

September 2026

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Thomas B. Hood

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Quin O'Brien

Cheryl Ross

Karen Thorstenson

Liliana Ware

Kevin Woodside

VILLAGE ADMINISTRATOR

Patrick Muetz

VILLAGE CLERK

Andy Harris



VILLAGE OF GURNEE
325 N. O'PLAINE RD.

Village Hall: **847-599-7500**

Utility Billing: **847-599-7525**

Community Dev.: **847-599-7550**

Police Non-Emergency: **847-599-7000**

Public Works: **847-599-6800**

www.gurneeil.gov



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Village of Gurnee. To provide
feedback, please contact:
smichael@village.gurnee.il.us

MAYOR'S MESSAGE

Dear Residents,

Today I would like to talk about our opportunities to honor each other. It has been my experience in the Village of Gurnee that there is an atmosphere of honor among citizens. By this, I mean I find citizens making the effort to recognize others for who they are or what they do whether they are business associates, family members or friends. In the busy world in which we live it is important that we take time out and make a special effort to honor those around us.

The following are ways in which the Village of Gurnee has established some intentional ways to honor others.

1. Gurnee Teacher and Staff Person of the Year – Every year, at the first Gurnee Village Board meeting in May, a teacher and staff person from District 50, 56 and 121 is selected and recognized for their exceptional service to students, schools and the community. The teachers recognized this year were Rocco Oddo, Jessica Pierson and Betsy Sincora. The staff persons recognized this year were Toni Ludwig, Brandi Smith and Miriam Yaquain. The Henderson Foundation generously provides a cash award of \$1,500.00 to each person.

2. Police Officer and Civilian of the Year – The Gurnee Police Department recognizes a police officer and a civilian each year for their outstanding performance in the Village of Gurnee. Detective Tyler Schutt and Community Service Officer Allan Kalinowski were selected as the 2025 recipients.

3. Gurnee Hometown Heroes recognizes veterans by flying banners along O'Plaine Road. Around Veterans Day, the banners are taken down and either given to the veteran or to the family of the veteran. This past year we had a special ceremony for Allen J. Lynch, a Medal of Honor recipient. I would encourage you to visit Veteran's Memorial Park which is directly in front of the Gurnee Police Station where a bronze plaque was installed honoring Mr. Lynch and his heroic actions.

4. Paying it Forward is an award given each year at the Gurnee Chamber Luncheon. This is a Gurnee business that recognizes community needs and addresses them with compassion and generosity. The winner last year was McClure's Garage.

5. The Pinnacle Award highlights businesses throughout the year with exceptional achievements in their field. The recipient last year was Teriyaki Madness which was the leading location of all Teriyaki Madness stores in Illinois.

6. Bringing Me Home is an award presented at the Gurnee Chamber Luncheon each year for a business that fosters community pride. A prior winner is Gurnee Donuts.

7. Special Needs Champion is an award given to a business that pays particular attention to those with special needs in their business. Great Wolf Lodge won this award last year.

8. Gurnee Days Honoree is an award given each year for the past 51 years to a person that has made notable contributions to the Village of Gurnee. This year Gale Graves was named the Gurnee Days Honoree.

There are many ways to honor others and much of it happens in the everyday moments of our lives. May we take the time to recognize the value in one another, treat each other with kindness and respect and appreciate the unique contributions each person brings to our community. I will continue to pray that we enjoy all that God has given to us and to especially appreciate those that He has placed in our lives.

As always, please feel free to reach out to me to discuss whatever you have on your mind.

Sincerely,

Mayor Tom Hood

GURNEE NEWS



COMMUNITY CELEBRATES GURNEE DAYS

In August, the Gurnee community came together at Viking Park for another memorable Gurnee Days celebration. The event featured something for everyone, including KidZone rides, live music, great food, a community art show, ice cream eating contest, a parade and a spectacular fireworks display. Congratulations to Lei Mangaran, a Gurnee Arts Commission Member who was this year's Community Art Show Best of Show winner. Thank you to the volunteers, vendors, performers, participants and everyone who came out to make Gurnee Days a wonderful celebration of our community.

GURNEE ARTS FESTIVAL ON THE PLAZA

Hosted by the Gurnee Arts Commission, the first Gurnee Arts Festival successfully brought the community together on Saturday, August 22, 2026, drawing an impressive crowd of over 700 people. Held at the scenic Welton Plaza on Old Grand Avenue, this free, family-friendly outdoor celebration showcased an array of original works from talented local artists in drawing, painting, ceramics, fiber arts and photography. Attendees enjoyed live fine art demonstrations alongside vibrant community talent, including stage performances by local groups such as Dancenter North, Citadel Theatre and the School of Rock. Complete with a lively Youth Tent featuring face painting and balloon animals, plus local food trucks, the gathering united art and community.



COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT: MEET TRUSTEE LILIANA WARE



On May 4th, the Mayor recommended and the Village Board approved, the appointment of Liliana Ware to the vacant Trustee position which was created by the resignation of Jeanne Balmes. Liliana is a long-time Gurnee resident, educator and community servant. She brings a wealth of experience and a deep commitment to the community she has called home for nearly three decades.

Born to a Chinese father and Peruvian mother, Liliana grew up in Peru before coming to the United States on a scholarship. She went on to earn her master's degree from Indiana State University and spent eight years working at the world headquarters of Rotary International in Evanston. In 1997, Liliana and her family made Gurnee their home. She continued her education and earned her doctorate in education in 2018. Since 2002, she has worked at the College of Lake County, where she currently serves as Assistant Director of Academic Planning. Before being appointed to the Village Board, Liliana served for the past two years on the Village of Gurnee's Planning and Zoning Board. That experience gave her an opportunity to learn more about the Village and its future while working alongside fellow residents and community leaders.

Outside of her professional and community commitments, Liliana is known for her adventurous spirit and love of staying active. Her children describe her as kind, welcoming and always ready for a new adventure. She enjoys playing pickleball, biking, exploring new cuisines, traveling, and most importantly, spending time with her family. Liliana is motivated by her love for Gurnee and her desire to help the community continue to grow and improve. She believes the best way to live life is to put others before yourself, and she is excited to bring that philosophy to her service on the Village Board.

NEW BUSINESSES

AAA Insurance - Abdallah Agency
6409 W Grand Ave.

BIGGBY Coffee
3430 Grand Ave.

Blue Deux Barbershop
3563 Grand Ave.

Gurnee Hyundai (Expansion/Remodel)
6251 Grand Ave.

HassleLess Mattress
6409 Grand Ave

Glambrows by K
1800 Nations Dr.

Gurnee Mills - Rally House, Chocolate Moonshine, Victoria's Secret (relocation)
6170 Grand Ave.

Lake Harbor Treatment
3915 Oglesby Ave.

Mehfil Coffee House
401 N Route 21

Moose Creek Pool Spa
200 Ambrogio Dr.

COMING SOON:

7 Eleven
3688 Grand Ave.

Dutch Bros Coffee
7340 Grand Ave.

Gurnee Community Bank
7320 Grand Ave.

Gurnee Mills - Sky Zone Trampoline Park, IKEA
6170 Grand Ave.

Quiktrip
1207 N Route 41

Seasons at Gurnee Apartments
1500 Tri-State Pkwy.

Trio Grand Ave Gas Station
4885 Grand Ave.

URO Partners
1445 N Hunt Club Rd.

Dearly Quilted
1333 N Delany Rd.

VILLAGE MEETINGS

Village Board

September 28
October 5
October 19
October 28
November 9
November 23

Planning and Zoning Board

September 16
October 7
October 21
November 4
November 18

Village Board and Planning and Zoning Board meetings are held at the Gurnee Village Hall (325 N. O'Plaine Road) and begin at 7 p.m.

Village Board meetings take place on Mondays and Planning and Zoning Board meetings on Wednesdays (Schedule Subject to Change).

MORE COMMUNITY EVENTS



CAR SEAT SAFETY EVENT

Saturday, September 26

3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Gurnee Target Parking Lot
6601 Granve Ave.



COFFEE WITH THE MAYOR

Saturday, October 3

10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Haraz Coffee House
5572 Grand Ave.

Upcoming Events

Paper Shredding and Recycling Event

Saturday, October 3, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Baxter Credit Union and the Village of Gurnee will host a free Shred Event for Gurnee residents on Saturday, October 3, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at Village Hall, 325 N. O'Plaine Rd. The event is first-come, first-serve. Staff will unload personal documents directly from your vehicle. Business and commercial documents will not be accepted.

Legions of Craft Beer Festival

Saturday, October 3, from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

The 9th Annual Legions of Craft Beer Festival is Saturday, October 3, from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. at Gurnee American Legion Post 771, 749 Milwaukee Ave. The Legions of Craft Beer Festival is an exceptional community event celebrating and supporting our local veterans!

The event will feature over 35 craft beers, delightful hard ciders and mouthwatering treats from various food trucks. Captivating live music enhances the vibrant atmosphere, creating the perfect setting for an unforgettable day.

Styrofoam Recycling Event

Saturday, October 17, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The Village of Gurnee will be hosting a Styrofoam Recycling Event on Saturday, October 17, from 10a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Gurnee Public Works Facility located at 1151 Kilbourne Rd. Only clean, dry and #6 labeled polystyrene products such as food containers and molded blocks will be accepted. Items like packing peanuts, straws and lids are strictly prohibited.

Trick-or-Treating

Saturday, October 31, from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.

The Village of Gurnee encourages the community to have fun and to celebrate safely. Should your family choose to trick-or-treat or pass out candy this year, please keep in mind the following:

- Stay on sidewalks. Do not take shortcuts across lawns.
- Watch for traffic, obey all traffic signs, look before crossing the street and never cross between parked cars or in the middle of the block.
- Children should always go trick-or-treating with a trusted adult.
- Never go into people's homes. If someone asks you or your child to enter their home, politely decline.
- Remain outdoors when distributing treats and provide individually packaged treat bags for children to collect.
- Check your child's treats.

Pumpkin Composting Event

Saturday, November 7, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Give your pumpkins a second life! The Village of Gurnee, in partnership with SWALCO and LRS, will be hosting the annual pumpkin composting at Village Hall, 325 N. O'Plaine Rd. Residents can drop off pumpkins, gourds and haybales for composting. Please remove all candles, wax, plastic, yarn and other decorations before drop-off. Collected materials are converted into nutrient-rich fertilizer, keeping seasonal waste out of landfills.

More Events Continued on the Back Page

PROGRAMS, SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS & SEASONAL REMINDERS

LEAF COLLECTION PROGRAM

The 2026 Leaf Collection Program runs October 12 through December 4. Residents can choose FREE weekly bagged collection or traditional bi-weekly vacuum collection. Bagged leaves are collected every week, while vacuum collection occurs every other week.

When raking leaves to the curb for vacuum collection, please keep leaves away from mailboxes and other obstacles. The collection truck uses a mechanical arm to reach and remove the leaves and if leaves are piled too close to a mailbox, the arm may not be able to reach them. This can leave leaves behind that the truck is unable to collect. Please give the collection arm plenty of room to work so your leaves can be picked up completely.

LEAF VACUUM COLLECTION

Lakeshore Recycling Systems (LRS) will make scheduled passes throughout the Village. Place leaves at the curb by 6 a.m. Monday of your scheduled collection week.

East of I-94 — Odd Weeks

Week 1: October 12–16

Week 3: October 26–30

Week 5: November 9–13

Week 7: November 23–27

West of I-94 — Even Weeks

Week 2: October 19–23

Week 4: November 2–6

Week 6: November 16–20

Week 8: November 30–December 4

FREE BAGGED COLLECTION

Collected weekly on your regular garbage day

Unlimited bags

Not affected by leaf volume or weather

8 free collections

Please note: Vacuum collection may take longer than one week due to weather or high leaf volumes. If delays occur, LRS will complete the current area before moving to the next scheduled area.

VACUUM COLLECTION REMINDERS

Place leaves at the curb by 6 a.m. Monday of your scheduled week. Do not place leaves in the street or on the sidewalk. Only leaves are accepted. Grass, branches and other yard waste can damage collection equipment. If rain occurs, still place your leaves at the curb. They will be collected as soon as possible.

LRS may conduct practice runs during the week of October 5. Leaf burning is prohibited in the Village.

COMMON CODE VIOLATIONS

A few simple reminders can help keep Gurnee neighborhoods safe, accessible and looking their best. Vehicles, boats, trailers and RVs must be parked on paved or approved hard-surface areas and sidewalks must remain clear of parked vehicles. Overnight street parking is prohibited between 2 a.m. and 6 a.m., though residents can contact the Gurnee Police Department at 847-599-7000 for temporary accommodations for overnight guests or driveway work. Refuse and recycling containers should be placed at the curb the evening before collection and removed by noon of the day following collection. Residents are also reminded to keep grass and weeds trimmed to 8 inches or less. A little prevention goes a long way toward maintaining clean, safe and welcoming neighborhoods throughout Gurnee.

BACK TO SCHOOL SAFETY

As students return to school and families settle into their routines, remember that everyone plays a role in keeping our roads and neighborhoods safe. Drivers should stop and remain stopped when a school bus has its red lights flashing and stop arm extended. Children walking or biking should use sidewalks and designated crossings, obey crossing guards and traffic signals, stay alert and put away phones and headphones. Bicyclists should always wear a properly fitted helmet and follow the rules of the road. A little extra attention from drivers, parents and students can help make every trip to and from school a safe one.

FIRE PREVENTION WEEK

Fire Prevention Week is October 4–10, 2026, and this year's National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) theme is "Charge into Fire Safety: Safe Charging Is a Superpower." Rechargeable devices are an important part of our everyday lives. Phones, tablets, laptops, power tools, e-bikes, scooters and other battery-powered devices all rely on lithium-ion batteries. While these batteries are generally safe when used properly, damaged batteries or improper charging can increase the risk of overheating and fire.

The Fire Department encourages residents to make safe charging a habit:

- Use the charger and cord designed for your device or one approved by the manufacturer.
- Charge devices on a hard, flat surface, not on a bed, couch or under a pillow or blanket.
- Keep charging devices away from anything that can burn.
- Never use a battery or device that is damaged, swollen, leaking or unusually hot.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for charging, use and storage.

This Fire Prevention Week, take a few minutes to look around your home. Check where and how your family charges its devices and make sure everyone understands the importance of safe charging. A few simple habits can help prevent a fire and keep our Village residents, families and community safe.



325 N. O'Plaine Road
Gurnee, IL 60031

Postal Patron

PRSRT STD
ECRWSS
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID Gurnee, IL
Permit No. 45

Honoring Veterans and Hometown Heroes

Veterans Day is a time to honor the courage, sacrifice and service of the men and women who have defended our nation. This year, the Village of Gurnee invites the community to join us in recognizing our veterans and Hometown Heroes Banner honorees at the Village Board meeting on Monday, November 9 at 7 p.m. The Hometown Heroes Program honors service members from the Village of Gurnee by displaying banners on O'Plaine Road featuring their name, image and branch of service. Please submit a nomination by October 3 by visiting https://www.gurneeil.gov/residents/programs/gurnees_hometown_heroes.php



Holiday Lights at Welton Plaza

Friday, November 20, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Save the Date! The Village of Gurnee & Gurnee Park District invite you to kick off the holiday season at the 6th annual Holiday Lights on Friday, November 20, 2026, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at Welton Plaza. Hosted in partnership with the Gurnee Chamber of Commerce and Gurnee Community Church, this free community celebration features (new this year!) horse-drawn trolley rides and a carousel, along with firepits with s'mores, free pizza, ice sculpting and holiday craft stations. Join Mayor Tom Hood, Santa Claus, local performers, and your friends & neighbors for this magical evening! We kindly ask attendees to bring a non-perishable food donation to help support the Warren Township Food Pantry.



John Callaghan Memorial Turkey Trot

Thursday, November 26, at 8:00 a.m.

The Jon Callaghan Memorial Turkey Trot is an annual 5K fun run and walk held on Thanksgiving morning and is organized jointly by the Gurnee Police Department, the Gurnee Fire Department and the Gurnee Community Church.

The charitable community event honors the memory of Jon Callaghan, an 11-year-old local student who passed away in 1997 after a brave battle with neuroblastoma, a rare pediatric cancer. All event proceeds are distributed to various humanitarian and medical causes, including pediatric cancer research at Chicago area children's hospitals, local school district special needs programs, food pantries and youth mission initiatives.

Participants can find additional registration details and event maps on the Official Gurnee Turkey Trot Website www.gurneeturkeytrot.org.



Small Business Saturday

Saturday, November 28

Celebrate Small Business Saturday in Gurnee on the Saturday after Thanksgiving and throughout the year!

Grab coffee, shop at a neighborhood store, visit a local salon or enjoy a meal at one of Gurnee's many independently owned restaurants. Every purchase helps strengthen our local economy and supports the people, families and entrepreneurs who make our community unique. Shop small this holiday season and year round.

