



## Supervisor

I am proud of our township! As the supervisor, I take seriously the scope of our responsibilities as a government entity. That is why I have made it a priority for our township trustees and me to be active members of our communities; getting involved beyond the scope of our duties as elected officials. I want to take this opportunity to inform and educate you on the role of trustees in township government, introducing you to YOUR township trustees.

Trustees are the legislative arm of township government. They have their powers conferred by Illinois statues and it is their responsibility to carry out those powers in a fair and prudent manner. There are numerous responsibilities, and trustees are critical to the proper functioning of the township. They have major roles in auditing township bills, attending to annual budgeting and levying, appointing fire protection district trustees, and many other township functions. The township board consists of the supervisor and 4 trustees, all elected by registered voters. We are fortunate to have individuals of varied backgrounds who have chosen to serve our residents in this role. I'd like to introduce you to them here.

William Swanston is our most seasoned trustee. He has served in that role for over thirty years and has seen his share of change. Bill, who has been a long time resident in Westmont, raised his family in that community. He also is an active participant in the township's Senior Advisory and S.A.L.T. (Seniors and Lawmen Working Together) committees. He loves serving on them because he is committed to helping those residents have meaningful, independent lives. When asked why he has stayed involved for so long, Bill said, "I appreciate the collaborative efforts of all the township's programs. We are encouraged to be involved and I love it!"



**Frank Wurster**

*Supervisor*

Kathy Abbate, a resident of Darien, is in her 2nd term as township trustee. Kathy has sought to be highly knowledgeable about the communities in our township and the programs we provide to them. She also has a lot to say about her role in the township, "I am proud of the board's effort to contribute to the improvement of resident's lives. We do this with fiscal prudence and maintaining balanced budgets. I also love that we get to serve such diverse communities."

Lorraine Grimsby resides in Burr Ridge and is in the midst of her 1st term. When she got elected, she said that one of the goals she wanted to achieve was to provide the best services to the communities while maintaining a balanced budget. While out in the community, Lorraine had this to say about her role, "I gain the most from listening to the voices of community residents. I get to hear views and concerns that are different from my own and this is valuable to me."

Finally, we have Mark Cuthbert, also in his 1st term as township trustee who lives in Hinsdale. With two years under his belt, Mark had this to say about being a trustee, "I enjoy working closely with our residents to find fiscally sound solutions to the issues in our community and ensuring we continue to deliver the valuable services they've come to expect from the township."

It is our goal to serve our residents in a way that meets their needs in a responsible and fiscally prudent manner. If you ever want to talk, give us a call or come in. We enjoy meeting community members and encourage you to come visit us any time. You can also get more information about how we're serving you from our website or you can become a friend of our Facebook page. We look forward to hearing from you.

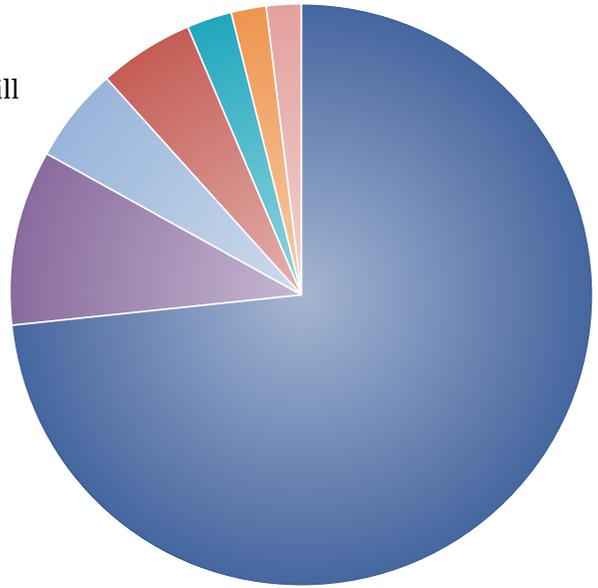
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## How Your Tax Dollars are Spent

The township has long prided itself on being fiscally prudent while still maintaining a high level of service to its residents. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, Downers Grove Township encompasses 50.92 square miles with a population of 146,795. This is 16% of the total DuPage County population. In April 2014, the DuPage County Treasurer published a chart that showed how your property taxes are spent by the major government bodies within the county. You can see from the pie chart that your township gets less than two cents of every tax dollar or 1.67% of the pie. We will continue working to provide the programs mandated by the state as well as the additional services we have long made available to our residents, enhancing the quality of life they deserve.



■ Schools **73.36%** ■ Cities **9.74%** ■ Fire/Other **5.44%**  
■ Parks **5.09%** ■ County **2.63%** ■ Forest Preserve **2.07%** ■ Township **1.67%**

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## Assessor: Assessment Q and A

### When are the notices going out?

The 2014 assessment year is nearing completion at the township level. When completed, the assessment roll is passed to the Supervisor of Assessments who applies any necessary multiplier to all township assessments. Next is the publication of this multiplier, and then, the changed assessments. Notices are mailed, and you have thirty (30) days to file a formal appeal with the Board of Review.

The Board of Review schedules hearings from mid-November through February and mails its decisions in March. The DuPage County Clerk begins the process of determining tax rates in April. At this point, all taxing bodies have submitted their levies to the Clerk. Once the assessment information is finalized, the DuPage County Clerk begins the process of calculating tax rates in preparation for tax bill printing. Tax bills for all properties in DuPage County are then printed and mailed around May 1. They are paid in two installments: June 1 and September 1. After installments are paid, the DuPage County Treasurer transfers the requested tax dollars to each taxing body following each installment period.

### My assessment is fair but my tax bill is too high. What can I do?

Monitor the taxing bodies listed on your tax bill, attend meetings, talk, text or email the board members about your concerns. Their levies determine the amount you pay in taxes to support services in your area. Also, be sure to vote on issues that could impact your property taxes.

### I think my assessment/market value is too high. What can I do?

Since your assessment is based on market value, you must have an opinion of your property's value. If not, watch for sales of similar properties in the area and compare them to your property. You may also have an independent appraiser determine the value of your property. If you do not agree with the Assessor's estimate of your property value, you are welcome to come in and discuss the matter at any time. You do not have to wait until the publication comes out.

**Theresa A. Cockrell**

*Assessor*



The year 2015 is a quadrennial year. The Assessor's Office is mandated to review and reassess property at least once every four years. It is during this fourth year that assessment notices are mailed to every property owner, along with a publication of all assessments in local newspapers. During the ensuing three years, the Assessor, the Supervisor of Assessments, and the Board of Review all have the authority, by statute, to equalize (multiply) properties in the township to arrive at an overall level of 33 1/3% of market value.

### I am a senior. Is there any relief?

Yes. If you are a property owner that is going to be 65 this year or who is already over 65, then it's time to apply for the Senior Homestead Exemption. The exemption deducts \$5,000 in assessed value prior to tax bill calculation. When you apply in 2014, the exemption will be deducted in the 2014 assessment year, tax payable in 2015. If you qualify for the Senior Homestead Exemption, then you may be eligible for the Senior Assessment Freeze. To qualify, your total household income must be \$55,000 or less and you should have already applied for the Senior Homestead Exemption.

### How do I know if my assessment is fair?

You may utilize our website for information on your parcel and the other 58,000+ parcels in the township. Go to the Assessor's section. On the left side of the screen select "parcel search" and request information by parcel number, address, or neighborhood code to see all parcels grouped with your property. It is all public record so you can compare similar properties. Recent sales are also listed so you can get an idea of the market value of property similar to your parcel. Please take the time to review our site. The answers to questions you have may be right there.

## Highway: New Township Purchase Helps Maintain our Right Of Way Trees

The Emerald ash borer is a ravenous insect that came to our country from China through the port of Detroit. Smaller than the head of a thumbtack, this bug has taken out a majority of the standard ash trees from Michigan west to Illinois. They bore into the tree, disturbing its vascular system. This restricts essential water and nutrients from reaching the top of the tree. The Emerald ash borer can live undetectable in a tree for up to four years and cause almost certain death in trees larger than 10" in diameter.

Currently we have more than 130 trees to remove from our right of ways, due mainly to this pest. The highway department purchased a used bucket truck this past August to help deal with the costs associated with tree removal. This truck allows our crew the ability to take down many of the trees we were previously unable to tackle ourselves. We will also use our new truck to aid in removing dangerous limbs left hanging from wind and ice storms.

**Lawrence C. Anderson**

*Highway Commissioner*



### Brush Pickup Program 2015-2016

Listed below are the dates for our Brush Pickup Program covering Unincorporated Downers Grove Township Areas ONLY. Please note that while these are our target dates, delays (due to equipment failure, weather conditions, etc.) are always a possibility. Crews will pass a house once during the scheduled pickup period.

Area Location	Spring Pickup 2015	Fall Pickup 2015	Spring Pickup 2016
1. County Line Rd. west to Rt. 83	4/13/2015	8/24/2015	4/18/2016
2. Rt. 83 west to Clarendon Hills Rd.	4/27/2015	9/7/2015	5/2/2016
3. Clarendon Hills Rd. west to Cass Ave.	5/11/2015	9/21/2015	5/16/2016
4. Cass Ave. west to Main St./Lemont Rd.	5/26/2015	10/5/2015	5/31/2016
5. Main St./Lemont Rd. west to Woodward Ave.	6/8/2015	10/19/2015	6/13/2016

### Brush Pickup Guidelines

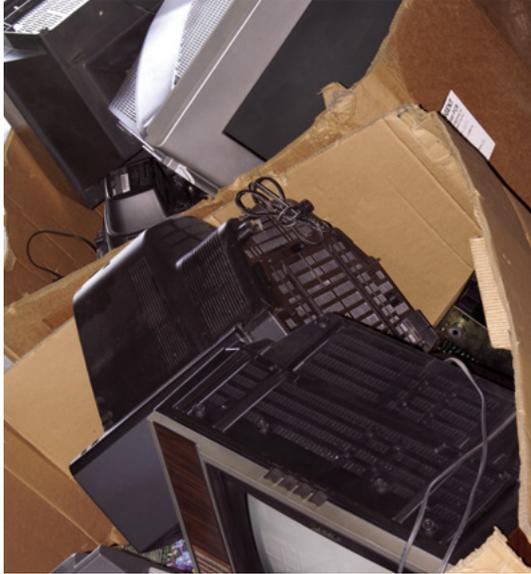
Brush is to be placed on the parkway no earlier than one week before the pickup is scheduled to start in each area, and no later than 7:30 a.m. on the date pickup begins. All brush must be cut in lengths under 6' with pieces no larger than 3" in diameter. We prefer that brush be securely bundled with string or twine; wire is not acceptable for tying bundles. No bundle should exceed 25 pounds. The township will not pick up items that do not conform to these guidelines. It is the sole responsibility of the homeowner to dispose of them.

Brush consists of branches from bushes, shrubs and trees. We do not pick up: flowers, grass clippings, leaves, lumber, logs, plants, roots, stumps, thorny branches, weeds, and anything in bags or other containers. NO EXCEPTIONS.

Christmas tree pickup is offered to residents in the unincorporated areas of the township. Trees should be placed on the parkway free of lights, ornaments, nails, screws and stands. Pickup occurs the first two weeks of January.

### Wood Chips Available

Wood chips from our brush pickup program are available to any township resident. They are delivered by the truckload. A small load is about 2 cubic yards and a large is about 6 cubic yards. Anyone wishing to receive some should call the Highway Department office at (630) 719-6625. Please be aware that the chips are “as is”; we cannot control the size or quality. There is no charge for this service.



### Electronic Recycling Program

As of January 1, 2012, the State of Illinois Law PROHIBITS any person or business in Illinois to throw out electronic devices. They must be recycled or the State can fine you up to \$7,000 for a first occurrence. The township offers a free electronic recycling program through COM2 Recycling Solutions. Electronics may be dropped off at the highway garage located at 318 East Quincy Street, Westmont, on the third Saturday of every month from 8 a.m. to 12 noon (except holiday weekends).

#### The equipment listed below details what we will recycle:

**Computers and Peripherals** - CPU’s, laptops, monitors, flat panels, keyboards, mice, cable, printers, plotters, external hard drives, tape drives, network hardware (servers, routers, hubs), communication hardware (modems) and subassemblies of any of the above.

**Data Center Equipment** - Power Distribution Units (PDU’s), uninterrupted power supplies (UPS Systems).

**Office and Telecommunication Equipment** - copiers, fax machines, phone systems, cell phones, hand-held devices, projection equipment, audio equipment, video equipment, TV’s, calculators, security equipment, videotapes, beepers and typewriters.

**2014 - 2015 Electronic Recycling Program Drop Off Dates:**  
1/17, 2/21, 3/21, 4/18, 5/16, 6/20, 7/18, 8/15, 9/19, 10/17, 11/21, 12/19

For further information or questions, please call the Highway Department at: (630) 719-6625.  
For additional information about COM2 go to: [www.com2computer.com](http://www.com2computer.com)

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### General Assistance: Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

LIHEAP is a program that provides help for low-income households by offsetting the rising costs of home energy through direct financial assistance. Emergency assistance is available to eligible households whose utility service has been disconnected and for homeowners whose furnace is non-operational or determined to be unsafe to operate. To inquire about the program, you can call DuPage County at (630) 407-6500.

In order to qualify for LIHEAP, a client’s total gross household income may not exceed 150% of the poverty level and they must be a customer of record with the utility company. When applying, clients must submit complete documentation of household income, proof of utility bills, a current lease, and social security numbers of all household members.

In the month of November, we begin accepting applications for any household income eligible by the above guidelines. Township residents wishing to apply for LIHEAP can call Downers Grove Township for an appointment by contacting Gary Ostrowski at (630) 719-6610.

2014-2015 Guidelines from 9/1/2014 thru 5/31/2015	
Number of Persons	Household Gross Income
1	\$1,459.00
2	\$1,966.00
3	\$2,474.00
4	\$2,981.00
5	\$3,489.00
6	\$3,996.00
7	\$4,504.00
8	\$5,011.00

## Seaspar Eagles Help Beautify Oak Hill/Oak Crest Cemeteries

On June 22, 2014 the Seaspar Eagles came to plant two gardens in the historic Oak Hill and Oak Crest Cemeteries. Our township is responsible for the maintenance of these cemeteries and appreciated the wonderful efforts of this group.

The Eagles is a community-based program that incorporates therapeutic recreation to help adults with developmental disabilities. The name Eagles stands for Enhancing Adult Growth through Lifestyle Education and Service.

Dawn Krawiec, the Seaspar coordinator for the Eagles, brought a dozen participants as well as some of their parents to Oak Hill for this day of beautification. Their efforts included bringing the plants to create these gardens. It was a coordinated effort; as one group planted, another group watered while others spread mulch around some of the trees. These gardens are a beautiful addition to Oak Hill/ Oak Crest cemeteries. We want to extend a big thank you to this group for their generous donation of time, talent and resources.

For more information about the Eagles contact:  
Dawn Krawiec at [dkrawiec@seaspar.org](mailto:dkrawiec@seaspar.org).



*Seaspar Eagles beautify Oak Hill Cemetery*

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## Human Services: Life Skills Programs

Jason Shiliga and Julie Waterman are your two Life Skills educators. They completed another successful year teaching Social & Emotional Learning programs. This was the 25th year the township conducted and offered this FREE service to local schools.

Julie joined the township's Human Services Department in the summer of 2013. She has diligently worked on updating some of our SEL (Social and Emotional Learning) lesson plans since joining us, breathing some new life into subjects that can be hard to teach. Being a mother of three boys gives her a unique insight into the issues we teach about in our classes. Julie's addition to the Township's Life Skills program has had a huge, positive impact.

### **When teaching in area schools, we target three major topics:**

- Anti-bullying with a focus on empathy
- Drug and Alcohol awareness
- Life Goals and Stress management

During the 2013-2014 school year, twenty-one schools benefited from the township's Life Skills program. We spent approximately 505 hours teaching in the classroom, educating over 3,400 students during the school year. Our classes are offered in grades ranging from 3rd to 8th.

In grades 3 through 6 we focus on the Anti-Bullying lesson plans and recently have added a Drug & Alcohol lesson plan for 6th grade. In grades 7th and 8th we focus on Drug & Alcohol awareness and Life Goals. These classes are designed to fit into our visiting schools schedule and we can adjust lesson plans as needed by our individual schools. Our lesson plans are also aligned with many of the SEL Standards set forth by the State Board of Education. Our free, Life Skills program allows schools to fulfill these SEL requirements.

We look forward to another successful school year with new activities to help our local schools meet the social/emotional needs of their curriculum and those of their students.

## Peer Led Life Skills Program

The Illinois Department of Human Services funds the Peer Led Life Skills Program through its Substance Abuse Prevention grant. The program seeks to promote positive social behaviors and establish relationships with the 7th and 8th grade students at Westview Hills Middle School.

The intent of the program is to promote and teach positive social behaviors with the middle school students. This includes the prevention of alcohol, tobacco and other drug use. The program achieves this through trained high school students who have been identified as leaders in their school and/or community as positive role models. The township recruits and trains high school students from Downers Grove North, Downers Grove South, Hinsdale Central, Hinsdale South, and Westmont High School who are interested in becoming teachers and promoting healthy life choices. In the classroom, those selected are trained to teach life skills as well as establish relationships with students during an after school program.



Peer Led teachers at Westview Hills Parent Night - August 2014

This year we are excited to introduce our new curriculum on bullying and healthy relationships and dating. Additionally, the Peer Led Life Skills Program, in collaboration with Westview Hills Middle School, is sponsoring Rachel's Challenge, a program dedicated to being an ally and a leader in the school and community. Rachel's Challenge will provide an all-day interactive curriculum for the students of Westview Hills and continue their programming in the evening with a community night dedicated to the families of these students.

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## Operation Snowball & Snowflake

Downers Grove Township provides support for Downers Grove North and Downers Grove South's Fall Snowball programs and District 99's Winter Snowball program. Snowball is a weekend retreat that is prevention based, focusing on good decision-making, current teen issues, and positive messages on staying alcohol, tobacco, and drug free. It is collaboratively organized and run by students, teachers and outside community members. Student leaders who are chosen by the adult staff then meet, plan, and coordinate for a two-month period before the event.

Snowflake is a day long event for seventh grade students that explores leadership and communication skills, healthy decision-making, substance abuse prevention and how to resist negative peer influences. The event is planned and implemented by trained high school students with adults serving in advisory roles. The program is a collaborative effort between Downers Grove North, Downers Grove South, O'Neill Middle School, Herrick Middle School, Lakeview Junior High, Jefferson Junior High and the township.

We have enjoyed these partnerships for several years and are dedicated to engaging and equipping youth with healthy life and leadership skills.

For more information about any of our programs please contact:  
Lauren Aramburu at [lauren.aramburu@dgtownship.com](mailto:lauren.aramburu@dgtownship.com)



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## Peer Jury Effects Growth through Community Service

Communities are places that people live, work and play in. When driving around the villages within our township, you can observe places that residents and visitors alike enjoy for their recreation, entertainment, and nice places to reside in. One reason this is such an enjoyable area is because people feel comfortable and safe. As a township, we feel it is necessary to be an active part of creating communities that people want to live, work and play in. That is why the partnership that our Peer Jury program enjoys with its community service sites is so valuable. It gives juvenile offenders the opportunity to contribute to the community in a way that is constructive.

The mission of the Downers Grove Township Peer Jury is to provide an effective diversion program for first time juvenile offenders. Built on the philosophy of Balanced and Restorative Justice, the focus is on the harm that was caused by the offense and helping the offender to repair that harm. A crucial part of that learning involves community service.

One of our partners when the program was launched in November of 2000 was the Hanson Center. Since beginning our collaboration, 101 juvenile offenders have performed 1,706 hours of community service at the Hanson Center. Cathy LeBeau, Program Coordinator of the Therapeutic Horsemanship Program, has been a fabulous partner in guiding kids to learn and grow through giving back to the community.



*Cathy LeBeau at the Hanson Center*

When speaking with Cathy, she espoused many benefits that are enjoyed through this valuable partnership. When asked about one of the most precious benefits for the offender, Cathy replied, "The kids see our riders and realize how lucky they are and that they can make choices. They also realize they have a lot in common with our riders who are people with disabilities. They don't notice the differences. We had one offender who had been doing barn chores and had asked to work with the riders. He enjoyed the experience so much that he has continued to be a volunteer since his release from peer jury. He does it because he wants to do something meaningful. This is an outcome peer jury loves to see; youth engaging in the community in a way that is positive.

Cathy has also seen a lot of enthusiasm from the parents. "A lot of parents are excited that their kids are doing service. It's a nice outlet for them. We've been thanked for the opportunity." This type of exchange shows that parents really value the chance for their kids to actively contribute to the community. One of the goals of the peer jury program is to help juveniles repair the harm that was caused by their offense. When they can give back to the community through volunteering, they begin to see how their actions contribute to the world in a positive way. This type of realization pays dividends long beyond their release from the peer jury program.

We are grateful for this wonderful collaboration with the Hanson Center and our eighteen other community service sites within the township. It is through these partnerships that we have affected growth and learning for the 1,176 youth that have gone through the program since its inception. We look forward to many years of fruitful partnership.

## Community Awareness

There are many ways to describe community: groups, neighborhoods, towns, etc. These words are concrete. They describe people and places. Community is much more. The word commune literally means to form a close personal relationship, to befriend, empathize, identify and sympathize - all intangible words describing the heart of community. The Township of Downers Grove DHS Prevention Grant supports community by enlisting all of these definitions.



*Willowbrook Corner Community events engages residents*

Site One of this grant involves the southeast portion of our township, which includes middle and high school students who attend District 180 and Hinsdale South High School. Substance abuse prevention is the primary goal. Informational campaign activities address identified substance abuse issues with a target audience of parents and students.

Diverse and effective outreach can only be achieved through relationship building, community empowerment, partnerships, collaborations and networking with local residents, families, coalitions, businesses and others.

There's never one solution. Change takes place over time, with many pieces to the puzzle. People have to be aware of an issue, understand it, and want to make a change for change to occur. There's an old saying, "It takes a Village to raise a child." Conversely, it takes passionate individuals together to raise a community!

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## Clerk: For Future Elections

Voting is a right that we enjoy in this country and the township can assist you with making sure you are ready to vote, you can come to the township to check if you are already registered or complete a voter application.

### To register you must meet these qualifications:

- You must be a United States Citizen
- You must be at least 18 years old on, or before, the next election (or for a General Primary, must be 17 and will be 18 by the General Election)
- You must live in your election precinct at least 30 days before the next election

Laura Hois  
*Township Clerk*



### You can register by mail or in person.

### Two forms of identification are required as listed below:

- A current and valid photo identification, or
- A current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck or other government document showing current name and address

*Please note that if you have moved or changed your name you must re-register to vote.  
You must register at least 28 days prior to an election in order to vote in that election.*

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## Township Board of Trustees To Serve You



William J. Swanston



Lorraine Grimsby



Kathleen A. Abbate



Mark D. Cuthbert

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