

Calendar

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

~ Of Special Interest ~

Spotlight on Nonprofit Agencies
Agencies receiving Township grants discuss their services & community needs at meetings 4th Thursdays. Attend our regular meeting in person or watch us on Cable Channel 10
Tuesdays at 5:30 pm, Fridays at 7:00 pm

Moraine Township Grant Application
Deadline: February 1, 2010

Talk to the Township

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

Van Line (847) 432-3000

Fax (847) 432-2178

Email info@morainetownship.org

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

<http://morainetownship.org>

SuperTalk: Mari Barnes



At the start of this second term of office, refreshed by two new trustees as well as welcome familiar faces, we greet our task of helping others with renewed energy and enthusiasm.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Moraine residents for their overwhelming support in the recent April election (sweeping 21 of the 30 precincts, winning 56% to 44% over my challenger). I am proud of the work we've been doing, and humbled by your vote of confidence. I pledge to continue to do my very best on behalf of all of our residents.

Moraine Township plays a very special role in the community, and we're glad to let you know all about it in this issue of *Talk of the Township*.

It takes a village or at least an office...

At the end of April, Paula Peddle, our receptionist and van coordinator extraordinaire had her second child, a baby girl named Brooklyn. While she was on maternity leave, everyone worked extra hard to keep the office running smoothly.

Ken Shaw, known to many residents who use our two Moraine Door-to-Door vans, moved from driving twice per week to working full time to do the van schedules. Scheduling the vans is truly an art form. Each day we drive 12 to 14 people (qualified seniors/disabled/economically challenged) to and from their scheduled medical appointments up to 15 miles from our borders, at the subsidized per ride rate of \$4. A van may be at Evanston Hospital in the morning and the V.A. Hospital at noon. Many residents we drive are in wheelchairs, which nearly doubles the time needed for pick up and drop off, often involving an additional seat held by a caregiver (who rides at no extra fee). Special thanks to Ken.

We often take for granted what our staff does each day, until we look to others to fill that role. In our case, the others – bookkeeper Shannon Mosier, General Assistance Director Tracy Coleman and Ada Goldstein, a volunteer who is as dedicated as staff – have run the Food Pantry, the RTA pass enrollment program, and so much more that goes on all day, along with their regular tasks. Paula, however, remains the only member of the staff who speaks fluent Spanish, so that asset was missed.

Fortunately, Paula is back in her chair and Ken is happily back on the golf course.

Collaborations Abound

We also pride ourselves on avoiding duplication of effort and services, as well as economizing and creating synergies at Moraine Township. Just a few of our collaborations include:

- Small Emergency Task Force, coordinating with Highland Park and Highwood police/fire and city staffs to respond efficiently to small scale emergencies like fires
- Green Initiatives Alliance committee with City of Highland Park, Park District of Highland Park, and School Districts 112 and 113
- Lake County Health Department Pandemic Readiness, working with Lake County, and cities of Highland Park and Highwood police and fire departments
- Salvation Army – emergency situation help
- PACE – all van related issues. We lease at an excellent rate to provide personal local rides.
- Food and holiday drives – volunteers and assistance of social workers in Districts 112, 113

continues on page 3

Township Funds Crisis Support Agencies Spotlight on Grantee Organizations

In past issues of *Talk of the Township*, we have examined the work of four local nonprofit childcare service providers, two mental health agencies and two that serve residents with developmental disabilities. In this issue, we're highlighting the contributions of two agencies selected by our Citizen Grant Advisory Committee to provide crisis support. Both organizations combine professional staff with extensive use of trained volunteers.

A Safe Place has been funded for many years by the Township to provide respected programs aimed at eliminating domestic violence, and support for victims. It is the only such organization in Lake County. A Safe Place provides emergency shelter and a wide range of programs to give victims support on "every step of their journey away from abuse," according to their grant proposal. Residential services at shelters provide beds, food, clothing and other necessary items families need when they flee violent homes. Most victims are women and children at poverty level incomes. One particular intention is to break the cycle of violence by educating the children who witness it. The agency has a 24-hour crisis line staffed by bilingual speakers. In satellite offices, A Safe Place also provides non-residential counseling and support groups. They also run a transitional living facility and a courthouse advocacy program. Presentations in community education awareness and prevention programs were made to over 500 Moraine residents. They received a general operating grant for the full amount requested, \$2,500, representing 0.1% of their total funding. Find them at <http://asafeplaceforhelp.org>.

Zacharias Center, which formerly was named LaCASA, has likewise been a Township-funded agency for many years. Their mission is "to provide a place where survivors of sexual assault and abuse can heal, and to mobilize the community toward action to end sexual violence." To that end, they provide free bilingual services ranging from 24-hour crisis intervention (hospital, police station, court visits), counseling, advocacy and community education. Prevention programs are presented to high schoolers, for example, on date rape, gender equality, risk reduction, self-defense and myth dispelling about sexual abuse. The Center serves Lake as well as northern Cook and McHenry counties, and southern Wisconsin. They received \$3,000 of \$5,000 requested for Children's Program funds, 0.35% of that budget. Find them at <http://zachariascenter.org>. ■

Garden Time: Moraine Pantry Plants Garden Thrives

Despite uncertain, and uneven, Spring weather, volunteers pitched in energetically to help make our Pantry Plants Garden Project grow this year. We look forward to a bumper crop of fresh produce for our client families.

Volunteers showed up on June 6 at the southern end of Barberry Road in Highland Park, and toiled cheerfully as they placed young plants donated by Anton's Fruit Ranch into the Woodridge Park grounds donated and cultivated for us by the Park District of Highland Park.

One group was organized by Sam Piro, who established a corps of community-minded volunteers to help our Food Pantry. Several family groups took part.

You will find some of the happy workers pictured on page 4, and our website.

You can help, too. Mari's spouse Charlie and son Will Barnes made a sign erected at the garden spot so volunteers can leave messages telling when plants were last watered or weeded. Just head on over – with your tools, and our thanks! ■

Catch us on Cable!

Board of Trustee meetings held on 4th Thursdays of the month are recorded. These meetings include reports on community needs from our grantee agencies and all public business.

Shown on Cable Channel 10, Tuesdays at 5:30 pm and Fridays at 7:00 pm

SuperTalk...continued from page 2

- Lake County Courts and Highland Park Peer Jury – for whom Moraine is a "community service hours" site
- Monitoring life safety issues for seniors living alone – with the assistance of the cities of Highland Park and Highwood
- Temporary Emergency Housing Task Force – in cooperation with Highland Park Community Development and Senior Center

We continually strive to meet the community's high standards and trust. ■

Talk of the Township

Moraine Township is pleased to communicate with residents about Township business. We hope this periodic publication will foster our goal to keep the public fully informed about Township services and activities.

Supervisor	Mari A. Barnes
Clerk	Ellen S. Gussin
Assessor	Peter J. Koukos
Trustee	Dwayne Douglas
Trustee	Bryna G. Gamson
Trustee	Margoth K. Moreno
Trustee	Jackie B. Schechter

Consult our website for timely information, including Agendas, Meeting Minutes, links to related information and on-line versions of *Talk of the Township*.



<http://morainetownship.org>

What DOES Moraine Do? Photo Gallery



Pantry Plants Garden Project volunteers
Fern Anderson & Elizabeth Mallory



Mackenzie Bean & Kaya Bogot

Get A Hand... Volunteer!

Supporting Community Youth & Seniors & Everyone In Between

...Give A Hand

Moraine Township • 277 Central Avenue • Highland Park IL 60031 • 847.432.3240 • fax 847.432.2179
www.morainetownship.org • Moraine Door-to-Door Paramedic Van Service • call 847.412.3000



Trustees Schechter and Douglas observe volunteer efforts



Sam Piro with Charlie, Mari & Scout Barnes



Assessor Services



Paula Peddle with Pantry client & our new green bag

Please!
Check with the Township
before bringing in a donation of food or clothing. Unfortunately, some things simply aren't useful to those we serve, and might be put to better use elsewhere. Call (847) 432-3240. Thanks for your generous cooperation!



Kaya & Dad Bill Bogot hose off with Elizabeth Mallory's help



Voter Services from the Clerk



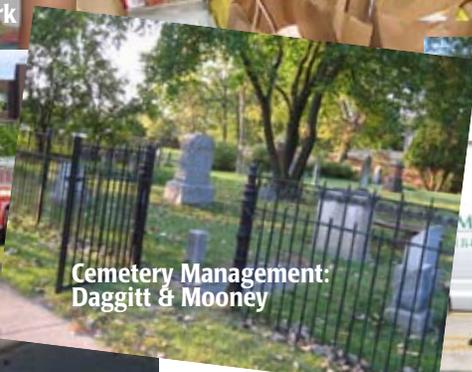
RTA Pass applications processed



Volunteers like Hispanos Unidos & Friends help shelve Food Pantry items



Fire/Small Emergency Support Services



Cemetery Management: Daggitt & Mooney



Award-Winning Senior/Paratransit Service



ClerkTalk: Ellen Gussin Delighted to be Your Clerk

Here I am – back for another four-year term to serve the outstanding residents of Moraine Township. I feel both honored and privileged to have the opportunity to continue in my role as Township Clerk, and I am delighted to welcome our new Trustees Dwayne Douglas and Jackie Schechter to our Board.

What Does the Town Clerk Do?

As chief record keeper and election functionary, the Clerk is busy with a variety of duties. These activities include preparation and filing of meeting minutes; and developing, distributing, and posting the meeting agendas (which I would like to point out are always available for public viewing on our website, <http://morainetownship.org>). In addition, I sign and notarize a variety of Township documents, such as tax levies, budgets, and audits. I occasionally issue proclamations, resolutions, and ordinances; distribute a variety of public notices; and continue to master the Freedom of Information and Open Meetings Acts, which all public officials must stay abreast of, referencing changes and making sure we are in compliance. I prepare the oaths of office for the Township Board, Assessor, and Deputy Assessors. And, I register voters! (See photo montage on facing page.)

The Township Calendar is a busy one, with regularly scheduled Board meetings twice per month. These are always open to the public and we welcome your attendance. Once per year in April we hold a Town Meeting, which is the Clerk's responsibility to call, publicize, run, and insure that a duly sworn-in Moderator is ready to serve at the meeting.

I have learned a great deal on the job and I have enjoyed getting to know Lake County Clerk Willard Helander and her excellent staff in Waukegan. I am proud to participate in and support as many projects of the Township as I can. You will learn more about the many services offered to seniors, handicapped, and otherwise-challenged individuals within our community as you read through *Talk of the Township* and online. The teamwork and diligent judgment of our Supervisor and Trustees are a pleasure to witness. They continue to rise to the challenge in addressing the often complex issues facing our community, cognizant of spending tax dollars wisely, delivering an award-winning transportation program, and assisting those in need.

Election News and Important Upcoming Dates

The Consolidated Election of April 7, 2009 is behind us. Complete election results are always available on the County website, and there are many links to this information on the Clerk's page on our website at <http://morainetownship.org>.

We will not have another opportunity to exercise our civic privilege of voting until the General Primary Election on February 2, 2010. The Primary date has been moved up several weeks and there is still talk of changing the Illinois Primary. Stay tuned for up-to-date coverage. The Primary Election will be followed by the General Election on November 2, 2010. Early Voting calendars will be published prior to each of these elections. The latter has continued to gain popularity with each election over the past three and one-half years since the State Legislature first enabled voters to cast their ballots up to 22 days prior to

concludes next column

What's New?

• *The Early Voting program has been so successful – about 50 percent voting early in Moraine Township (the highest in the County) – that the number of polling places can be reduced to make the process more efficient, lowering costs. I have been very focused on evaluating specifics of the election process in Moraine Township and suggesting cost-cutting and efficiency-improving measures to the County Clerk as well as our State Representative and Senator, so this is a welcome development.*

• *Moraine Township is working with Highland Park High School to encourage more juniors and seniors to become election judges. Training is provided and school absence excused for this worthy experience in learning about our democratic process. And, as mentioned in the last issue, I really believe that students make great election judges.*

an election. A state-issued picture ID is required to verify against the voter's registration in the County computer system.

Voter Registration

Voter Registration is available Monday through Friday at the Moraine Township office, 777 Central Avenue, Highland Park, from 8:30am to 4:30pm. To register to vote, bring two forms of identification – one with your name and current address. You must be a United States citizen, 18 years old by the next election (a 17-year-old can register as long as his/her birthday is on or before the date of the next election) and have resided in the voting precinct for 30 days prior to the next election.

I can be reached during regular business hours of 8:30am to 4:30pm at the Township Office at (847)432-3240 or by email: clerk@morainetownship.org. ■

CommunityTalk Latino Services Rise

Not only has Moraine Township been able to establish a very welcome group of Latino Advisory members from Highwood and Highland Park, but also Family Service is spearheading a Latino Initiative, funded in part by the United Way, in addition to their work at Nuestro Center.

Elsi Rodriguez, Nuestro Center Director, put out a call for voluntary help to assist with summer programs. Volunteers are welcome all year, as tutors and mentors. Email erodriguez@fssl.org.

Family Service invites applicants for the new position of Latino Youth Advocate. That person's role will be to provide youth outreach and educational and recreational support; to plan and lead culturally enriching activities; and develop a new community-based youth drop-in center. Special priority will be on Latino youth at risk of school failure.

The intent of the Latino Initiative is to organize a core youth planning group to identify interests and unmet needs of Latino youth in Highwood and Highland Park, and proceed to design a program to be implemented locally, working in close coordination with agencies and officials in the community.

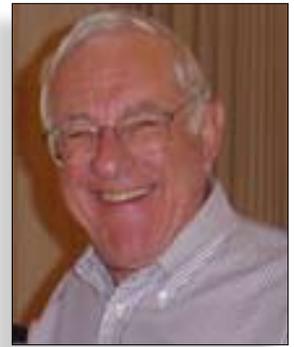
Contact Robert Wolf, Family Service Executive Director, for further information at (847)432-4981.

Moraine Township's own Latino Advisory Committee is working on projects from monitoring housing issues to acting as interpreters during times of community gatherings, and at emergencies like fires, where communication can be critically important. We are grateful to have their volunteer services!

Trustee Dwayne Douglas will be joining Trustee Margoth Moreno as Board liaison to the Latino Advisors. ■

AssessorTalk: Pete Koukos Board of Review

An advisory committee is being formed to meet with the members of the Lake County Board of Review (BoR) prior to the beginning of this year's round of hearings. I believe the committee will consist of three assessors, one or more lay citizens, a commercial realtor and a member or two of the Lake County Board. I'm not sure if the committee will include an appraiser. The Lake County Township Assessor's Association members all seem to agree that consistency is a desirable trait for the BoR members and alternates. Many of you have given your opinions to me as well. I'll do my best to remember your valid critiques.



Appealing Advice

If you are going to file an appeal, I suggest you not talk about how high your taxes are as time is limited. Frankly, those are not in the purview of the Board of Review. Your assessment is all the BoR is concerned with. The tax levy is the work of the taxing bodies. The assessed value of your property determines how the total tax levies are divided among all property owners. Your property assessment as compared to other like properties in your neighborhood based upon uniformity or on market value is the evidence required to make a change in your assessment.

To give you an idea of the assessment/appeal process, my 2008 market value assessment was \$884,000. I've had my property on the market for over a year. The price listed on the multiple listing service is \$599,000. That is a good argument to use to request a reduction of my property assessment. A tax bill of \$16,525 for a 2100 square foot house is a bit much, even for one east of Sheridan Road, but that will not help an appeal. The fact of a real market price does matter and I should be able to make a good case to the Board of Review. (Obviously, the Assessor cannot change his own property values.)

If you think you have a basis for an appeal, see us first. If we cannot find sufficient evidence to request a change, we will show you how to file an appeal and/or suggest an appraisal.

Deadline Approaches

We close our books on or about July 15 this year. The individual property assessment notices will probably be mailed on or about August 13. There will be 30 days from that date to appeal the assessment. An appeal hearing will be held sometime in the fall. The decision of the Board will be mailed after all Lake County appeals have been heard, probably sometime in February 2010. The decisions will be mailed after all appeal hearings have been concluded; however, the County is working to have the decisions of the Board posted on the web site as decisions are made, but I'm not certain that will occur.

I've reported this before, but it bears repeating. Many taxpayers only become aware of their assessment when the tax bills arrive. This past May was no exception. Asking me to reduce the current tax bill will get you nowhere. This Moraine Township newsletter is sent to every household in the Township, but apparently not all read it and/or don't remember my admonishment to pay attention to the assessment notice. This year's Property Assessment Notice (in place of the former "blue card") will contain more information and hopefully encourage more to read it. That will be the time to react, not next May.

continues on page 7

AssessorTalk...continued from page 6

I expect the State/County to impose an increase of about 1-2% to the property assessments we submit this year. It seems that although the number of sales has been drastically reduced from the previous year, the median sale price has continued to increase over last year since the State does not consider foreclosures and similar sales to be qualified.

Most properties will NOT be published in the local press this year because we will only make about 700 to 800 parcel changes this year. For example, if we had granted a vacancy for commercial property last year, we will raise the property to its full value and require a commercial property owner to ask for the vacancy change again. In addition, we will have raised the value of ComEd property to maintain some consistency with the other townships in the County.

How Time Flies

As of December 31, 2009, I will have served four years as your Assessor. It certainly doesn't seem that long. In the time I've served this community as your Assessor, I've only dealt with six or seven people I considered disagreeable souls. I've met many wonderful people in my day to day dealings with taxpayers. Once I can explain the miserable property assessment and tax systems, most folks agree we need a change, but none of us have come up with a better method of paying for our local government services. Nor, given tax cap, can I find fault with the need for non-home rule units of government to levy the maximum allowed. Once that unit of government does not levy the maximum, that portion of the levy is lost forever.

As many of you know, I've lobbied to have the sales ratio analysis be based upon only one preceding year's sales instead of three in a declining housing market, which has caused our equalizer to be too high. Apparently this has not impressed the State legislature.

I've also lobbied to have the income requirement for the senior assessment freeze to be raised the last few years, and that has been done. Making the freeze portable, however, has not been viewed favorably.

A closing statement is needed here. Farewell, friends. ■

Grants Awarded for FY09-10 Committee Selects New Chair for FY10-11

Citizen Grant Advisory member recommendations for FY09-10 (April 1-March 31) were approved at the Board's April 23 meeting. In-coming Chair Harry Crane stood in for Chair Wendy Ezgur in making the presentation. Others who served included Nancy Rotering, John Sirotti, and Latino Advisory observer Adela Lozano. Trustee Bryna Gamson was Board liaison. Supervisor Barnes offered the Board's thanks for their service.

The Board approved \$120,000 in grants for 22 programs run by 19 nonprofit organizations serving Moraine Township residents. Last year, grants totaled \$100,000. The Board allocated the 20% additional funding from reserves to address current economic conditions. Supervisor Barnes noted that "Despite belt-tightening that must happen in other spheres, Township government is here to insure that residents in need be served. The agencies we support are the direct service providers for day care, psychological and health counseling, developmentally disabled programs, job hunting, immigrant aid and housing. We would not be the same caring community without them."

concludes next column

What Happened in the April Assessor Election?

Deputy Assessor Patty Powers, CIAO, was unopposed in election as Assessor for a 4-year term – along with the Township's Trustees, Clerk and Supervisor. However, terms of office for Assessor do not conform to those of other officials, who were sworn in on May 14.

On January 1, 2010, Patty Powers will assume her new responsibilities as Moraine Township Assessor. Congratulations, Patty!

Grant Advisors also recommended guidelines for their committee structure, formalizing terms of office and breadth of demographics represented on the committee. They also recommended that in next year's application, agencies identify how they serve non-English speaking clients. Award letters from the Supervisor will also state that recipients must make midterm reports to the Board.

Grants for service to residents were made to the following agencies, whose contact information is available on the Township's website: A Safe Place, Cancer Wellness Center, Career Resource Center, Center for Enriched Living, Epilepsy Services of Northeastern Illinois, Family Network (Parent-Child Drop-In, Right From The Start and After School Activity Program), Family Service (counseling and Nuestro Center), Glenkirk, Highland Park Community Nursery School & Day Care Center, Highland Park/Highwood Home Child Care Association, Highland Park Illinois Community Land Trust, Interfaith Housing Center of the Northern Suburbs (Homesharing Program), JCYS/Lutz Center, Josselyn Center, Links-North Shore Youth Health Service, PADS Crisis Services, The Art Center (Make Art Count program), Tri-Con Child Care Center, Zacharias Center. ■

News Briefs

Some highlights since our January issue

- The Board increased grants by 20% (from reserves) to help sustain nonprofit agencies serving local residents in this tight economic period.
- Moraine received another \$35,000 grant from the Healthcare Foundation of Highland Park, to help underwrite costs of medical appointment trips for low income senior and disabled residents using the Township's award-winning Moraine Door-to-Door paratransit van service.
- The Board advanced \$25,000 (from reserves) honoring the pledge made by a previous administration of \$100,000 towards capital expenses of the Community Family Center. The balance will be paid when CFC begins renovations to the Karger Center to house several childcare agencies.

Talk Back/Volunteer

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

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

- Food Pantry/Clothes Closet
- Grant Advisory Committee
- Latino Advisory Committee
- Pantry Plants Garden Project
- Senior Services
- Transportation



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

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

- Supervisor Barnes gratefully accepted a \$1,000 donation to the Food Pantry from JEWEL-OSCO in honor of their Grand ReOpening.
- JEWEL-OSCO also generously donated plants remaindered from their sale tent to our Pantry Plants Garden Project.
- Assessor's Office staff moved next door to improve consumer services and confidentiality.
- The Supervisor worked with building owners and architect to plan much needed disabled access to Township offices.
- A new Township attorney was hired.
- Trustees attended a briefing by members of the Highland Park Police Department on Gang Activity in the region.
- Moraine increased communications outreach via TribLocal, online and in print.
- A Board Code of Ethics is under discussion.
- Grantee organizations presented updates at Board meetings: Family Network, Tri-Con, Community Family Center, PADS, Links, and JCYS Lutz Center.
- Trustee Jackie Schechter was named liaison to Highwood City government.
- Moraine happily accepted results of Postal Workers Food Drive on May 9 for the Food Pantry, assisted by HPHS Hispanos Unidos & Friends Club.
- Supervisor and some Trustees participated in the *Know Your Government*

program on April 19, in Spanish and English, hosted by City of Highland Park's Human Relations Commission in cooperation with City of Highwood.

- Moraine became a drop-off site for cell phones for the Red Cross.
- Latino Advisory Committee, interested in monitoring housing issues, heard presentations from Rob Anthony of the Highland Park Illinois Community Land Trust and Betsy Lassar, policy analyst, at their March meeting. The July meeting took up assisting with language barriers at emergencies and public events.
- The Moraine Township Charitable Fund, a 501(c)(3) entity, was established to conform with Northern Illinois Food Bank regulations, in order to continue to receive certain food stuffs.
- Retiring Trustees Cynthia Plouché and Jeff Zaluda were thanked for their service and newly elected Trustees Dwayne Douglas and Jackie Schechter were welcomed as they joined re-elected Trustees Bryna Gamson and Margoth Moreno, and Supervisor Barnes, at the May 14 meeting.
- Supervisor and staff stepped up to solve emergency housing, food and clothing needs after a fire in Highwood in June.
- Since January, the Food Pantry has served 78 to 119 households per month. Moraine Door-to-Door vans have made 1,977 trips through May. ■