

The City Newsletter

Elmhurst

February 2004

Issue 1



T.I.F. Districts

A Community Development Tool

What exactly is Tax Increment Financing?

T.I.F. is a tool used by local government to fund public investment in a particular area slated for redevelopment. The establishment of a T.I.F. District allows the City to capture, for a designated time period, the increased tax revenues that result if the redevelopment stimulates private investment in the area. Private investment contributes to a higher tax base within the area and the increased tax revenues are placed in a special fund earmarked for certain public purposes, as permitted by law. Tax Increment Financing provides local government a way to revitalize the community without imposing increased property taxes on the entire community. The establishment of a T.I.F. District also offsets, in part, the federal and state funds no longer available to communities.

Where are the T.I.F. Districts in Elmhurst located?

Elmhurst's first T.I.F. District (T.I.F. I) was established in 1986 in the Central Business District. T.I.F. II was created in 1993 in the Lake Street area in north Elmhurst and T.I.F. III in 1996 in the area of Illinois Route 83 and St. Charles Road.

How does T.I.F. work?

A number of steps are involved in Tax Increment Financing:

- A potential T.I.F. District is identified based on certain criteria, such as age and obsolescence of structures, deterioration, code violations, inadequate utilities, lack of community planning, etc.
- A redevelopment plan is adopted, including such goals as property acquisition; renovation of existing buildings; construction of infrastructure improvements; architectural, engineering, legal, marketing and financial planning; demolition and site preparation; etc.
- The tax base is frozen at the most recent equalized assessed value (EAV) and the incremental tax (the difference between the frozen tax base and subsequent EAV increases due to the T.I.F.) is collected and used for further improvements.

Character Counts in Elmhurst

Not Just for Kids

The nationwide character development initiative, Character Counts!, has been adopted by the Elmhurst community. Character Counts in Elmhurst seeks to integrate the core ethical values of trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship into government, schools, sports, religious institutions and the business community. In Elmhurst, the goal is for citizens of all ages to know, understand and implement these six pillars in their lives and interactions with others.

The Character Counts in Elmhurst coalition includes the City of Elmhurst, Elmhurst School District 205, the Elmhurst Park District, the Elmhurst Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Elmhurst Public Library and many other individuals, businesses and organizations interested in promoting character-building in the community. The City officially kicked off the program in Elmhurst by proclaiming the month of October 2003 as Character Counts in Elmhurst month. Since then, the coalition and its members have initiated a number of programs and events to involve both children and adults in activities and special events that build character awareness. The following list includes a few of the many exciting developments in Character Counts in Elmhurst:

- A speaker's bureau provides suggestions to local organizations, businesses and groups for incorporating the six pillars into their activities.
- A photography contest for children and adults encourages contestants to think about the six pillar words, what they mean to the individual and how

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- When the T.I.F. is terminated, all taxing bodies receive tax revenue based on the full value of the improved properties.

What effects does the establishment of T.I.F. have on the redevelopment area, on homeowners within the community and on other taxing bodies?

- Blighted conditions in the redevelopment area are addressed. The EAV within the T.I.F. District increases and private investment is encouraged.
- The effect on homeowners is neutral in the short term, but in the long term, higher EAV within the City lessens the tax burden for individual property owners.
- Other taxing bodies, including school districts, park districts and libraries, may experience a modest loss in inflationary growth initially as they continue to receive tax revenue on the base EAV. In the long term, all taxing bodies benefit from increased tax revenue based on a healthier tax base.

What has been accomplished in the City's T.I.F. Districts?

- In T.I.F. I, increment funds have been used for streetscape improvements, facade renovation, additional parking, property acquisition, professional services, etc. Future projects will include additional streetscape work,

parking lot and parking deck improvements, utility upgrades, facade grants to business owners and retail business grants to encourage economic growth. Private investment in this area has led to the construction of a number of retail, commercial and multi-family residential projects. T.I.F. I experienced a 177.3% increase in EAV between 1985 and 2002. (Prior to the T.I.F. implementation and City action, the Central Business District EAV actually decreased in some years.) Retail sales have increased by over \$11 million during that time.

- The T.I.F. II area has seen the construction of a new hotel, a new car dealership, a bank and a number of other businesses in the last ten years. Improvements have been made in streetlighting, roads and other types of infrastructure. The area experienced a 160.4% overall growth in EAV between 1992 and 2002. Retail sales almost tripled during that time and over \$98,000 in hotel tax revenue was generated in fiscal year 2002-03 alone.
- T.I.F. III has experienced an impressive amount of private side development since its inception. The relocation of the City's public works facility made land available for a new grocery store and a number of other successful businesses. The demolition of the old grocery store and a large lumber/hardware store freed space for the construction of two large retail businesses. T.I.F. III experienced a 198.9% growth in EAV from 1995 to 2002. Retail sales increased from \$38 million in 1996 to over \$83 million in 2002.

The bottom line is that Tax Increment Financing benefits the residents, the taxing bodies and the business community of Elmhurst. T.I.F. finances upgrades to critical infrastructure systems, stimulates private investment in the community, increases EAV citywide, thereby lessening the tax burden for individual property owners, and increases revenues in the long run for all the community's taxing bodies.



Character Counts

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they might be pictured through the art of photography.

- The winter reading program at the Elmhurst Public Library includes a large selection of books featuring "characters with character," whose actions reflect the "Six Pillars of Character."
- Classroom discussions in District 205 schools highlight the core ethical values, and the principles of Character Counts are emphasized through assemblies, skits, songs, banners, activities and even the "Character Counts! Shuffle."
- The Board of Directors of the Chamber of Commerce has endorsed the program, contributed financially to the cause and encourages its members

to sign an agreement to run their businesses in accordance with the six core values.

- Plans are being put in place by the Elmhurst Park District to incorporate Character Counts into their daily programming and preschool curriculum, and to funnel information about the program to affiliate groups involved with recreational programming.
- All Elmhurst police officers have received training in the principles behind Character Counts and an awareness of their responsibility to lead by example. By the very nature of their duties, Elmhurst police officers demonstrate the six pillars of character on a daily basis.

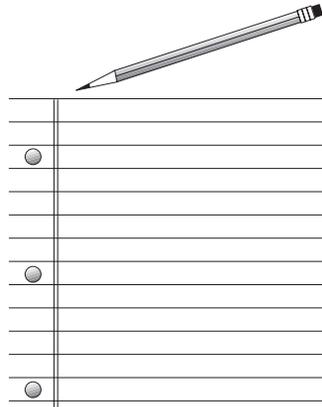
For more information about how you, your organization or your business can get involved in Character Counts in Elmhurst, visit www.charactercountsinelmhurst.org or call 516-8869.



The Wearing of the Green

Whether you're as Irish as Paddy's Pig or just Irish for one day each year, be sure to mark your calendar now so you won't miss the eighth annual St. Patrick's Day Parade. This popular event will begin at noon on Saturday, March 13. Elmhurst's parade has grown immensely since its modest beginnings and is now the third largest in the Chicagoland area, annually attracting crowds of over 10,000 spectators. Bring the family and share the fun with leprechauns and beautiful Irish dancers, bagpipers and clowns, and much, much more. For more information, check the St. Patrick's Day Parade website at www.elmhurststpatparade.com or call Julie and Mike Wagner, co-chairpersons at 832-3805.

Citizen Survey: A Valuable "Snapshot"



Every two years the City of Elmhurst mails citizen surveys to a cross section of Elmhurst residents. Information shared with City staff by survey respondents provides a valuable "snapshot" of their priorities, concerns and impressions of their hometown. This information is used by elected officials and staff to better meet the needs of the community. The 2004 survey will be sent to approximately 1,600 residents early this summer. If you receive a survey, you may fill it out by hand or follow the instructions to complete it online. Please remember that your opinions are important and they make a difference in the services provided by the City. Many respondents to the 2002 survey indicated an interest in using credit cards to pay for City utilities, vehicle stickers and other city obligations. As a result, the City initiated a three-phase program last year to achieve that goal. Credit cards are now accepted in person at City Hall or residents can elect to have their bimonthly utility bill deducted directly from their bank account. Surveys conducted in past years have resulted in the implementation of a number of other programs, including an ongoing anti-speeding program, taping of City Council meetings, the annual "Spring Clean-Up" (see article on page 9) and traffic signal modernization (see article at right).

St. Charles Road Traffic Signal Interconnect



Motorists may have already noticed an improvement in travel times on St. Charles Road as a result of a traffic signal interconnection project. The project was made possible by the DuPage Mayors and Managers Conference, the DuPage County Traffic Division, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and the communities of Elmhurst, Villa Park, Lombard and Naperville. The project's goal was to reduce the travel time required to pass through the respective communities, utilizing the St. Charles Road corridor. (75th Street in Naperville was also included in the project.)

The traffic signals from Fair Avenue in Elmhurst to Westmore-Meyers Road in Lombard were interconnected using fiber optic cable. The intersection at Route 83 and two signals on Route 83 north of St. Charles Road were also connected to the system. The coordinated traffic signals improve traffic flow through the corridor. The result is that drivers are experiencing fewer delays along St. Charles Road. Before the project began, it took motorists 10 to 20 minutes to travel the St. Charles Road corridor, depending on the direction and time of travel. After the project was completed, the travel time was reduced by a little more than a minute for eastbound traffic during the morning rush hour, and more significantly, by nearly nine minutes for motorists driving west during the evening rush hour.

The most difficult task for engineers proved to be coordinating the St. Charles Road corridor with Route 83. The cycle length (the time for the lights to change from red to green) for Route 83 is longer than required for the St. Charles Road corridor. The St. Charles Road signal coordination was based on the Route 83 timings. This temporarily caused long wait times for the side streets in Elmhurst. As a result, the signals in residential areas were modified to function on half cycles to provide better traffic flow from the neighborhoods. Interagency communication and cooperation was crucial to the successful completion of the project. In fact, the project was so successful that the same effort is being considered in different areas countywide. During 2004, DuPage County will begin an 18-month Transportation Coordination Initiative to analyze the county and prioritize the areas that would benefit most from coordinated traffic lights.



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Honoring Youth Volunteers

An exceptional group of young people will be recognized by the City Council and the Elmhurst Commission on Youth at a reception and ceremony on Monday, May 3. These youth have distinguished themselves by sharing their time and talents through voluntary service in the community. To qualify, applicants must live within School District 205 boundaries and must be between 12 and 18 years of age. Nomination forms have been mailed to local schools, youth groups, service organizations, local businesses and community leaders. They are also available at the Mayor/City Manager's office in City Hall. The submission deadline is March 4. For more information, please contact Elmhurst Youth Coordinator, Rebecca Berg, at the Elmhurst YMCA at 834-9200.

Citizens Police Academy

Would you like to know more about how the police process a crime scene? How about some hands-on experience in dusting for fingerprints, defensive tactics and hostage negotiations? Would you like to know more about one of the nation's fastest growing crimes – identify theft? The Police Department has a perfect opportunity for you to find answers to these questions and many more. The Citizens Police Academy provides an opportunity to learn firsthand about police work. This free, 13-week program is offered twice a year and gives participants a working knowledge of the Elmhurst Police Department and law enforcement in general. The program's goals are to improve communication, confidence and cooperation between the police and the community. The program is limited to 25 students per session and there are still openings in the class scheduled to begin on March 4, 2004. One block of instruction will be offered each Thursday from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m., with each block providing hands-on training and an in-depth look at a particular division within the department. To qualify, you must be 21 years of age or older, either live or work in Elmhurst and pass a background check. For more information or to obtain an application, contact Sergeant Robert Nicholas at 530-3057.



Mayor's Message



I would like to congratulate two members of our excellent Police Department here in Elmhurst: Dominic Panico and Dan Terry, who were promoted at a recent City Council meeting. Dominic Panico was sworn in as Deputy Chief, while Dan Terry has moved up to the position of Sergeant. We appreciate these two fine individuals and all of the people who staff our Police Department. Day in and day out they work diligently to make Elmhurst a safe place to live and work.

As you probably know, the opinions of our residents and businesspeople are extremely important as we plan for the future. This summer, the City will be sending out another public opinion survey to a randomly selected cross-section of residents. If you receive one, please take the time to fill it out and return it to City Hall. Your feedback is critically important to your elected officials and staff in allocating our limited resources.

In order to facilitate traffic flow through Elmhurst and our neighboring communities — Villa Park and Lombard — the City recently worked with these municipalities, as well as the DuPage Mayors and Managers Conference, the DuPage County Traffic Division and the Illinois Department of Transportation, to coordinate traffic signals along the St. Charles Rd. corridor. It was the goal of this project to create a more consistent flow of traffic and improve travel times. Hopefully, the project will also reduce the number of motorists cutting through our residential neighborhoods on side streets. Remember, "It's Our Town, Please Slow Down."

Lastly, I'd like to invite everyone to come on over to Spring Road for our fabulous St. Patrick's Day Parade on Saturday, March 13. This year, we'll be honoring Elmhurst resident and American Legion member, Bill Ralston, the man behind our ever-popular Memorial Day Parade and programs. Please join me for the "Wearin' of the Green," always an exciting family event.

Mayor Thomas D. Marcucci



City Vehicle Stickers



Residents are reminded that a vehicle sticker must be purchased and displayed on every vehicle registered or housed within City of Elmhurst corporate limits.

To avoid potential penalties, the new sticker must be bought and affixed to the vehicle by May 1st each year. Stickers will be sold at a discounted price from March 1st through April 30th. Beginning on May 1st, stickers will be sold at full price. The money collected by the sale of vehicle stickers goes into the City's General Fund and is earmarked for roadway maintenance and construction.

If you do not receive an application by mail, you may print one from the City's website (www.elmhurst.org), pick one up at City Hall or call to have one mailed. To save time and avoid waiting in long lines, residents are encouraged to mail the completed application and fee to City Hall, or drop it in the white drop box in the parking lot. Your vehicle sticker and receipt will be returned by mail. You may also purchase your sticker in person at City Hall. If your vehicle license number changed when you obtained your new Illinois license plates, please notify the City so that vehicle sticker records can be updated. Call 530-3118 for more information.

Yard Waste Pickup

Yard waste collection for residents living within Elmhurst city limits will resume on your regular refuse collection day during the week of April 1st. Yard waste includes leaves, brush, shrubbery trimmings, twigs, dead flowers and weeds (with soil removed). Sod, rocks, earth, vegetable plants and fruit are not considered yard waste and should be included with other refuse. Yard waste may be put in 30-gallon brown Kraft paper bags or in 33-gallon garbage cans clearly marked "Yard Waste Only." Labels are available at the Public Works counter in City Hall. The bags or cans may not weigh more than 50 pounds. One clearly visible yard waste sticker is required for each bag or container. In addition, a maximum of two bundles of brush will be picked up each week at no extra cost. Brush bundles may not exceed four feet in length or weigh more than 50 pounds each. Branches may not exceed four inches in diameter.



Annual Spring Clean-Up



The fourth annual city-wide Spring Clean-Up will be held during the second week in May, on either Wednesday, May 12th; Thursday, May 13th; or Friday, May 14th – whichever is your regular refuse collection day. On your Spring Clean-Up day, BFI will collect furniture, appliances, fixtures, carpet, construction and demolition debris (up to two cubic yards) and bulk items. Stickers are not required for this special pickup. Yard waste, tires, car batteries, riding lawn mowers, liquids and hazardous materials are not accepted during Spring Clean-Up. (This service is available to all residents within incorporated City limits.)

Senior Health and Safety Fair

The annual Senior Health and Safety Fair, sponsored by the Elmhurst Senior Citizens Commission and the City of Elmhurst, will be held on Saturday, April 24th, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at its new location – York High School Commons. The fair will include free blood pressure, vision, hearing and glucose (diabetes) screenings. Individuals who wish to participate in the \$20 comprehensive cholesterol screening (HDL, LDL and triglycerides) will need to fast for 12 hours prior to the test and call CareMatch at 782-7878 to pre-register. Osteoporosis screenings will be offered for a \$5 charge. Call the Abbey at 993-8989 to register. The fair will also include refreshments, informative exhibits, timely presentations and information on volunteer opportunities. Bring your used eyeglasses and hearing aids for donation to the needy. For more details, watch for a fair flyer in your utility bill or check the local newspapers.

Senior Chore Days

The City of Elmhurst and the DuPage Senior Citizens Council will again sponsor Senior Chore Days this spring. The program's goals are to assist eligible Elmhurst seniors with spring yard work and provide volunteer opportunities for Elmhurst residents and organizations. Chore Days will be held during the first three weekends in May. Interested seniors and volunteers will arrange dates and times that are convenient for both. Please call Hina Patel at the DuPage Senior Citizens Council at 620-0804 for more information.

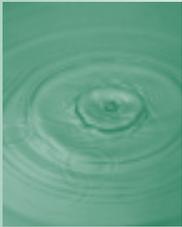


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2004 Fire Hydrant Flushing Schedule

The City of Elmhurst Public Works Department will begin the annual hydrant flushing program on April 5, 2004. The hydrant flushing operations will take place Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Flushing operations will be completed over a four-week period.

Water Distribution Reliability



During the coming construction season, the DuPage Water Commission will begin

one of its final major projects – connecting the southwest transmission water main (under Butterfield Road in Elmhurst), the northwest transmission water main (located under the Prairie Path in Elmhurst) and the new “Inner Loop Water Main,” proposed for the east side of Route 83. The Inner Loop line will connect the southwest water main at Butterfield Road and Route 83, and the northwest water main at Randolph Street and West Avenue.

This important infrastructure improvement project will ensure the water distribution system’s reliability in DuPage County. The county’s distribution system is designed as a loop. If one portion of the loop is out of service, the system can be seriously stressed and may not be capable of meeting peak demand in some parts of the county. The inner loop main will enhance the ability of the commission to ensure adequate amounts of water, even with a part of the distribution loop out of service.

The construction route will go north from Dorchester Avenue and Route 83 Frontage Road along the frontage road to the Elmhurst Wastewater Plant. At that point, the water main will be installed in a tunnel going under Salt Creek and ending at the Prairie Path at Randolph and West.

The City and the DuPage Water Commission will work together during this important construction project to minimize disruptions and provide convenient detour routes for affected residents and businesses.



Stranger at the Door?



Do you automatically open your door whenever the doorbell rings or someone knocks, or do you check the window or peephole before opening the door? The Elmhurst Police would like to remind residents of a few safety precautions:

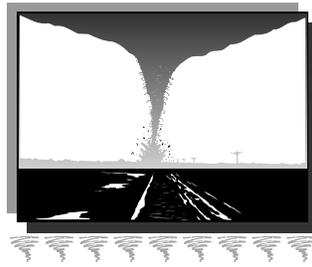
- Always check the peephole or window before opening the door. If you are uncomfortable or suspicious of the person at the door, keep the door closed and call 9-1-1. The police are happy to respond and they encourage residents to call immediately.

- Instruct children to never open the door to a stranger.
- Always keep your screen or storm doors locked.
- If you do not want solicitors knocking at your door, stop by City Hall for a free “NO SOLICITORS” sticker to put on the door.

Remember – you don’t have to answer the door. The choice is yours, and if you feel the least bit uncomfortable, call 9-1-1 right away.

Tornado Season – Be Prepared

Springtime in the Midwest is also tornado season. A tornado is a violently rotating column of air generated by a severe thunderstorm. Severe tornados can generate winds of 250 miles per hour or greater, and although they normally touch down only briefly, they can be very costly in terms of personal injury and property damage. The best way to protect yourself and your family is to be informed and be prepared. Discuss the facts about tornados with your family. Conduct regular tornado drills and make sure all family members know exactly what to do during an actual tornado.



During tornado season, it is important to be alert to changing weather conditions and reports that warn of tornado activity in the area. If a tornado is sighted nearby, or if you hear a tornado siren or a severe weather warning, stay calm and take cover immediately. The safest place to

be during a tornado is in a basement, or if you are not able to get to a basement, in an interior room or hallway away from windows. If you are outdoors and hear the tornado siren or see an approaching funnel cloud, take shelter immediately. If there is no building nearby, lie flat on the ground in a low spot.

To alert the community of an approaching tornado, the City of Elmhurst has six radio-controlled outdoor severe

weather warning sirens designed to provide the earliest possible warning. The sirens are strategically located throughout the community to provide maximum coverage. The sirens are sounded if the National Weather Service issues a tornado warning for DuPage County and if the storm poses a threat to Elmhurst, or if an actual tornado or funnel cloud is sighted in Elmhurst or traveling in this direction. Take shelter and monitor the situation by listening to radio, television or NOAA Weather Radio updates. Do not call the Fire Department or the Police Department for information. If these departments are inundated with non-emergency calls during an actual tornado, they will be severely limited in their ability to respond to potentially life-threatening situations. Use the telephone only for emergency calls.

In conjunction with the State of Illinois ESDA (Emergency Services and Disaster Agency), the first week in March has been designated as Tornado Preparedness Week. During this week, schools conduct take-cover drills, and review and update their disaster plans. Thousands of pieces of literature on storm safety are distributed through local stores and schools. Films and talks on tornado safety are provided in schools and for civic or

business groups. A skywatcher class for tornado observers is also conducted. Elmhurst ESDA has a volunteer squad whose training includes weather spotting, first aid and rescue. All members carry alert radios so they can be quickly alerted in times of severe weather or whenever their services are required. The City also has a working agreement with the York Radio Club whose members serve on a volunteer basis as Sky Watch personnel during severe weather.

Remember – the best way to protect yourself and your family during a tornado is to be informed and prepared ahead of time.

“Conduct regular tornado drills and make sure all family members know exactly what to do during an actual tornado.”

February 2004

City of Elmhurst

209 N. York St., Elmhurst, IL 60126
(630) 530-3000

Website homepage: <http://www.elmhurst.org>
Email: webmaster@elmhurst.org

City Hall Hours:
Monday - Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
(Finance Department counter open
1st & 3rd Mondays until 7:00 p.m.)

Thomas D. Marcucci, Mayor
Janet S. Edgley, City Clerk
David Dyer, City Treasurer

Aldermen

1st Ward - Michael J. Regan, Paul Fichtner
2nd Ward - David S. Noffs, Janice A. Vanek
3rd Ward - Michael Bram, Susan J. Rose
4th Ward - John E. Gow, Brad Walsh
5th Ward - James J. Parker, Phillip D. Jordan
6th Ward - George Szczepaniak, Stephen G. Hillsman
7th Ward - Charles R. Mueller, Mark A. Mulliner





The Historical Museum *Bringing History to Life*

Celebrate Women's History Month!

Mark your calendar for Thursday, March 4, and attend a special reception at the Museum for viewing the exhibit, "The First Ladies of Elmhurst." Special exhibit tours with the curator will highlight some of the special artifacts and stories of women important in Elmhurst history. A first person reenactment of one of Elmhurst's "First Ladies" will take place between 6 and 7 p.m. The Museum will also offer light refreshments. We hope you will join us in commemorating the women who helped shape Elmhurst.

Ruth Strand Memorial Contests

The museum and the Elmhurst Historical Museum Foundation are announcing the second year of two contests celebrating the life and memory of Ruth Strand, beloved Elmhurst librarian and noted local history author. Winners of an essay contest for high school juniors and seniors living in

Elmhurst or attending Elmhurst high schools will receive one of two financial scholarships. There is also a local history poster competition for Elmhurst 3rd graders and the winner will ride in the Memorial Day parade. Deadlines are April 12 for the essay contest and May 14 for the poster contest. Call the Elmhurst Historical Museum Education Coordinator at 833-1457 for more information.

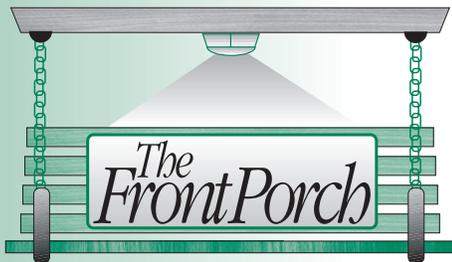
Elmhurst Museum Day

Visit the community's fine museums free of charge on Elmhurst Museum Day, Sunday, May 16, from 1 to 5 p.m. The Elmhurst Art Museum, the Elmhurst Historical Museum, the Lizzadro Museum of Lapidary Art and the Theatre Historical Society of America will offer special activities for adults and children. A free trolley bus will provide transportation between museums. Please call any of the museums for more information about International Museum Day or about their regularly scheduled exhibits and programs.



Day Off? Drop In!

Visit the museum for special activities on certain Fridays when District 205 is not in session. Bring your children on Friday, March 19, for a free program on origami and folded paper tricks. Friday, April 2, should be a perfect day to make and fly a kite. Call 833-1457 to reserve your spot at 1:00, 2:00 or 3:00 p.m. The cost is \$3 per child. Day Off? Drop In! programs require an adult to accompany children. (More children's programs are listed on the enclosed Community Calendar insert.)



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