinner beginning at 5 p.m. on Tuesday, November 19th is sold out, this season of gratitude prompted an interview with four students and two chefs who talked about preparing for this treasured community gathering at the Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences.

Animal science students Makenna Connor and Nora McGuire teamed up with food science students Nylah Robinson and Egypt West to meet with volunteers Chef Alvin Green, owner of Al's Cookie Mixx, and Michelle Sandifer, Smith Village's executive chef.

Both McGuire and Connor, who are certified animal handlers, were barn workers at the school during the summer. "Close to the fourth of July, twenty-three poults arrived at our school," recalled Nora McGuire, who described what it was like for students to hold the baby turkeys in the palm of their hand. "Since then, we worked with other students to provide a protected environment for the first several weeks until the birds' feathers fully emerged. We adjusted the heat, water, food, and bedding as they matured, and we trimmed their beaks and nails. Our job is to make sure the turkeys are healthy."

Added Makenna Connor, "In less than two months, the tiny poults grew to become free-range turkeys exploring the area outside our barn. Every week, we weighed the turkeys by getting on a scale, holding them by their legs, and subtracting their weight from ours. When they reach close to thirty pounds, they are ready for processing. So far, seventeen have been put on the back of a truck to go to the plant. This is part of the farm-

to-table dining model that may not have occurred to most urbanites like us!"

Horticulture students also contribute to the farm-to-table process by growing the pumpkins, potatoes, and vegetables. Weeks before the feast, food science students, who are certified food handlers, begin to plan meals for 350 senior citizens who live in the 19th Ward. Their teacher, Amonte Campbell, prepares a list of tasks to tackle. Expert chefs guide students as they prepare all items from the turkey, side dishes, and pumpkin pie – except for Eli's Cheesecakes. They also teach students how to carve turkeys.

"During previous years preparing this dinner, I learned how to brine turkeys," recalled Egypt West. "Now my Mom and I do this together for our Thanksgiving dinner. What we learn at school enhances my family's life."

Nylah Robinson keeps the spotlight on the purpose of the gathering, "It's about feeling like we're one big family. We started a new tradition for our neighbors by creating a reason for senior citizens to enjoy not only our meal but also being together. We know for some this may be their only Thanksgiving dinner this year. Everything must be perfect."

Chef Alvin Green, whose son is a Chicago Agricultural graduate now attending South Side Occupational Academy, has volun-

teered his support since Alderman Matt O'Shea proposed the idea of this Thanksgiving feast in 2013 to Bill Hook, the school's principal. Michelle Sandifer recalls making stuffing for hundreds of people, when she first was the pastry chef at Smith Village. She has returned to the senior living community as

executive chef and has volunteered to create real-world experiences for students who seek culinary careers.

"In addition to a delicious meal, our role is to make sure that guests enjoy a healthy meal. Preparing this dinner for so many guests is a life-changing experience for many students. When they walk into the gym where dinner is served, they understand why so many practices for cleanliness and safety are paramount," said Green.

"Our annual endeavor is to make sure that everyone has a way to celebrate with others as all of us express gratitude for our blessings," Sandifer said to summarize an hour-long conversation with Green and the four high school seniors. She added, "Twenty-seven percent of all people 65 years and older live alone. So while sharing a meal brings people together, raising the ingredients and cooking them makes our team at Chicago Ag a very special family. We hope our guests taste the love, our secret ingredient."



Tips to Help You Prepare for Your Thanksgiving Meal

Chef Green advises students and cooks at home to:

1. Plan, plan, plan and confirm the entire menu two weeks before the day.
2. Write a shopping list and shop early, especially if ordering a fresh turkey.
3. Set the dining table a few days before the celebration.
4. Refrigerate food to avoid food poisoning. The busiest time for this malady at ERs starts on Thanksgiving Day.

Chef Sandifer adds:

1. Clean and sanitize the kitchen and clean during prep time to avoid cross contamination.
2. Prepare non-perishables in advance, and freeze or refrigerate them. Begin defrosting a frozen turkey by placing it in the refrigerator two days before the dinner.
3. Sharpen carving knives. Never soak them in water which makes them dull. Sanitize knives between each use to avoid cross-contamination.
4. Honor family recipes but try a new side dish or beverage each year.



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Frances Lachowicz, Executive Director

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Mercy Circle Centenarian Celebrates by Reflecting on the Joys of Helping Others

Sister Renee Humble, RSM, born on October 18, 1924, retired as a psychiatric nurse at Aurora Hospital when she was seventy-five years old. In 1999, Sister Renee decided to join Hesus House, which provides shelters in Aurora, to dedicate herself to assisting homeless families and individuals. "For someone who is homeless, the first step to 'getting back on their feet' is to find a place to live," she explained.

Reflecting on her first career, Sister Renee said, "I always wanted to be a nurse. The need for general hospitals to open special departments for people with mental health challenges in the 1950s aligned with my personal goal. The fact that the Sisters of Mercy could help me achieve that goal influenced my de-

cision to join the order."

Like several of her classmates who joined the Sisters of Mercy in the late 1940s, Sister Renee had completed some higher education and worked before joining the order. Growing up in Washington, Iowa, Sister Renee first studied nursing at St. Ambrose Hospital in Davenport when it was common for hospitals to educate and train nurses. She then joined the Sisters of Mercy and moved to Chicago.

Upon graduation with a bachelor's degree in nursing from Saint Xavier College in 1947, she worked for two years as a psychiatric nurse at Aurora Hospital, one of Illinois' first hospitals to serve patients who needed mental health care. She also worked at Mercy Hospital in Chicago;

the city's first hospital founded in 1852. Both were sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy.

In 1951, Sister Renee studied for a master's degree at Catholic University of America and fulfilled the requirements for clinical experiences during the night shift at St. Elizabeth Hospital, one of the few places in the country totally dedicated to delivering psychiatric care to patients who lived in and near Washington, D.C.

"As nurses, we always were available to patients with mental health needs. One of my primary roles was to get to know patients as a way to build trust with them. This way, we could encourage them to take care of themselves by complying with what might seem like a sim-



ple task such as taking their medications. It has been very gratifying to see so many people get well," stated Sister Renee. "Today with the availability of a wide variety of medications, it is encouraging that so many people, who previously would have been hospitalized, can be treated outside a hospital."

2025 Shared Cost Sidewalk Program

Property owners share the cost of sidewalk repair with the City under this popular program. Thousands of Chicagoans have participated in this program taking advantage of the low cost, exceptional value, and ease of participation.

The Shared Cost Sidewalk Program cost per square foot charged to property owners is well below what a private contractor would charge.

Additional discounts may be available for senior citizens and people with disabilities.

Applications will be taken on a first-come, first-served basis. The number of participants is based on the availability of funds. The program typically reaches capacity quickly, so you are encouraged to apply early. Please note that if you previously applied for the program,

you must apply again in 2025 if you want to be considered for the 2025 program. Applications will only be accepted through the City's 311 system by calling 311, through the City's service request website, 311.chicago.gov or through the free CHI311 mobile apps on iOS Apple and Android. The property owner's contact information and the property address are required at the time

of the request.

The Shared Cost Sidewalk Program has not announced the opening day for applications yet. However, we will announce it through our email blast as soon as it becomes available. If you have any questions in the meantime, please contact CDOT at (312) 744-1746 or email cdotsharedcost@cityofchicago.org.




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Gill Honored as Friend of Agriculture

Reflecting her diligent support of agricultural issues, state Rep. Mary Gill, D-Chicago, has been honored by the Cook County Farm Bureau and the Illinois Farm Bureau with a "Friend of Agriculture" award.

"Agriculture is one of the defining industries of our state, impacting our food and fuel network not just here, but across the country and the world," Gill said. "It's also influential for many here in the community I serve. I'm proud to represent a district that is home to the Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences. Urban communities and agriculture are connected in more ways than people realize, and this one-of-a-kind school continues to produce excellent individuals who choose to pur-

sue a career in this critical field."

The Friend of Agriculture award is presented to lawmakers who have an outstanding voting record on agricultural and economic issues. In addition to her support in Springfield, Gill has engaged members of the industry, "adopting," a farm in Stephenson County in northwestern Illinois and regularly meeting with stakeholders on relevant topics.

"I am honored to receive this award from the Cook County Farm Bureau and Illinois Farm Bureau," Gill said. "It's critical that Springfield responsibly prioritizes agricultural issues, and I look forward to continuing this productive relationship." For more information, please contact RepMaryGill@gmail.com.



Maintaining cheer during the holiday season

Avoid binge drinking or abstain altogether

The holiday season is a vibrant time when friends and family come together to celebrate. For some, this festive spirit can sometimes lead to excessive drinking.

Fortunately, there are ways to fully enjoy the holiday celebrations without feeling pressured to partake in alcohol. With a little creativity, you can find alternative beverages and activities that allow you to immerse yourself in the joy of the season, ensuring that the focus remains on connection, laughter, and shared experiences.

How to avoid binge drinking

During social gatherings like holiday parties where alcohol is present, there is a risk of binge drinking. Binge drinking is defined as consuming four or more drinks within two hours for women and five or more drinks in the same period for men.

Try these tips to avoid binge drinking:

- Use a smaller cup and refrain from refilling it until it's empty. Being aware of how much you're drinking can help you take control of your consumption.
- Reduce your drinking pace by alternating between an alcoholic beverage and a non-alcoholic drink rather than consuming drinks back-to-back,
- Setting clear boundaries about your alcohol consumption, whether by limiting drinks or simply saying "no thanks," can help you enjoy holiday festivities without guilt.

How to avoid drinking while in recovery

While holiday celebrations can present relapse triggers and temptations, people in recovery shouldn't feel they need to avoid these festivities entirely. Spending the holidays with loved ones while staying substance-free is worth trying.

Try these tips if you're in recovery and plan to attend a party:

- Hold a non-alcoholic drink to reduce the chances of being offered alcohol.
- Keep a list of AA or NA meetings on hand and plan regular check-in calls with a sponsor or a loved one during the event. This will help you stay focused and talk about your feelings should temptation or negative emotions arise.
- Before attending an event, be honest with yourself about the urges you might experience and determine when it would be best for you to exit. Having a trusted friend on standby or knowing an alternative transportation option can help reduce stress and ensure you have a way to leave if necessary.

More tips are available at www.rosecrance.org. For individuals seeking recovery, experts at Rosecrance offer support. Contact 888.928.5278 to discover how Rosecrance can assist you in recovering from alcohol or substance use.

A festive advertisement for a craft fair. The background is white with a border of pine branches and ornaments. In the center, the text reads: "SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14TH 9AM - 3PM", "Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences presents the 11th annual RED TRACTOR CRAFT FAIR", "Purchase holiday crafts, treats & gifts handmade by students at this very unique craft fair!", and "3857 W. 111th Street Chicago, IL 60655 (Pulaski & 111th St.)". Two red tractor icons with Santa hats are positioned on either side of the main title. The advertisement is framed by a collage of black and white photos showing students at tables with their crafts.

Father Perez Knights of Columbus Council #1444 Celebrates 25th Anniversary

Father Perez Knights of Columbus Council #1444 members, family members, and friends gathered in the Perez Clubhouse on Saturday, October 12th to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Council's grand opening of the clubhouse at 111th and Trumbull.

The 115-year-old council held its first regular meeting on November 17, 1909, in Ogden Park Hall located at 6319 S. Ashland in Englewood. The Council opened the first Perez Clubhouse on April 26, 1928, on the corner of Marquette Road and May Street. After a fire completely gutted the clubhouse on December 27, 1952, the Council met at several locations: Marquette Hall, St. Kilian Hall, and then Legion Memorial Hall for two years. The Association and Council celebrated the opening of a beautiful clubhouse at 9515 S. Ashland, Auburn/Gresham, on January 14, 1954.

As Brother Knights moved to Beverly, Morgan Park, Mount Greenwood, and the adjacent southwest suburbs, the Association sold the clubhouse and met for 5 fraternal years in temporary quarters on Pulaski Road. In 1979, the Association rented its first Mount Greenwood based clubhouse at 111th and Sacramento. This location served the Council and community well until the Council vacated the space and began holding its meetings at Our Lady of Fatima Council #3582 in Oak Lawn for two years.

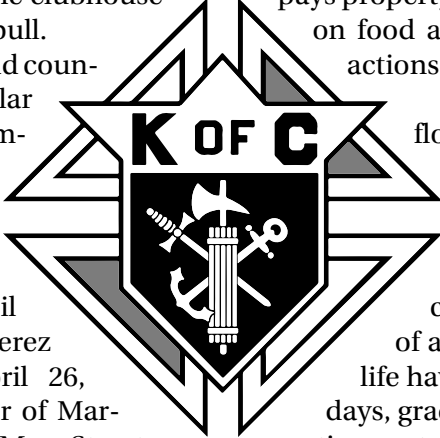
Finally, with the help of then 19th Ward Alderman Ginger Rugai, the Council anchored solidly in the

current Association clubhouse. The Association rented the building from 1999 until 2005 when it obtained a mortgage. The Association made the final payment on the mortgage in 2014. The Association pays property taxes and sales tax on food and beverage transactions.

The Council has flourished in its current location. The clubhouse is a fixture in the social life of the community. People of all ages and walks of life have celebrated birthdays, graduations, baptisms, retirements, bachelor parties, and a post Southside Irish party with Brother Knights as hosts.

Boasting a membership of just shy of 900 Catholic men, the Council, operating out of the unpretentious Perez Clubhouse, repeatedly earns the highest accolades from the Illinois State Council and the Supreme Council for recruiting new members, supporting seminarians, and contributing to the Chicago Police Chaplains Ministry, the St. Christina Food Bank, the Newman Fund supporting Catholic activities on secular college campuses, providing holiday meals and money to needy families, and awarding scholarships to 8th graders matriculating to a Catholic high school.

Year after year, the Council collects more money during the annual "Tootsie Roll Drive" than any council in the state. Ninety percent of those funds are returned to the community to support secular and religious programs that address quality of life needs for those with intellectual disabilities.



Chicago Department of Housing Announces 2024-2025 Emergency Heating Repair Program

The Chicago Department of Housing launched their 2024-2025 Emergency Heating Repair Program, EHRP, on November 1st. EHRP provides grants for emergency furnace or boiler repairs to income-eligible Chicago residents. Applications are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis, and funding is limited.

Any applicant with an active email address can apply online through the city's 311 service line, the CHI311app, or through the city's website, www.chicago.gov/ehrp. Residents who do not have an active email address can submit the application through the mail by sending it to:

Department of Housing

Attn: Emergency Heating Repair Program

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For more information, please call Rep. Gill's constituent service office at 773-445-8128, or email repmarygill@gmail.com.

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Chris Webber, Diane, and staff are amazing! They consistently go above and beyond to provide excellent, personalized service. They have guided my son and me through some really difficult situations, and always provide calm and reassurance. A few years ago, we had a house fire on a Friday night. Chris was physically at my door Barn Saturday morning to make sure we were ok! I am consistently amazed at the service they provide. They are honest, caring, supportive, and just really kind people. I frequently brag to all of my friends and family about what a great State Farm agent I have, and how I never feel like a random, unidentified customer when I call. I think I've been with them for about 10 years now and I have no intention of ever leaving. This is the best customer service I've ever had, although it feels more like family!! Thank you Chris, Diane, and team for all that you do! We truly appreciate you all!!

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Need help with leashing your dog? Here are some tips:

- Bring training treats with you
- Don't let your dog approach someone unless that person solicits attention from your dog and you are comfortable with them interacting.
- Try not to allow your dog to jump up on people, especially small children, older adults, or people with mobility issues because this might scare or injure them.

More: <https://be.chewy.com/leash-train-dog-2/>

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Illustrated by Li Chin | doggedrawings.net

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Thomas Ramsden Named Development Director for Mercy Circle

Life has come full circle for Tom Ramsden as he settles into his new position as director of development for Mercy Circle, sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas. "I was born at Mercy Hospital," said Ramsden.

"We are delighted that Tom has joined our team. He knows and values how faith-based organizations provide a better life for people they serve," stated Frances Lachowicz, executive director of Mercy Circle.

"I learned about the good works of the Sisters of Mercy when my mother moved here for the last 16 months of her life. Her exceptional care motivated me to shift my focus from raising funds for Catholic secondary schools to our senior living community when this position opened," added Ramsden, whose goal is to build upon the relationships that Mary Bannon, his predecessor, has cultivated.

"Since it opened more than 10 years ago, it is the perfect time to embark on three boutique fundraising campaigns," announced Ramsden, who is working with Mercy Circle's board of directors and executive director.

"We now are confirming the details of Mercy Circle's plan to launch a capital campaign to update the entire floor where resi-

dents receive skilled nursing care as well as residents and neighbors who benefit from rehab programs. And with her family's major gift to honor the memory of Sister Sheila Megley, RSM, who was a resident here, we are refreshing the dining room for independent residents. We also will secure funding to establish a wellness center," Ramsden explained.

Ramsden's confidence in the community's response to his outreach is inspired by the mission of Mercy Circle: to provide opportunities for seniors to live in a faith-based community and grow in wisdom, age, and grace.

For other not-for-profits, Ramsden has secured major gifts and topped off with capital campaigns. He also has managed annual appeals, planned giving, grant writing, and corporate sponsorships for events. Over the years, Ramsden served as development officer for the Daniel Murphy Scholarship Fund, St. Viator High School in Arlington Heights, St. Rita High School, and St. Ignatius College Prep.

The youngest in his family, Ramsden and three siblings were born at Mercy Hospital. His father grew up in St. Ethelreda's Parish where he was taught by the Sisters

of Mercy. Born and raised in the Beverly neighborhood, Ramsden's father died suddenly when he was in second grade and his mother continued working for the Chicago Public Schools. The Marist gradu-

ate earned his bachelor's degree at St. Mary's University of Minnesota and is completing a master's degree in non-profit administration at the University of Notre Dame.

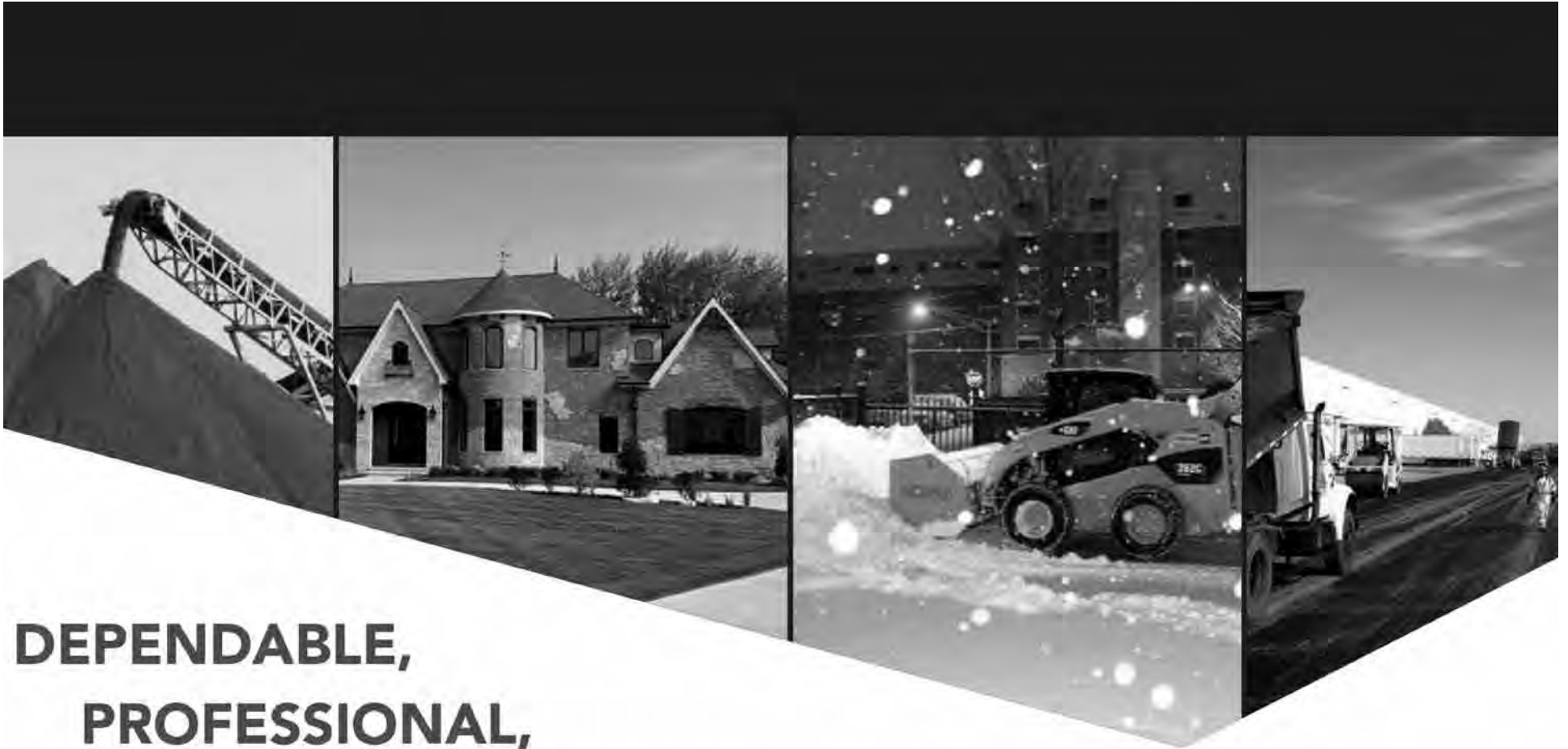


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Winter's Approach Prompts Attention to Staying Active and Caring for One's Health

For assisted living residents at Smith Village, a life-plan community in the 19th Ward, a change in the seasons does little to alter the pace of activity and pursuit of interests that residents enjoy year-round.

Meghan Maple, Smith Village's associate executive director, and Gabriele Bowers, CNA for assisted living residents, share some tips for all seniors about how to beat the fast-approaching winter doldrums.

"Get out as often as possible. Attending any of the social events that Alderman Matt O'Shea hosts for seniors is a great way to so-



cialize. Isolation affects a person's cognitive and physical well-being," said Maple. "Establish a weekly route such as a visit to the local library. Consider joining a book club. Be the first to say yes when invited to family gatherings, especially when family members offers a ride," added Maple.

Maple also said, "Enrolling in an exercise program can bring a welcome mental boost on winter's grayest days. WGN-TV offers chair exercise programs on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays; WTTW also airs great ones. Smith Village recently hosted the 19th Ward's Tech Thursday series, and it's clear that many seniors are tech savvy. Don't be afraid to ask a grandchild or a neighbor for a tutorial if you don't know how to use FaceTime or email so that you can stay in touch with friends and relatives, grandkids too! A leisurely phone conversation with a long-time friend can be the perfect tonic on a chilly winter afternoon."

Planning and sharing a healthy and robust fall menu with lots of

seasonal root vegetables supports older adults' well-being, but other considerations are important as well. "Being mindful of managing medications should be a priority for all of us," said Bowers. "Understand the dosage and frequency for taking each prescription. Taking them at the proper intervals can sometimes be a challenge."

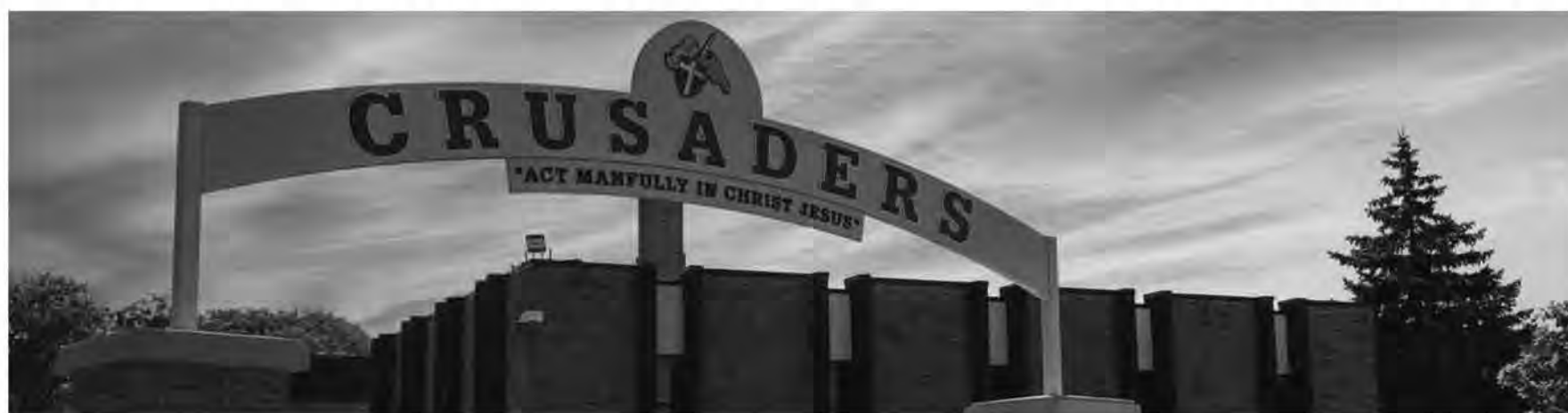
Bowers continued, "Reminders such as setting an alarm on your mobile phone; associating taking your prescriptions with a certain activity, such as before or after breakfast; and using a medication organizer available online or at the local store, to organize medications into days of the week and times of the day. Use the method that works best for you."

Winter presents its own challenges during the holidays. Bowers suggests, "It's important to share daily medication use with a family member who can help with reminders. Also, exercise special caution when taking cold and flu over-the-counter medications or when enjoying a special holiday beverage to avoid contraindications with prescriptions."

Please contact Smith Village at (773) 474-7302 or smithvillage.org to learn more about the assisted living community they offer.



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