

# North Township NAVIGATOR

YOUR GUIDE TO NEWS AND SERVICES IN EAST CHICAGO, HAMMOND, HIGHLAND, MUNSTER AND WHITING • WINTER 2016

## BUILDING A STRONGER COMMUNITY

### STAMP OUT POVERTY

Helping those most in need in North Township is going to ramp up and change direction next year in an all-out effort to stamp out poverty, stabilize families and communities.

Providing help to those who have nowhere else to go will be bolstered by efforts to assist those who live at the margins – perpetually unstable but just above the danger zone.

North Township Trustee Frank Mrvan said the stability of Northwest Indiana communities is at stake.

"By gearing up to be more proactive, we are developing strategies to prevent chaos in fragile families," Mrvan said. "Intervening earlier will shorten the window to recovery and provide

additional stability for struggling communities and their residents."

The township has joined forces with Lake Area United Way to learn more about the Alice Study of Financial Hardship, which details the whys of perpetual financial instability.

It will be up to the townships, which serve as the community's safety net, to develop solutions.

"We are working with educators, employers, social services and the faith-based community," he said. "My hope is when we talk about this a year from now we will see new employment opportunities and career-training initiatives that are making a difference for our families who need it most."

#### EDGE OF SURVIVAL

Data shows poverty in Lake County is not a choice, but the result of too little income to make ends meet. Those living at the margins employ short-term strategies that have long-term consequences, such as: skipping medications, meals or failing to make critical bill payments.

Trustee Frank Mrvan is working with the county's 10 other townships to create an integrated system that's more effective.

Integral to the initiative is a Lake Area United Way study known as "Edge of Survival."



### ERIN'S LAW SHINES LIGHT ON CHILDHOOD SEXUAL ABUSE

The woman who brought national attention to childhood sexual assault is coming to North Township March 17.

Named by PEOPLE magazine as one of 15 women changing the world, Illinois resident Erin Merryn, has championed legislation aimed at protecting children from sexual abuse and exploitation.

Already 28 states, including Indiana, have made Erin's Law their own. North Township Trustee Frank Mrvan would

like to see the law – which mandates sexual abuse awareness in all public schools – enacted in every state.

"Erin's story breaks down barriers and opens communication," he said.

National data shows 3 out of 4 abused adolescents are violated by someone they know well. "Lake County statistics on child sexual abuse are alarming," Mrvan said. "It is important we are on the forefront to protect our children."

#### SAVE THE DATE ...

North Township Trustee Frank J. Mrvan invites the community to learn more about preventing child sexual abuse and exploitation during Erin Merryn's discussion March 17, which is the day preceding National Child Exploitation Awareness Day.

**INFO:** Visit us online for updates at [northtownshiptrustee.com](http://northtownshiptrustee.com).



WE'RE HERE TO HELP YOU! FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT US AT [NORTHTOWNSHIPTRUSTEE.COM](http://NORTHTOWNSHIPTRUSTEE.COM).

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**NEWS TIP? STORY IDEA?**

Send your suggestions to:

[northtownship@theideafactory.us.com](mailto:northtownship@theideafactory.us.com)

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# NORTH TOWNSHIP TRUSTEE URGES FAMILIES TO GET TESTED FOR LEAD

Trustee Frank Mrvan is marshaling local resources to urge East Chicago residents to get tested for lead exposure.

Robocalls began in October to city residents impacted by excessively high lead levels in the soils around the West Calumet neighborhood.

Since lead findings were made public in August, the township has been helping those impacted by the health threat.

“Every child in East Chicago needs to be tested,” Mrvan said. “It’s a simple pin-prick. Testing is accessible and it is free. The good news is: medication is available to reverse the situation as is dietary assistance to help parents know what foods eliminate lead from the body. En-

## UPCOMING TESTS

The East Chicago Health Department and Indiana Department of Health are providing free lead screenings. Be smart. Get tested.

**INFO:** Visit [northtownshiptrustee.com](http://northtownshiptrustee.com) for latest testing dates and locations.

vironmental physicians are also available to help with more complex cases.

“They can’t help, though, until people are tested,” he said. “While the local and state health departments address medical needs, the township is addressing this man-made disaster through awareness to prevent lifelong problems.”



## LETTER FROM THE NORTH TOWNSHIP TRUSTEE

### “We’re thinking big in 2017 and ready to tackle poverty, abuse, lead testing and so much more”

Big things are coming in 2017 for North Township. Here’s a sneak peak:

#### STAMPING OUT POVERTY ...

... by working with Lake Area United Way and other townships to build a unified system that identifies families living one emergency from financial ruin. The goal: Keep them out of harm’s way by increasing jobs and income. Instead of waiting for people to come to us, we’re going out into the community.

#### PREVENTING SEXUAL ABUSE ...

... by creating a partnership that includes the healthcare community and schools in all-out effort to increase early reporting of child sexual assaults. We want to give children a safe-zone where they learn about inappropriate touching and have a safety net that protects them.

#### TESTING OUR RESIDENTS ...

... by screening 100 percent of all East Chicago children for lead exposure. This free test can begin the medical process to reverse the effects of lead exposure.

#### SECURING TRANSIT FUNDS ...

... by cementing plans for permanent funding for Dial-a-Ride. We have done the best we can with grants and other temporary funding resources. It is time to secure permanent funding for our on-demand buses that serve more than 50,000 township residents a year.

From our family to yours, I wish you a blessed holiday season and the very best in the New Year!

#### FRANK J. MRVAN

North Township Trustee



WE'RE HERE TO HELP YOU! FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT US AT [NORTHTOWNSHIPTRUSTEE.COM](http://NORTHTOWNSHIPTRUSTEE.COM).

# WINTER IN THE PARK



## SHELTER & PICNIC RENTALS

As soon as the end of the year approaches, Wicker Memorial Park Superintendent Brett Bierman knows he will begin fielding calls to rent summer space at one of the park's 8 picnic areas and six buildings.

"We open reservations right after the New Year and expect that all of our facilities will be fully booked for the summer by the middle of January," he said. "Right after Thanksgiving, we start getting daily calls from folks who know how popular Wicker Park is for family reunions, class picnics and general get-togethers."

Reservations for the 2017 summer season – May 1 to Sept. 30 – begin 8:30 Jan. 3. The rates are:

	WEEKENDS HOLIDAYS	WEEKDAYS	DEPOSITS
GENERAL PICNIC AREA	\$100	\$75	\$100
PAVILION	\$550	\$325	\$50
STANDS	\$225	\$175	\$40
SHELTERS	\$175	\$125	–
BREEZEWAY	\$275	\$225	\$50

## WELCOME!

Wicker Park is alive with activity throughout the winter season. Bundle up for a brisk walk or bring your binoculars and look skyward. Chances are you'll spy more than one of our feathered friends – blue jays, cardinals and woodpeckers are abundant throughout the park.

## WINTER SNOW TRAILS

When the weather outside is frightful, walkers and runners are often accompanied on the Wicker Park trails by snow-shoe enthusiasts and cross-country skiers. Bring your own equipment and join in the fun on either the 2.5 mile trail or half-mile inner trail.

## NEW DOG RUN

Our new dog park features pet fountains, benches for leash holders and plenty of space to run around. The annual fee is \$25 for township residents, \$60 for out-of-township and \$100 out-of-state. Register your dog at the Wicker Memorial Park picnic office.

Reservations are available for out-of-township and out-of-state residents at a higher cost. Discounts are available for not-for-profit organizations, veterans, police and firefighters who have a North Township resident as a member.

**INFO:** Contact Wicker Memorial Park at (219) 838-3420.

## SENIOR ACTIVITIES

# HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS

### COAT GIVEAWAY

After collecting gently used coats/jackets and buying new ones with donated funds, the North Township Trustee will distribute winter items to township residents on a first-come, first-served basis.

**WHEN:** 3:30-5 p.m. December 15

**WHERE:** North Township Trustee's East Chicago office, 2105 Broadway

**INFO:** Call (219) 398-2435.

#### PLEASE NOTE ...

Recipients must be North Township residents and have a valid ID. Children must be in attendance to receive coats, one coat per person. No strollers are allowed inside the building during the coat distribution.

### HAPPY BIRTHDAY JESUS

Children and their parents are invited to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Each child should bring canned goods or paper products for the Old Firehouse Community Center. This free event features activities, pizza and beverages.

**WHEN:** December 8.  
Preschoolers: 11 a.m.-1 p.m.  
Kindergarten-Grade 5: 3-5 p.m.

**WHERE:** Wicker Park Social Center, 2215 Ridge Road

**RESERVATIONS:**  
Please call Tya at (219) 923-9410.

### PICTURES WITH SANTA

Bring your little ones for a visit and free photo with Santa!

**WHEN:** 3:30-5 p.m. December 15

**WHERE:** North Township Trustee's East Chicago office, 2105 Broadway

**INFO:** Call (219) 398-2435.



### DECEMBER LUNCHEON

The luncheon features mixed green salad, baked ham with horseradish, green beans almondine, baked potato with butter, chives and sour cream, apple pie. Includes bread and butter, coffee or hot tea.

**WHEN:** Noon December 14.

Doors open at 11 a.m.

**WHERE:** Wicker Park Social Center

**FEE:** Seniors enjoy great food, entertainment, guest speakers and door prizes for \$5.

**RESERVATIONS:** Call (219) 932-2530, extension 301.

### FEBRUARY LUNCHEON

The luncheon features vegetable soup, baked fish, scalloped potatoes, green beans and tapioca pudding. Includes bread and butter, coffee or hot tea.

**WHEN:** Noon February 8.

Doors open at 11 a.m.

**WHERE:** Wicker Park Social Center

**FEE:** Seniors enjoy great food, entertainment, guest speakers and door prizes for \$5.

**RESERVATIONS:** Call (219) 932-2530, extension 301.

### VALENTINE'S DANCE

Join us as we welcome Valentine's Day – North Township style. Enjoy a delicious, heart-warming meal that includes mixed green salad, chicken marsala, buttered mashed potatoes, buttered corn, homemade bread, cherry pie and coffee. Valentine's gifts will be distributed from 1 to 1:30 p.m. and music by Geno J. Sciacca from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.

**WHEN:** Doors open from 11 a.m. to noon February 9. Dinner served from noon to 1 p.m.

**WHERE:** Wicker Park Social Center

**FEE:** \$20 per person.

**RESERVATIONS:** Call (219) 313-3934 or email [uribee@ntto.net](mailto:uribee@ntto.net).

# WINTER ASSISTANCE

## WEATHERIZATION ASSISTANCE

The North Township Trustee's office is working with Northwest Indiana Community Action to keep out winter's chill. Services include adding insulation, replacing light bulbs with their energy-efficient cousins, caulking leaky windows, replacing appliances and so much more.

**INFO:** Eligible residents may contact NICA at (219) 794-1829. Press zero and ask for weatherization. Not sure you qualify? Please call the North Township Trustee's office at (219) 932-2530.

## SHOVELING HELP

North Township wants to match seniors, who need help digging out, with volunteers, who have a shovel or snowblower. During heavy snow, the township implements an automated call system to help those who are snowed-in and need help getting out of their homes.

**INFO:** If you need assistance or want to volunteer, please call the North Township Snow Hotline at (219) 306-1344.

## WELL-BEING CHECKS

If you would like to be part of the township's seasonal well-being checks, call Chief Deputy Virginia Carter at (219) 398-2435, ext. 369.

## PET ASSISTANCE

Best Buddies Pet Pantry provides pet food, pet supplies and toys for those who cannot afford it.

**INFO:** To find out if you qualify, call a case manager at (219) 932-2530. If you would like to donate cash, pet food or toys, call (219) 728-1401 or email [bestbuddiespetpantry@yahoo.com](mailto:bestbuddiespetpantry@yahoo.com). Donations are also accepted at Petco in Highland and Munster Animal Hospital. For more info, visit [bestbuddiespetpantry.org](http://bestbuddiespetpantry.org).

## SENIOR ASSISTANCE

North Township's Senior Ambassadors program is up and running just in time for the holidays and beyond.

In addition to information about reverse mortgages and locating honest, dependable repair companies, Coordinator Catherine Thomas is compiling tax preparation information and setting up programs for seniors who want to learn more about senior-specific deductions.

"There are deductions you may not even know about – but our CPAs do," she said.

The information will be available early in 2017 to give you plenty of time to talk to the experts.

"We are limited only by our needs and vision for how our seniors can be helped," she said. "Even if we don't provide a requested service, we can find those that do."

**INFO:** Call Senior Ambassadors Coordinator Catherine Thomas at (219) 398-2435, ext. 364.



CHICAGO WOLVES

# HUNGRY FOR MORE



Allstate arena

7 PM FEBRUARY 4

5 PM COACH BUS FROM WICKER PARK  
RESERVATIONS MUST BE PAID IN ADVANCE

\$35 INCLUDES GAME TICKET + TRANSPORTATION • RSVP 219.932.2530 X 331

Frank J. Mrvan



NORTH TOWNSHIP TRUSTEE  
BUILDING A STRONGER COMMUNITY

5947 HOHMAN AVENUE  
HAMMOND, INDIANA 46320

# SWEETHEART'S DANCE

4-6 PM FEBRUARY 11  
WICKER PARK CLUBHOUSE

DANCING • DJ • PRIZES • CRAFTS • FOOD

WHO CAN ATTEND? CHILDREN - AGES 4-12 - ACCCOMPANIED BY AN ADULT.  
ADMISSION: \$5 PER COUPLE, \$3 EACH ADDITIONAL CHILD INCLUDES FOOD.

RESERVATIONS REQUIRED: PLEASE CALL 219.932-2530, EXT. 331

