

December 28, 2020

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ELGIN insight



STRATEGIC HIGHLIGHTS



United Way Shows Up for Elgin in Times of Need

The City's 2020 United Way campaign officially kicked off last week. When you give to United Way of Metro Chicago, you are supporting the basic needs of Elgin residents hit hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic. Last week's event, "Uniting for the Holidays" offered a great example of how United Way shows up for our neighbors in need.

United Way partnered with other local organizations including the Elgin Partnership for Early Learning (EPEL), the Northern Illinois Food Bank, Gail Borden Public Library, VNA and Greater Elgin Family Care Center to put on Uniting for the Holidays, a special food distribution event. The event served 500 families with food, diapers, early learning bags, books and activities kits, helping bring a smile to the faces of so many during these difficult times. This



event could not have been possible without United Way's expertise, partnerships, scale and vision to impact the challenges that we face as a city.

The last day to pledge a donation is **Wednesday, December 30**. Please don't forget to make your pledge before it is too late. Check your inbox for a recent email from Karina Nava, 2020 United Way Campaign Chair, for your individual pledge link.

Last year City of Elgin employees donated over \$8,000 to United Way. We are half way to matching last year's pledges. With your commitment today, we can exceed last year's campaign to make a bigger impact and support the rebuild of our community in more equitable ways. When we come together, we'll be able to build back stronger and make Elgin a more vibrant and thriving city.



Delivering a Creative Alternative to Bring Joy (and a Little Horror) to the Community

The pandemic has wreaked havoc across the world this year, and it has especially impacted the special events industry. The cancellation or significant reduction in scale of traditional large gatherings, weddings, concerts, conferences, etc. left a major hole in the heart and soul of so many. While many organizations adapted by offering virtual events, the City of Elgin instead ran with a wild and wicked idea that resulted in its most highly attended event in recent history.

"It became clear early on that our signature event, Nightmare on Chicago Street, was not going to be feasible this year just based on gathering size limitations alone," said Special Events and Community Engagement Manager Kate O'Leary. "As disappointing as that was, we didn't let it stop us from living up to our reputation as the midwest's Halloween destination."



KATE O'LEARY

Kate and the team in the parks and recreation department began brainstorming what a safe Halloween event could look like. Armed with the creative mind of Fred Wimms and technical expertise of Smooch Medina, the outline for Little Park of Horrors was developed.

SPECIAL EVENTS COORDINATOR

"We knew we had a lot of amazing props, the necessary production staff, a group of enthusiastic volunteers and a community that loves Halloween," said Kate. "Perhaps the key ingredient to make this idea come to life was that Elgin is home to Wing Park, 121-acres of natural scenery filled with mature trees and a road that winds around through the park."

Little Park of Horrors (LPH) was created as a haunted drive-through event taking place over 11 nights. Having the event take place at Wing Park offered an inherently spooky background to enhance the experience, and it provided the ability for staff to control heavy traffic. Event guests were able to enter on the south end of the park and enjoy eight themed scenes from the safety of their vehicles before exiting on the east side.

Over those 11 days, the event drew over 25,000 people in approximately 6,350 vehicles. For comparison, the most highly attended Nightmare on Chicago Street (NOCS) in 2018 had about 18,000 people. A big difference between LPH and NOCS is that LPH was a much more family-friendly event. This provided families an option to experience an event this year—one that wouldn't add to the already extensive amount of screen time being had by so many.

"It was so heartwarming to see how excited and generous families were upon entering the event," said Kate. "I couldn't count the number parents who told me this was the first thing their kids were able to get out and do this year."

What was similar to NOCS was the amount of volunteer and staff time that went into the development and execution of LPH. The *Elgin Allies* team alone donated approximately 750 total hours.

"The volunteers were essential for prop building and set up of the event, as well as coordinating the traffic flow through the park nightly," said Kate.

The event required nearly 10 days of setup, too. City staff from several departments and divisions, including Hemmens, land management, public works, forestry and parks and recreation, all worked together to turn this idea into reality, and show Elgin residents that their city would keep its commitment to celebrating Halloween. To call the event a success would be an understatement.

COLLABORATION



DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION



INNOVATION



CITY OF CHOICE



SAFE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITY



HIGH PERFORMING, FINANCIALLY STABLE GOVERNMENT



STRATEGIC PRINCIPLES & PRIORITIES

CORE VALUES

COLLABORATION



DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION



INNOVATION



STEWARDSHIP



DEFINED GOALS

CITY OF CHOICE



HIGH PERFORMING,
FINANCIALLY STABLE
GOVERNMENT

SAFE AND HEALTHY
COMMUNITY



PROMOTIONS - CONGRATULATIONS!

Cherie Aschenbrenner – PT Senior Liaison – Department of Neighborhood Services

NEW EMPLOYEES - WELCOME!

Donna Jacabe – PT Crossing Guard – Police

John Samaan – PT Crossing Guard – Police

Yvette Wilkins – PT Crossing Guard – Police

Carol Keegan – Public Safety Telecommunicator – Police

Kelly Marrero – Public Safety Telecommunicator – Police

Adam Dahlberg – Firefighter – Fire

Alfredo Garcia – PT Custodian – Building Maintenance

Vince Di Vito – Utility Worker – Water

Kaitlyn Johnsen – PT Program Leader – Parks and Recreation

Alejandra Leyva Corrales – PT Janitor – Parks and Recreation

Jonathan Buck – PT Fitness Desk Clerk – Parks and Recreation

Brianna Ramos – PT Attendant – Parks and Recreation

Natalia Silva – PT Attendant – Parks and Recreation

Kayla Kaldenberger – PT Assistant Instructor – Parks and Recreation

Alex Lilly – PT Cart Attendant – Golf

*This issue includes promotions and new employees since September 30, 2020.

RECOGNITIONS

To: Sandy Kolba

From: Cindy Walden

Thank you for the sharing the FOIA research information which is attached to the zoning verifications letters. Without your research/files, our reports would not be done in a timely manner. Again, your

assistance is greatly needed and appreciated.

In the past two weeks, we received SEVEN (7) zoning verification requests. The last time we had received a request was back in March (2020). Dave and I were fortunate that majority of these seven files had been requested in the past, as new files take a long to research and write up.

To: Public Works

From: John Ferron, resident

Thanks for the great work [with on-street leaf collection] on Morgan Street yesterday.

To: Erica Rodriguez

From: Tom Fezzy, resident

Thank you so much! It is always such a pleasure to deal with the City of Elgin and it is so great that you are way ahead of all other municipalities with technology and solutions to problems. My only regret is that I don't get to see you in person. Thank you, again!

To: Karina Nava

From: Steve Moon, Grand Victoria Foundation

Dear Karina, Thank you for being such a great partner and representative for the city on the Elgin Covid Relief Fund steering committee! I appreciate your positive energy and your advocacy for the Elgin community. Please also extend my gratitude to your colleagues that have contributed behind the scenes. Thanks again.

To: Officer Adam Ross

From: Javier Valdivia, via post to Facebook group "What's Happening in Elgin IL?"

To the awesome officer that helped me out at Exxon on Larkin and Edison. THANK YOU SO MUCH. My car would have been towed if it wasn't for this gentleman, took time to pick up my spare keys and bring them to me. I thanked him but didn't even take his name. Unit 8801.

To: Sonia Gascas

From: Jennie Phillips

Thank you for helping with KB suggestions and reviewing the KB with a critical eye. Much appreciated!

To: Matt Falco, Jorge Alvarez and Scott Lobono

From: Jeff Meyers, resident

I recently had some contract work done on my home and had an opportunity to work with Matt Falco, and his team. They were excellent during inspection of the work being done on my home.

While here, I mentioned to one of the inspectors that I had a crack in my basement floor, and I would like to get an unbiased opinion of it. My house is new construction and still under warranty, however, I have made no progress with the builder in covering repair work.

Both inspectors directed me to contact Matt Falco for an onsite inspection. Let me tell you, the help I got from Matt was fast, concise, professional, and very helpful in helping me compile data that will help me

determine if I have a structural issue or cosmetic issue, and how I can use this info to convince the builder to complete either a cosmetic or structural repair.

I couldn't be happier with the help I received. I just recently moved to Elgin from Algonquin. My experience with village employees in Algonquin was very good, but nowhere close to the performance from the village of Elgin.

I ask you to please recognize Matt and the inspectors involved. It's always nice to get a pat on the back... but it's even nicer to get some money to go with it. My request would be for both!

To: Aaron Cosentino
From: Herb Bolding, resident of Glens of College Green

It may sound like a broken record to you, but I have to thank you again. The interest you have shown in helping us to keep our community clean and attractive is very much appreciated.

To: Kathleen Chantrey and PW Traffic Maintenance Division
From: Vivian Jaquint

Kathleen ... You and your team are incredible!!! You fixed it within 24 hours. I really appreciate it as it is super dark at 6:15AM when I walk my dog. Thank you again! ENJOY the rest of your weekend!

To: Sonia Gasca, Jennie Phillips, Brooke Snow
From: Diane Kleczewski, Wynstone Condominium Association

On behalf of our homeowners, I want to thank you for your efforts contacting the proper company to provide maintenance to our utility boxes.

They were here last week, checked and provided maintenance on all utility boxes on our campus. THANK YOU SO MUCH!

To: PW Streets Division
From: Larry Hemb, resident

Thank you for the skip patching South Lyle St. this past week. It is so nice to just drive in a straight line down the road instead of weaving left and right to avoid the potholes. You literally had to speed up or slow down to avoid them because of oncoming vehicles. Thanks again, Larry Hemb

To: David Koski
From: Linda Nail

Linda called and said she was extremely thankful to you for all your assistance.

To: Ray Eggert
From: Homeowner on South Street

Homeowner called 311 to compliment Ray and his fine work. Exact words she used "he was wonderful!"

To: Joe Wozny
From: Darlene Castelvecchi, resident

Constituent called 311 to let you know that the tenants from a residence have just moved out, and she is grateful for your work on this address. She understands the hard work this case must have created for you and she says 'Thank You'.

To: Public Works and Special Events
From: Dennis Doherty, resident

Resident called 311 to send a kudos to everyone who put their part in the leaf clean up, street repairs and the wing park event.

To: PW Streets Division
From: Sally Rhymes, resident

Resident called to extend her appreciation and thanks for taking care of the alley (behind 625 Forest). She said she is very happy with your work and so are all the neighbors. Thank you for the job well done!

To: Kyle Stoecklein
From: Jeffrey Gill

Jeffrey called 311 and wanted to thank Kyle very much. He said it was a pleasure working with him and he appreciates all his efforts.

To: 311 and Meter Shop
From: Jim Davis, resident

I've had about a half dozen interactions with the city's 311 service, the most recent concluding today.

Every time I've called, I've been put in touch with a city employee in a reasonably fast time. And each employee has been friendly and helpful. (I've had similarly good results when I've emailed after hours; someone always has replied the next day.)

I'll detail my most recent experience as an example, and I apologize for not taking names, but, again, the experience was typical:

My water bill roughly doubled, so I was concerned about it. The advocate I talked to scheduled an appointment—for the next day—for a city employee to check for possible water leaks. He called with a 15-minute heads up, showed up on time, did a thorough inventory, and gave a full report to my wife, suggesting some basic repairs to toilets and such.

All in all, another more-than-satisfactory experience. From my perspective, the 311 system is an outstanding city program.

To: 311 and PW Traffic Maintenance Division
From: Corey Zak, resident

I saw on the news that Chicago is having issues with their 311 Calls not being addressed.

I wanted to compliment the City Of Elgin on handling my call about one month ago. I called to report 2 street lights out on Kenneth Circle. I had no idea what would come of my call. I am happy to report within 48 hours the lights were repaired! This is wonderful service, it makes me proud to live in Elgin.

To: Kyle Kirincic, Sewer Division
From: Nancy Calderwood, resident

Nancy Calderwood called 311 to extend her gratitude for your prompt response. She really appreciates it and wants you to know. Thank you!

To: Forestry and Kathleen Chantrey
From: Winston Melvin, via 311 mobile app

The trees in front of my home on Monday Dr. have been removed!! The contractor showed up did a thoroughly professional job, cleaned up very well, and even reset my mailbox!!! Thank you, thank you!

To: Forestry Division
From: Kathy Griffen, resident

Resident called 311 to say thank you very much for the service on the tree trimming, she advised she was very satisfied on how fast the work got done. Thank you!

To: Lizette Lara, Crystal McGuide
From: Sarah Ibrahim, resident

Resident called 311 to share that she is very happy with the customer service she received and all the information that was provided to her. She wanted me to say Thank you on her behalf for treating her well, and always being so nice.

To: Officer R. Daniel Payne
From: Anonymous

Anonymous Caller to 311 was very pleased with how polite and genuine Officer Payne was at the Salvation Army recently. She feels he is making a positive difference in the community and wanted to call 311 and let us know.

Share your story.

This month, the official Resident Officer Program of Elgin (ROPE) sign for Officer Ryan Nelis was posted at his office downtown at 31 S. Grove Ave. The downtown ROPE Officer position was created earlier this year, and Officer Nelis has been a great resource to the residents and businesses of downtown Elgin. Nelis helps educate constituents and address concerns



about downtown, working closely with the Downtown Neighborhood Association. This photo posted to the Elgin Police Department's Facebook page received an enormous amount of engagement.

We want to see and share your pictures and videos. They may be used on the City's social media channels, website and in other hiring and promotional materials. [Send us photos from your workday and we can help share your story.](#)



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