

# FLOSSMOOR NEWS

Winter 2024-25  
Volume 34 / Number 3



## WRAPPING UP A FUN, HISTORIC YEAR

**Flossmoor's Centennial celebration continues into the winter season with more opportunities to get connected to the community and each other.**

**Half a Century of EMS**  
*Emergency Medical Service has been offered in Flossmoor for 50 years.*  
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**Day of Service**  
*Get details on the 2025 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service.*  
Page 5

**New Gem in Town**  
*H-F High School students & teachers have created the newest sculpture in town.*  
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### Centennial Year was a Home Run

Flossmoor, thank you for celebrating our Village's 100th birthday all year long!

2024 brought some challenges — Remember the dangerously cold and icy Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service in January? The noisy cicada takeover in May? Or how about Flossmoor's first-ever recorded tornado in July, the week before a beautiful Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra concert downtown? — but this welcoming community still found beautiful times to get connected with each other: just take a look at some of the memories featured here and on the cover of this newsletter!

Good times are still ahead: this holiday season, you'll find opportunities to Celebrate the Season with Small Business Saturday and Flossmoor's Tree Lighting on Saturday, Nov. 30, plus enjoy family fun at the Flossmoor Public Library on Saturday, Dec. 7, and you can register to take a trolley ride through Homewood and Flossmoor on Thursday, Dec. 12. The year will close with festive lightings of the community menorah and kinara in Flossmoor Park. See all of the details on the following pages.

Shine on into your second century, Flossmoor, like the gem you've grown to be!

# Stay Informed

Sign up to receive alerts.  
Text 'ECOM911Alerts' to 77295 to receive important notifications.



## Sign Up Today for Rave Mobile Safety & Smart911 Service

Rave Mobile Safety allows you to receive notifications from state and local authorities to stay informed on potentially hazardous situations involving weather, traffic and other critical emergencies. By creating a Smart911 profile, you are able to share information about the members and pets of your household that will reach emergency responders if they were to respond to an incident at your home. Signing up is easy and takes only a few minutes. Text "ECOM911Alerts" to 77295, or register at [www.Flossmoor.org/GetConnected](http://www.Flossmoor.org/GetConnected). Get alerted about:

- Critical Safety Notifications
- Weather Emergencies
- Traffic Issues



## News for – and from – Your Neighborhood

Get information on Village news, events, meeting updates and happenings sent directly to your desktop or mobile device by signing up for Flossmoor's Enewsletter / ECop service. Enewsletters are delivered every other week, and ECop Alerts are sent when there is a call to action regarding an immediate safety or traffic issue in the Village. Scan the QR code here or visit [www.Flossmoor.org/GetConnected](http://www.Flossmoor.org/GetConnected) to join!



## village officials

**Michelle Nelson, Mayor**  
[mnelson@flossmoor.org](mailto:mnelson@flossmoor.org)

**George Lofton, Trustee**  
[glofton@flossmoor.org](mailto:glofton@flossmoor.org)

**Joni Bradley-Scott, Trustee**  
[jbradleyscott@flossmoor.org](mailto:jbradleyscott@flossmoor.org)

**James Mitros, Trustee**  
[jmitros@flossmoor.org](mailto:jmitros@flossmoor.org)

**Gary Daggett, Trustee**  
[gdaggett@flossmoor.org](mailto:gdaggett@flossmoor.org)

**Rosalind Mustafa, Trustee**  
[rmustafa@flossmoor.org](mailto:rmustafa@flossmoor.org)

**Brian Driscoll, Trustee**  
[bdriscoll@flossmoor.org](mailto:bdriscoll@flossmoor.org)

**Gina LoGalbo, Village Clerk**  
[glogalbo@flossmoor.org](mailto:glogalbo@flossmoor.org)

**Bridget Wachtel, Village Manager**  
[bwachtel@flossmoor.org](mailto:bwachtel@flossmoor.org)

## village numbers

**Village Hall:** (708) 798-2300  
**Fire:** (708) 798-3885  
**Non-Emergency Police:** (708) 957-4500  
**Non-Emergency TDD:** (708) 647-0179  
**Public Works:** (708) 957-4100  
**Building Department:** (708) 957-4101  
**Emergency Only:** 911

## village meetings

**Village Board Meeting**  
1st & 3rd Mondays of the Month at 7:30 p.m.

**Plan Commission Meeting**  
3rd Thursday of the Month at 7:30 p.m.

**Zoning Board of Appeals**  
4th Tuesday of the Month at 7:30 p.m.

**Public Art Commission Meeting**  
2nd Monday of the Month at 7 p.m.

**Community Relations Commission Meeting**  
4th Monday of the Month at 7 p.m.

**Green Commission Meeting**  
3rd Tuesday of the Month at 7 p.m.



#ThisIsFlossmoor  
#Flossmooris100  
Find us on social media! Look for updates, photos, videos and good conversation on Facebook and Instagram. We truly appreciate all the residents, business owners and visitors who have supported us and joined the conversation.

## calendar

flossmoor.org

**Saturday, Nov. 30**

**Small Business Saturday** — All Day / Village-wide  
Celebrate Flossmoor's small businesses and all they have to offer. Hosted by the Flossmoor Business Association in partnership with the Village of Flossmoor.

**Tree Lighting** — 3-5:30 p.m. / Flossmoor Park  
Visit with Santa and enjoy hot chocolate and caroling in Flossmoor Park for the annual Holiday Tree Lighting.

**Saturday, Dec. 7**

**Holiday Story Hour** — 10 a.m.-noon / Flossmoor Public Library  
Enjoy a story hour and craft led by the H-F Vocational Achievement for Successful Transition (VAST) and Student Government students! Register at [www.FlossmoorLibrary.org](http://www.FlossmoorLibrary.org).

**Gingerbread Village Tours** — 4-6 p.m. Register at [www.Flossmoor.org](http://www.Flossmoor.org) for a tour of resident Janet Gustafson's unique, homemade Gingerbread Village.

**Thursday, Dec. 12**

**H-F Holiday Lights Trolley Tour** — 5-10 p.m. / TBA  
Reserve your spot at [Flossmoor.org](http://Flossmoor.org) on one of two trolleys and enjoy a holiday lights ride throughout Homewood and Flossmoor.

**Saturday, Dec. 14**

**Senior Santa Letters** — 10 a.m.-1 p.m. / Wiley's Grill  
High school seniors join with senior citizens to help Santa respond to some of his many letters. Sign up at [www.HFParks.com](http://www.HFParks.com).

**Wednesday, Dec. 18**

**Learn About Hanukkah & Kwanzaa** — 6:30 p.m. / Flossmoor Public Library. Join a Flossmoor rabbi and a representative from the St. Veronica Kwanzaa Ministry for an info night.

**Thursday, Dec. 19**

**Holiday Lights Parade** — 4:30-6 p.m. / Village-wide  
Flossmoor Police, Fire & Public Works Departments travel through the neighborhoods with their vehicles adorned with holiday displays.

**Wednesday, Dec. 25-Wednesday, Jan. 1**

**Menorah Lighting** — 5 p.m. / Flossmoor Park  
Join us for the nightly lighting of Flossmoor's menorah for Hanukkah. Interested in lighting the menorah? Sign up at [www.Flossmoor.org](http://www.Flossmoor.org).

**Thursday, Dec. 26-Wednesday, Jan. 1**

**Kinara Lighting** — 5 p.m. / Flossmoor Park  
Join us for the nightly lighting of Flossmoor's kinara for Kwanzaa. Interested in lighting the kinara? Sign up at [www.Flossmoor.org](http://www.Flossmoor.org).

**Monday, Jan. 20**

**Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service** — All Day / Various Sites  
Join in the community-wide day of service.

# LET IT SHINE, FLOSSMOOR!

Flossmoor will come alive with holiday beauty and spirit once again this season. There are many days — and ways — of celebrating with neighbors and friends. All are invited to the following special events this winter:

## Celebrate the Season / Small Business Saturday

Support our local businesses and the Flossmoor Business Association around town with shopping specials all day on Small Business Saturday: Nov. 30. The fun will start at 3 p.m. when Santa arrives for photos, hot chocolate and treats at Park Place in Flossmoor Park (2523 Flossmoor Road). Spend time exploring Downtown Flossmoor, which will come alive with music and be adorned with holiday lights and decorations. Around 5 p.m. members of the Homewood-Flossmoor High School Viking Ensemble will join Santa in Flossmoor Park to lead the community in holiday songs. At 5:30 p.m., the switch will be flipped to officially light up the holiday season. Back by popular demand: Watch for a luminary display and sale from the Flossmoor Service League in Flossmoor Park!

## Holiday Story Hour & Craft

Bring the whole family out for a story hour and craft from 10 a.m.-Noon on Saturday, Dec. 7, inside the Flossmoor Public Library. We are thrilled to have members of the H-F High School Vocational Achievement for Successful Transition (VAST) program and members of the H-F Student Government to help lead the craft.

## Gingerbread House Tours

On Saturday, Dec. 7, you can experience a one-of-a-kind holiday treat right here in Flossmoor, as resident Janet Gustafson's unique Gingerbread Village Display opens to the public from 4-6 p.m. This intricate display can only be viewed by registering at [Flossmoor.org](http://Flossmoor.org).

## New! H-F Holiday Lights Tour

The Villages of Homewood and Flossmoor are excited to introduce a new holiday event that we hope will become a beloved tradition: the H-F Holiday Lights Tour! We are looking for festive homes to be featured on our official tour map. Families from both towns will board trolleys in the evening on Thursday, Dec. 12, for a scenic ride to enjoy the incredible holiday displays in our neighborhoods. If you'd like to be part of the magic, please sign up your home via a form at [Flossmoor.org](http://Flossmoor.org)! It's a great way to bring our amazing, close-knit communities together and celebrate the holiday season with style.



**Bundle up for some holiday fun this season in Flossmoor!**

## Santa's Senior Helpers

Flossmoor will partner with the Homewood-Flossmoor Park District, the Village of Homewood and Homewood-Flossmoor High School for a special day on Saturday, Dec. 14, when area seniors partner with high school seniors to help Santa with all of the letters he receives. Volunteer seniors are needed between 10 a.m.-1 p.m. at Wiley's Grill. Contact the park district for more info: 708-957-0300.

## Holiday Lights Parade

Flossmoor's favorite tradition returns on Thursday, Dec. 19, at 4:30 p.m. as the Flossmoor Police, Fire and Public Works Departments take to the streets in decorated vehicles for the Holiday Lights Parade. Set up a lawn chair or lay out a blanket on your lawn and watch as the fleet of brightly lit vehicles travels through Flossmoor neighborhoods. Check out a route map at [Flossmoor.org](http://Flossmoor.org).

## Menorah Lighting

Join fellow residents and visitors every evening at 5 p.m. from Dec. 25 through Jan. 1 for the daily lighting of the community menorah to celebrate Hanukkah. If you are interested in lighting the menorah, sign up at [Flossmoor.org](http://Flossmoor.org).

## Kinara Lighting

At 5 p.m. each night from Dec. 26 through Jan. 1, final lights will be lit for the season: the kinara in celebration of Kwanzaa. If you are interested in lighting the kinara, please visit [Flossmoor.org](http://Flossmoor.org) to register. All are welcome!

Stay up-to-date on all things seasonal celebrations by following the Village of Flossmoor on Facebook (@[FlossmoorIL](https://www.facebook.com/FlossmoorIL)) and Instagram (@[VillageofFlossmoor](https://www.instagram.com/VillageofFlossmoor)), or by visiting [www.Flossmoor.org](http://www.Flossmoor.org).

# CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF EMS IN FLOSSMOOR



**Flossmoor's first six paramedics in June 1974 (left) and some of the Village's original equipment (right).**

Flossmoor's Centennial is not the only milestone to be celebrated in the Village this year. While the Village was incorporated in 1924, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) weren't added as a Village service until 1974. Now celebrating 50 years of EMS in Flossmoor in 2024, the Village proudly commemorates the remarkable journey of the Flossmoor Fire Department and its esteemed role within the South Cook County Emergency Medical Services Program.

The EMS odyssey began in the fall of 1973 when the landscape of emergency medical response was evolving vastly. In those early days, six pioneering members of the Flossmoor Fire Department — Gregory Berk (who would become Flossmoor's first full-time Fire Chief), Howard Dekker, Don Kandl, Merv Kleinstein, Cliff Lutton and Ken McAfee — dared to embark on a new journey voluntarily by enrolling in an inaugural paramedic program offered in South Cook County through Ingalls Hospital.

These trailblazers overcame the challenges of rigorous training and emerged successful, earning their certification as licensed Emergency Medical Technician Paramedics (EMT-Ps) through the Illinois Department of Public Health in June 1974. On Sept. 1, 1974, the Flossmoor Paramedic

program became operational, marking a defining moment for the Village regarding accessing advanced pre-hospital care for its residents. In the program's inaugural year, Paramedics and Fire Department volunteers diligently responded to approximately 102 EMS requests, setting a strong precedent for the years ahead.

"We were always cognizant that we were helping our neighbors and treated them like we'd like our family to be treated in these stressful situations," says Phil Minga, retired Captain/Paramedic and former Flossmoor trustee.

Throughout the following decades, the Flossmoor Fire Department has continually adapted to the needs of the Village. Notably, in 1994, the Department enhanced its operations by staffing part-time Firefighter/Paramedics, recognizing the necessity of sustaining vital services.

"Until 1994 for more than 20 years, EMS was provided entirely on the backs of the volunteers who made up the Flossmoor Fire Department," says John Ratko, retired Captain/Paramedic.

Then in 1998 — when the Fire Department celebrated its 70th anniversary — the Department was forced to re-view its staffing levels, as the demand for EMS continued to

increase. The demand for service had caused undue pressure on the volunteers. In December that year, the Village Board approved hiring six contract Firefighters/ Paramedics with Kurtz Ambulance Service.

By 1999, driven by increasing demands for EMS, Village and Fire Department leadership determined that two Advanced Life Support (ALS) ambulances would be essential to serve Flossmoor's growing population.

The Department now proudly operates these two ambulances, allowing for simultaneous emergency responses, and responds to more than 1,500 EMS calls annually, a staggering 400+% increase since 1974. As the Department continues to expand its services, the operations now include a diverse and skilled mix of full-time, contract, part-time and paid-on-call Paramedics and EMT-Basic personnel. Each member plays an invaluable role in delivering exceptional emergency medical services to the residents and visitors of Flossmoor.

"This evolution of our services is a testament to the unwavering commitment of the members of the Flossmoor Fire Department and the ever-growing trust our community places in us," says Matthew Berk, Assistant Fire Department Chief.

In partnership with neighboring communities and as a testament to a spirit of cooperation, the Department also ensures that mutual-aid support is always at hand, showcasing a commitment to collective service. Flossmoor is one of 23 members of the 3rd District Chief's Association Mutual Aid Box Alarm System Division 24 (MABAS 24), ensuring neighborly EMS assistance during any time of need. As a MABAS member agency, Flossmoor has the same agreement as the 1,175 other communities: all agreeing to voluntarily send pre-determined resources, without reservation, to assist a stricken community. MABAS has also become a partner agency with Cook County's Department of Homeland Emergency Management & Regional Security. Together, they design and establish capability-based systems to serve the high-density urban area.

The Fire Department is proud to service Flossmoor and — when needed — its neighboring communities and looks forward to a strong, healthy future.

"As we reflect on our storied past, let us also recognize the enduring legacy of excellence built by those who have come before us and the future contributions yet to be written," says Berk. "We stand on the shoulders of giants, and together, we must continue to uphold the proud legacy of the Flossmoor Fire Department."



**Connor Cheung carries some donated children's books at last year's event.**



## **Building Community through Service**

Is this your year to make your "day off" a "day on" in service to others and your community? Flossmoor's Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service — held annually on the observed birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. — coordinates hundreds of volunteers to help with a variety of non-profit service in and around Flossmoor. This year's event will take place on Monday, Jan. 20. Project site hosts are needed for this year's event! Are you able to:

- Organize a neighborhood clean-up?
- Offer a free workshop?
- Organize a repair fair where volunteers help fix broken household items?
- Organize a school supply drive?
- Get your neighbors together to do light yard maintenance for a neighbor in need?
- Gather your friends to bake treats for public service workers?

For more information, to share an idea or to host a service project, contact Community Engagement Manager Stephanie Wright at 708-798-5472 or [swright@flossmoor.org](mailto:swright@flossmoor.org). If you are ready to volunteer, sign up at [www.Flossmoor.org](http://www.Flossmoor.org).

# NEWS TO USE!



## Tree & Holiday Lights Recycling

For more than a decade, Irons Oaks Environmental Learning Center and the Homewood-Flossmoor Park District have been keeping holiday trees and lights out of landfills. Once again this year, when you are finished with your real holiday tree, you can drop it off at the Irons Oaks Vollmer Road lot between Dec. 26-Jan. 21. Be sure it is clear of ornaments, garland and tinsel, and it can be reused as mulch.

If you have any holiday lights or extension cords that have outlived their use, you can drop them off between Nov. 23-Jan. 21 in bins at any of the following locations: the H-F Racquet & Fitness Club, Irwin Community Center, Goldberg Administration Center, Park Place in Flossmoor Park or Irons Oaks. For more information or questions, call 708-957-0300 or visit [www.hfparks.com](http://www.hfparks.com).

## Winter Tree Pruning Cycle

The annual tree pruning cycle will begin this January in the Old Flossmoor neighborhood. Tree pruning can help improve tree structure by promoting strong branch attachments and removing defects when necessary. The pruning process includes removing dead, damaged and diseased branches. Insects and diseases are attracted to dead/damaged branches, so removal is essential. Removing diseased branches also helps reduce the spread of the disease further into the tree.

Properly pruned trees help promote tree health and help manage tree risk. Annual tree pruning cycles help reduce the risk for the community while increasing the benefits trees provide. Lower branches on small and younger trees will be left on the tree as long as possible. Younger trees need as many branches as possible to promote root establishment and increase trunk growth. The branches will be removed as soon as they cause a clearance issue. Don't hesitate to get in touch with Flossmoor Public Works with questions at (708) 957-4100.



## Holiday Shopping Tips from the Flossmoor Police Department

### Parking Lots

- Park near parking lot lights.
- Back into spaces when possible.
- Write down or store your parking lot location in your phone.
- Use the panic button on key FOB to help locate your car or to draw attention.
- Always secure your vehicle, and don't unlock it until you are within a few feet.
- Never leave your car running and unattended.
- Stow packages in the trunk or covered on the floor.

### In-Store Shopping

- Do not leave a purse, wallet, phone or children unattended/open in a cart.
- Be aware of distraction tactics used by thieves, like the bump and grab.
- Be alert to your surroundings even with uniformed police or security nearby.
- Store money and credit cards securely before exiting a store.

### At Home/Delivery

- Bring packages in through a closed garage.
- Break down boxes (i.e., TVs, computers, anything of value) and place them in recycling bins.
- Keep gifts out of sight from windows and close your blinds when no one is home.
- Lock doors, windows, garage doors and car doors, day and night.
- Schedule deliveries when someone is home to receive them.
- Request signature upon delivery when possible.
- Have mail held at the post office while out of town.
- Use a Ring doorbell or other surveillance options.
- Request to be added to the Flossmoor Police Department house watch list if traveling by calling 708-957-4500 prior to your trip.

## Snow Season Reminders

During winter, the Public Works Department strives to provide residents with the highest possible level of service, and to promote a safe environment for pedestrian and vehicular traffic. The department takes this responsibility very seriously, and works to continuously improve its snow-removal operations. Below are some reminders regarding the Snow & Ice Control Policy and some recommended snow removal tips:

- Salting of streets in the Central Business District and along principal routes, key intersections, hills and curves, is conducted whenever icy or slippery conditions become hazardous. The Village tries to balance its priority of ensuring public safety with its concern for the severe pollutant effects of salt on the environment.
- Snow plowing begins when accumulation amounts to more than two inches. However, the Village is not responsible for plowing roadways that are under another agencies' jurisdiction. These roads include: Crawford Ave., Governors Hwy., Western Ave., Dixie Hwy., Kedzie Ave., Vollmer Road, Holbrook Road and Flossmoor Road (between Crawford & Governors Hwy.). Plowing continues in other areas as long as required to maintain passable roadways. Plowing priorities are as follows:
  1. Central Business District
  2. Principal arterial streets
  3. Collector streets and parking lots
  4. Local through streets
  5. Cul-de-sacs and alleys
- Please do not allow children to play on or around the street during a storm or afterwards. Visibility is often limited during snowplowing efforts. Snow forts or tunnels in snowbanks present a serious hazard. In addition, sledding

areas and toys should be kept far away from the street.

- Please do not attempt to get the attention of snow plow operators, even while they are stopped, as weather conditions could still make it difficult for them to see you. If you would like to request service or to report a problem during a snow event, please contact either the Public Works (708-957-4100) or Police Department (708-957-4500) directly.
- If possible, shovel driveway aprons only after roadways are completely cleared. This will eliminate the need to shovel more than once.
- Please help keep hydrants clear for quick access when needed by the Flossmoor Fire Department. If possible, please shovel a path from the hydrant to the street, sidewalk or driveway.
- Do not push snow into or across the street. This not only creates an additional hazard, but also may result in the same snow being deposited in your neighbor's driveway should the snowplow make an additional pass.
- In order to make pedestrian travel safer and easier for everyone, clear snow and ice from the walks adjacent to your property.
- Please remove all vehicles from the roadway. This will decrease hazards for snow plow operators and allow roadways to be plowed efficiently.
- Maintain and repair mailboxes and posts. Check your mailbox to make sure it is secured properly to the post and does not extend past the face of the curb.



## Memories Make a Great Gift

Add a special memory or dedication to downtown Flossmoor in the shape of an engraved brick or bench plaque — either choice makes a lovely holiday gift and both helps support Flossmoor's public art fund! Bricks are \$125; bench plaques are \$500. Complete your order at [www.Flossmoor.org](http://www.Flossmoor.org) by Dec. 1 to receive a keepsake postcard that you can wrap to announce your gift to your recipient. Need engraving ideas or have questions? Reach out to [Info@Flossmoor.org](mailto:Info@Flossmoor.org).

# business spotlight



**Sponsors — including Eyes on Sterling and Rich Township — joined in the fun at Take Me Out to the Ball Game in June.**

## Centennial Super Stars

This centennial year featured some amazing events and happenings. Did you catch the custom drone show in Flossmoor Park on June 20? Did you enjoy the live bands at OAKtoberfest on September 28? Did you get a birthday cupcake at an event this year? Flossmoor events couldn't have been accomplished this year without the support of our Centennial Sponsors. Please show your support for these local businesses and organizations with your foot traffic, social media likes, online reviews and dollars, if possible. Thank you, sponsors!

## VIP SPONSORS

- Eyes on Sterling — 1030 Sterling Ave.
- Flossmoor Station Restaurant & Brewery — 1035 Sterling Ave.
- Law Offices of Kathleen Field Orr
- UChicago Medicine — 19550 Governors Hwy.

## CONNECTED SPONSORS

- Meijer — 3800 Vollmer Road
- Prairie State College — 202 S. Halsted, Chicago Heights

## BEAUTIFUL SPONSORS

- Bank Financial — 2743 Flossmoor Road
- Bloom Township — 425 S. Halsted, Chicago Heights
- The Center for Dental Excellence — 19615 Governors Hwy.
- Comcast
- Flossmoor Animal Hospital — 19581 Governors Hwy.
- Foundation for the Preservation of Flossmoor History
- Governors State University — 1 University Parkway, University Park
- Leland Grove Law, LLC — 1038 Sterling Ave.
- Nicor Gas
- Rich Township Supervisor Calvin Jordan & Clerk Sugar Al-Amin — 22013 Governors Hwy., Richton Park
- Southland Smiles — 19815 Governors Hwy.

## WELCOMING SPONSOR

- Sutton Ford — 21315 Central Ave., Matteson



## Flossmoor Welcomes Haus of Hue

In September, Jacqueline Elliott brought her new store, Haus of Hue, to Flossmoor at the Shops on Sterling. Her elegant shop offers a unique and personalized experience. Jacqueline and her team craft custom, luxurious skincare products and fragrances. She was a regular shopper and fragrance supplier at Gypsyfix who decided to make the leap into her own retail space. Stop by the Shops and support this creative, local esthetician and small business owner!

# school spotlight

## HF Charts a Course Through 2028-29 with Strategic Plan to Lead School District

At the October District 233 Board of Education meeting, the Homewood-Flossmoor Community High School administration presented the Charting a Course Strategic Plan for 2024 through 2029. The presentation summarized the work that began in fall 2023, when HF embarked on a journey to chart a course through the 2028-29 school year.



**Strategic Planning Committee members — including HF students, parents, staff and board members, plus partner school administrators, teachers and board members — analyze data at a planning meeting.**

An inclusive Strategic Planning Committee comprised of 30 stakeholders, who have a vested interest in HF's students and school, navigated the process with the needs and hopes of the local community at the center.

Working with Dr. Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr., founder and chief executive officer of Revolutionary ED, the team reviewed perception data from a comprehensive survey, focus group and interview process, as well as academic, social emotional, discipline, and behavioral health data. In a series of meetings spanning from September to April, the committee conducted a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis of the data to identify areas of focus, theories of change, strategic planning goals and potential metrics.

The HF administrative team then developed key performance indicators (KPIs), action plans and evaluation metrics based on the work of the committee. You can view

the details on the HF Strategic Plan webpage ([www.hfhighschool.org/district\\_info/strategic\\_plan](http://www.hfhighschool.org/district_info/strategic_plan)).

The following summarizes the Theory of Change and Strategic Plan Goal for each of the five identified key areas.

### College Career and Life Readiness

#### Strategic Plan Goal

By 2029, 80% of HF students will meet the State of Illinois College and Career Ready Indicator making them eligible for the Illinois Distinguished Scholar distinction.

### Fiscal Responsibility and Equitable Access

#### Strategic Plan Goal

By 2029, HF will develop and implement a transparent and equitable funding process that allocates resources to district programs and facilities based on identified needs and priorities. This will be accomplished while employing practical and responsible fiscal strategies to maintain 50% of the operating budget in reserves.

### Partner Schools, Family & Community Engagement

#### Strategic Plan Goal

By 2029, HF will improve collaboration with partner schools, and provide families with tools and supports necessary to improve student outcomes as evidenced by at least 85% of staff and families indicating communication helps them understand how they can support students' learning and 85% of students indicating they know how to get support for their learning.

### Professional Excellence.

#### Strategic Plan Goal

By 2029, 100% of HF staff will engage in comprehensive professional learning that emphasizes cultural proficiency and HF will recruit, hire and retain a diverse and inclusive teaching staff.

### Student Voice and Empowerment

#### Strategic Plan Goal

HF will develop and implement a school-wide system by 2025 for all students to provide input and to influence school procedures and practices. By 2029, at least 80% of HF students will be engaged in school-wide opportunities to provide their voice on key decisions that equitably impact their educational experience.

# flossmoor faces & places

## Centennial for the Centennial

PHOTOS BY LARRY BURROWS PHOTOGRAPHY.



For more than 20 years, Homewood-Flossmoor Community High School students and teachers have been creating public sculptures and installing them around the school's sprawling campus. In 2013, these efforts expanded into downtown Flossmoor with the installation of the students' piece, *Bell Tower*, on the lawn of the Flossmoor Public Library. Now more than 10 years later, students installed a special sculpture this fall in that same location commemorating Flossmoor's 100th birthday in 2024, entitled *Centennial*.

"Inspired by centennial celebrations and a tribute to late artist Claes Oldenburg, this sculpture embodies the timeless elegance of a diamond and celebrates Flossmoor as a hidden gem," says Greg Petecki, artist and H-F High School Art teacher.

The 7-ft. metal, diamond-shaped, powder-coated sculpture was made as a rotational piece for the Village of Flossmoor's public art collection, managed by the Flossmoor Public Art Commission.

"*Centennial* is a sculpture that represents more than a piece of art — it was an opportunity for students to see a piece through from design to exhibition," says Mike Cheney, artist and Flossmoor Public Art commissioner. "The Village was very lucky to have a great talent leading the students on this piece for our world-class sculpture collection: Greg Petecki, who has been recognized as a Secondary Art Educator of the Year by the Illinois Art Education Association."

Petecki's students were inspired by the work of Oldenburg, an artist famous for his monumental sculptures of everyday objects, such as his *Spoonbridge and Cherry* in Minneapolis and *Batcolumn* in Chicago. The team wanted to choose an everyday object that would signify 100 years and

that would also be a nod to Flossmoor, often touted as a "hidden gem" in Chicago's Southland.

"This larger-than-life piece reflects our community's spirit and showcases the importance of teamwork and diverse skills in turning creative ideas into reality," says Petecki. "It's a valuable learning experience for our students, preparing them for success in the 21st century."

H-F 3D Art students — Riley Curtis, DeAsia Matticx, Mars Randle and Charlotte Symowicz — paired with students in the school's Welding classes — Chase Kral, Jacob Quirke and Brayden Reid — to create the piece over the course of a year under the director of their teachers, Petecki and Bill Merchantz, a Career & Technical Education teacher.

The sculpture is an example of true collaboration: The high school provided the creativity and art production; the Village of Flossmoor and Public Art Commission provided inspiration, guidance and the preparation of the sculpture pad; the Flossmoor Public Library provided the location; and organizers behind the Hidden Gem Half Marathon — a 13.1-mile road race that is run in Flossmoor — (known as Flossmoor's Future) provided funding as a gift to the community.

When we heard about the sculpture project by the H-F students, we just knew we had to be a part of it," says Tom Dobrez, co-race organizer. "This delightful work of art is one more reflection of the Gem effect, where a special event, such as the Hidden Gem Half Marathon, has helped spread pockets of hope and renewal all around Flossmoor. For example, the creation of the *Centennial* sculpture is something that seems to connect us together in a beautiful way."

*Centennial* will be on display at its current location through 2027.

# commission corner

## Group Effort Saves Waste from Landfill

Recyclepalooza 2024 — held Saturday, Sept. 21 — saw a record-breaking turnout with more than 400 cars driving through, helping divert thousands of pounds of hard-to-recycle products from landfills. This year's event introduced new recycling services, including latex and spray paint collection through Flat Can Recycling, with more than 3,800 pounds of paint recycled. The Center for Hard to Recycle Materials (CHaRM) in South Holland played a key role in processing various items this year, including four box truckloads of electronic waste and a full truckload of textiles. CHaRM's efforts align with its mission to keep waste out of landfills and to minimize environmental impact. More than 300 trophies were collected to be repurposed, and 35+ bicycles were donated to Working Bikes, a nonprofit that refurbishes and redistributes bikes to people in need locally and globally.

Recyclepalooza continues to grow, making it easier for residents to recycle responsibly and support sustainability initiatives. Thank you to the Green Commission for its continued work on this event.



## Endless Sky

At its Oct. 7, 2024, meeting, the Village Board of Trustees voted to add a rotational sculpture to Flossmoor's permanent art collection. Iowa-based artist Hilde DeBruyne's *Reaching for the Sky* has been in the Village since 2021. The 6-ft. tall, powder-coated steel sculpture — valued at \$15,000 — is located in Leavitt Park between Richard Hunt's *Uplifted* and Scott McMillin's *Minions*, both permanent pieces.

The abstract sculpture can be interpreted many ways. Some see shapes, some see a sunset or sunrise, some a moon. Elements of the sculpture appear to be birds in flight. Flossmoor Public Art Commissioner Jodie Lawrence explained recently at this fall's sculpture walk that the artist — who herself had emigrated to the United States from Belgium — related the sculpture to the powerful imagery of seeing a flock of birds migrating together in the sky and how this can represent the passage of time or the movement of people from one place to another.

"When I view *Reaching for the Sky* through this perspective, it feels like a metaphor for our vibrant community," says Lawrence. "It is a peaceful and contemplative sculpture; one can bring their own stories and impressions to it and discover how it relates to their own journey."

Visit Leavitt Park to revisit *Sky* this season!



## Village of Flossmoor

2800 Flossmoor Road  
Flossmoor, IL 60422

[flossmoor.org](http://flossmoor.org) | [@FlossmoorIL](https://www.instagram.com/FlossmoorIL)

## MAYOR'S MESSAGE



**Mayor Michelle Nelson**

Hello, Friends & Neighbors!  
The holidays are here, and Flossmoor has a great series of events to help us Celebrate the Season, starting with our annual tree lighting and Small Business Saturday on November 30. You are also invited to join us in Flossmoor Park for our annual nightly community menorah lighting during Hanukkah from December 25 – January 1 and for the lighting of our kinara for

the seven nights of Kwanzaa from December 26 - January 1. These are special opportunities for us to come together to celebrate and learn about the beliefs and cultures that contribute to the fabric of our Village. While the holiday season is typically filled with joy and hope, it may be difficult for some. Please keep an eye out for neighbors who are facing challenges and could use some cheer.

We had a blast celebrating our 100th birthday all year long with you! Thanks to our sponsors, commissions, residents, volunteers and staff who made this year extra special through Centennial service projects, music and art, and lots and lots of cupcakes! Some of the memorable projects included planting 100 parkway trees with the Green Commission, identifying all of our homes that are at least 100 years old with the Foundation for the Preservation of Flossmoor History, and celebrating the 100th birthday of Flossmoor Park with the Flossmoor Public Library and our historical society. We also welcomed four new sculpture installations, thanks to your generous donations and the work of the Public Art Commission. My favorite sculpture addition is *Centennial*, which was created by H-F High School students and teachers and sponsored by the organizers of the Hidden Gem Half Marathon to celebrate our birthday. White Sox fans will never forget welcoming Baseball Hall of Fame organist Nancy Faust to town to perform at Take Me Out to the Ball Game in June, which was capped off by an incredible, custom drone show. Thank you for making 2024 memorable and meaningful!

These events were part of the reason the Chicago South-

land Visitor's Bureau recognized Flossmoor with an Award of Merit this year for extraordinary service and partnership. The Bureau called Flossmoor a "vibrant community" and said our initiatives and events are extensive, inclusive and diverse — and I couldn't agree more. We were also recognized by *Chicago Magazine* twice this year as the best place to raise a family in the South Suburbs and for our vibrant small business community. The word is out: Flossmoor is the place to be for families and businesses!

Looking forward, economic development will continue to be a major focus. Interest in our vacant Village-owned properties has increased in recent months, and we are working to bring several new and exciting projects to the Village in 2025. These include the Central Business District Roadway, Pedestrian & Streetscape Improvements Project, designed to improve the safety, accessibility and beauty of our downtown, funded in part by a \$1,184,000 grant. Plans are being finalized and will feature shorter crosswalks, improved sidewalk accessibility and parking, additional pedestrian protection, placemaking spaces, and native plantings throughout. Renovation work will begin in spring 2025! Please visit [www.flossmoor.org](http://www.flossmoor.org) for more information.

In January, our annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service will be celebrated. I hope you will join me at one of our community service events on Monday, Jan. 20, and on the day before at my 5th Annual Classical Music Concert, featuring outstanding pre-collegiate musicians from throughout the region. The 4 p.m. concert will be held at Flossmoor Community Church and benefits the Center for Food Equity in Medicine, a local organization that provides nutritional support for those dealing with a life-altering medical diagnosis.

In the spirit of the season of gratitude, thank you to the residents who have worked tirelessly throughout the year to welcome new neighbors, host block parties, coach/mentor our youth, donate to local charities, and feed, clothe and house those in need. As 2025 approaches, I hope to see you at our ice rinks, volunteering at events, and supporting local businesses and restaurants. I'm looking forward to the many opportunities to enjoy life together in this beautiful community that we all call home.