



VILLAGE NEWS

August/September 2022

Staff Highlights

Each month we will be introducing Village of Olympia Fields staff, both new and not so new, whose primary job is to make the Village work well for you, our residents, and to ensure that we are responsive to your needs. We exist to serve you. We want to get to know you, but, more importantly, we want you to get to know us!

Comings & Goings

If you have visited the Olympia Fields Village Hall, Police Department or Public Works Building recently, you may have noticed a few new faces. Joining the staff in the new fiscal year are Judge Drella Savage, Mr. Ruben Briceno, Officer Nicholas Burris, Mrs. Lisa Fifer-Smith, Mr. Miles Wade and Mrs. Jessica Washington, who collectively bring a wealth of talent and experience to the Village. We are excited to welcome them all to the Village.

Drella Savage Village Administrator/Chief of Staff



The Honorable Drella C. Savage is a retired circuit court judge who served the citizens of Cook County as an elected official for over 20 years in the Domestic Relations and Law divisions of the unified

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And the Winner Is...

Congratulations to the Olympia Fields Police Department, which took First Place in the 2022 Lemont Legends Cruise Night competition showcasing emergency vehicles, on August 3. Officer Sean Barry, who represented the OFPD at the event, is pictured standing in front of the department's winning vehicle—a Hummer. Chief Blasingame is pictured holding the First Place plaque.

Well Done OFPD!

National Night Out Hits Big in Olympia Fields



The saying "Go Big or Go Home" certainly applies to the Olympia Fields Police Department's (OFPD) National Night Out event that took place on Tuesday, August 2, from 6–10 p.m. at Bicentennial Park. An estimated 250–300 community members attended the OFPD event, which was one of many such community-building events hosted, annually, by local police departments across the country. The National

Night Out program was created to strengthen relationships between the police and the communities they serve.

The children delighted in carnival-themed activities, including an obstacle course with kid-size, ride-in police cars and ATVs, a bounce house, dunk tank, bumper cars, arts and crafts and face painting, while enjoying popcorn, cotton candy and ice cream from Olympia Fields' own Shawn Michelle's Homemade Ice Cream. It was an "all hands on deck" kind of event with police officers firing up the grill and serving hot

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Three Guiding Principles

The Village of Olympia Fields operates under the framework of Three Guiding Principles:

1. *To Preserve and Maintain the Beauty and Charm of the Village;*
2. *To Improve the Efficiency of Our Government; and*
3. *To Protect the Village's Property Values through an Economic Development Program Consistent with Future Lifestyles and New Economy Business Models.*

Each month, we will highlight Village programs, events and activities that exemplify these three principles, which, going forward, we will refer to as the PIP (Preserve, Improve, Protect). Collectively, we can make a positive difference in our community, and it is our goal to showcase the efforts of our residents, volunteers, staff and commercial partners who contribute to making Olympia Fields the destination place that it is.

Improving the Efficiency of Our Government

Water Billing Made Easier—New Sensus FlexNet Tower Nears Completion

In our ongoing effort to improve efficiencies in governance and the cost-effective delivery of services to our residents, the Village of Olympia Fields is pleased to report that the new Sensus FlexNet Tower is close to completion. The tower, which was approved by the Village's Board of Trustees in January 2022, will improve the Village's water meter reading capabilities. Specifically, the tower will increase accuracy and timeliness in billing and provide residents with a more user-friendly understanding of their water usage patterns. Also with the new tower, the Village will be able to transition to a monthly billing cycle, which will enable residents to identify problems sooner, before they result in costly water bills.

The system's two-way, long-range radio network will be able to read water usage data and provide real-time usage

Maintaining and Protecting the Beauty and Charm of the Village

The 50/50 Tree Program Is Back!



A photograph of two young children, a girl and a boy, planting a small tree in a garden. The girl is kneeling on the grass, holding the tree's trunk, while the boy is crouching beside her, using a small trowel to dig a hole in the soil. The tree has green leaves and a thin trunk. The background shows a grassy lawn and some bushes.

Guess what Village is a recognized Tree City USA community? Olympia Fields ... of course. The Tree City USA program, sponsored by the Arbor Day Foundation, provides communities with a framework for maintaining and growing their tree cover and, ultimately, creating beautiful, healthy, sustainable and environmentally-sound neighbor-

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Protecting the Village's Property Values through an Economic Development Program Consistent with Future Lifestyles and New Economy Business Models

Coming Attractions

It is our goal to foster economic development within our community, and to that end we welcome the following new businesses to the Village of Olympia Fields.

Lawrence's Fish & Shrimp

Olympia Fields is the new home of Lawrence's Fish & Shrimp. The popular eatery has brought all the seafood deliciousness that it has been known for since 1950, to the south suburbs. Lawrence's Fish & Shrimp is located at 3248 Vollmer Road in Butterfield Plaza—right next door to Shawn Michelle's Homemade Ice Cream. The restaurant's grand opening is planned for September 15. More information is coming soon!

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Staff Happenings

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court system. She graduated from Northwestern University and Howard University School of Law cum laude. Judge Savage currently serves as the Chairperson of the Illinois Judicial Council Foundation and the Central Region Representative for the Connection & Social Action International Committee of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.®

Judge Savage is a resident of Olympia Fields, and previously served as the Village Clerk from 2019–2021. She returned to the Village as Administrator/Chief of Staff in May 2022. In this capacity, she manages the day-to-day business operations and administrative functions of the Village. Specifically, Judge Savage advises and consults with the President and Board of Trustees to ensure adherence to the administration's guiding principles and operational tenets as they relate to governance, fiscal management, organizational structure and the efficient delivery of services to residents. She is pleased to work with a dynamic team of professionals and considers herself a servant leader, committed to maintaining the high standards that Olympia Fields has enjoyed for over a century.

Ruben Briceno Maintenance Worker



Mr. Ruben Briceno is responsible for the general maintenance of the Village's streets, sewer, and water systems. Prior to joining our Village in May 2022, Mr. Briceno worked for the Village of Richton Park. He has extensive experience in warehousing, having worked 10+ years in that industry. Mr. Briceno has been married for 14 years and is the proud father of two boys and one girl. In his spare time, he enjoys spending time with his family and is an avid gamer.

Nicholas Burris Police Officer

Officer Nicholas Burris was formally sworn-in as a police officer with the Olympia Fields Police Department on August 10, 2022. He is a graduate of Illiana Christian High School in Lansing and Prairie State College. Officer Burris also holds an EMT certificate from Prairie State College. Prior to joining the OFPD, he was employed with the Phoenix Police Department and the South Suburban College Campus Police Department. Officer Burris's primary responsibilities will include basic patrol and observation of the Village and making a positive impact on the community through helpful and positive interactions. He hails from a law enforcement family, as both of his parents work in law enforcement as well.



Lisa Fifer-Smith Assistant Finance Director



Mrs. Lisa Fifer-Smith joined the Village in August 2022. A certified public accountant, Mrs. Fifer-Smith received a Bachelor of Science in accountancy from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She has over 25 years of accounting experience. Prior to joining the Village, she was the controller for II in One Contractors, Inc., in Chicago. Ms. Fifer-Smith will assist in the management of the day-to-day accounting and finance-related matters of the Village.

Miles Wade Water Billing Clerk



Mr. Miles Wade began his tenure with the Village as a temporary employee. He became the Village's full-time water billing clerk in July 2022. In that capacity, he handles all water billing related matters. Mr. Wade is a graduate of Rich Central High School. He attended Emporia State University on a four-year athletic scholarship and graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in business administration.

Jessica Washington Executive Assistant to the Village President & Village Administrator/Chief of Staff Director of Communications



Mrs. Jessica Washington will be responsible for managing the external communications and marketing for the Village. She also will serve as the Village's FOIA officer, grant manager, human resources representative and business licensing contact. A resident of Olympia Fields, Mrs. Washington is a graduate of Augustana College and the Loyola University of Chicago School of Law. She practiced law for five years in the areas of family law, adoption and probate. Additionally, she is a published writer and editor with over 27 years of editorial experience, primarily serving law firms, bar associations, legal publishers and organizations catering to the legal profession. Prior to joining the Village in July 2022, Mrs. Washington served as executive assistant to the director of day-to-day operations at Southland College Prep High School in Richton Park and managed the communications for the Matteson District 162 Board of Education.

July and August saw the departure of two Village staff members: Ms. Cynthia Smith, account manager supervisor in the Finance Department and Mr. James Landini, director of Public Works. Though we are sad to see them go, we thank them both for their invaluable contributions to the work of the Village and their service to our residents and wish them both much success in their new career endeavors.

National Night Out

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dogs and hamburgers to hungry attendees. Guests took pictures in the photo tent, participated in Smai Tawi yoga sessions led by Michael Wilson and enjoyed the rhythmic performances of the Azania Youth Drum Ensemble and indigenous drummers. Attendees were also able to purchase a variety of one-of-a-kind items, such as monogrammed glassware, stationery, jewelry and handbags from the many vendors who set up shop at the event. The Olympia Fields Park District and various local stores, community groups and organizations donated items and set up booths giving away plenty of freebies, including toiletries, children's books and duffel bags.



One of the evening's highlights was the raffle of an electric guitar autographed by Buddy Guy. Mr. Alex Freeman was the lucky winner of the guitar, which was donated by Village resident Ron Vasser. The other highlight of the evening was the mini-auto show sponsored by the Chicago Crossroads Corvette Club, arranged by Mr. Vasser, who is a club member.

Joining in on the fun were State Representative Debbie Meyers-Martin, Rich Township Supervisor Calvin Jordan, Village President Sterling Burke, Village Trustees Sandra Finley and Kelvin Oliver, Village Administrator Drella Savage, and a host of members of various Village committees and homeowners associations.

The event's primary organizers were OFPD officers Rhonda Chatman and Chivon Dugan, with the support of their fellow officers. "It was a lot of hard work, and very worth it to see the community come out and enjoy themselves. That was the goal. We've already started making notes for next year; it's going to be awesome," commented Officer Dugan. Officer Chatman, who doubled as the DJ for the evening, enthusiastically predicted, "Next year's event will be bigger and better." Officers Chatman and Dugan were both recognized by the Village President and the Board of Trustees with a commendation for their hard work in planning the OFPD's National Night Out event.

Trustee Kelvin Oliver, a long-time resident and member of the Village's Public Safety Commission, remarked, "This year's National Night Out at Bicentennial Park allowed ample space for music, games, food, rides and, most importantly, the opportunity for residents to meet and interact with the Olympia Fields Police Department in a positive way—building bridges of hope, respect and trust! As a resident, the event filled me with pride, and as the Public Safety Trustee Liaison, I am committed to fostering community policing. I salute Chief Derrick Blasingame and his entire Police Department for setting a standard that all communities should live up to. Our Village President Sterling Burke often speaks of the importance of preserving the beauty, charm and nature of Olympia Fields; this event exemplified that and more."

Visit the Village's website to view the Video of OFPD National Night Out event courtesy of Mr. Ron Vasser.

Stay Informed about Emergencies with CodeRED

The CodeRED emergency notification system is an extremely high-speed telephone communication service that can deliver customized pre-recorded emergency messages directly to homes and businesses via voice, email and text. The service is free to residents and businesses within the Village of Olympia Fields.

We encourage all Village residents and business owners to sign up for CodeRED. It is an indispensable tool for communicating critical emergency information such as natural disasters, criminal activity, power outages, traffic detours and watermain breaks. CodeRED sends alerts about emergency and non-emergency events affecting the Village via telephone, text and email.

Read more about the CodeRED emergency notification system on our website. Don't be caught unaware again...visit our website to sign up today!

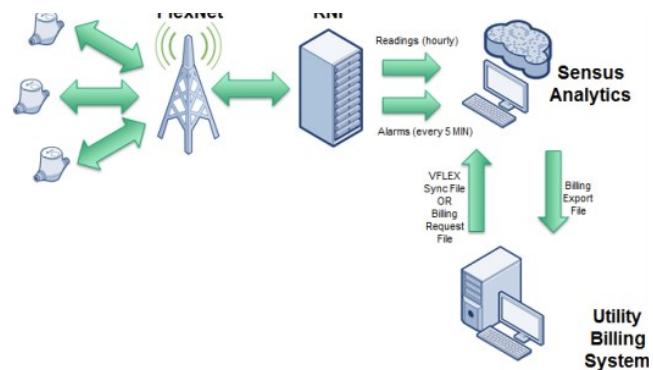
**Please Do Your Part ...
Keep the Village Clean!**



Water Billing

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information from meters and other sensors located throughout the Village. This will be especially useful in helping the Village's Public Works Department immediately identify high water use issues related to leaks and equipment failure, system outages and other abnormalities that can drive up water costs.



Water Meter Conversion Program



The Village's Department of Public Works is in the final phase of its Water Meter Replacement Program. Through this program, public works representatives will replace old water meters with new state-of-the-art Smart Meters at no cost to residents. With the installation of the upgraded Smart Meters, water meter readings will be conducted remotely via the Sensus FlexNet Tower network, which means public works personnel will no longer need to access your property to do these reads.

We are pleased to report that the majority of Village residences have completed the meter conversion process. If you are one of the 29 residences that have yet to convert to a Smart Meter, please contact the Public Works Department at 708-503-8200 immediately to set up an appointment. Time is of the essence!

Mature Tree Care

According to the International Society for Arboriculture (ISA), caring for mature trees is just as important as planting baby trees. Annual tree inspections can nip budding problems and extend the life of your trees.

Four characteristics of tree vitality:

- New leaf or bud formation
- Leaf size
- Twig growth
- Absence of crown dieback (gradual death of the upper part of the tree)

Tree health and stability are major concerns. Cavity openings, extensive twig dieback and fungal presence (mushrooms) can indicate structural weakness, which could potentially pose a danger to you, your family or your home. Thinning of the tree's crown can also be problematic. For more information, please refer to ISA-arbor.com Mature Tree Care.

To locate arborists to assist in your tree evaluation, visit the following web sites: <https://www.isa-arbor.com> or <https://www.treesaregood.org/findanarborist>.

Submitted by Susan Moroney, Beautification Committee

50/50 Tree Program

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To that end, the Village of Olympia Fields, in conjunction with the Beautification Committee, is once again offering the 50/50 Tree Program to residents to help "keep Olympia Fields green." Through this program, the Village splits the cost of a new tree with the resident, thus providing a 50 percent savings on the purchase price of select trees. Residents and Homeowner Associations (HOAs) may purchase up to two trees, while supplies last. Information about the types of trees available and the ordering process will be sent to HOA presidents in September. Interested residents may also obtain information about the 50/50 Tree Program on the Village website at www.olympia-fields.com. Orders must be placed by September 28, for delivery in October. Residents are responsible for planting their own trees. Trees will be available on a first come, first served basis.



Resident News You Can Use

Each month we will answer some of the pressing questions commonly asked by residents. We will also use this space to share special announcements, information and other news you can use.

Fielding Your Questions

Hosting an event in the Village? Planning to build a fence? Want to install an alarm system? Did you know that per the Village's Code of Ordinances, you must obtain a permit to do these things? We are here to help you navigate these and other thorny issues.

Hosting an Event: Anyone planning to host an event in the Village of Olympia Fields, e.g., a parade, concert, festival or other public assembly, must submit an Event Permit Application to the Village at least 30 days in advance of the event. The application is subject to the approval of the Village's Board of Trustees. (Section 18:36–37). The Event Permit Application is available for downloading on the Village's website.

Building a Fence: Anyone planning to build a fence must submit a Fence Permit Application to the Village at least 30 days in advance of fence construction. Fence permit fees start at \$60. The application is subject to the approval of the Village's Board of Trustees. (Section 6:13(a)). The Fence Permit Application and a list of requirements are available for downloading on the Village's website.

Installing an Alarm System: Anyone planning to install an alarm system must submit a Building Permit Application to the Village at least 30 days in advance of installation. The application is subject to the approval of the Village's Board of Trustees. (Section 6:13(a)). Once approved and installed, an Alarm System Registration Form must be filed with the Village along with a \$25 registration fee. The Building Permit Application and the Alarm System Registration Form are available for downloading on the Village's website.

We encourage you to make the Village's website at www.olympia-fields.com your first stop for information. Can't find what you are looking for on the website, then please contact the Village Hall at 708-503-8000. We are here to help!

Help for Families with Wandering Family Members

Do you have an elderly or mentally disabled family member who sometimes wanders from home?



If you answered "Yes," a Scent Jar may be just what you need. The Olympia Fields Police Department has received a limited shipment of Scent Jars from the Cook County Sheriff's Department. They are available to

Olympia Fields residents on a first come, first served basis—while supplies last.

How They Work

Scent Jars are simple to use. Enclosed in each Scent Jar kit is a cloth and directions for use. Simply open the jar, and remove the cloth. Use the enclosed cloth to thoroughly wipe the armpits of your wandering family member. This will ensure that the cloth absorbs the strongest scent possible of your loved one. It is recommended that you wear rubber gloves when handling the cloth to prevent the possibility of cross contamination with your scent. Once you have used the cloth, place it back in the jar, and close the lid as tightly as possible. Then store the jar (labeled with your loved one's pertinent descriptive information) in your refrigerator. If your family member should wander off, contact the Olympia Fields Police Department immediately, and give them the scent jar; their bloodhound(s) will be able to detect the scent from the cloth, which will aid in locating your lost family member.

50/50 Tree Program

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It's Possible Mobile Tutoring

Just in time for the start of a new school year, It's Possible Mobile Tutoring is now open in Olympia Fields. Housed at

3228 Vollmer Road in Butterfield Plaza, It's Possible Mobile Tutoring offers educational and tutorial programs as well as before and after care and transportation services.

Little Caesars Pizza

Pizza, Pizza is coming to the Village. Little Caesars Pizza will be opening in October 2022, at 3770 Lincoln Highway (next door to Perros Brothers Gyros).

Village Happenings

If you build it, they will come...even in a heavy rainstorm. That was certainly the case on Saturday, August 20th at the Olympia Fields Park District's Playground Ribbon Cutting and Back-to-School event at Sergeant Means Park. Families braved the inclement weather to celebrate the official unveiling of the Park District's new playground, covered patio and fitness equipment. Although, the rain prevented guests from physically experiencing the Park District's newest additions, a good time was still had by all. The Park District's indoor facility played host to fitness demos, face painting and a backpack giveaway sponsored by State Representative Debbie Meyers-Martin and Rich Township Supervisor Calvin Jordan. Outdoors in the covered pavilion, guests enjoyed food, fun, fellowship and Zarlengos Italian Ice and Gelato while grooving to the sounds of DJ Steve "Silk" Hurley on the turntable.

Joining Representative Meyers-Martin and Supervisor Jordan were State Representatives Anthony Deluca and Will Davis, Olympia Fields Village President Sterling Burke, Southland College Prep High School Board President Ron Bean, Rich Township Assessor Sam Brown, among other Village and Township officials.



Jesus Vargas, executive director of the Park District, Park District President Deborah Robinson, Vice President Steve Hurley, and Commissioners Trinette Britt-Johnson, Lori Carlton-Jordan and Neal Pierce, did the honors cutting the ceremonial gold ribbon marking the official grand opening of the new park facilities. (Board member Eric Anderson was not present at the event). Mr. Vargas explained that the construction of the playground, patio and fitness circuit was jointly funded by the Park District and an Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development grant. Village President Burke encouraged residents to take advantage of the new facilities and all that the Park District has to offer.

Pop-Up Shop

Co-sponsored by the Olympia Fields Park District and Sisters Sweets



20712 Western Avenue, Olympia Fields
Sunday, September 25
1:00–4:00pm

Someone You Should Know ...



Mr. Baron Waller, Olympia Fields resident and owner/operator of several Culvers restaurants in the Chicagoland area, was recently honored by the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) Chicago, the local office of the leading community development organization in the nation.

LISC Chicago awarded Mr. Waller the "For-Profit Real Estate Development Award" for his collaborative community development work related to the establishment of his Culver's restaurant located at 11050 S. Doty Avenue W, in the Pullman area. Remarkably, the opening of the Pullman Culvers marks the first standalone restaurant built in that community in over 30 years. Mr. Waller received his award at the 28th Annual Chicago Neighborhood Development Awards ceremony.

We congratulate him on this outstanding achievement.

Around Town

The Southland is abuzz with fun and educational activities and events for the entire family. Mark your calendars!

2022 Main Street Music Fest

In Conjunction with the Park Forest Art Fair
Downtown Park Forest—Main Street & Cunningham Drive
Saturday, September 17
11:30am–8:00 pm