

ALLEN PARK 2026 DOWNTOWN GUIDE INSIDE!

Allen Park

T O D A Y



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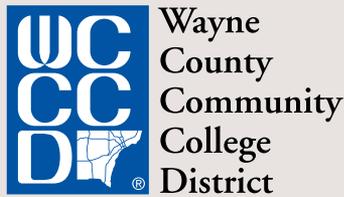


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Thursdays at the MUSEUM

WCCCD's partnership with the Detroit Institute of Arts offers WCCCD student programs at no cost and complimentary transportation for adults 55 and over. Experience something new every month, including tours of the collection, art talks, art-making, films, and music. Each program is followed by a complimentary reception featuring light refreshments.

MELODIES AT THE MUSEUM

Join us at the DIA for a series of musical performances-just for senior groups! All performances start at 1:00 p.m. and include post performance to-go refreshments.

APRIL 30, 2026

MUSEUM EXPERIENCE(S):

- 12:00 NOON**
Bus Pick Up at Downriver Campus
- 12:15 P.M.**
Departure Time
- 1:00 P.M.**
Estimated Arrival Time
- 1:00 P.M. – 2:00 P.M.**
Musical Performance
- 2:00 P.M. – 3:00 P.M.**
Self-Guided Visit
- 3:00 P.M.**
Departure (Cookies to Go)

Downriver Campus
21000 Northline Rd.
Taylor, MI 48180

These field trips are offered at no cost.

To register, Downriver Campus - contact Grace Kowalski at 734-699-7008 ext. 5283 or gkowals2@wcccd.edu

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Scan for digital publication

To advertise in the next issue call Mark Fisher at (313) 218-7117 or email mfisher@communitypublishing.com

From the MAYOR

Welcome Spring!

THIS year marks the sixth anniversary for Allen Park Today magazine, first published in June of 2020. The magazine provides residents and businesses with helpful information and articles about city operations, our employees, residents, businesses, local events, school events, and things that impact our community and our lives.

Please keep this publication for reference. It is especially important for those who do not access the internet. The magazine contains contact information for city departments, the trash collection schedule, calendars of events, and the answers to many of your questions. We also encourage you to visit the city's website, and the many official city Facebook pages for important information and announcements.

The fiscal year 2026-2027 budget process is underway, and we are planning for capital improvements to infrastructure, equipment maintenance and project development. We remain conservative in our planning, respecting the fluctuations in our economy. Our departments and administration work together to ensure Allen Park continues to improve and provide for our employees while remaining financially stable.

The renovation of our fire department, which began in January of 2025, will reach completion this year. Department personnel have moved into their new living quarters and the addition and refinements are progressing.

Exciting news for this year is that on Saturday, May 30, the Historical Commission is hosting a ribbon cutting and grand re-opening of the Historical Museum. The event will take place from noon to 4 p.m. Please watch for announcements.

As always, we welcome your suggestions for future articles. Allen Park Today is delivered to all homes and businesses in Allen Park. Copies are also available at city hall, the library, and online at <http://www.communitypublishing.com/allen-park-today>.



Gail McLeod, Mayor



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Contact Information

Website: www.cityoffallenpark.org

City Facebook: City of Allen Park – Government

Police Department Facebook: Allen Park Police Department

Fire Department Facebook: Allen Park Fire Department

Library Facebook: Allen Park Public Library

Recreation Facebook: Allen Park Parks & Recreation/
Community Center

DDA Facebook: Allen Park DDA

City Cable Channel: WOW – 10 & Comcast – 12

CodeRED: Text ALLENPARKALERTS to 99411

City Departments/Location

Police Department

Non-Emergency: (313) 386-7800

Fire Department

Non-Emergency: (313) 928-0024

City Hall

Main Number: (313) 928-1400

Parks & Recreation/Community Center

Main Number: (313) 928-0771

Allen Park Public Library

Main Number: (313) 381-2425

Department of Public Services (DPS)

Public Services: (313) 928-0550

Water & Sewer: (313) 928-3393

Priority Waste: (586) 228-1200

Allen Park Historical Museum

allenparkhistoricalmuseum@gmail.com

Trash/Recycling Holiday Pick Ups

Memorial Day (delayed to Tuesday through Saturday)

Fourth of July (no delay in pickup)

Labor Day (delayed to Tuesday through Saturday)

Thanksgiving Day (delayed to Friday and Saturday)

Christmas Day (delayed to Saturday)

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Scan for more information on our team & services!

Think Green this Spring at the Allen Park Public Library



Bring some color to your home gardens with the help of these programs!

Out with the cold and in with the dew as we welcome springtime programming at the Library! Join us for returning and new programs for home gardeners of all ages.



On **March 24** at **6:00 p.m.**, visiting guest Joe Barson, owner of Barson Greenhouse, will be discussing **Vermiculture 101!** Learn all about the specialized cultivation of worms for creating healthy garden compost right at home!

Our **Children's Garden Club** will return in May with a few updates to its previous format. First, and most excitingly, there will be no registration for Garden Club! We've also shortened the program from four sessions to three, all in May, and the emphasis will be more educational. Children ages 4 - 10 and their caregivers are invited to learn about zero-waste gardening and make crafts to plant at home instead of at the Library!



Garden Club will meet on **May 5** to make homemade bird feeders, on **May 12** to create ice cream cone seed starters and on **May 19** for a fun in the sun popsicle party! These are rain or shine events.

Save some green in your wallet with Accounting Aid Society's free tax prep

On April 11, the Library will once again host the Accounting Aid Society as they provide no-cost tax preparation! Appointments can be made by calling **(313) 556-1920** or visiting accountingaidsociety.org.



Scan the QR code for a list of the documentation you'll need. *Library staff is not able to schedule or assist with tax preparation in any way.*

Save the Date for these Special Events



Summer Reading Kick-Off

Unearth a Story this summer at the Library! Join us for snacks, crafts, registration and more!
Saturday, June 13
10:30 a.m.

WHALE Tales Water Safety

Join us Tuesdays during Summer Reading for free Water Safety classes provided by the Red Cross!
Tuesdays | June 16 - July 21



1:00 p.m.



Plant a library seed, watch it grow!

We are thrilled to announce the opening of our Seed Library! Simply come into the Library to browse the selection of over forty different seeds available. Patrons can then choose up to five seed packets to try, take them home and plant them! No library card is required, it's just that easy.



Patrons are also encouraged to donate seeds of the same type back to the Library in the return packets provided.

Care instructions and information for all available seeds can be found on our website at allenparklibrary.org.

*There are no residency requirements to participate in any of the Allen Park Public Library's programs or Seed Library.



Spring Means Cleanups

Let's all do our part to keep our community looking great!

WITH spring upon us it's only natural to get into "cleaning mode". The weather is getting warmer, the days are longer and we're already thinking about summer cookouts and outdoor community events.



To that end, the Allen Park Building Department wants to remind residents that it's the responsibility of all of us to keep our city looking nice. Here are a few things to remember this spring/summer:

Sidewalks

Property owners are responsible for maintaining the sidewalk between their property and the public right-of-way (city easement) – regardless of the cause. It is considered a hazard if a slab is raised $\frac{3}{4}$ " high between slabs. Also, please keep bushes and trees trimmed so they do not obstruct sidewalks.



Noxious Weeds, Grass and Refuse

Grass height should not exceed six inches for the entire lot.

Front Yard Regulation. With respect to the portion of the lot or lands located between a sidewalk and a street, or within 36" from an adjacent sidewalk, driveway or property line, it shall be unlawful for the owner or occupant or person in charge or control of any lot or lands, either public or private, within the city to allow or maintain on such portion of such lot or lands, any plant or structure which exceeds a height of 12". This does not apply to trees, hedges or shrubbery.

This code must be maintained or the city will cut the grass at the homeowner's expense.

Compost and leaf collection starts April 6

Residents are responsible for bagging or using properly marked containers. These items must be put on the city easement close to the street for Priority Waste to pick up on your scheduled day. It is a code violation to blow grass or leaves into the street.

Trees, Hedges and Shrubs

Hedges are defined as a row of bushes or small trees planted close together, especially when forming a fence or boundary.

Trees, shrubs, vines or plants cannot be planted so close to any property line as to obstruct the vision of travelers along the street and sidewalk.

Hedges and shrubs in the front yard are prohibited except under the following conditions:

1. The property is adjacent to a commercial alley, in which case the hedge or shrubbery is permitted but shall not exceed 30" in height within six feet of the front sidewalk.
2. The property is a corner lot, in which case the hedge or shrubbery is permitted along the corner lot line but shall not exceed 30" in height within six feet of the front sidewalk.

Other helpful information

- Ground feeding of animals is prohibited. Feeders must be at least 48" off the ground. Keep area clean and tidy.



- Dogs and cats must remain under control of a responsible person capable of physically restraining, handling and/or supervising the animal. No person shall knowingly allow any dog or cat to deposit its waste on any public place, or the property of another person, unless the person in control of the animal immediately picks up and disposes of such waste in a proper sanitary manner.
- Trash cans/carts must be stored so they cannot be seen from the street or sidewalk. Cans/carts that remain on the easement outside of the designated pick-up day is a code violation.

**BUILDING DEPARTMENT
NUMBERS**
Priority Waste: (586) 228-1200
Building Department: (313) 928-4441
Code Enforcement: (313) 928-5363

Rooted in Relationships and Customer Satisfaction

SMITH INSURANCE GROUP PUTS CLIENTS FIRST By Kelsi Klein

FOR more than a century, Smith Insurance Group has been a trusted name in the Downriver area, providing the community with a one-stop shop for all things insurance.

Founded in 1903, the family-owned, independent agency has evolved over the years to continually meet the diverse needs of its clients, but its values haven't changed.

Smith Insurance Group is currently led by fourth-generation owner and president Dan Smith, who is dedicated to building on the agency's legacy by ensuring each client is met with personalized service.

"We don't have any complicated phone trees," Smith explained. "When you call our office, you're going to get old-fashioned service and a live person on the phone every time."

"Old-fashioned service" doesn't mean outdated. Conversely, Smith Insurance Group is well equipped to meet the needs of every kind of client, whether that means sitting down face-to-face with an agent, handling everything online without ever having to step foot in the office, or a combination of both.

"We want to meet our clients where they're at," Smith said. "We can give them the best of both worlds, and I think that makes us a little bit unique."

From first-time homebuyers to families that have been with the agency for decades, Smith Insurance Group has a reputation for trustworthy service for all.

As an independent agency, it represents a broad range of top-tier insurance carriers, giving it the ability to objectively compare coverage and prices and cater them to individuals' circumstances. Its loyalty is to its clients, not insurance companies.

Whether it's your car, home, boat, motorcycle, or life insurance, individuals and families can find the coverage they need – all in one place.



Similarly, business owners can rest assured knowing that Smith Insurance Group is able to protect their livelihoods with everything from contractors, commercial buildings, business owners, workers compensation, professional liability, commercial auto insurance and more.

In September 2025, Smith Insurance Group was voted first place in the News Herald's Reader's Choice Awards, for Best Insurance Agency Downriver for the fifth consecutive year, a testament to its commitment to the community it serves.

"We try to give more than we take, and give back to the community that's given so much to us," Smith said. "When clients do business with us, they're keeping their money right here in their community."

From getting involved with community outreach programs to sponsoring local sports teams and church organizations, Smith's dedication to making an impact on people's lives drives him in both his personal life and his business.

With more than 120 years in business, Smith Insurance Group's longevity is rooted in relationships and customer satisfaction, leading and advising clients from day one and for generations to come.

Smith Insurance Group is located at 8258 Allen Road, Allen Park, MI 48101. For more information or to start a quote, visit www.getsmithinsurance.com, email info@getsmithinsurance.com or call (313) 278-3800.





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Employment Opportunities for All Abilities



Services To Enhance Potential (STEP) is a non-profit organization that provides support and services to more than 1,300 individuals with disabilities and mental health needs residing in Washtenaw and Wayne counties. STEP helps individuals with barriers to employment reach their full potential and achieve their life goals through various programs and trainings. These include skill building, supported employment, volunteer opportunities, vocational rehabilitation, and more. With offerings like the Progressive Art Studio Collective (PASC), What's Cooking at STEP, and training at our three STEP Thrift Store and Donation Centers, STEP offers opportunities to individuals of all abilities.

Declutter for a Cause - Your Spring Cleaning Donations Make a Difference at STEP Thrift Store & Donation Centers



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(734) 250-8695



STEP Thrift Store & Donation Center
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For more information, please call
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SPONSORED MESSAGE

Tired of struggling with poor vision? Not sure what to do? Ask the Doctor

Q: Dr. Jacobi, my usual eye doctor said she could no longer improve my vision with regular eyeglasses or surgery, but I still struggle with everything from driving to reading. I have been told I have "low vision. What does that mean, and what could I hope for from a low vision evaluation?

- Mabel M.

A: The first step is to determine how much actual vision or usable vision you have. In addition, we need to identify your needs. I find most patients who are struggling with poor vision due to various eye diseases still have very usable vision when they are given the right eyewear.

One of the first things I ask my patients is what they would like to accomplish with improved sight. I ask about activities they have given up due to their visual limitations. The only limitation for the solution is usually the motivation of the patient, as they come to terms with a permanent, lowered visual status. However, this is often the best time to see a low vision specialist such as myself, because the sooner you get the right eyewear, life will be easier.

During the first appointment, I spend one hour with each patient in order to pinpoint the best optical solutions (beyond regular eyeglasses). Next I will show you what it would look like with the vision restored by the new eyewear, so you can determine if that will work for you. In other words, the patient will experience exactly how they will see with their prescribed devices before they leave the office.

Stop struggling with poor vision. To schedule an appointment

CALL TODAY (248) 731-9393

ABOUT BEYOND LOW VISION

For more than 35 years, John P. Jacobi, OD, FCOVD, FIALVS has been helping partially sighted people get their lives back. Dr. Jacobi is a Fellow of the Optometric Vision Development and Rehabilitation Association. He is a member of American Optometric Association (AOA), the Michigan Optometric Association (MOA), and a Fellow in the International Academy of Low Vision Specialists.



www.beyondlowvision.com
26850 Providence Pkwy Suite 150 | Novi, 48374

GREETINGS Allen Parkers –

What a winter it has been! As I write this at the end of January, snow totals are trending higher than the last several years, and, as anyone who stepped outside this winter can confirm, the temps have been consistently frigid.

Fortunately, the dedicated DPS crews were ready. Long, cold, late nights making water main repairs and plowing streets isn't anyone's idea of fun, but the team understands their critical role and serve with the utmost dedication. It's inspiring for me to witness, and a point of pride for the community.

As I approach the end of my first year in service to Allen Park, I can reflect with gratitude on the privilege of leading the DPS team, as well as being part of the hard-working group of city departments collaborating with city council to improve and innovate. I've also had the pleasure of getting to know some of our residents who are no less an essential part of that team.

Together in 2025 we improved nearly 25,000 square yards of neighborhood streets through our sectioning program, fully reconstructed more than 3,000 feet of pavement, replaced 3,000 feet of water main – including nearly 100 lead water service lines – and installed liners in more than 5,000 feet of sanitary sewers. And for our furry neighbors, we developed a dog park to be constructed and opened this summer.

Looking ahead, our strategic goals include sustaining and expanding these investments in critical infrastructure. We will also promote urban re-forestation by removing cost barriers to street tree replacements – a long-term vision to protect and enhance the value of tree-lined neighborhoods.

None of this work is possible without your continued support of our shared vision. As always, we're open to your feedback – I look forward to hearing from you!

With Gratitude,



Aaron Filipski
Director of Public Services

IMPORTANT TREE INFORMATION FOR RESIDENTS

The City of Allen Park maintains over 10,000 city trees, typically in the easement between the street and sidewalk. The work consists of removals and trimming.

Removals

Removals are performed in the order a request was received but may be deferred if other trees require priority attention. To qualify for removal, a tree must be considered diseased or dying, as determined by the department. Trees are not removed because of sidewalk issues or aesthetics.

Given the number of trees, staff size and the department's numerous other responsibilities, removals may take one-to-two years once in the removal queue. Property owners wishing to remove a city tree more expeditiously may do so at their own expense but must first apply for and be issued a permit from DPS.

Maintenance

Maintenance trimming is typically performed in the fall and winter months. Limbs that present an immediate hazard, are overhanging and resting on a structure, are impeding pedestrians or vehicles, or are obstructing traffic signals and signage are addressed during any season. Trees are not trimmed for the purpose of aesthetic shaping.

Planting

The department encourages tree planting as a way of preserving the tree-lined character of neighborhoods. As existing mature trees begin to age out, it is important to be forward-thinking and proactive in replacing them. To that end, the department is exploring a city-funded reforestation program that would remove the cost burden from the property owner.

If you're interested in potentially having a tree planted on your easement free of charge, please complete the form on the department's webpage or call our office at (313) 928-0550 x2. Completing the form or expressing interest does not automatically mean you'll have a tree planted – it's just to gauge interest and assist in planning. Staff would reach out to confirm interest before planting.

For more information, visit www.cityofallenpark.org > Departments > Department of Public Service > Forestry.

Help Save Birds from Window Collisions



Black-and-white Warbler by Laura Erickson

Each year, hundreds of millions of birds fly into windows, unable to distinguish reflections from reality. Nearly half of these collisions happen at home windows. The good news is that you can help reduce these fatal accidents with simple, effective solutions.

Never had a bird hit your window?

Even if you haven't seen it happen, chances are that a bird has hit your windows when you weren't around. Any size window can be dangerous, even small ones. However, tested solutions exist to prevent these collisions.

You can prevent collisions by placing visual markers on your windows that follow these rules:

Size: Stripes should be $\frac{1}{8}$ inch wide, dots should be $\frac{1}{4}$ inch diameter.

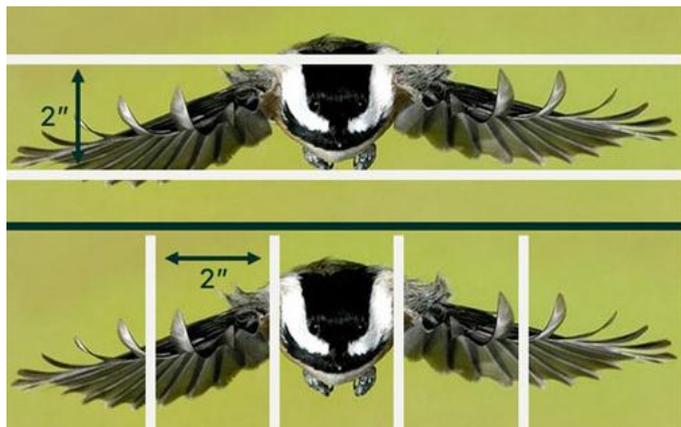
Spacing: Place pattern elements no more than 2 inches by 2 inches apart.

Placement: Markers must go on the outside of the window. Irregular patterns that follow these guidelines will work too. Windows with insect screens are already safe for birds. Find more information at abcbirds.org.



Above This Barn Swallow dove through this tiny gap at top speed (30+ miles/hour!) showing why patterns with large spaces don't work well to prevent collisions. Photo by Keith Ringland

Right Diagram of recommended spacing for bird-friendly visual markers. Markers must be close enough together that birds do not try to fly through the spaces in between.



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Scan or contact the ABC Collisions team at collisions@abcbirds.org and visit abcbirds.org/solutions/prevent-home-collisions

Quick & Affordable Ways to Stop Collisions on Your Windows

All of these solutions must be applied to the exterior of the window and follow the 2-inch by 2-inch spacing rule.

- 1. Tempera paint:** Available at most art supply and craft stores, it can be applied freehand or using a stencil as a template. Tempera is long-lasting, even in rain, and nontoxic, but comes right off with a damp rag or sponge.
- 2. Tape:** Any opaque tape can be used to create patterns. Translucent ABC BirdTape transmits light and is made to last outdoors.
- 3. Window Films:** Films with approved bird-friendly patterns prevent collisions. Effective options include Feather Friendly, Solyx Bird Safety Film, BirdDivert, and White CollidEscape. Scan the QR code below for links and further guidance.
- 4. Cords:** Hang at intervals in front of the window, creating a visible barrier for birds. Also known as Acopian Bird Savers, you can buy these or make your own from parachute cord.
- 5. Screens:** Protect birds using removable screens over the window. Insect screens, removable screens attached with suction cups or hooks, and exterior solar shades are all good options.
- 6. Decals:** To be effective, decals *must be spaced no more than 2 inches apart horizontally and vertically*, more closely than recommended by most manufacturers. While bird-of-prey decals are popular, birds do not see them as predators and single hawk decals are not effective.

More information is available on these and other options at abcbirds.org/solutions/prevent-home-collisions



To donate to ABC's Collisions program visit:
support.abcbirds.org/glass



Tempera paint is a washable, long-lasting, and nontoxic solution to preventing bird/window collisions. Photo by Christine Sheppard



Feather Friendly applied to glass exterior. Photo: Feather Friendly



Shade moves with a solar motor operated from inside with a remote control. Photo by Christine Sheppard



Bird decals designed by artist Lynne Parks. Photo by Christine Sheppard



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Scan or contact the ABC Collisions team at collisions@abcbirds.org and visit abcbirds.org/solutions/prevent-home-collisions

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Lincoln Park Location: 3962 Fort St., Lincoln Park, MI 48146 | vitoslincolnpark.com |
Taylor Location: 20540 Ecorse Rd., Taylor, MI 48180 - Delivery to Allen Park

Notice to Allen Park Voters

Dear Voters,

When I first started administering elections for the City of Allen Park, an average primary and general election cycle would cost around \$20,000. Well, fast forward a couple of decades, with modern technology and legislation, and we were getting close to \$100,000 per election cycle.

I have always tried to oversee the Clerk's Office finances by doing what is most cost efficient with minimal impact on the residents. With that said, 17,179 Allen Park voters cast ballots in the November 2024 general election, and out of those, 11,729 either voted Absentee Ballot or did Nine Day Early Voting, with 5,450 going to the polls on Election Day.

So, with only 30 percent showing up at the polls, we had no other choice than to reduce our precincts to use taxpayer resources logically while still making sure every voter has full access to cast their ballot, however they choose. Early voting and absentee voting options remain available; Election Day voting locations are still available – just fewer of them.

How You'll Be Notified: Residents will be mailed updated voter information cards. We will also be posting on the city's website: www.cityofallenpark.org and our cable channels.

Upcoming Elections in Allen Park:

Allen Park voters will take part in two major elections this cycle – the **August Primary** and the **November General Election** – each playing a different but equally important role in shaping leadership at the state, county and local levels.

From choosing party nominees to making final leadership decisions, these elections determine who represents the community and how policy directions are set.

Here's a quick glance at what each election means and how residents of Allen Park can prepare.

- **August 4, 2026 – Statewide Primary Election.** This is when political parties choose their nominees for offices that will appear on the November ballot. Primaries are especially important because they determine which candidates will represent each major party (Democratic, Republican and others) in the November general election.
Remember, Michigan does have open primaries; however, you must vote in only one (1) party section. Absentee ballots will be available starting June 25. Early voting will be available from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday & Sundays and 11:00 am to 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday and Friday starting July 25 through August 2 at Allen Park City Hall. Election day voting will take place from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. at your designated precinct location.
- **November 3, 2026 – Statewide General Election.** This is the main election when voters choose public officials for major state and federal offices. Absentee ballots will be available starting September 24. Early voting will be available from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sundays, and 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday and Friday starting October 24 through November 1 at Allen Park City Hall. Election day voting will take place from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. at your designated precinct location.

To view your individual voter info visit Michigan.gov/vote

The City Clerk's Office does not concern itself with who, what and why you vote. Our duty is to make sure you have every available opportunity to cast your ballot and that ballot is counted. Know your voting rights, know your ballot and know where to vote.

Michael I. Mizzi – City Clerk

VOTER PREP CHECKLIST

- Confirm your registration
- Check your precinct location
- Review your sample ballot
- Learn what candidates and proposals will appear on the ballot
- Choose how you want to vote (Early, Absentee Ballot or In-person on Election Day)
- Plan your voting day

All these tasks can be completed using resources at www.Michigan.gov/vote



Michael I. Mizzi, City Clerk

Please review the map for your new Precinct Number and Voting Location

Voting Precinct Map City of Allen Park, Michigan



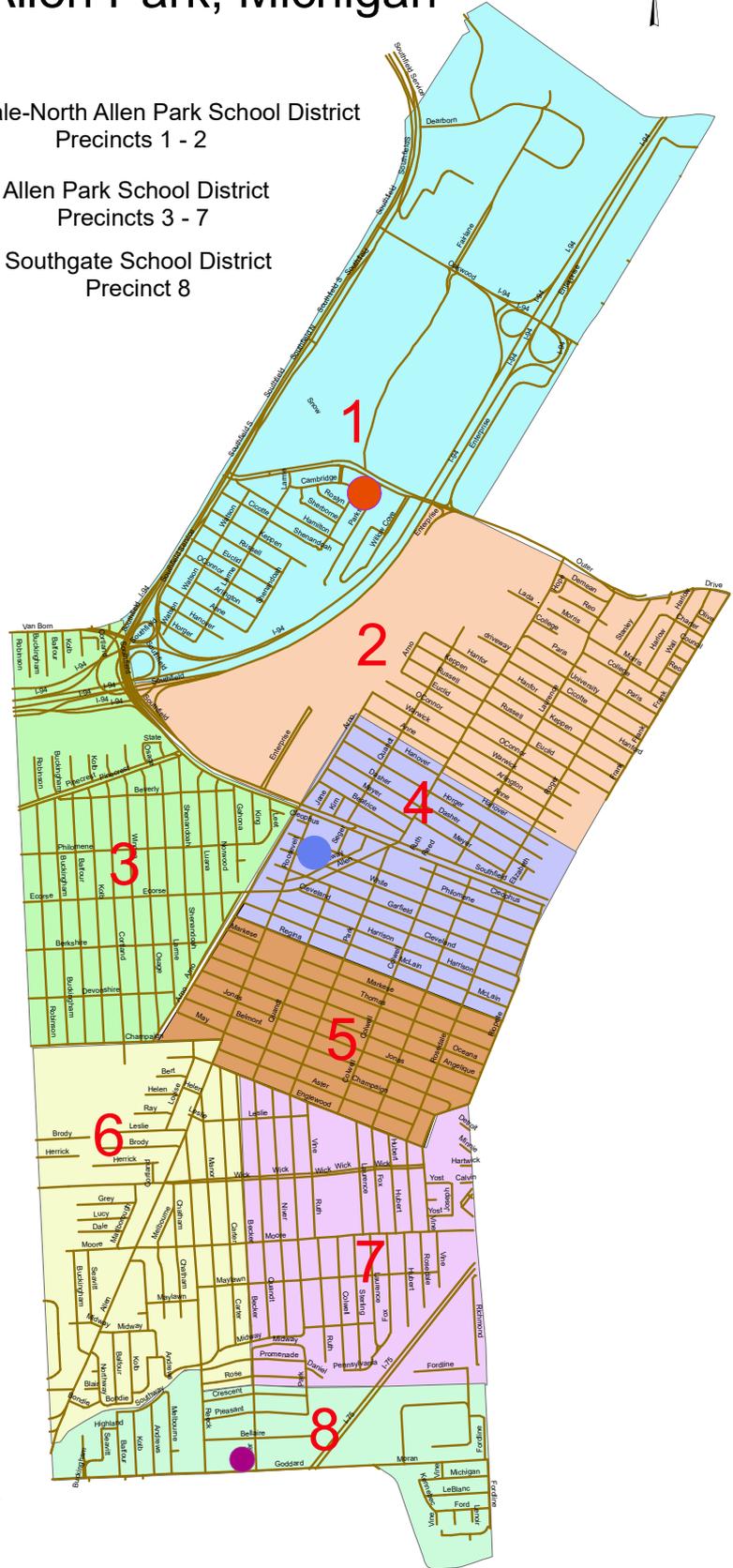
Melvindale-North Allen Park School District
Precincts 1 - 2

Allen Park School District
Precincts 3 - 7

Southgate School District
Precinct 8

Precincts

- 1 Allen Park Church of Christ 23610 W. Outer Drive ●
- 2 Allen Park Community Center 15800 White Street ●
- 3 Allen Park Community Center 15800 White Street ●
- 4 Allen Park Community Center 15800 White Street ●
- 5 Allen Park Community Center 15800 White Street ●
- 6 Allen Park Community Center 15800 White Street ●
- 7 Allen Park Community Center 15800 White Street ●
- 8 Church of the Nazarene 10944 Reek ●



U.S. Congressional District 13 - All Precincts

State Senator District 2 - All Precincts

State Representative District 2 - All Precincts

County Commissioner District 13 Precincts 1, 2 and part of 4

County Commissioner District 15 Precincts 3, part of 4, 5 - 8

Jan 5, 2026



NEWS FROM THE CITY

Notice of Hydrant Flushing

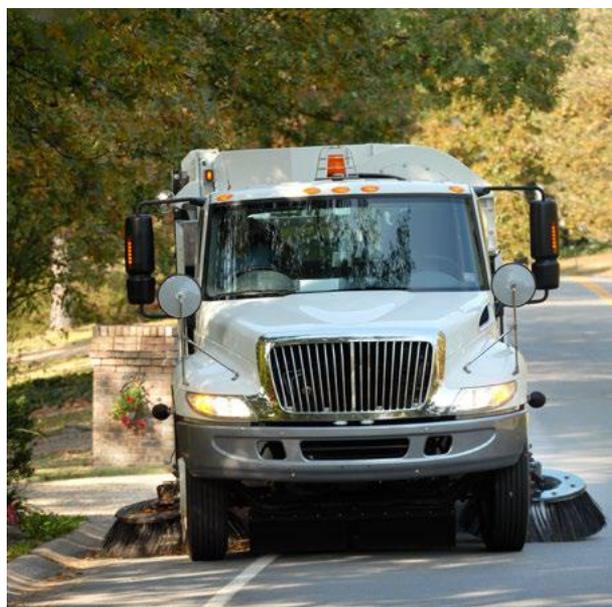
The City of Allen Park Water Department will be conducting routine fire hydrant flushing throughout the city as part of our regular maintenance program. The hydrant flushing program begins in spring and continues until each fire hydrant is individually flushed and inspected.

The city of Allen Park has over 1,000 fire hydrants to maintain. This work is essential to ensure hydrants are in proper working order and ready for use by the fire department in the event of an emergency.

During hydrant flushing, some residents may experience temporary discoloration of their tap water. This is normal and not a health concern. If you notice discolored water, we recommend running cold water from your laundry tub or an outside faucet for several minutes until the water runs clear. Avoid doing laundry until the water has cleared to prevent staining.

The City of Allen Park Water Department will be issuing alerts to residents via Code Red to notify them of hydrant flushing that could potentially affect the homes in the given area. To sign up for these alerts, text "ALLENPARKALERTS" to 24639 to enroll or visit cityofallenpark.org under police department for more information.

We appreciate your patience and cooperation as we complete this important maintenance to keep our water system reliable and our community protected. For questions or concerns, residents are encouraged to contact the Water Department directly at (313) 928-3393.



Street Sweeping Resuming Soon

Street sweeping is done monthly from April to September in accordance with EGLE requirements.

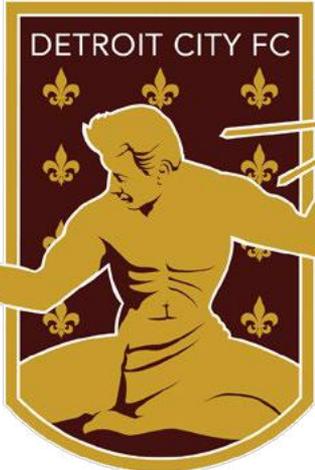
Contrary to popular belief, street sweeping is not done for good looks or to have spotless streets – street sweeping is done to maintain clearance and drainage for storm sewers.

Street sweeping is done on trash pickup days to ensure that no cars are impeding the sweeper. It takes two weeks to sweep the city, and each street sweeper is equipped with GPS to track routes and progress.

In the fall, leaf pickup is also added to the schedule. It is still against city ordinance to rake leaves into the streets – again, leaf pickup is to ensure that streets are allowed proper drainage. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact DPS at (313) 928-0550 x2.



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www.dcfcdownriver.com

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Woven Into the Fabric

Local couple details why they love Allen Park

By Ryan M. Place

FOR engaged couple Dale Climer and Joeli Burton, Allen Park isn't merely an address, it's their foundation.

Dale grew up on Ogden Street in southwest Detroit before moving to Warren.

"In 1996, my older brother, Tim Climer, and my mom and I moved to AP," he said. "We lived on Park Avenue between Thomas and Oceana."

Dale attended Arno Elementary, Allen Park Middle School, Allen Park High School, and Riley Alternative High School before moving out in 2009. Life, however, has a way of circling back.

Joeli grew up in south Dearborn Heights near Southfield-Van Born and graduated Annapolis High School.

"Dale and I lived in Dearborn Heights from 2013 to 2021," she said. "Then we moved to Allen Park for its family-friendly atmosphere, community pride and the schools."

After learning carpentry and masonry, Dale transitioned into roofing, where he's mastered the trade. He currently manages projects for Four Seasons Kanga Roof.

"Roofing sits at the intersection of physics and craftsmanship," he explained. "Pitch, load paths, uplift resistance and snow load all determine if a roof survives a storm or not. And the most important yet overlooked detail in roofing is probably flashing, the waterproofing at joints and intersections."

Joeli works as a surgical dental assistant at Periodontic & Implantology Associates in Dearborn.

"Advanced periodontitis can dissolve so much bone that the teeth are barely anchored in place," she said. "Bacteria beneath the gums triggers chronic inflammation that dissolves the bone and ligaments. I work at the best periodontal office, where we help patients achieve healthier gums and restore their smiles."

At home, Dale and Joeli are raising two daughters: Teagan (8) and Delanie (7).

"Delanie is taking level one karate at Allen Park Martial Arts Center, the same place Dale trained," she said. "Teagan does tumbling at Downriver Gymnastics. Also, my best friend Sandy lives a few blocks away and our families regularly hang out together."



The couple embraces everything Allen Park offers, such as the Lighted Christmas Parade, the Street Fair, and especially Cabrini Fest.

"It's like a high school reunion every year," Dale said. "All AP past and present shows up for it."

They love local favorites like The Streatery, Wheat & Rye, Bella Pizza, The Glass Onion, Roosevelt Lanes, Champaign Park's inline rink, and Critter pet store.

Dale fondly remembers the Allen Park dollar movie theater (1940-2019).

"My first date was there," he said. "We saw 'Titanic' in '97. I also miss Moro's cherries jubilee and minestrone, VHS stores King Video and Blockbuster. Those memories are woven into the psychic fabric of being an Allen Parker."

When not working, Dale enjoys boating, fishing, golfing, hockey, snowboarding, and PC gaming (especially Diablo and Borderlands). Joeli makes vinyl decals with her Cricut machine, loves horror films and is collecting vintage teacups to hand-paint in gothic style.

Their favorite getaway? "A spontaneous dart-on-the-map trip to Beulah, Michigan," she said. "The turquoise blue Crystal Lake won our hearts."

For Dale and Joeli, Allen Park offers something simple but increasingly rare: familiarity, safety, tradition, and great neighbors. It's not just where they live, it's where their next chapter is already being written.



Welcome to
ALLEN PARK

CITY COFFEEHOUSE

Rolo Park



2026 Downtown Guide

CITY OF MELVINDALE

CITY OF DEARBORN HEIGHTS



Outer Dr.



E Pinecrest Dr.

Allen Rd.



M39 / Southfield Rd.

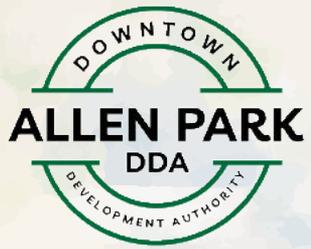
Ecorse Rd.

Park Ave.



Allen Rd.

Champaign Rd.



DISTRICT MAP

- DDA District
- Municipal Boundaries
- City Hall
- Community Center
- Hotels

DDA BOARD MEMBERS



Fred Frank
DDA Chairperson



Jeff Holden
DDA Vice Chairperson



Frank Cieszkowski
DDA Secretary



Alex Alexander
DDA Boardmember



Steve Donohue
DDA Boardmember



Greg Genter
DDA Boardmember



Gail McLeod
Mayor



Dan Smith
DDA Boardmember



Andre Tirado
DDA Boardmember



Jessica Tremonti
DDA Boardmember



Pete Zingas
DDA Boardmember



allenparkdowntown.org

DDA STAFF MEMBERS

The Allen Park Downtown Development Authority (DDA) welcomes Allen Park residents and visitors to our downtown district. With more than 400 businesses along Allen Road, Ecorse Road, Park Avenue and Southfield Road, our community offers a diverse mix of services, dining, and local experiences.

Our downtown is a unique destination where small town charm meets modern convenience. Whether you are a lifelong resident or visiting for the first time, we invite you to explore everything that makes Downtown Allen Park special.

Downtown Allen Park is designed for discovery. As you stroll through our streets, you'll find:

- **A Taste of the Town:** Enjoy a range of dining options – from classic American diners and cozy coffee shops to international cuisine. Whether you're dining indoors or relaxing on one of our outdoor patios, there's something for every palate.
- **Local Shopping & Services:** Support our community by visiting the specialty shops and service providers that give Downtown Allen Park the personal, hometown feel that you cannot find online.
- **Community Spirit:** Join us for our signature events, including the seasonal Farmers Market, the new Block Party concert series, the Paint the Park Art Festival, and Allen Park's annual Street Fair, which brings thousands of neighbors and visitors together for food, music and fun.
- **Downtown Charm:** Take time to explore our community, walk through downtown and enjoy the newly installed murals, which are quickly becoming a well-known feature of Downtown Allen Park. With more to come in 2026!
- **Stay Connected:** Follow us on social media for up-to-date information on everything happening in Allen Park.

Over the last few years, more than 60 new businesses have opened in Downtown Allen Park. We take great pride in maintaining a safe, clean and welcoming environment for everyone. Our local business owners are the backbone of our community, and they are ready to greet you with the warm hospitality Allen Park is known for.

Thank you for choosing to spend your time in Downtown Allen Park. We hope you enjoy your visit, discover a new favorite spot and return again soon.

See you soon,
Fred Frank
Chairperson, Allen Park DDA



Benjamin Hughes
Executive Director



Jamie Horn
Program & Event
Coordinator



Laura Corradi
Market Manager



Trevor Daniel
DDA Attorney



facebook.com/AllenParkDDA/



instagram.com/allenparkdowntown

PAINT THE PARK

1 NUTS NOW
5713 Allen Rd
Naomi Haverland

2 HADDIX ELECTRIC
5729 Allen Rd
Beau Stanton

ALEXANDER'S DRY CLEANING
3 5741 Allen Rd
Kevin Burdick

TUCCINI ORTHODONTIC LAB
4 6533 Allen Rd
Kitsune Jolene

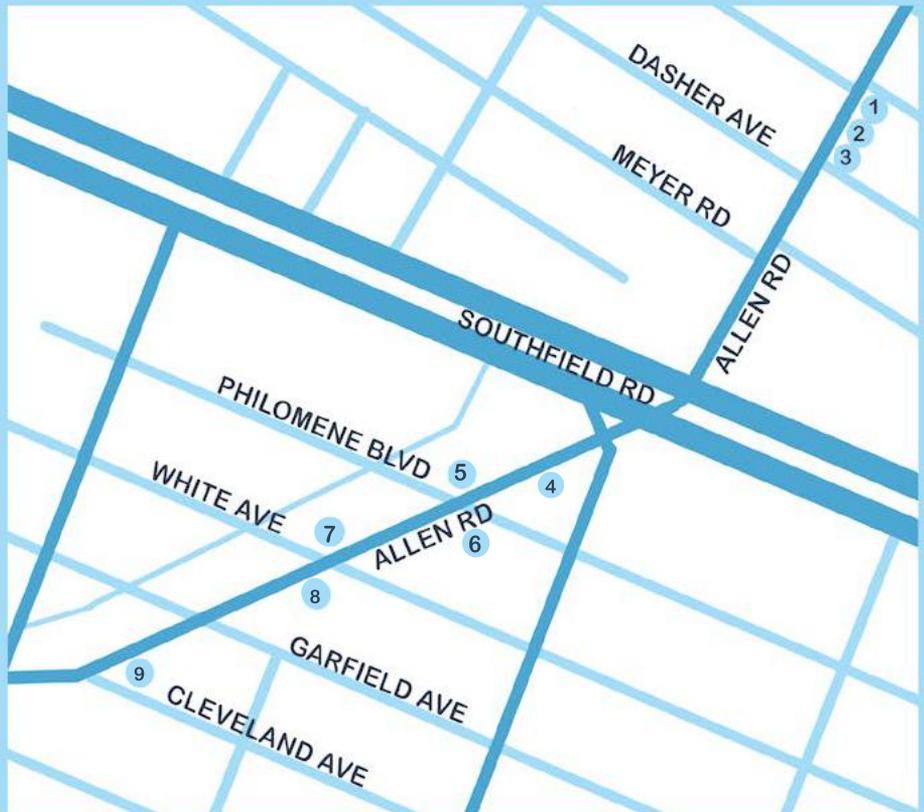
PRESTIGE BANQUET HALL
5 6600 Allen Rd
Ouizi

COMMUNITY SPACE
6 6601 Allen Rd
Ivan Montoya

METROPOLITAN FURNITURE
7 6670 Allen Rd
Kelly Golden

BIG BEN'S COMIX OASIS
8 6711 Allen Rd
Rick Malt

NEXTGEN INSURANCE
9 6831 Allen Rd
Zach Curtis



Nine murals. One vibrant journey. Grab your map and set out to explore the artwork that brings our downtown's spirit to life. Each mural adds a fresh layer of creativity to the city—mark them off as you go, share the adventure with family & friends, and experience Allen Park in a bold, colorful new way.

The art is already on the walls...now it's your turn to discover it!



2026



ALLEN PARK DDA EVENTS

FARMERS MARKET

May 1 - October 23

Every Friday 3 PM - 7 PM



Classic Car Show

Thursday, June 18

4 PM - 9 PM

Touch-A-Truck

Saturday, July 18

10 AM - 2 PM



Taste of Downriver

Co-Sponsored By Southern Wayne County Regional Chamber

Tuesday, August 11

6 PM - 9 PM



Paint the Park

Mural Program: Sunday, August 16 - Sunday, August 23

Mural Light Activations: Friday, August 21 - Sunday, August 23

Art Fair: Saturday, August 22 - Sunday, August 23 12 PM-10 PM

Trunk-or-Treat

Friday, October 23 5 PM - 7 PM

Co-Sponsored By: Allen Park Presbyterian Church



Home for the Holidays

Friday, December 11 & Saturday, December 12

2 PM - 8 PM



DOWNTOWN ALLEN PARK

1ST AND 3RD THURSDAYS

MAY THRU OCTOBER

MUSIC, VENDORS, AND MORE

FAMILY FRIENDLY FUN

EXCITING THEMES

FOR MORE DETAILS
www.downtownallenpark.org



BLOCK PARTY



Beyond the Paint,

THE STORY BEHIND THE MURAL



Nuts Now: A colorful nod to Michigan’s proud space legacy, artist Naomi Haverland celebrates the 14 Michiganders who have journeyed into space, from Apollo moonwalker James Irwin and pioneering spacewalker Ed White to modern explorers like Jerry Linenger and Christina Koch. The vibrant artwork brings that spirit home, blending imagination with local pride. A community favorite, it delights children with its candy-themed whimsy, while adults appreciate its clever tribute to Michigan’s inventive spirit.

Haddix Electric: Where past meets future, the historic Henry Ford electric railway arches, constructed in 1927 as part of Ford’s ambitious effort to electrify the Detroit, Toledo & Ironton Railroad, stand as enduring symbols of this ingenuity in Allen Park. These reinforced concrete catenary arches once lined the DT&I rail spur leading from the Ford Rouge complex toward Carleton, forming a continuous sequence that stretched for many miles across Downriver communities. Built to support overhead electric wires for Ford’s shortlived electric locomotives, the structures proved so robust that demolition crews later abandoned attempts to remove them, leaving the arches as accidental monuments to Ford’s unrealized vision. Today, they remain some of the most distinctive industrial relics in the region - quiet, rhythmic sentinels tracing the path of a bold experiment in modernizing American rail. Artist Beau Stanton carries that legacy forward, reimagining the power and progress of the era with sweeping forms and dynamic bursts of energy. The artwork invites viewers to explore a creative interpretation that honors this iconic Allen Park landmark.



Alexander’s Dry Cleaners: Created by artist Kevin Burdick as a tribute to the history of the Detroit Lions franchise, this mural features longtime fullback Cory Schlesinger, who played for the team from 1995 to 2006. Known for his toughness, punishing lead blocks, and remarkable durability, Schlesinger became a fan favorite during his 12-year career and was widely respected as one of the league’s most dependable role players. A three-time Pro Bowl alternate and a key contributor to the Lions’ offense across multiple eras, he also earned recognition for his leadership and work ethic on the field and in the locker room. Today, he continues to make an impact off the field as a teacher at Allen Park High School, where he brings the same discipline and passion to the classroom that defined his playing days. This mural represents Allen Park’s proud heritage as the headquarters of the Detroit Lions team.

Tuccini Orthodontic Lab: A heartfelt tribute to love, remembrance, and the bonds that endure, this mural was created by international artist Kitsune Jolene. It honors William “Bill” Tuccini, a beloved family member and cherished citizen of the Allen Park community who passed away in 2024. At its center is the message, “shower the people you love with love,” a gentle reminder to slow down, hold close the people who matter, and express affection while we can. The hands depicted in the artwork are modeled after his son, Chris, symbolizing the continuation of Bill’s legacy through the family he loved so deeply. Surrounding this sentiment is soft, dreamlike imagery that blends memory and imagination, inviting viewers to pause and reflect on their own stories, their own families, and the moments that shape a life. Through its warm colors and symbolic details, this mural celebrates connections that span generations and reminds the community of the lasting impact one person can have on many.





The Prestige Banquet Hall: Artist Ouizi's sweeping display of vibrant peonies brings a burst of color and life to The Prestige Banquet Hall, infusing the space with the same energy and warmth that define the Allen Park community. Long cherished for symbolizing prosperity, beauty, and a joyful life, the peonies feel right at home - mirroring the pride residents take in their neighborhoods, their traditions, and the connections they share. The mural's

lush petals and bold hues brighten the landscape, creating a welcoming landmark to downtown that reflects the city's lively character and the sense of togetherness that makes Allen Park feel like family. In celebrating these timeless blooms, the artwork becomes a tribute to the community itself - vibrant, resilient, and full of heart.

Metropolitan Furniture: This mural is more than art; Kelly Golden has created a tribute to the beloved businesses that shaped Allen Park's identity and filled its streets with memories. Among the many details is a warm nod to several beloved pieces of Allen Park's history: Moro's Restaurant, the



cherished family owned establishment that served the community for 45 years; the Allen Park Theater, a neighborhood landmark that opened in the 1940s and quickly became a cultural anchor for generations; and Borbely's, the city's first grocery store and meat market, which opened in the 1930s. It honors the places where life unfolded - where nervous teenagers shared their first dates, where anniversary dinners were held with love and laughter, and where families made weekly trips for groceries. These establishments weren't just businesses; they were the backdrop to countless personal stories, woven into the fabric of the community's collective heart. Together, these elements root this mural deeply in the city's collective memory. They transform the space into a gathering point, a reminder of the moments that shaped lives, and are an invitation for residents and visitors alike to pause, reflect, and feel the welcoming spirit that makes Allen Park truly special.



Big Ben's Comix Oasis: Bold and imaginative, artist Rick Malt offers a glimpse into the future of Allen Park - a future where public art becomes a defining force in shaping the city's identity. His dynamic design captures the momentum of a community that embraces creativity, innovation, and the power of shared expression. His work symbolizes a city ready to evolve, inviting residents and visitors alike to see their surroundings as a canvas for possibility. In this vision of tomorrow, Allen Park becomes a place where ideas take flight, where artistic voices are celebrated, and where public art serves as both a reflection of the community's spirit and a catalyst for its continued growth.

NextGen Insurance: This mural by artist Zach Curtis stands as a vivid gateway into Allen Park's layered history, transforming a single newspaper photograph from a past classic car show into a sweeping tribute to the city's identity. What began as one captured moment of chrome, crowds, and summer energy now unfolds across the wall as a larger story of Allen Park itself - its early farmland roots, its rapid midcentury growth shaped by the nearby Ford Motor Company, and the rise of a downtown district that became a social anchor for families and factory workers alike. The mural's nods to the beloved local movie theater and the bustling gatherings along Allen Road echo the city's commercial heart alive with neighborhood tradition. The Classic Car Show, now one of Allen Park's signature events, reflects the community's deep automotive heritage, turning Allen Road into a living museum of Detroit's mechanical artistry year after year. By weaving together the excitement of that original photograph with the broader history of the city's development, Curtis's work becomes more than a nostalgic image - it's a living chronicle of the people, industries, and traditions that shaped Allen Park across generations.



Community Space: This mural by Ivan Montoya is a vibrant tribute to the warmth, charm, and walkability of Allen Park. The design was inspired by Ivan's time spent exploring the city - walking through downtown, photographing its nostalgic architecture, lush greenery, and golden summer light. He described the mural as "a day-in-the-life feel - from planting together in the garden, to relaxing on the porch, to sharing time at a local coffee shop." Each scene is tied together by sunlight and color, symbolizing a bright future and the strength that comes from

growing together. This piece beautifully reflects the spirit of Allen Park and the everyday moments that make it feel like home.



EATS, TREATS & DRINKS

May's Bakery

6617 Allen Rd
Allen Park MI 48101
313-551-5051

7 Brew Coffee

14800 Southfield Rd
Allen Park MI 48101
479-358-9274

Arby's

14864 Southfield Rd
Allen Park MI 48101
313-382-7530

Barrio Burrito Bar

16920 Southfield Rd
Allen Park MI 48101
313-406-4053

Baskin-Robbins

7205 Allen Rd
Allen Park MI 48101
313-928-3131

Bella Pizza

6709 Park Ave
Allen Park MI 48101
313-928-3100

Biggy Coffee

15552 Southfield Rd
Allen Park MI 48101
313-451-8529

Biggy Coffee

17410 Ecorse Rd
Allen Park MI 48101
313-928-0940

Chicago's Pizza

6639 Allen Rd
Allen Park MI 48101
313.495.7777

City Coffeehouse

6623 Allen Rd
Allen Park MI 48101
313-908-4027

Maruu Cafe

6821 Allen Rd
Allen Park MI 48101
313-789-8996

Cottage Inn Pizza

15550 Southfield Rd
Allen Park MI 48101
313-484-2500

Culver's

15655 Southfield Rd
Allen Park MI 48101
313-914-2049

Custard on the Avenue

6834 Park Ave
Allen Park MI 48101
313-406-4411

Dairy Queen

17446 Ecorse Rd
Allen Park MI 48101
313-400-6992

Del Taco

14570 Southfield Rd
Allen Park MI 48101
313-483-8840

Dunkin'

16950 Southfield Rd
Allen Park MI 48101
313-254-9940

Dunleavy's Food & Spirits

6004 Allen Rd #2639
Allen Park MI 48101
313-382-4545

El Jalapeño Mexican Restaurant & Taqueria

4939 Allen Rd
Allen Park MI 48101
313.969.3400

Glass Onion Griddle

6828 Allen Rd
Allen Park MI 48101
313-558-9618

Hungarian Strudel Shop

6816 Park Ave
Allen Park MI 48101
313.383.3440

Jet's Pizza

6701 Allen Rd
Allen Park MI 48101
313.381.4538

Kentucky Fried Chicken

8020 Allen Rd
Allen Park MI 48101
313-928-3811

Krispy Kreme

15050 Southfield Rd
Allen Park MI 48101
313-388-8533

Liberati's Italian Deli & Bakery

7607 Allen Rd
Allen Park MI 48101
313-928-8000

Little Caesars

7211 Allen Rd
Allen Park MI 48101
313-382-8881

Major Tomato

6547 Allen Rd
Allen Park MI 48101
313-254-9146



Manuel's Taco Hut

16806 Ecorse Rd
Allen Park MI 48101
313.383.3030

McDonald's

15405 Southfield Rd
Allen Park MI 48101
313-388-8200

Mick's On Roosevelt

6815 Roosevelt Ave
Allen Park MI 48101
313-381-7365

Papa's Pizza

19347 Ecorse Rd
Allen Park MI 48101
313.386.8888

Pekin Tokyo

15170 Southfield Rd
Allen Park MI 48101
313-436-5588

Pink Garlic Indian Cuisine

18625 Ecorse Rd
Allen Park MI 48101
947-948-5680

Primo's Pizza & Catering

8237 Allen Rd
Allen Park MI 48101
313-928-5500

Qamaria Yemeni Coffee

7706 Allen Rd
Allen Park MI 48101
313-406-6911

Qazzaz Coffee

5410 Allen Rd
Allen Park MI 48101
313-633-1990

Ram's Horn

15544 Southfield Rd
Allen Park MI 48101
313-928-7500

Subway

15861 Southfield Rd
Allen Park MI 48101
313-379.3537

Ted's Coney Island

6790 Allen Rd
Allen Park MI 48101
313.928.4544

Thai Vylai

6555 Allen Rd
Allen Park MI 48101
313-768-5324

The Broadcast Booth

6550 Allen Rd
Allen Park MI 48101
313-389-5050

The Rat Pack - Martini & Cigar Lounge

6627 Allen Rd
Allen Park MI 48101
313.914.7346

The StrEATery

5955 Allen Rd
Allen Park MI 48101
313-633-1724

The Taco Stand Taqueria

5038 Allen Rd
Allen Park MI 48101
313-724-6221

The Triangle Coney Island

6565 Allen Rd
Allen Park MI 48101
313.386.3800

Tim's Coney Island

16015 Southfield Rd
Allen Park MI 48101
313-928-6690

Trina O'Malley's

6752 Allen Rd
Allen Park MI 48101
313-406-2128

Tropical Smoothie Cafe

14595 Southfield Rd
Allen Park MI 48101
313-789-3370

Wheat & Rye Bar and Grill

7721 Allen Rd
Allen Park MI 48101
313-928-4322

Wing Snob

16930 Southfield Rd
Allen Park MI 48101
313-789-9464

Wishbone Broasted Chicken

18617 Ecorse Rd
Allen Park MI 48101
313-383-9600

Yugen Asian Cuisine

18736 Ecorse Rd
Allen Park MI 48101
313-395-2737

Z Shawarma King

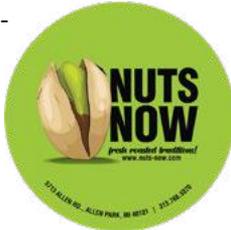
15548 Southfield Rd
Allen Park MI 48101
313-749-7517

GO NUTS!

Everyone is nuts for Nuts Now

By Terry Jacoby

It might sound corny – or even cliché – but everyone is nuts about Nuts Now in Allen Park. From the wide variety of delicious and healthy options to the fun atmosphere and outstanding customer service, Nuts Now is the sweet and/or savory choice for nuts, candy and other delights.



Just ask a few of the customers.

Jennifer stopped in Nuts Now recently after work and called it her “new favorite place.”

“I didn’t know what to expect when I walked in there, but I was definitely blown away by the selection of candy and pastries and seasoning and nuts and dried fruit,” she said. “I cannot wait to go back and take my time and look through everything.”

Brittney went to Nuts Now to grab some of their amazing trays for Father’s Day earlier this year.

“The staff of girls working were great, selection was amazing and the prices were great as well,” she said. “I would 100 percent recommend going for any occasion.”

And Mostafa raved about the outstanding service experience and wide variety of nuts.

“They are always putting something new on the shelf to try, and the employees always greet you with a bright smile,” he said. “Don’t get those stale nuts from wherever, get Nuts Now!”

Gareeb Koussan, an owner of Nuts Now, along with Ali Aboudraa, Gus Mellah and Faye Amin, is well-versed in the small business world. He earned a bachelor’s in business administration from the University of Michigan and has spent more than 20 years in the nuts and seeds wholesale industry.

“We have been in business in Allen Park for the majority of those years,” he said.



And that made choosing a location for Nuts Now an easy decision.

“We opened Nuts Now in January 2025, and chose the current location because we own the building and wanted to be close to our wholesale, which is on Allen Road and Russel Street,” he said.

The location (5713 Allen Road) is about 2,500 square feet, and the Nuts Now team includes a staff of 12 employees.

“What makes our business special is that all of our nuts and seeds are freshly roasted from our roastery wholesale down the street,” Koussan said. “We love improving the city of Allen Park and own several properties, which we have renovated in the area.”

Nuts Now is known for many favorites, including top sellers flavored cashews, Swedish candy, imported chocolates and Turkish delights.

“People didn’t know that we carry such a wide variety of

Turkish delights, and many people have never tried them before and everyone loves them,” Koussan said. “What helps us stand out in this business is that we love to give everyone samples of most of the items. We want people to taste



items before they buy them. And who doesn’t love to snack on things while shopping?”

Koussan and his team do a good job of keeping up with trends in the market as well as social media.

“Social media has been a great contributor to our success,” he said.

Check out Nuts Now on Facebook www.facebook.com/p/Nuts-now-61572207046096/.

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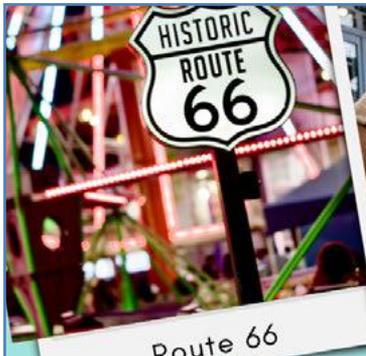
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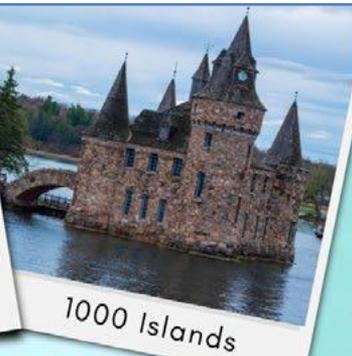




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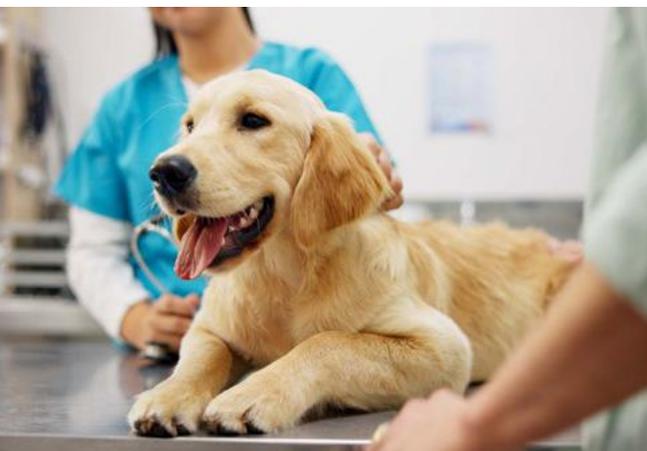
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A Senior Driving Seniors

85-year-old Elaine Erkfitz provides more than just a ride for seasoned residents

By Dave Gorgon

FOR 20 years, Allen Park resident Elaine Erkfitz has picked up senior citizens and disabled persons from their homes and transported them by bus to wherever they want to go.

Erkfitz, who is 85 herself, said she enjoys her role as a senior transportation specialist. She's a senior driving seniors through a program provided by the city and SMART, the Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation.

Residents in need of a ride to their doctor office, dentist office, shopping or other destinations – even just out to lunch – simply call the Parks and Recreation Department to schedule a ride. Destinations can be as far as four miles outside a city border, including hospitals in Dearborn and Wyandotte. The round-trip fee is only \$4 per passenger.

Erkfitz is in good health, fit, is friendly and knows the job well. She knows her bus and its equipment, which includes a wheelchair, a walker and a lift for people who need easy access to the vehicle. She knows when it needs maintenance, which is provided by the Department of Public Services.

"I just love what I'm doing," she said. "I really do."

Erkfitz followed in the footsteps of her husband of 56 years, Jim, who had retired from BBDO and served the city as a driver. When the city had an opening for another driver, Jim recommended Elaine for the position. She earned a chauffeur's license and at first drove seniors on "adventures," trips, including Frankenmuth and the Jackson State Prison. Her role eventually changed. She kept the job even after Jim's passing nine years ago.

The mother of two sons and grandmother of two said the best part of the job is the people she drives. She is there for them, she talks to them and



befriends them. As a "good listener," she's a great ambassador for the program.

"The seniors are wonderful," she said. "They really are."

The city feels the same way about her.

"Elaine is exactly what we need," said Rob Fulton, director of Parks and Recreation. "We're the outside attachment to these people. The majority do not drive. Elaine engages with these folks so she's more than a driver. She is caring. She's a friend."

"Elaine probably knows more about these passengers than some of their family members," Rob added. "She has attended funerals and has been invited to parties. They have such a confidence in Elaine and a comfort level. That's all we ask. She's good for the SMART program."



Erkfitz said there are "times I want to retire, but Rob says, 'what will you do?' I think I'll stay until I get bored. You can always play so much pickleball and cardio drumming. Fortunately, my knees are good and I have only minimal hand arthritis."

Elaine is one of six drivers in the city program. The others are Frank Goodwin, Jim Degg, Tina Righetti, Katie Gryzwa and Dave Wilkie. They are all employed by the City of Allen Park, which has an agreement with SMART.

The city has applied for grants that would pay for a new bus. Allen Park is eligible for two new buses over the next two years.

To schedule a ride, call the Allen Park Department of Parks and Recreation at (313) 928-0771. Transportation hours are 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Get Ready to Mingle

Allen Park dog park in the works By Dave Gorgon

A LLEN PARK dog owners interested in the city creating a park for their pets will be getting their way later this year.

Several city departments are working with an ad hoc committee to iron out the details of the park, which will be located near the statue of Rusty the dog on one-and-a-half acres on the grounds of the Department of Public Services (DPS) at 24000 Outer Drive. The artwork was relocated from the former campus of Baker College.

"We hope to have it open by early to mid-summer," said DPS Director Aaron Filipski.

Since the property is partially located in Melvindale, the park will be open to Melvindale residents as well. All participants will purchase a pass to gain access to the park. The cost of the pass has not been determined.

"A dog park is a very popular amenity," Filipski said. "There's a community within the community of the members."

Since Filipski oversaw a dog park for his previous employer, the City of Royal Oak, he has been tapped to get Allen Park's park built and opened. The Allen Park Department of Parks and Recreation, the city clerk's office and even the mayor's office have been involved, and the city council has approved the creation and funding of the park.

A dog park has been a topic for several years in Allen Park. Filipski said the "gears started turning" last April. Staff met with an ad hoc dog park committee to discuss needs, options and overcoming any challenges, such as truck traffic and sharing parking space with city employees.

"We spent time laying out some designs with the users in mind," Filipski added.

He also sourced "the appropriate vendors," such as a concrete provider, a fencing contractor and technology providers that would supply access key fobs to users and closed-circuit cameras to keep an eye on the park.

The participants met again in the fall when a rough layout was presented. Filipski said the committee will draft a user agreement, rules for the park and a price for users. He said the park will be divided into two parts: one for larger dogs, the other for smaller dogs. Both sections will be fenced.

Parks and Recreation Director Rob Fulton said participating dogs will have to be registered in the city and have all their shots. Filipski said the dog owners will police the park, saying all members will want the rules to be enforced and for everyone to be respectful.



Wayne Smith and Tess (above).
With wife Pam and Tess (right) at a Florida dog park.



Community surveys indicated there was high level of interest in a dog park in the city. Mayor Gail McLeod appointed several members to the dog park committee, including Allen Park dog lovers Pam and Wayne Smith, who have eagerly surveyed other dog parks in the region.

"Pam and Wayne have been an integral part of moving the dog park forward," Fulton said. "They have passion and enthusiasm for this to become a reality. I know it's a vital piece to add to our community offerings and to maintain our momentum as a very aggressive and progressive community."

The Smiths have plenty of experience taking their 6-year-old Boston Terrier, Tess, to dog parks, especially when they visit Dunedin, Florida, for about five months a year. Locally, they visit WOOFhaven, a dog park in Woodhaven.

"So many other cities have dog parks," Pam said. "We're snowbirds in Florida. We take our pup to a dog park every single day. It's socialization for her and us. It's a great way to meet people. We've met about 40 people at the dog park and, of course, we know every single pup. We enjoy it as much as the pups."

Wayne is known as the "candy man" at the Florida park because he always provides treats for the four-legged friends.

"Dog parks are an opportunity for people to meet and talk about local issues and make friends," Wayne said. "It's a nice way to get out and meet people."

"We laugh, we talk, we visit and celebrate birthdays," Pam added. "Outside of the dog park, we have breakfast, lunches and coffee with people we've met there."

The Smiths have resided in Allen Park since 1998 and the dog park concept has excited them as much as anything else in the city.

"I personally like being part of projects that people are excited about, that make a difference and improve quality of life," Filipski said. "I'm excited about this."



A New Home for Those Who Serve

Allen Park fire station remodel nears completion

As spring sunlight reflects off freshly updated glass and steel, the Allen Park Fire Station is taking on a new life, one that mirrors the pride, dedication and professionalism of the firefighters who call it home.

After more than a year of construction, the station's comprehensive renovation is now racing toward a July 2026 completion, marking a major investment in both public safety and the people who provide it.

The transformation began in January 2025, with a full gut and rebuilding of the station's interior living spaces. Crew bedrooms, living quarters, kitchen, gym facility, and offices were all redesigned from the ground up to better support the daily demands of modern firefighting.

Former chief and deputy chief offices were repurposed into crew locker rooms, while outdated firefighter kitchens, storage areas and former Department of Public Works offices were converted into private bedrooms, a commercial-grade kitchen and a state-of-the-art fitness facility.

Beyond aesthetics, the project has focused heavily on safety, efficiency and long-term sustainability. Major infrastructure upgrades include high-efficiency commercial HVAC systems, LED lighting throughout the station, code-compliant fire detection and suppression systems, enhanced door security with cameras, and a cutting-edge "Heart Smart" 911 alerting system designed to improve emergency response times.

The apparatus bay, often considered the heart of any fire station, also received significant attention. Upgrades include full-glass bi-fold apparatus doors, new crew office space, efficient radiant heating, commercial ceiling fans, an upgraded diesel exhaust removal system, extensive floor drain repairs, and complete concrete floor reconditioning. Together, these improvements modernize the bay while creating a safer, healthier working environment.

"We are so thrilled with all the changes to the station," said Fire Chief Jeff O'Riley. "The upgrades and improvements are a vast improvement over our old living conditions. The crew finally have a station they deserve to call home while serving their community day in and day out."

At approximately 60 percent complete, construction is now



focused on a new administration building and department training space. The former dormitory structure was found to have severe foundation issues, causing the building to sink and exterior walls to fail, making replacement the only viable option.



"We're excited that the new building will not only house our administrative offices but also include a proper conference room for professional meetings with business owners and construction contractors," Chief O'Riley explained.

The new training room will accommodate up to 50 people, giving firefighters a dedicated space for daily training while also allowing the department to host state-sponsored classes through the Michigan Firefighters Training Council. These programs are funded through licensing and inspection fees from fireworks stands across the state, turning a unique revenue source into a valuable training opportunity for first responders.

As the project enters its final phase, attention will shift to exterior enhancements, including a secure staff parking area, landscaping, architectural roof panels, a clock tower, and a dedicated firefighter training area behind the station.

"We are incredibly proud of our new station and can't wait to share it with the community," Chief O'Riley said. "I want to thank the residents of Allen Park for their continued support, as well as everyone who donated their time and financial contributions to help make this new home something truly special."

Once completed, the renovated Allen Park Fire Station will stand as more than a modernized facility. It will be a symbol of the city's commitment to its firefighters and the community they protect, every hour of every day.



Park Avenue Realty

Experience, integrity and 'Spouses Selling Houses' in Allen Park

By Terry Jacoby

PARK Avenue Realty in Allen Park has been named a Wayne County Real Producers Top 100 and recognized by HOUR Detroit magazine as being in the Top 5 percent of realtors in the Metro Detroit area from 2015–2025.

While the awards are an honor, what owners Kelly Matelic and John Medrek are most proud of is something far more meaningful – the incredible feedback from the clients they've served over the years.

Park Avenue Realty holds an impressive 4.7 out of 5-star rating on Google, along with a 5.0 rating on Zillow with over 500 reviews.

One recent client, Brooke, shared: "I cannot recommend Park Avenue Realty enough! Kelly and John assisted me throughout the whole process. They were there for every single step and every single question I had. The process of buying a house would not have been such a breeze without them."

Another client, Rich, said: "Great people! Great communication! Kelly was recommended to me by my lawyer for my aunt's estate. I had never owned a house before, so this was all new to me. She did a fantastic job helping me navigate the treacherous waters of realty! Within three days of hiring them, the estate sold for above the asking price."

"These reviews mean the world to me," Kelly said. "Nothing is more exciting than the gratifying feeling I get from helping people meet their real estate needs. I

understand how important it is to find your dream home or secure the best offer for your property. I make it my responsibility to help my clients achieve their goals."

A boutique brokerage with a personal touch located on Allen Road in Allen Park, Park Avenue Realty is a family-run brokerage operated by husband-and-wife team Kelly Matelic and John Medrek. With over 26 years of combined experience in the local market, they specialize in residential real estate throughout Allen Park and the surrounding Downriver communities.



"We like to call ourselves 'Spouses Selling Houses,'" Kelly said. "Together, we work as a team to list and sell homes, combining our strengths to provide a hands-on, highly personal experience for our clients."

What sets Park Avenue Realty apart is their commitment to:

- Clear communication
- Strong local market knowledge
- Confidence-driven guidance through every step
- Individualized attention

"Being a small, family-run business allows us to truly focus on our clients' goals and deliver thoughtful, personalized service," said Kelly, whose love for real estate comes from the heart.

"I first got into real estate because I love helping people navigate one of the biggest decisions of their lives, and that passion continues today," she said. "Working alongside my husband makes the experience even more rewarding. Together, we take pride in helping clients feel supported, informed and confident from start to finish."

Park Avenue Realty focuses on personal attention, teamwork and earning the trust their clients value when buying or selling a home.

"You can count on me to always do what's in your best interest," Kelly said. "I pride myself on being honest, trustworthy and knowledgeable in the real estate market. Whether you are an experienced investor or a first-time buyer, I am here to help you find the property of your dreams."

Park Avenue Realty is located at 8048 Allen Road in Allen Park. For more information, call (313) 477-4030, (313) 739-7413 or email kelly24mich@aol.com





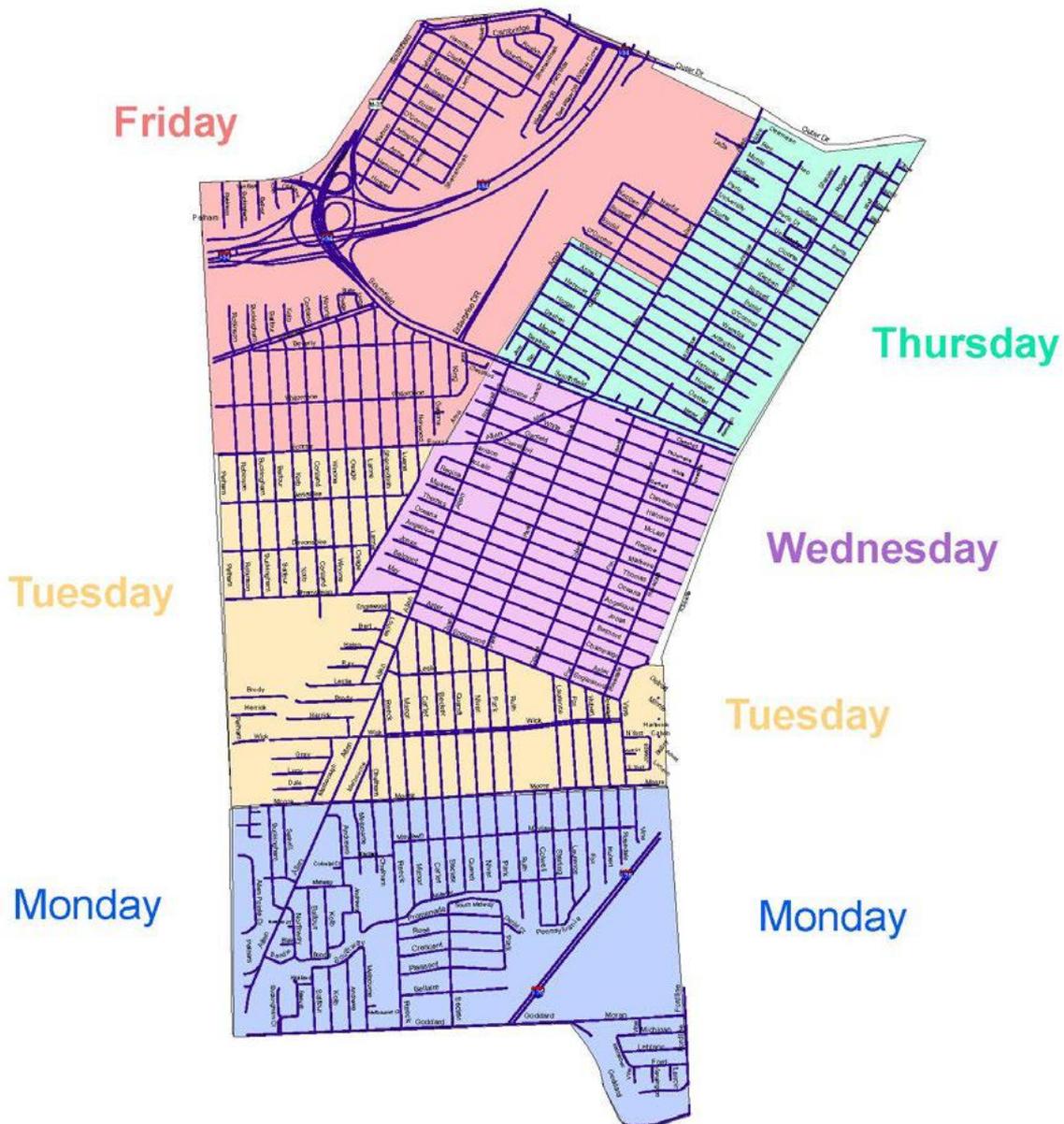
Rubbish Disposal Information

Rubbish, recycling and compost pickup are serviced by Priority Waste. Each household is provided with a 96-gallon black tote for trash disposal and a 64-gallon green tote for recycling. Yard waste/compost service is also provided weekly from the first week of April through the second week of December. See the below map for your scheduled pickup day (a more detailed map is available at cityoffallenpark.org).

Holiday Schedule

The following is a list of holidays observed by Priority Waste. Your normal pickup will be delayed by one day following these holidays:

New Year's Day January 1	Memorial Day Last Monday in May	Independence Day July 4
Labor Day First Monday of September	Thanksgiving Day Fourth Thursday of November	Christmas Day December 25



Frequently Asked Questions

Rubbish

- There is no parking in the street allowed on your scheduled pickup day between 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.
- Carts should be placed between the street curb and the sidewalk (grass area) or in the driveway approach (streets must remain clear for street sweeping and snow removal). Cart handle should be facing the house and away from the street. There needs to be at least three (3) feet between your cart and any other objects such as parked cars, light poles, mailboxes and other carts.
- Additional bins may be purchased by contacting Priority Waste at (586) 228-1200 or visiting prioritywaste.com
- If your existing bin is damaged or missing, contact DPS at (313) 928-0550 x2 for an exchange at no cost.
- Priority Waste will pick up bulk items outside of your bin if the pile is the size of 2 kitchen stoves or less, or if it is a single item of furniture like a couch or chair. Mattresses and box springs **must** be wrapped in plastic prior to pickup. Any bulk items that fall outside of these guidelines, you must contact Priority for a special pickup at (586) 228-1200. For excessive amounts of waste, renting a dumpster may be advisable.
- Concrete, construction materials, and hazardous waste are **not** acceptable materials for disposal. Contact DPS at (313) 928-0550 x2 to arrange for curbside pickups (fee applies), or you may contact Riverview Land Preserve to dispose of items yourself.
- Pharmaceuticals may be disposed of in a secure bin located in the Police Department within City Hall (no liquids or aerosols allowed).
- Hazardous Waste may be disposed of at one of several events held throughout the year by Wayne County.

Recycling

Acceptable recycling items include:

- Papers: newspapers, magazines, catalogs, junk mail, office & computer papers
- Cardboard - Cardboard must be cut into 2' x 2' sections and placed inside of the cart.
- Pizza boxes (ONLY IF bottom liner is removed and there is NO food, cheese or grease in or on the box).
- Glass (clear, brown, green – rinsed with lids removed). **DO NOT INCLUDE** drinking glass, Pyrex, plate glass, other colored glass, China, light bulbs, ceramics, or mirrors.
- Plastics #1 through #7. Labels can be left on; please rinse all items out completely.
- Aluminum & metal (empty aerosol cans, lids from glass jars, food containers – rinsed well).
- The City of Allen Park hosts special disposal events in Spring and Fall: shred days for confidential documents and Styrofoam recycling days. Check the City website for future dates and guidelines.

Appliance Disposal

- Appliances containing Freon require the purchase of a Freon disposal sticker from City Hall. The cost of the sticker is \$35 and covers the disposal of Freon. Items with Freon will not be picked up without a disposal sticker.
- All large appliances must have doors removed prior to setting out for disposal.
- No additional phone calls or arrangements are needed for appliance pickup. Items can be set out on your normal pickup day.

Compost

- Collection is every week on your scheduled day of service starting in the first full week of April through the second week of December.
- Leaves, grass clippings, and yard waste must be in cans that clearly say "Compost" ("Compost" stickers are also available at City Offices), or in paper compost bags only. The city does not provide containers for yard waste.
- Brush must be bundled no larger than eighteen inches in diameter and four feet long. One individual item cannot be more than three inches in diameter.
- Sod and dirt are **not** acceptable as yard waste; please contact DPS at (313) 928-0550 x2 to arrange for alternate pickups (fee may apply).
- **50 POUND MAXIMUM WEIGHT ON CANS AND PAPER BAGS.**
- **PLASTIC BAGS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED - NO EXCEPTIONS.**

For large amounts of brush, contact Department of Public Service, (313) 928-0550 x2 for an estimate. Once payment is made the brush will be scheduled for pickup.

Warning: Raking of leaves and blowing snow into the street is against the city ordinance. You could be ticketed and fined.



Priority Waste: (586) 228-1200 / 855-927-8365

or



PriorityWaste.com

Please visit cityofallenpark.org for more information regarding Household Hazardous Waste days, as well as any other special announcements or additional city information.

'Everyone Needs Reminders to Believe in Yourself'

Arno Elementary recognized for excellence in education *By Sarah Tuxbury*

ARNO Elementary School's playground is full of kids playing tag, kickball and hide and seek. Cheering them on with high fives and words of encouragement is a guy that most people would traditionally expect to be behind a desk. It's Arno's Principal Steve Zielinski.

Zielinski, who Arno students know by name because of his visibility, understands that acts of kindness and encouragement go a long way.



"We want our students to know we care and we want them to have a positive experience as they grow," he said. "If I want the kids to show up and do their best, I need to do the same."

This type of encouragement is the approach the school has adopted when it comes

to standardized testing. The results? U.S. News & World Report ranked Arno Elementary School in Allen Park as a top PK-5 school in the state for the second straight year in its K-12 directory.

U.S. News' team looked at state assessment scores for mathematics and reading/language arts when reviewing 103,391 pre-K, elementary and middle schools nationwide – they ranked the top performers in each state and district.

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer recently sent a congratulatory letter to the school for Arno's "Best Elementary Schools" honor.

"Everyone needs reminders to believe in yourself, even adults," Zielinski said. "My philosophy here is to tell our kids that they can be successful. We have many talented people in our community. With the right strategies and tools, we let the students know they can do it. And with recognition like this, they are seeing that they can."



Preparing Students for Future Success

APHS Principal Skiba earns prestigious administrator award

By Terry Jacoby

JASON P. Skiba, principal at Allen Park High School, is a big believer in community, family, teamwork and a focus on always improving as blueprints for providing opportunity and growth for students, faculty and administrators.



Skiba was the recipient of the 2025 American Association of School Librarians (AASL) Distinguished School Administrator Award. Sponsored by ProQuest, the \$2,000 award recognizes and honors a school administrator who has made worthy contributions to the operations of exemplary school libraries and to advancing the role of the school library in the educational program.

"I wouldn't be able to support the literacy initiatives without the support of the Allen Park School Board," Skiba reiterated during his recent acceptance speech in St. Louis. "They support the ability for us to fund a full-time librarian and a paraprofessional when there are districts in Michigan without that benefit. It shows the commitment of the community to literacy, not just for younger students, but for life-long learning.

"Our connection and support from the Allen Park Public Library is helpful as well, creating a continuum of offerings for students even after they graduate," Skiba added. "All of this, of course, would not be possible if we did not have a strong librarian in Melissa Lambert (AP library media specialist), who creates the opportunities for our students."

Skiba believes a strong school library program is a cornerstone of a well-rounded education.

"Our library is not just a place for books but a dynamic hub where students explore their interests, develop critical thinking skills and cultivate a lifelong love of learning," said Skiba, who became principal at APHS in 2022. "It supports academic achievement and personal growth, and empowers students to thrive in an interconnected world. I am committed to ensuring that our library evolves as an inclusive space that meets the diverse needs of our students and prepares them for future success."

'Grateful Every Day'

Pat Donohue named finalist for 2026 Michigan Middle School Principal of the Year

By Terry Jacoby

PAT Donohue has been recognized for his dedication to students, staff and community partnerships throughout his 28-year career in education. And that recognition continued this year when the Allen Park Middle School principal was named a finalist for 2026 Michigan Middle School Principal of the Year.



The honor recognizes outstanding leadership, student achievement and commitment to school communities across the state.

Donohue, in his seventh year leading APMS, said the recognition is especially meaningful because the nomination comes directly from his staff.

"This honor isn't about me," Donohue said. "It reflects the incredible teachers, counselors, secretaries, custodians, paraprofessionals, and administrators at Allen Park Middle School who show up every day for kids. I'm just the guy trying to remove roadblocks so they can do their best work."

Under Donohue's leadership, APMS has focused on strengthening academics, expanding student opportunities and rebuilding a positive school culture grounded in collaboration and respect. Staff members credit his steady, student-centered leadership style and his commitment to data-driven instruction, mentoring new teachers, and building a supportive climate for both students and staff.

Colleagues note that Donohue's work aligns with many district priorities he has helped champion to better prepare students for high school success.

"Education has changed a lot," Donohue said. "Teachers are asked to do more than ever. My job is to make sure they feel valued, supported and reminded why this work still matters. The magic of teaching is still there – we just have to protect it."

Donohue said the real recognition belongs to the Allen Park Middle School community.

"We've built something special together," he said. "And I'm grateful every day to stand beside this team and serve our students."

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COMMUNITY PUBLISHING & MEDIA

Schools continued on page 62



'Keeping the Focus on What is Best for Students'

BOE Trustee Laura Luecke earns honors and distinctions by state

By Terry Jacoby

LIFELONG Allen Park resident Laura Luecke, who has been a Board of Education trustee since being elected in 2020, continues to be recognized for her contributions and service to her community, and specifically, Allen Park Public Schools.

Over the past few years, Luecke has received the following honors and distinctions through The Michigan Association of School Boards (MASB): Level 1 - Certified Board Member Award; Level 2 - Award of Merit; Level 3 - Award of Distinction; Community Relations Specialty; and Advocacy Skills Specialty.

The MASB is a voluntary, nonprofit association of local and intermediate boards of education with membership of over 600 boards of education, representing nearly all public school districts in the state and is recognized as a major voice influencing education issues at the state level.

Luecke, who has been a strong advocate of continuing her professional development through MASB, earned the recent accolades by attending conferences, classes, workshops and learning sessions. She said school board members are "the district's school policy makers" and she takes that responsibility very seriously.

"It is important to have knowledge and experience regarding the range of areas that encompass the day-to-day operations of an educational system, such as school law, curriculum, finance, labor and community relations to name a few," she said. "That knowledge and experience can assist school board members to remember what is most important, keeping the focus on what is best for students."

Luecke is always looking ahead.

"I am very much looking forward to the completion of the bond work and the strategic plan," she said. "Amazing people have been hard at work on great projects and the completion of that work makes me excited for the future of APPS. Great things really are happening in Allen Park and I am proud to have a small part in that."



'There Is Always More to Learn'

BOE Trustee Jason Babbage honored with specialty awards by state

By Terry Jacoby

WHEN Jason Babbage became a member of the Allen Park Board of Education, he didn't believe that "it's just the way we've always done it," was justification for the way things were done.

"When I first joined the Board there was no formal onboarding process, and as a result, I initially struggled to understand the procedures being used in our meetings, especially when they did not align with the board policies I was reading independently," he said.

A turning point for Babbage came when he spoke with AP Trustee Laura Luecke, who was taking Michigan Association of School Boards (MASB) courses. She was able to clearly explain proper board governance and the processes the board should be following.

"That conversation motivated me to begin my own MASB training, and I committed myself to learning everything I could about effective board operations," Babbage said. "With the support of several board members who also pursued additional training, I am proud to say that we have transformed into one of the most well-informed and high-functioning boards in Michigan."

Babbage recently earned a Level 1 - Certified Board Member Award; Level 2 - Award of Merit; Finance Certification Specialty; and a Data Skills Specialty.

"I am well-educated but I firmly believe that there is always more to learn," he says. "I welcome different perspectives and see ongoing education as essential to responsible leadership."

This commitment to learning also guided his interest in serving as Board Treasurer.

"I completed all available MASB finance courses to ensure I was the most qualified candidate for the role," he said. "Although I was not selected, I did not let that discourage me. Instead, it strengthened my determination and ultimately drove me to earn my Finance Certificate. I have continued my professional development since then, earning additional certificates this year and planning to pursue more."



LEARNING THE INTRICACIES OF WORLD DIPLOMACY

Model UN offers students many opportunities to shine By Terry Jacoby

BRADY Boroniec, now studying social relations and policy at Michigan State University, credits his experience at Allen Park High School for helping to set him on a path of making a difference in the world. And that “valuable experience” includes being a part of APHS’s Model United Nations club.

“My interest in Model UN really began with my interest in world politics and policy but from that it grew into much more,” said Boroniec, who participated in the club for four years. “It helped me to improve my public speaking skills, since many of the competitions require you to convince and persuade people to your point, which is a great skill to have in your repertoire. It also helps a lot with critical thinking as a lot of the speaking you do has to be on the spot and unscripted, so always thinking about your next word is important.”

Model United Nations is “education through simulation”, where high school students research real-world problems and issues then work together to come up with peaceful conflict resolutions. The purpose of Model UN is to help raise students’ awareness of international issues and prepare them for a globalized world, and is designed to foster enthusiasm for, and increase students’ understanding of, international affairs through a simulation of the United Nations.

The student-led club at APHS is run by president Lily Murdoch and vice president Dylan DiCicco under the direction and supervision of two co-advisors, staff advisor Tim Brown and volunteer advisor Laura Luecke.

By delving into their roles as diplomats to the UN, students gain a hands-on understanding of the intricacies of world diplomacy.

“What really impressed me was how much the kids grew from day one to day three at the MSUMUN event,” said Brown, who is the mathematics department chair at APHS. “Students that were apprehensive became more outgoing and comfortable with the conference and themselves.”

Murdoch, who plans to major in political science and be a lawyer in the future, has been involved with Model UN since sixth grade.

“I love it because it’s really improved my public speaking skills and gives me an outlet to speak and debate on world issues while still being in high school,” she said.

DiCicco, who plans on becoming a high school history teacher, said the club has helped prepare him for college.

“The reason I first joined the club was because I was always interested in world issues, and the club seemed

perfect for my interests,” he said. “It lets me learn other people’s opinions and lets me learn more about the world around me.”

APHS students, referred to as delegates, are assigned a country or person to represent by the Model UN conference hosts and meet after school to learn formal debate procedures and research their



country/person’s positions on the assigned topics that their committee will address. The main conference is held at Michigan State University in March and features around 500 students from around the Midwest.

“The club is grateful for the support it receives from the district that affords us the possibility to be a part of something we all appreciate so much,” said Luecke, who has been a Board of Education trustee since being elected in 2020.

Schools continued on page 64





How Can We Make the World a Better Place?

The Future Cities program aims to provide solutions By Terry Jacoby

ON January 20, 2026, 18 Allen Park Public Schools students in Garrett Filkins' Introduction to Engineering Design Process class traveled to Novi to compete in the Future Cities competition. They returned with four awards, including "The Incorporation of Plastic Materials Award", "Urban Farming Design Award", "The People's Choice Award" and "Most Team Spirit Award."

The Allen Park students worked hard for a month, with the help of Filkins and fellow AP teacher Robyn Loselle, to go through the engineering-design process to create a city of the future that focuses on eliminating food waste. Students then presented their ideas and models to a panel of judges at the event in Novi.

"This was an awesome experience for everyone involved and the students' hard work definitely paid off," said Filkins, who teaches a high-school-level engineering and design processes course, as well as middle school robotics.

Future City is a national hands-on, cross-curricular educational program that brings STEM to life for students in grades six through 12. Using the Engineering Design Process (EDP) and project management skills, students showcase their solutions to a citywide sustainability issue. This year's challenge asked students to design a city that eliminates food waste from farm to table and keeps citizens healthy and safe.

The EDP model begins with identifying the problem and learning the specifications before brainstorming solutions and then designing the plan. It concludes with testing, improving and redesigning before building and sharing the project.

This is only Allen Park's second year with the Future Cities program, which has been led by Filkins both years. This year, Allen Park had five teams across 18 students

taking part in Future Cities.

"This starts in the high-school-level engineering class our eighth-grade students can take, and it turns into a club that meets two-to-three times a week after school," Filkins said.

Loselle, who teaches seventh-grade science and has been at Allen Park Middle School for five years, was specifically requested by the students last year to help with the program, and has been part of the project both years.

The teachers have observed the students learning and practicing a number of important skills including:

- Applying math and science to current real-world scenarios, issues and policies
- Discovering all the unique and different branches they could pursue in engineering
- Learning to communicate and collaborate as a team to work through disagreements and meet specific deadlines
- Presenting in front of a panel of judges, and then answering on-the-spot questions from engineering professionals in different fields



The middle school Future Cities program starts with a simple question: How can we make the world a better place? The students then set out trying to answer the question.

Here are a few answers from Allen Park students:

"Future Cities helped boost my creativity," said Olivia S.

"It helped me to problem solve...And wish I could do it all over again," said Francesco J.

"I gained a lot of knowledge, and the experience opened my eyes to possible future careers and industries," said Daniel B.

For more information on the Future Cities program, visit futurecity.org/what-is-future-city.



Truly Unforgettable

Allen Park's Unified Sports programs bring joy, connectivity

By Terry Jacoby

UNIFIED Sports, which promotes social inclusion for students with and without intellectual disabilities who work and play together on teams, continues to evolve and grow along with its impact, importance and significance. It's certainly a "game changer" for everyone involved.

Part of the Special Olympics of Michigan, Unified Sports partners with high school and middle school students who help as mentors, coaches, teammates and friends to the athletes.

The Allen Park Unified Sports basketball program started in November 2022, and joined Lincoln Park, Woodhaven-Brownstown, Wyandotte, and Carlson in the first year of Downriver competition. Allen Park's Unified Sports program has since expanded to include bowling in the fall and track and field in the spring.

"This program has been an incredible success story in so many ways," said Dr. Matt Sokol, special education director for Allen Park Public Schools. "The student-athletes feel a sense of belonging and pride in representing Allen Park. The student mentors do a tremendous job of supporting our student-athletes and form strong bonds with them that otherwise may not have happened."

And then there is the pure excitement and joy that comes with friendly competition with your fellow students, and are clearly "unifying" events for everyone involved.

"The games themselves are electric and the parent/community involvement has been very strong," said Dr. Sokol, who thanked the amazing efforts of coaches Chrissie Forth, Laura Beals, Caryl Dazer and Harriet Theise (bowling) along with AHS Athletic Director Jimmy Victor. "Without them, none of this would be possible. I'm very proud that we've been able to weave this in as part of the culture here in Allen Park."

Forth, who took over as coach of the basketball program for the 2025-2026 season, is an Autism Spectrum Disorder classroom teacher at Lindemann Elementary.

"As a unified basketball coach, you walk into the gym expecting to teach the game, but very quickly you realize the game is teaching all of us," said Forth, who had two assistant coaches, Beals (a paraprofessional in her classroom) and Dazer (an adapted PE teacher for APPS). "The first thing you notice is joy. The smiles when a shot goes up, the cheers from teammates on the bench, the pride on their faces when they're encouraged and celebrated by their peers.

"Our team brings together special education and general education students, and what happens on the court is something special," Forth added. "You see genuine connections form – high-fives after missed shots, teammates lifting each other up and moments where support matters more than the outcome. Those interactions carry far beyond the gym."

This season Allen Park had 22 players on the team, including 14 athletes and eight peers. They played other unified basketball teams from neighboring districts such as Woodhaven, Wyandotte, Lincoln Park, Southgate and Carlson, and attended a unified basketball clinic hosted by Woodhaven-Brownstown School District.

The Allen Park team also participated in a unified basketball tournament hosted by the Lincoln Park Unified Basketball program (full day), with games against the same districts, skills competitions, a unified cheer performance and a dance party.

"The entire experience is incredibly uplifting," Forth said. "Families fill the stands, the community shows up with open hearts and the energy in the room is unlike anything else. There's a shared understanding that this is about belonging. Every athlete is seen. Every athlete matters.

"Watching our players grow in confidence, celebrate each other's successes and play with pure joy is a reminder of why programs like unified basketball are so important. These moments stay with you. Long after the final buzzer, the feeling remains – and it's something truly unforgettable."





ALLEN PARK WRESTLING

The Goal is to Make Good People

By Terry Jacoby

LIKE Vince Lombardi with the Green Bay Packers and John Wooden with UCLA, the name Bob Loyd will always be connected with Allen Park wrestling. Loyd, who was involved with Allen Park wrestling from 1982 until his passing in 2019, served as an assistant and/or head coach at the middle school and high school for decades.

One of Bob's former wrestlers at AP was his son, Dan, who became the head coach of the boys program in 2015. Bob would be proud of his son, who also was instrumental in building the girls program. In 2023-24, the school board approved a paid coaching position for girls wrestling.

Last season, the Jaguars qualified eight girls to the MHSAA regional tournament and four girls to the state meet at Ford Field. This season, Mike Farkas is the head coach of the AP wrestling program while Dan Loyd is the girls' head coach – and the team is on pace for another strong showing.

Senior Brynna Alwell is ranked in the top 10 in the state, at 145 pounds, and joined wrestling because it's one of the few sports where you are alone in the fight.

"You are the beholder of what happens at the end of the match," she said.

"This team is very important to me. These girls care about one another, and they've got my back when things are rough."

Alwell has big plans when it comes to wrestling – and Allen Park.

"I'd really like to wrestle competitively in college," she said. "Then I hope to one day come back and take over the girls program. I think it would be a really great full circle moment for me, to come back and continue what Coach Loyd has started."

For junior Jozlyn Colón, stepping onto the mat and learning wrestling "felt like learning a foreign language."

"Last year I was extremely nervous to join wrestling because I thought it was

so intimidating," said Colón, who wrestles this year at 130 pounds. "What truly made me commit to wrestling was Coach Loyd. He believed in my potential even when I didn't believe in myself. He doesn't treat us differently based on wins or losses. He treats us like his own kids."

Colón hopes to wrestle in college and continue pushing herself to be better every day.

"Wrestling is the only sport where I didn't just find a team, I found a family," she said.

Junior Paige Young, who wrestles at 140 pounds, is proud to be a Jaguar.

"Part of the fun is watching my teammates hit their goals and become better wrestlers," she said. "This year we have had 10-plus new girls and helping them and watching them grow as a wrestler and a teammate has been amazing to watch."

Cameron Maldonado is another AP wrestler currently ranked among the best in the state.

"I started wrestling during my junior year and immediately loved the Allen Park wrestling family I was welcomed into, and the constant learning and becoming better that wrestling is centered around," said Maldonado, a senior who wrestles at 170 pounds. "This team has taught me that the relationships formed in a positive team environment can help you grow through any and every difficult obstacle. This team has shown me how women in every sport deserve their own space, to have their own voices heard, and respect for the work they put forward."

And all of that "feeling they belong" philosophy starts at the top.

Loyd said, "every time I'm on a wrestling mat, I'm with my dad."

"Every year my dad would give a speech about how wrestling made him who he was," Dan said. "To that point, from my dad's example I've always emphasized that my goal is to make good people. If I make a couple of good wrestlers in the process, that's a bonus."



(Left to right) Jozlyn Colon, Alyssa McCaffrey and Paige Young.

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North Pointe IB, K-5 Primary Years Program
18635 Bowie Street, Southgate, MI
734-282-2861
northpointe.southgateschools.com

Davidson Middle Academy*
14101 Leroy, Southgate, MI
734-339-6624
http://davidsonma.southgateschools.com

*This school is pursuing authorization as an IB school. Candidate status gives no guarantee that authorization will be granted. For further information about the IB and its programmes, visit www.ibo.org.



Titan Spring Break 2026

Enrichment Camps, March 30 - April 2

Offerings at Fordline Elementary School

The K-5 camps are FREE to Southgate Community School District students and \$30 a day for all other attendees.

The camps run from 9:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. Campers must provide their own lunch. Latch-Key before and after camps can be selected during registration for an additional fee.

Grades K-2

Monsters Inc And More Camp

Monday, March 30

We love our monsters! Come to our camp full of monster themed activities and you are sure to have a roaring good time!

A Day With Pete The Cat Camp

Tuesday, March 31

A Day with Pete the Cat is always a groovy adventure, filled with a rock-and-roll attitude and a positive outlook!

Rhyme Time Camp

Wednesday, April 1

Get ready for camp, it'll soon be here. Meeting new friends gives us reason to cheer. If you like to learn and have so much fun, Rhyme Time Camp is definitely the one.

Beach Day Camp

Thursday, April 2

Leave the cold behind and bring the summer spirit indoors! Get ready to make waves and dive into learning fun!

Grades 3-5

Camp Hogwarts

Monday, March 30

Have you been waiting for your letter to a school of magic? This is your chance. Enter a world of mystery and adventure at our Camp Hogwarts.

Challenge Camp

Tuesday, March 31

Do you have what it takes to overcome an obstacle, solve a puzzle or master the game? Bring your problem solving skills and creativity to Challenge Camp, a launchpad for imagination.

Camp LOL

Wednesday, April 1

What better time than April Fool's Day for a camp all about laughing. Explore the hilarious world of wordplay and riddles. It will be a pun-tastic good time.

Beach Day Camp

Thursday, April 2

Leave the cold behind and bring the summer spirit indoors! Get ready to make waves and dive into learning fun!

**REGISTER
TODAY!**

camps.southgateschools.com



Camp Questions: Beth Hinzmann, 734-339-6681 or hinzmannb@sgate.k12.mi.us

Latch-Key Questions: April Roberts, 734-339-6443 or robertsa1@sgate.k12.mi.us



AROUND Allen Park

March – June



- The Allen Park Downtown Development Authority (DDA) is launching a brand-new Block Party event series. The events will take place on the first and third Thursday of each month, beginning May 7 through October 15. Each date will feature its own unique theme and will include family-friendly activities, curated vendors, live music, and food and drinks. A complete list of event themes and dates can be found at: www.downtownallenpark.org

ONGOING

- The 2026 Allen Park Farmer's Market will open on May 1 and take place every Friday through October 23 from 3-7 p.m., at the corner of Park Avenue and Philomene Boulevard. The market will be closed on May 22, July 3 and September 4. For more information, visit www.downtownallenpark.org.

MARCH

March 31

Author Talk: Nina Innsted

6-7 p.m.

Allen Park Public Library
8100 Allen Road

Join author *Nina Innsted* as she discusses her newly published book, *"Unsolved Michigan"* during this free event. No registration required. Visit www.allenparklibrary.org for more information.

PLEASE NOTE: Event details may have changed. Please check event website or social pages for the most up-to-date information.

JUNE

June 5-7

St. Frances Cabrini Festival

9000 Laurence Avenue
Save the dates for the annual festival featuring fun for the whole community. Enjoy food, games, music and more. For more information, visit www.cabriniparish.org.

June 18

Chrome and Classics Car Show

4-9 p.m.

The free, family-friendly event will be back this year along Allen Road, showcasing a variety of classic and custom vehicles in the heart of the city. Car exhibitors can enter at Roosevelt and Allen roads at 2 p.m. For more information, visit www.downtownallenpark.org.



ALLEN PARK HISTORICAL MUSEUM GRAND OPENING & RIBBON CUTTING

THE HISTORICAL COMMISSION WOULD LIKE TO INVITE ALLEN PARK RESIDENTS AND SPECIAL GUESTS TO COME CELEBRATE WITH US AND SEE THE NEWLY RENOVATED MUSEUM

May
Saturday 30 2026

12:00 PM WELCOME
1:00 PM RIBBON CUTTING

REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED

15504 ENGLEWOOD AVE
ALLEN PARK, MI 48101



Allen Park Update

Home values in Allen Park remain strong, with most homes currently selling between \$170,000 – \$260,000 and the median price around \$209,000, up roughly 4–5% from last year. Homes are typically selling in about 25–44 days, showing steady buyer demand despite limited inventory.



9804 Hubert, Allen Park
Sold for \$220,000
with an over asking offer!

CENTURY 21
Curran & Oberski

8054 Robinson, Allen Park
Sold for \$215,000
pending within 4 days!

The logo for Jackie Cone Realtor features a stylized house outline in gold above the name "Jackie Cone" in a cursive font, with "REALTOR" in a smaller, sans-serif font below it.



313-999-3983
Jackieconecc21@gmail.com

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Hours of Operation: Mon - Fri: 8:00AM - 5:00PM | Saturday: 8:00AM - 2:00PM

