

# THE BREMEN BEACE

SHINING A LIGHT ON BREMEN TOWNSHIP GOVERNMENT & SERVICES



There is comfort in being in this together.





### **Greetings from the Supervisor**

Greetings Friends and Neighbors,

"Alone we can do so little; together we can to so much." That is how author and disability rights activist Helen Keller viewed her life, which was highly productive despite the loss of both her sight and hearing while she was just an infant. I am humbled by her story, and I take her advice to heart as I seek to strengthen our Bremen Township communities through my role as Supervisor.

What I have learned in my years in my years on the township board, both as a Trustee and now as Supervisor, is that every community in Bremen is unique with its own set of concerns and challenges. Our local governments struggle with some of the same problems also, whether it is economic development, infrastructure upgrades, financial difficulties, or educational and recreational opportunities .In an always unpredictable world, public safety has climbed to the top of our concerns. We want our children to be safe in their schools and parks, we want to travel through our local communities without fear.

Quality of life is especially important when we seek a place to raise our families. Clearly, working together toward that goal is in all our best interests. That is why Bremen Township reaches out to other local officials and agencies to join with us so we can address these issues together. We also welcome new relationships, such as our ongoing collaboration Patricia Theresa Flynn, Commissioner of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District, along with County Commissioner Donna Miller to find solutions to flooding problems throughout the township. Commissioner Flynn has also served as a Village of Crestwood Trustee and knows well the nature of Bremen communities. We are grateful to have both of them on board with us.

Township Government often fills in the voids when other local agencies are stretched thin, and we serve as the safety net for services such as food assistance, senior transportation and help with utility bills to name a few.

It is not a good thing to go it alone in this world .As I grapple daily with issues confronting Bremen Township, I need to know what issues our residents are concerned with. I need to have your partnership so we can continue to move forward. We have an open door policy , so please contact us with your concerns so that together we can seek solutions.

Helen Keller was right on target with her philosophy that together we can do so much! Sincerely Yours.

Lathyr Stranier

Kathryn Straniero, Bremen Township Supervisor

## **Officials REPORTS**



### **Kathryn Straniero** – TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR

Recently, Bremen Township has launched its new Youth & Family Program, which includes youth counseling along with additional programs as well to fit all ages. These services are free to any and all township residents between the ages of 5-18 years of age at our Wellness Center at our Oak Forest facility.

Newly drawn county and congressional maps have given us new County Commissioner Monica Gordon and Congressman Sean Casten for portions of Bremen Township and we welcome them and look forward to working closely with them on Township issues. We are very excited and proud that our new Congressman has chosen to re-locate a satellite office within Bremen Township and be the townships new neighbor at our Oak Forest Complex on Oak Park Ave. The close proximity and availability of sharing their questions and concerns with their very own Congressman is a plus for our residents.



### John D. Lord - TOWNSHIP CLERK

As I have expressed in the past, the Clerk's Office plays a vital role in the electoral process from voter registration to the presentation of certified results. One area that stands out is the difference between registered voters and ballots cast in local elections. Reports from the Cook County Clerk's Office indicate that participation in local contests such as for our Mayors, Alderpersons, Trustees, along with School Board members is generally about 14%. These are the contests that have more of an impact on our communities, schools and leaders in our respective towns, villages or cities Putting this into perspective means that out of 1,000 eligible voters, less than 80 participants determine what direction, taxes we pay, and who we chose as community leaders. We need to remember that the only avenue we have to

determine the quality of our elected officials and direction of our home towns is to cast our vote is to cast our vote. Each and every vote matters and has the ability to be the deciding factor for the future of your community. I urge all residents to be engaged and exercise your right to vote.



### Willie A. Jones - TOWNSHIP ASSESSOR

The Cook County Assessor's Office has begun mailing out exemption renewal applications for Senior and Disabled persons only, with a deadline of return on May 10th. Applications for Disabled Veterans and long time occupants are scheduled to be mailed on May 12th, with a return deadline of June 14th. Once you have received your renewal application please call our office for any questions or assistance in submitting them. Please remember, the county will now only renew regular Homeowner and Senior Homeowner exemptions. Seniors receiving the Senior Freeze exemption must re-apply. Missed exemptions for previous years as far back as 2018 can still be applied for.

Please call our office at (708) 333-1591 (option 2) for any questions and/or assistance.



### John P. Flaherty - TOWNSHIP HIGHWAY COMMISSIONER

It appears the snow gods were watching over us this past winter, with one of the most snow free day seasons in recent memory which gave us more time to prepare for the upcoming construction season.

Bid requests were presented and received for resurfacing projects in many areas throughout the township that will be completed this summer and early fall.

Just a reminder, with the spring rains coming, it is important that we keep our culvert and drainage ditches free of leaves and debris to maintain proper storm water flow and avoid any potential flooding.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call our office at (708) 333-9534 so that they can be addressed promptly. Again, thank you for allowing us to serve you.

### **Upgrades & Improvements**

We recently completed upgrading our computer and phone systems at both facilities to keep pace with the rapid improvements in technology. These upgrades were long overdue, and will in the long run, prove to be more cost effective by eliminating repair and service call expenses. We are also in the process of revamping our web site in order to make it more user friendly and provide more capabilities for residents to obtain updated reports and access information. The township has also upgraded the fire protection and alarm system in the newly renovated Wellness Center which will continue to provide Youth counseling and other activities.

At this time, a comprehensive five year is being developed to make physical improvements to both facilities beginning this year. Slated for this season is a facelift on our Markham facility which will include new landscaping, lighting and signage. The Oak Forest facility will consist of new plantings along our walking path and the construction of exterior comfort stations in addition to a new four season room.

The Board of Trustees takes pride in the fact that the cost of these improvements will come from savings the township has made in previous years and will not require any borrowing and will not increase taxes for our residents.

### N.A.M.I. Partnership

Our partnership with N.A.M.I. (National Alliance on Mental Health) is one of the most rewarding programs we have established. The caring, dedicated staff of volunteers have helped numerous residents and families in understanding and coping with the struggles of mental health. Following is a list of some of the programs and activities that are planned.

- During the month of April, Family to Family classes are held Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6:30-9:00 P.M. in our meeting room.
- On Friday, April 28th, a Suicide Prevention Class will be offered all day long beginning at 8:00 A.M.
- The Family Support Group meets every 2nd Monday of the month from 7:00-8:30 P.M.
- May is National Mental Health Awareness Month and on Saturday, May 13th N.A.M.I. will be hosting its 2nd Walkathon and Minds in Motion event. This is a fun filled day with activities and information for all ages, with many local health agencies distributing helpful information, games for children and light refreshments. The Walkathon will take place on our very own Maggie Crotty Walking Path on our grounds with walking contests also. Hot dogs, chips and soda will be available for a nominal fee of \$5.00 with all proceeds going directly to programs that benefit our residents. Please join us and show your support for these much needed programs.

For more information contact Marianne Bithos - President of South Suburban N.A.M.I. at (708) 852-9126.



Poster for Walkathon sign up please send this file



Carolyn Carter



Mary Catuara



Edward Maggio



John M. (Mike) Tatro

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Through our partnership with
Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias
and Cook County Commissioner
Donna Miller we are proud to present
this added convenience for our residents.



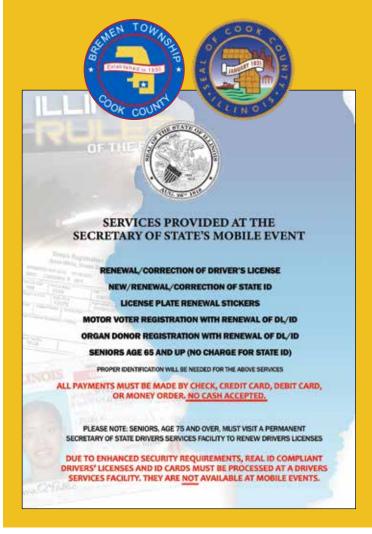




Kathryn Stra

On Friday, April 21, 2023 Bremen Township and Cook

County Commissioner Donna Miller welcomes the Secretary of State Mobile Unit to the Bremen Township Senior Center. They will be at 15350 Oak Park Avenue from 10 A.M. to 2 P.M. offering the following services:





# NOTIFICATION ABOUT OAK FOREST HOSPITAL

### Saying Goodbye to an Institution

The Cook County Bureau of Asset Management will begin demolition of buildings on the Oak Forest campus in July of 2023. These buildings are outdated, have been vacant for years, and are extremely costly to maintain. As demolition is completed, the county will engage with the community about future plans for the property.

**Public Information Plan:** The county will keep residents and businesses informed via community meetings, briefings with local officials, mailed bulletins and electronic newsletters. The public can also communicate questions and concerns directly to the Bureau of Asset Management at Audrey.Jonas@cookcountyil.gov. Information as it becomes available will be posted at cookcounty.gov/oakforest.

**Time Table:** This project will begin this spring and projected to be completed in January of 2026 while having minimum impact upon traffic. All precautions will be taken to ensure air quality is maintained.

# **ANYTHING WE CAN PUT HERE?**



As I prepare to open up my new Bremen Township office, I would like to introduce myself as your Congressman. I have represented the 6th District of Illinois in the U.S. House of Representatives since 2019, and am looking forward to continuing to deliver for the district over the next two years.

As a scientist, clean energy entrepreneur and CEO, and now as a Member of Congress representing parts of Chicagoland, I have dedicated my career to fighting climate change. Prior to running for office, I worked in the private sector to craft market-based solutions to reduce emissions while creating jobs and spurring economic growth.

In Congress, I'm focused on lowering costs for families, keeping our community safe, and fighting for a livable planet to pass on to our children. I've advocated for bills like the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which brought funding for over 38 new projects to the area that make our roads safer. I also proudly voted to pass the Inflation Reduction Act, lowering prescription drug costs for 103,000 seniors in the 6th District.

I am the Vice-Ranking Member of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee and serve on the House Financial Services Committee. I am also the Vice-Chair on the New Democrat Coalition Climate Change Task Force and the Vice-Chair of the Sustainable Energy and Environment Coalition.

While working diligently in Washington on behalf of Illinois' 6th Congressional District, I'm committed to keeping in close contact with constituents. To date, I have held 60 town halls and over 470 community events.

Through my office's outstanding casework program, I have responded to over 150,000 pieces of constituent mail, resolved over 4,610 constituent cases with federal agencies, and returned over \$4 million dollars back into the pockets of constituents.

Here are a few examples of what my office can assist you with:

### **Visas and Passports**

Are you encountering long delays in the processing of a visa, green card, or other immigration benefits? We can inquire with the relevant agencies and request the expedition of your case when possible. If you need a passport for imminent travel, we can help hasten the delivery of a pending application or help arrange an in-person appointment at the Chicago Passport Office.

### **Veterans Affairs**

Serving those who have served our country is one of my greatest privileges. My office is here to assist you and your family members. We can help you obtain the status of a VA claim for service-connected disability compensation, payment of education benefits, answer questions you may have about medical care at VA facilities, and help with other casework issues pertaining to the retrieval of service records and missing awards or medals.

### **Social Security and Medicare**

My office can also assist with Social Security and Medicare issues, like helping release owed Social Security Disability back pay, reinstating Medicare after it is wrongfully canceled, clarifying miscommunications or mistakes between the agency and you, and receiving updates regarding pending applications.

As your Congressman, it's an honor to represent you and my office stands ready to assist any way we can. If you have any questions, please contact my DC office at 202-225-4561 or my Glen Ellyn office at 630-520-9450.

Sincerely,

Congressman Sean Casten

# THERE IS ONLY ONE PLANET EARTH... **LETS TAKE CARE OF IT!!!**



Again on Earth Day and Arbor Day, Bremen Township will observe them be hosting our annual Ewaste Disposal Event. For the convenience of our residents, we are including both locations.

On Saturday, April 22nd, E-Waste will be collected at our Oak Forest location - 15350 Oak Park Ave. Computers, printers, cables of all sorts, holiday lights, small electronic appliances, and batteries will be accepted. Because of limited space, only one TV per family will be allowed.

On Saturday, April 29th these same services will be provided at our Markham facility - 16361 Kedzie Ave.

In addition to electronic devices, residents will be able to dispose of unwanted prescription drugs anonymously in prescription bottles which will be shredded to destroy identity or in unmarked plastic bags.

Both these events will begin at 9:00 A.M. and end when the

# **WELCOME FRIENDS OF INDIAN BOUNDARY PRAIRIES**

One of the most recent organizations to join the Bremen Township team is the Friends of the Indian Boundary Prairies. This is a volunteer organization that helps promote public awareness, understanding, education and appreciation of our remnant natural areas. Within our boundaries we still have a cluster of five protected high quality native grasslands one of which has been named a National Natural Landmark by the U.S. Department of the Interior because of its importance as a natural asset which includes some of the finest tall grass prairie preserves in the Midwest.

We welcome this organization with open arms as they regroup after the toll the pandemic has affected them, and wish them all the best in continuing with their important mission. Working and collaborating together will be beneficial to both the Friends and the residents as they will be presenting programs and educating our residents about the natural areas within the township. This Spring new native grasses and seedlings will be planted throughout our walking path to restore areas that attract endangered wildlife such as the Monarch butterfly.

Newcomers are always welcome to join with us in preserving and learning more about our natural resources. To learn more about joining us, information can be found at ibprairies@yahoo.com, or call our office at (708) 687-8220 or follow them at Friends of the Indian Boundaries on Facebook.



# Introducing a **New Partner**

Greetings Friends and Neighbors,

My name is Patricia Theresa Flynn and on December 6th I was sworn in as Commissioner of The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD). As a member of the Board of Commissioners, my duty is to ensure the District upholds our mission to protect residents and businesses by treating waste water and control flooding. Protecting waterways and advocating for public health are central to the work I've done throughout my career as both an employee of the MWRD and as a public servant.

As a wife, mother, and resident of Crestwood, the fight for clean water and public health are two of the driving forces that propelled me into public service, and seek a position which I could have the greatest impact. Serving as a Trustee the Village of Crestwood, I chaired both the Water/Sewer Departments and the village Finance Committee, in addition to helped develop effective policy and procedures for the village, along with supporting annual balanced budgets. As a lifelong South Side resident, I am proud of my ties to community but I am beyond grateful for the opportunity to represent and serve in my new capacity as Commissioner for The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago.

My priorities as MWRD Commissioner include investing in both gray and green infrastructure, especially as climate change increases precipitation and existing facilities continue to endure wear and tear. I am also mindful of forever chemicals which are found in most household products such as food packaging and make up that can make their way into waste water. Most importantly, it is critical to ensure fiscal responsibility in all policy and budgetary decisions, and I remain committed to upholding the MWRD'S mission.

The District currently has several projects underway to mitigate flooding and improve infrastructure throughout our service area, including the Robbins Stormwater Park and Midlothian Creek Restoration projects. I encourage you to read more about these projects and more at mwrd.org/projects.

Again, it is my pleasure to be a part of Bremen Township and look forward to collaborating on current and future projects and working together serving residents across the Southland and beyond. Please contact me at FlynnP@mwrd.org or contact my office at (312) 751-5656.

Patricia Theresa Flyger

Patricia Theresa Flynn

Commissioner - Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

**6** The Bremen Beacon

### WE CANNOT ALWAYS BUILD THE FUTURE FOR OUR YOUTH, BUT WE CAN BUILD OUR YOUTH FOR THE FUTURE. "

-Franklin Delano Roosevelt

### **Fulfilling our Obligation**

Our youth today face unprecedented challenges on a day to day basis. Following two years of disrupted education and social isolation added to the normal pressures and awkwardness that our young people experience, can make life and growing up very stressful and scary.

With social media, streaming apps, cell phones and screens everywhere, participation and interaction in life is so much different today than in past generations. It is important that we provide a safe haven for our young adults really listen to the difficulties they face and guide them through these challenges.

### **Bremen Township Launches New Youth Program**

Many of our residents are unaware of the many Youth Services we provide. With that said, we are taking steps to ensure that our young people have the information and resources available for those in need of assistance. We are embarking with a new out reach program to engage, identify, and notify our young people and their families of programs and services that may be helpful to them.

### **Open House**

We invite you to join us for our Open House Wednesday, April 26th from 10:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M. as we welcome our newest expansion of our Youth and Family Wellness Center at our Oak Forest facility.

This is a great opportunity for residents to see first hand what Bremen Township has to offer for not only this program, but for the many other services that are provided, including Senior Services along with programs and activities for all ages.

### **Community Chat**

On Thursday, April, 27th from 6:30-7:30 P.M. we will be hosting the first ever Community Chat at the Senior/ Youth Complex - 15350 Oak Park Ave. This Town Hall setting will serve as an introduction of our Youth & Family Services and a venue for residents to express their concerns, ask questions and share their thoughts on how we can better serve the needs of residents. Together with schools, parents, and community involvement, we will add to our success in reaching every young adult that will benefit from our programs. Please RSVP to dr.michele@brementownship.net or call (708) 419-4100.

# **INDIVIDUAL AND/OR GROUP COUNSELING IS AVAILABLE** Call (708) 419-4100 to schedule SUCCESS

### **WEARE HERE** TO HELP!

Many of the issues facing our children today can likely be better understood with, and even be resolved with intergenerational help and assistance from caring adults. Sometimes, our young people just need a sympathetic ear to listen to their concerns and provide direction. We are that ear!

### ISSUES WE CAN HELP WITH:

- ADD OR ADHD
- Adjustment
- Fear Grief
- Anxiety
- Mood Fluctuations
- Bullying
- Sadness
- Conflict Resolution
- Substance Use
- Depression
- Suicide Prevention
- Eating Disorders
- Other Services, as needed



### **WACKY WEDNESDAY'S**

Games to improve selfesteem, decision making and social skills. Ages 10+.



### **TEEN THURSDAY'S**

PROGRAMS

**Counseling Services & More** 

**MOVIE MONDAY'S** 

values we can learn from

them. Ages 12 and over.

**TALL TALE TUESDAY'S** 

Books & games that deal

decision making, grieving

with social skills, good

Super heroes and the

Open chill out time & teen support group. Ages 13-18.



Call (708) 419-4100 to register

The Bremen Beacon www.brementownship.org

# For Our SENIORS

# Seniors ON THE GO







### **Senior Services**

One of the mainstays of our Senior Services Department is our transportation program. Seniors aged 55 and over are offered rides for shopping, salon visits, or any other destinations within the township boundaries.

Medical related trips are not limited to the township as we go as far north to 95th St. and as far south as Rt. 30. All rides are provided Monday thru Friday with the first pick up at 8:30 A.M. and the final return trip pick up at 3:30 P.M. We also have two Pace handicap accessible busses and a van for those that need assistance.

The fare for a round trip ticket is \$4.00 with multiple ride ticket available at a discounted price of \$16.00 for ten rides.

Call our office at (708) 687-8220 and one of our friendly staff will assist you.

### **Come Join us For Lunch**

Another popular program we offer is our Senior Lunch Program in our Senior Café. With our partnership with Age Options, delicious, healthy and nutritional lunches are served Monday thru Thursday for a requested donation of \$4.00. Besides a great lunch, this gives our seniors an opportunity to socialize with their friends, meet new ones, and a great way to spend the afternoon.

Visit our web site for our updated menu and call our office at (708) 687-8220 to make your reservation.

### **BINGO** is Back!

This is another activity that residents of all ages were happy to see return. Every Thursday, doors open at 9:00 A.M. for Bingo with games starting promptly at 9:30 A.M. This is another great way to get out and share some fun and win some prizes. The cost is \$5.00 per person which includes light refreshments for all.

### **Moving Forward**

On February 14th this year we hosted our first ever Senior Valentines Day Party. Over 60 seniors enjoyed a fun filled afternoon that included music with DJ Jason, a photo booth (donated by our DJ), dancing and great food provided by Bartolini's of Midlothian. We received so many compliments on this event that we are planning on making this an Annual event.

The end of March was our inauguration of our Grandparents Spring Fling. This event featured grandparents and their grandchildren enjoying a fun filled afternoon with dancing to the music of DJ Jason, games and sweet treats, provided by the township. What a great time to spend time with grandchildren. Its success has prompted us to make this an annual event. Keep on the lookout for these and more events coming.

### **Shipshewana**

On Wednesday, May 10th, we will be heading to Shipshewana to enjoy delicious Amish food. Observe their customs, visit and shop at their famous Flea Market. We will depart from the Senior Center at 8:30 A.M. and return approximately 6:00 P.M.

The cost of this trip is \$25.00 which is for motor coach transportation. Reservations and payment is due March 28th. Call (708) 687-8220 to book your reservation.

### Back by Popular Demand... Plant & Go Party

### Wednesday, May 17th 10:00 A.M.

We supply everything you need to take your plant home – all you have to do is supply the fun.

We will have the potting soil, plants, pots and tools ready for you. What a great way to brighten up your home or garden while enjoying time with your neighbors. Call our office at (708) 687-8220 to reserve your plant and place and more details.

### **Spirit of Chicago Boat Lunch Cruise**

Join us on Wednesday, June 28th as we head to Navy Pier to board the Spirit of Chicago for a sightseeing afternoon. We will enjoy DJ entertainment and signature brunch before beginning our cruise at 12:30 P.M. The ship will then cruise Lake Michigan until we depart at 2:20 P.M. The fee for this trip is \$75.00 which includes coach travel and all amenities. We will leave the Senior Center at 10:00 A.M. and return approximately 3:30 P.M.

Space is filling up quickly so please reserve your spot at (708) 687-8220. No refunds after June 9th.

# **Try your Luck at Four Winds Casino**

Wednesday, July 12th we will be departing for a day trip to Four Winds Casino in New Buffalo, Michigan. The price of this trip is \$27.00 with each traveler receiving a \$15.00 slot credit and a \$10.00 food credit. Call our office for more info and reservations

### Other Ways We Can Help

### FREE PRODUCE

Every 2nd Friday of each month, in partnership with Together We Cope and the Greater Chicago Food Depository, Bremen Township distributes fresh produce at our Markham facility (16361 Kedzie) from 10:30 A.M. until noon. There is no income or age requirement to participate and benefit from this program.

### **GENERAL ASSISTANCE**

General Assistance is available for those in need and who are not eligible for other State or Federal assistance. All recipients are required to provide necessary documentation to determine eligibility before assistance can be rendered.

### **EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE**

This is a special program that provides help and assistance to individuals and families with utility bills, rent, food and dire circumstances. Eligible residents may receive Emergency Assistance only once in a two year period. Please call our office at (708) 333-9530 for more information.

### **BENEFIT ACCESS PROGRAM**

License Plate Discount and/or RTA Free Ride Card for either seniors or persons with disabilities. Service and assistance is available at both of our facilities

### **NURSES CLOSET**

Medical equipment such as wheel chairs, crutches, walkers, etc. are available for use to residents at no cost at both facilities with a small refundable deposit.

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### THE BREMEN BEACON

16361 Kedzie Parkway Markham, IL 60428 708.333.9530 info@brementownship.net www.brementownship.net

Supervisor, Kathryn Straniero Clerk, John D. Lord Assessor, Willie A. Jones Highway Commissioner, John P. Flaherty

### **Trustees**

Carolyn R. Carter Mary Catuara Edward P. Maggio John M. (Mike) Tatro



letting us serve you!

Supervisor, Kathryn Straniero Clerk, John D. Lord Assessor, Willie A. Jones Highway Commissioner, John P. Flaherty

Carolyn R. Carter Mary Catuara Edward P. Maggio John M. (Mike) Tatro

## STAY CONN

Please send your email address to info@brementownship.net to get all the latest updates for programs and services and follow us on facebook.



### **ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE**

16361 Kedzie Parkway Markham, IL 60428 708.333.9530

### SENIOR/YOUTH COMPLEX

15350 Oak Park Avenue Oak Forest, IL 60452 708.687.8220

