

# North Township NAVIGATOR

YOUR GUIDE TO NEWS AND SERVICES IN EAST CHICAGO, HAMMOND, HIGHLAND, MUNSTER AND WHITING • WINTER 2017

## PARTNERS IN AUTISM AWARENESS

### PROGRAM WILL HELP LOCAL POLICE BETTER IDENTIFY AUTISTIC CHILDREN

North Township and Autism Speaks are working to provide training for police to better identify and relate to children with autism in order to keep them safe.

At the same time, the township is working with families with children who have the disorder to provide fun bracelets that will be an easy identifier.

The program will begin with East Chicago Police and eventually include all agencies in North Township. East Chicago officials have identified 180 special needs families that could benefit from the training.

Township Trustee Frank Mrvan credits Assistant Chief Deputy Gilda Orange for starting the program. The mother of a police officer and an autistic grandson, Orange said she just happened to be in the right place to learn about the training.

“If you didn’t know better, you wouldn’t know my grandson is autistic,” Orange said. “Because he doesn’t process thoughts and emotions like other kids, untrained police might think he is exhibiting dangerous behaviors when he isn’t. This training will help protect Justin and hundreds of others like him.”



Autism, or autism spectrum disorder, refers to a range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviors, speech and nonverbal communication, as well as by unique strengths and differences.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates 1 in 68 children in the United States have autism, effecting 1 in 42 boys and 1 in 189 girls.

**INFO:** Learn more at [autismspeaks.org](http://autismspeaks.org)



North Township Trustee Frank J. Mrvan talks to students about township government at Morton High School in Hammond.

### STUDENTS GET HANDS-ON LESSON IN GOVERNMENT

In an effort to bring government even closer to the people, North Township Trustee Frank Mrvan is taking his office and the township’s governing board on tour.

Since the first class at Hammond’s Morton High, Mrvan is seeing a growing interest in local government – how it works and why it’s important.

“These students are the next leaders of our region – and our country,” he said. “Our goal is to show young people public service in action.”

The inaugural visit was so successful, Mrvan took the initiative even further – and is conducting township board meetings at local high schools.

“Most students never imagine that township government is a safety net for people living at the margins. Now, they see why it’s important.”





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**LISA SALINAS-MATONOVICH**  
 Board secretary

**HAMMOND OFFICE**

5947 Hohman Avenue  
 Hammond, IN 46320  
**PHONE:** (219) 932-2530  
**FAX:** (219) 937-4412  
**HOURS:** 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday – Friday

**EAST CHICAGO OFFICE**

8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday – Friday  
 East Chicago, IN 46312  
**PHONE:** (219) 398-2435  
**FAX:** (219) 397-2190  
**HOURS:** 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday – Friday

**HESSVILLE CIRCLE OF SERVICES**

2835-165th Street  
 Hammond, IN 46323  
**PHONE:** (219) 803-0659  
**HOURS:** 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday – Friday



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# TOWNSHIP HELPING CUSTODIAL PARENTS SECURE CHILD SUPPORT

Lake County Prosecutor Bernard Carter is bringing the weight of his office – and two members of his staff – to North Township’s Circle of Services to serve as a satellite office charged with helping single parents throughout the township recover monies owed to them in support of their children.

North Township Chief Deputy Virginia Carter said the idea to bring the services to the township was the brainchild of caseworker Marguerita Olson, who saw the growing number of clients in need of the services but without the means of traveling to Crown Point to get them. “It is absolutely incredible the number of women who are not receiving the

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

The partnership between the Lake County Prosecutor’s office and North Township will begin early in 2018. If you are a custodial parent in need of help in securing child support, please call the township at (219) 932-2530.

court-ordered spousal support owed to them. We are grateful to Marguerita for recognizing the problem and helping create a solution,” Virginia Carter said. “What this means for custodial parents and their children is living precariously through no fault of their own,” she said. “We are working with the prosecutor’s office to help stabilize our families.”



**LETTER FROM THE NORTH TOWNSHIP TRUSTEE**

**“North Township residents have so much to be thankful for this year — and holiday season”**

Thank you for another fantastic year! I am proud of the progress we have made in assisting our residents by addressing needs – one by one. I want to thank my fantastic staff, who while small in number, are mighty in creating and launching programs that make township residents’ lives better.

Here are just a few of our successes:

**NO MORE SECRETS:** More than 100 school-age children came forward with stories of horrific abuse and the pain that it caused during our No More Secrets Sexual Abuse Prevention campaign. As a result, those children are receiving the counseling they need to move forward. Since August, we’ve trained nearly 100 educators to identify potential abuse victims and guide them to assistance.

**DIAL-A-RIDE:** While we continue to search for a permanent source of funding and other options to expand, Dial-a-Ride is consistently providing trips to as many as 240 residents a day and is on schedule to provide about 45,000 on-demand trips this year.

**VETERANS:** Thanks to the incredible generosity of our residents and success of our annual Victory for Veterans Ride, we have completed a Reflection Fountain at the southeast corner of Wicker Memorial Park. The fountain, which lights up at night, will be dedicated this spring in honor of our fallen veterans and Gold Star families. Stay tuned for details of the Reflection Fountain dedication.

**FRANK J. MRVAN**  
 North Township Trustee



# WINTER IN THE PARK

## WELCOME!

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



## SHELTER & PICNIC RENTALS

As the end of the year approaches, Wicker Memorial Park begins fielding calls to rent summer space at one of its eight picnic areas and six buildings. "We open reservations right after the New Year and expect that all of our facilities will be fully booked for the summer by the middle of January," Park Superintendent Brett Bierman said. "Right after Thanksgiving, we start getting daily calls from folks who know how popular Wicker Park is for family reunions, class picnics and general get-togethers."

Reservations for the 2018 summer season – May 1 to Sept. 30 – begin 8:30 Tuesday, Jan. 2. The North Township rates are:

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

Reservations are available for out-of-township and out-of-state residents at a higher cost. Discounts are available for not-for-profit organization members, veterans, police officers and firefighters who are North Township residents.

**INFO:** Visit [wickermemorialpark.com](http://wickermemorialpark.com) to learn more about our facilities and picnic areas as well as view all of our amenities.

## WINTER SNOW TRAILS

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

## DOG RUN

Our dog park features pet fountains, benches for leash holders and plenty of space to run around. The annual fee is \$25 for township residents, \$60 for out-of-township and \$100 out-of-state. Register your dog at the Wicker Memorial Park picnic office. Download forms at [wickermemorialpark.com](http://wickermemorialpark.com).



## SENIOR ACTIVITIES

### SENIOR LUNCHEONS

Seniors enjoy great food, entertainment, guest speakers and door prizes for \$5. Lunch is served at noon. Doors open at 11 a.m. Friendly reminder: There's no luncheon in January.

**DECEMBER 13:** The luncheon features mixed green salad, baked ham with horseradish, green beans almondine, baked potato with butter, chives and sour cream, apple pie. Includes bread and butter, coffee or hot tea.

**FEBRUARY 7:** The luncheon features vegetable soup, baked fish, scalloped potatoes, green beans and tapioca pudding. Includes bread and butter, coffee or hot tea.

**WHERE:** Wicker Park Social Center

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

### EASTER HAM BINGO

Grab a friend and head to Wicker Park for an afternoon of fun. Winners receive a gift card for a ham. Township residents only. Must show picture ID.

**WHEN:** 1 to 3 p.m. **March 21.** Doors open at noon. Sign in at the door.

**WHERE:** Wicker Park Social Center  
**INFO:** Call (219) 313-3934.

### FOUR WINDS CASINO

Roll the dice and let Lady Luck guide you to fame, fortune or at least a rollicking good time on this trip to New Buffalo, Michigan.

**WHEN:** 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. **March 27**

**WHERE:** Four Winds Casino  
**FEE:** \$26 per person includes round-trip transportation to/from Wicker Park. Upon arrival at the casino, you'll receive a \$15 slot credit and a \$10 food credit.

**RESERVATIONS:** Call Eleanor at (219) 313-3934.

### HAPPY BIRTHDAY JESUS

Children and their parents are invited to celebrate the birth of Jesus.

Each child should bring a gift in the form of hygiene items – such as shampoo, toothpaste, deodorant – as well as laundry soap and adult or children's socks.

This free event features crafts, games, facepainting, stories, cookie decorating, pizza and beverages.

**WHEN:** December 7

**Preschoolers**  
11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**Kindergarten-Grade 5**  
4:30 to 7 p.m.

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

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

### PICTURES WITH SANTA

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

**WHEN:** 3:30 to 5 p.m. December 14

**WHERE:** North Township Trustee's  
East Chicago office, 2107 Broadway

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**  
Please call the East Chicago office at (219) 398-2435.





Energy Assistance Program to provide greater impact and education in 2018 ...

## PROGRAM TO HELP RESIDENTS WITH ENERGY EFFICIENCY

North Township is retooling its energy assistance programs to provide greater impact and education, beginning in 2018.

Chief Deputy Virginia Carter said employees are being trained to provide classes for residents to achieve even greater energy savings.

"We've moved beyond the programs where we would provide vouchers for such items as window coverings," she said. "What we want to do is equip our residents

with the knowledge to spot energy inefficiencies. Once they complete the class, we will have a host of items to help, such as LED light bulbs."

Other easy ways to save money:

- Replace your five most frequently used light fixtures with Energy Star models – save \$75 per year.
- Dial that thermostat down 7-10 degrees for eight hours per day – save 10 percent a year.
- Fix leaky faucets to save 1,661 gallons of water – save \$35.

### SHOVELING HELP

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

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

## TOWNSHIP RESTORE TEAM HELPING TO STABILIZE VETERANS

Newly created rapid response teams are stepping in to stabilize veterans and their families suffering the aftermath of a war that, for them, never ends.

North Township Trustee Frank Mrvan is working with local veterans groups to create a network of support for veterans with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and other lingering issues.

Known as Restore Team, Mrvan said the effort, which launches early next year,

will help veterans and their families with housing, education, legal issues, financial assistance and substance abuse.

"Assistance will continue until the crisis is resolved," Mrvan said. "We will not walk away from our veterans.

"The Restore Team will be the hub of our comprehensive veteran's network, which includes mental health services, food, housing and clothing – everything they need to put their lives back together."

### SEEKING VOLUNTEERS

North Township is looking for volunteers to assist in stabilization efforts. We need professionals who can address veteran homelessness, legal issues, education and employment as well as volunteers who can help with groceries, clothing, tutoring and other activities that are part of daily life.

**INFO:** Call Coordinator Mayra Rodriguez at (219) 932-2530.



## TOWNSHIP ASSISTANCE

*We connect people and services!*

FOOD • CLOTHING • UTILITIES • SHELTER  
PRESCRIPTIONS • TRANSPORTATION

ASSISTANCE IS JUST A PHONE CALL AWAY!

**(219) 932-2530**

Frank J. Mrvan



**NORTH TOWNSHIP TRUSTEE**  
BUILDING A STRONGER COMMUNITY

5947 HOHMAN AVENUE  
HAMMOND, INDIANA 46320

# SWEETHEART'S DANCE

4-6 PM FEBRUARY 10  
WICKER PARK CLUBHOUSE

DANCING • DJ • PRIZES • CRAFTS • FOOD

RESERVATIONS REQUIRED

PLEASE CALL 219.932-2530, EXT. 331

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

VALENTINE'S  
EVENT FOR  
CHILDREN!