



# WEST DEERFIELD TOWNSHIP

*Your Community Resource for Life*

601 Deerfield Road  
Deerfield, Illinois 60015  
847-945-0614

info@westdeerfieldtownship.org

## SUPERVISOR'S MESSAGE



## Greetings, West Deerfield Township Residents!

I hope you and your loved ones remain safe and healthy during these uncertain and unprecedented times.

The Covid-19 pandemic has forced us to modify what we do here at West Deerfield Township, guided by an overarching commitment to the health and safety of **our** residents and our staff.

As tragic and difficult as the pandemic has been for all of us, the kindness and generosity that I have witnessed since it first began, is a testament to our strength when we work together.

### Examples are:

- A thoughtful article from Jerry Zachar, our director of counseling, reminding residents that the township's counseling services are a resource for those who may be facing emotional challenges.
- A new effort underway to help West Deerfield Township become a safer and more welcoming community for those suffering from dementia.
- Our annual holiday wish program, and changes made to our transportation services program.
- The outpouring of support we received from residents and donors to help feed the increasing number of community members facing financial or health-related challenges.

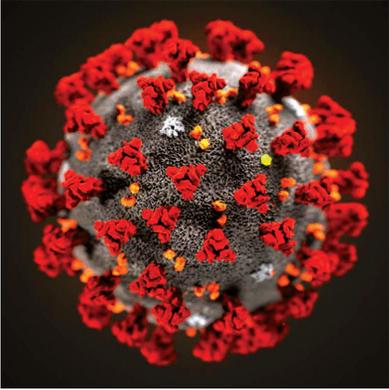
Finally, I'd like to thank Township staff and community members for setting an example of democracy working at its best during our early voting process. Creating an environment in which everyone feels safe from the risks posed by the pandemic was no easy task, because there was no template to use as reference. I want to especially thank Clerk Kristen Scott who stepped up to the task and handled it flawlessly. She coordinated with the county – which runs the early voting site – and other officials to ensure social distancing, privacy, drop box placement and collection, and sanitation requirements could be met. Quite simply: She created the template. I also want to thank the fire marshall for all of his help in ensuring the township building, replete with voting machines and increased traffic, met all code and safety requirements, as well as the police department and village for their cooperation.

The socialization constraints we all feel as a result of the pandemic has made our township election process feel even more endearing. It has been a true pleasure seeing everyone come out in droves to exercise their right to vote. We got to see one another's masked smiling faces, in-person. It gave us all a brief and very welcome feeling of normalcy.

The strength of this community really shows not when times are good, but when we all face a shared challenge. Please continue to keep our most vulnerable neighbors in mind as we enter the holiday season and harsher winter months, and I wish you and your families nothing but health and happiness this fall!

*Sincerely, Alyson Feiger*  
Township Supervisor

# “Coping in the Time of COVID”



As we all take precautions to keep ourselves and loved ones physically safe amid the COVID-19 pandemic, mental health experts also advise us to be mindful of our emotional well-being. It is not uncommon for people to experience feelings of anxiety, helplessness, depression and isolation during these challenging times.

One way to better manage these feelings is to understand the emotional aspects of the pandemic. That's why West Deerfield Township is planning “Coping in the Time of COVID,” a virtual panel discussion bringing together experts for a frank conversation about our mental health. Panelists include Hugh Brady, past president of the Illinois Chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, Rosalba Diaz, educational outreach coordinator for A Safe Place (domestic violence), and Elizabeth Thielen, senior director for Nicasa Behavioral Health Services (gambling and substance abuse). Jacob Royko of the Josselyn Center will act as moderator.

Panelists will discuss COVID's emotional effects on the individual and the entire family, and share strategies and resources to deal with these emotionally challenging times. Although the panel discussion will be virtual, viewers will be able to submit questions and provide comments via an electronic chat option. The panel discussion will be Tuesday, December 8 at 6:30 P.M.

[www.westdeerfieldtownship.org](http://www.westdeerfieldtownship.org)

For further information, please contact Township Supervisor Alyson Feiger.

## Going Places

### *West Deerfield Township's Transportation Service Resumes with Enhanced Safety Precautions, and New Payment Options*

We're pleased to announce resumption of transportation services to residents who need rides to medical or dental appointments. We suspended the service when the COVID-19 outbreak deemed it unsafe for drivers and passengers. Now, with new safety precautions in place, we're confident we can safely provide this necessary service to residents.

We also will be providing “quality of life” trips as the schedule permits for those who need a lift to the grocery store, local restaurants, hair salons, etc.

#### **Safety Measures Implemented Include:**

- *Drivers wear face coverings at all times.*
- *Vans will be fully sanitized prior to each ride.*
- *Passengers' temperatures will be taken using a forehead thermometer before boarding. Those with a temperature over 100 degrees will not be permitted to board.*
- *Van windows will remain slightly open to promote air circulation.*
- *Passengers will be required to wear face coverings for the entire duration of their trip and will also be asked to remain a safe distance from the driver.*



As an added measure to increase safety, we have implemented a pre-paid coupon system where passengers can present their one-way or round-trip coupon to the driver. The township mailed several free coupons to frequent users as a courtesy. Those interested in purchasing coupons, which cost **\$3 for one-way trips** and **\$5 for round-trips**, can do so by mailing a check and a note requesting how many and which types of coupons they'd like to purchase.

Please make checks out to West Deerfield Township (minimum check amount is \$10). Write “VAN” in the memo section of the check. Checks can be mailed to:

**West Deerfield Township, Attention: Julia  
601 Deerfield Road  
Deerfield, IL 60015**

To schedule an appointment or ask questions about the new procedures and payment method, please call Julia at **847.945.0614**.



# File for All Lake County Property Tax Exemptions Online

**You can now apply online for all property tax exemptions – It's easy and convenient.**

Visit [www.lakecountyil.gov](http://www.lakecountyil.gov) and follow the steps below:

- 1) At the top of the page, click the tab entitled "Chief County Assessment Office."
- 2) Scroll to "Smart E-filing Portal".
- 3) Create an account and begin the filing process.

*The exemptions you may qualify for include the following:*

### General Homestead Exemption

To qualify you must live at your property as your principal residence on or before January 1 of this tax year. This exemption lowers the equalized assessed value of your property by \$6,000.

### Senior Homestead Exemption

If you turn 65 in 2020 and the property has been your primary residence on or before Jan. 1 you qualify for this exemption. The exemption lowers the equalized assessed value of your property by \$5,000.

### Senior Assessment Freeze

This exemption is filed annually and is income-based. To qualify, you must be 65, your property must be your primary residence and your household income must be under \$65,000. This exemption freezes the equalized assessed value of your property for 2020.

### Homestead Improvement Exemption

This exemption allows for the four-year deferral increases in the assessed value on your principal residential property for improvements done to that property where the local township assessor would add value. A maximum of \$25,000 in assessed value maybe deferred under this program.

### Disabled Person's Exemption and Disabled Veterans, Returning Veterans and Senior Citizens Tax Deferral

If your property is your primary residence on or before January 1, 2020, and you are considered disabled under the Federal Social Security Act, you may qualify for this exemption. Further, disabled veterans and those returning home from deployments are eligible for exemptions.

*Please review your tax bill annually to make sure that the exemptions you qualify for are applied to your tax bill. If you have any questions, please contact the West Deerfield Township Assessor's Office at 847-945-3020. We are always happy to assist you.*

### Tom Healy

West Deerfield Township Assessor

## Spirit of Generosity *Defines Our Community in These Challenging Times*

The COVID-19 pandemic tightened its grip on our community this past spring creating widespread economic hardships on West Deerfield Township families and increasing the number of people requiring food pantry assistance by more than 25 percent.

Along with the pandemic came a host of new challenges for food pantry officials, from meeting basic food needs, to finding additional volunteers to pack and distribute it, to maintaining a safe environment. Many of those concerns dissipated as residents intuitively stepped up to the proverbial plate with increased donations.

"Helping neighbors in need through volunteerism has always been a hallmark of our community," said West Deerfield Township Supervisor Alyson Feiger. "Volunteers form the backbone of nearly all of the support we provide to in-need families and residents.

Whether they donate time or resources, or innovative ideas to overcome the unique challenges created by pandemic, it is a comfort to those we serve, knowing that this community consistently steps up when the need arises."

### ***Some of the Many Ways Township Residents Have Helped Include:***

- ***Package and deliver donated food.*** More than 100 masked volunteers sign up for pre-scheduled time slots to help package and deliver food to the most vulnerable and high-risk food pantry patrons.
- ***Donate fresh produce.*** Residents have donated fresh produce from their own gardens.
- ***Donate personal protective equipment.*** Residents donated masks, gloves, hand sanitizer and other personal protection equipment.
- ***Donate toys and games and books.*** Two high school students donated toys and games to keep kids, now forced to stay at home, entertained and busy. Many others have donated an assortment of books for all ages and abilities.

As the pandemic begins a second wave of wide-spread infection, the pantry must rely heavily on cash donations to purchase and distribute grocery gift cards for needy families, a safer alternative to traditional means such as collecting, packaging and delivering food donations.

Those interested in donating to the West Deerfield Township Food Pantry can do so via the West Deerfield

Township's website ([www.westdeerfieldtownship.org](http://www.westdeerfieldtownship.org)) or by contacting Alyson Feiger, Township Supervisor at 847.945.0614.

# TOWNSHIP *Quick Takes*



## **Disability Grants are Available**

The Township accepts applications throughout the year. Grants may be awarded to individuals in the Township who demonstrate a need for help to cover the cost of home modifications, equipment, therapy, etc. that would increase the resident's access to the community and to their world.

### **APPLICATIONS ARE REVIEWED QUARTERLY.**

A committee of volunteers, each with different backgrounds in social services, disability, and accessibility issues reviews requests with names and identifying information removed.

### **DOWNLOAD THE APPLICATION ON OUR WEB SITE.**

Visit [www.westdeerfieldtownship.org](http://www.westdeerfieldtownship.org), or come in to the Township Office for a copy. Please call Alyson Feiger, Supervisor, if you have any questions about the program or the application process.



## **Unincorporated Roads**

For road repair and maintenance, the West Deerfield Township contracts with the Vernon Township Highway Department to ensure safe driving conditions for all motorists.

### **SERVICES INCLUDE:**

The Highway Department provides such services as snow plowing, shoulder grading, pavement repair and rehabilitation, re-painting of traffic control markings on the pavement and signage.

### **IF YOU HAVE A CONCERN...**

...about one of the unincorporated roads in our Township, please call the Township office at **847-945-0614**



## **Senior Social Services**

Did you know...the Township partners with the Deerfield Park District to provide Senior Social Services at the Patty Turner Center.

Topics include in-home services, community resources, help with applying for benefits, Medicare, and caregiver support. Please call our staff member, Margie Fischer, M.A. at **847-940-4010** for help with a variety of information.



## **LIHEAP** *(Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program)*

Application assistance is available at the Township office by appointment.

This program offers limited financial assistance, based on income, for heating and electric bills. Please call Lupe Somerville at the Township office.

**847-945-0614**



## **Passport Services**

In response to significant challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic, West Deerfield Township has temporarily suspended passport services at our office. The Township will resume passport services as local conditions and resources allow.







## As We Protect Ourselves from the Covid-19 Virus, Township Counseling Services are Available to Help Those with Feelings of Isolation.

By **Dr. Jerry Zachar**  
Director of Counseling Services,  
West Deerfield Township

It's no secret that this year has brought myriad challenges to the health and well-being of our community. Everyone has been impacted in some way by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Some of us have lost loved ones to the deadly virus. Others have contracted the virus. Many are suffering from economic hardship or job loss. Parents face anxiety over the choices they need to make about how their kids will continue to receive an education. Essential workers continue to do their jobs amid uncertainty and stress. In short, our lives have been dramatically altered as we navigate our way through this public health crisis.

Just as we are constantly monitoring our physical symptoms to protect ourselves and our families from the threat that COVID-19 poses, I encourage everyone to be mindful of their mental health as well.

*Stress, anxiety, feelings of isolation and loss  
can lead to depression.*

Instead of suppressing or burying those emotions, it is always helpful to acknowledge them and share your feelings with others. By getting these feelings out in the open, people are far better equipped to manage and recover from them.

Earlier this year, prior to the outbreak, West Deerfield Township established a grief and loss support group aimed at providing people who have lost loved ones with a place to share their feelings and find some sense of kinship with those facing similar challenges.

We are fortunate that, despite the virus, we have been able to continue our twice-monthly by gathering outdoors in a socially-distanced atmosphere. I take it as a point of pride that the group saw such value in meeting that we continued doing so, albeit in a different setting.



As the weather gets colder, we plan to resume our meetings indoors, masked up while also physically distancing ourselves from one another.

Because of the need to socially distance and avoid others, the pandemic has in some cases exacerbated the feelings of isolation and loneliness that many were feeling even before the virus became prevalent. For others, the pandemic has brought about similar feelings that may be unfamiliar to them.

So, I want every West Deerfield Township resident to know that we are here to help if you need it.

*All the support services we provide, including  
one-on-one counseling and support groups,  
are provided free of charge for West  
Deerfield Township residents.*

If you would like to learn more about the services we provide, or if you know someone who may benefit from counseling, do not hesitate to reach out to me. I can be reached at **847.945.0614**. All conversations and voice mails are confidential. No one should have to suffer mental or emotional challenges alone, especially during a time where the need for support is greater than ever.

# West Deerfield Township Launches Drive to Become a “Dementia-friendly” Community



When West Deerfield Township trustee Ron Levitsky sought to learn more about how communities can take proactive steps to better serve individuals living with dementia and other cognitive impairments he didn't have to look far. Several nearby communities

have already adopted measures to earn the distinction of becoming “dementia friendly.”

Now he and other West Deerfield Township leaders are taking the initial steps to better understand the specific needs of residents and their loved ones impacted by dementia.

*“Our goal is to make West Deerfield Township safer and more comforting for those facing day-to-day challenges that dementia presents.”*

And, as part of that effort, every facet of our community has a role to play,” said Trustee Levitsky. “That’s why, with the guidance from the Dementia Friendly America initiative, we’re gathering leaders from government, businesses, first responders and social agencies together to study the specific needs of our residents with memory issues and how best to meet those needs.”

Dementia is an overall term to describe symptoms of a decline in memory and thinking that interferes with daily life and impacts functioning independently. Alzheimer’s disease is the most common type of dementia. According to the Alzheimer’s Association, more than five million Americans 65 and older live with Alzheimer’s disease, and 70 percent of individuals with a diagnosis live at home. Alzheimer’s disease impacts the entire family. More than sixteen million caregivers and care partners provide unpaid assistance for individuals living with Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias.

Trustee Levitsky and township supervisor Alyson Feiger have assembled a working group comprised of local decision makers in government, public safety, business, social service agencies and faith-based organizations. The group has met

twice to assess how it can deliver a coordinated approach to make the region safer and more compassionate for individuals living with dementia. Ideas that have been discussed range from equipping first responders with information about how to best help a person living with dementia in need to asking restaurants and retailers to be more accessible by helping to remove the stigma attached to a disease that impacts so many local families.

The Township is relying on guidance from Dementia Friendly America, a national network of communities, organizations and individuals seeking to ensure that communities across the U.S. are equipped to support people living with dementia. It has also tapped the expertise of a Deerfield resident who has both personal and professional experience dealing with those with dementia.

Emily Mysel, a Deerfield resident and senior program manager for Family Service of Glencoe, has assisted local communities in becoming more dementia friendly. Her grandparents’ journey with dementia sparked her drive to help others understand the disease so communities can be more supportive. She is volunteering her time and bringing her expertise to assist West Deerfield Township.

“We’re starting a conversation in West Deerfield Township about how we as members of this community can support families, employers and government leaders in their efforts to become more understanding about the challenges those living with dementia, their caregivers and loved ones face day in and day out,” said Mysel. “We’re hopeful that this conversation is the catalyst for creative ideas and practical steps we can all take with the goal of being more understanding, more compassionate and more effective in serving this special population.”





Your Community Resource for Life

[www.westdeerfieldtownship.org](http://www.westdeerfieldtownship.org)

FALL 2020

**West Deerfield Township**

601 Deerfield Road  
Deerfield, Illinois 60015  
847-945-0614

**Assessor's Office**

847-945-3020

**Hours**

8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.  
Monday through Friday  
Assessors Office  
Closed 12:00-1:00 p.m.

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# West Deerfield Township fine tunes Holiday Wish Program for upcoming season

With the holidays rapidly approaching, West Deerfield Township is proud to roll out our holiday wish program, which spreads a little holiday cheer to so many local families in need this holiday season.

The Township's Holiday Wish program, which has helped hundreds of area families over the years, will look a bit different this year.

As we strive to keep staff and clients safe we cannot accept actual gifts for our Holiday Wish program. We will provide gift cards, funded by contributions, as opposed to actual gifts. Gift cards will bring welcome relief to those who have suffered financial hardship this year.

Those interested in being a donor, can purchase gift cards from local grocery stores, pharmacies, big-box stores (Target, Kohls, Walmart), gas stations, local specialty stores, restaurants.

"We know that, based on the past success of this program, that our community will step forward to support our neighbors who are less fortunate and in need of our support," said West Deerfield Township Supervisor Alyson Feiger. "We extend our warmest thanks to all the residents and businesses who give so much to brighten the holidays for our community."



*"West Deerfield Township is proud to facilitate what is, in essence, a celebration of community and generosity during the holiday season."*

**Alyson Feiger**

West Deerfield Township Supervisor

\*If you would like to adopt someone for the Holiday Season, please download and complete the Sponsorship Form on our website at:

[www.westdeerfieldtownship.org](http://www.westdeerfieldtownship.org)

You may also call our office at **847-945-0614** to request a form be mailed to you.