



# Elm Grove NEWS- INDEPENDENT



Vol. 16 No. 5

Serving Elm Grove, Wisconsin & Neighboring Communities

January 2026

*Freedom of the Press is Essential. Community News Matters.*

**JANUARY 14, 2026**

The Village of Elm Grove's **71<sup>st</sup> Anniversary** of Incorporation

## Elm Grove Library

### Director Retires

By Lisabeth Passalis-Bain

[elmgrovenews@yahoo.com](mailto:elmgrovenews@yahoo.com)

A lively gathering of relatives, friends, current and past colleagues, Village officials, Friends of the Elm Grove Library, community members, and the press attended a special after-hours party at the Elm Grove Public Library on December 19 to honor and thank **Sarah Muench** for her 21 years of dedicated service, as a Reference Librarian (2004-2006), Technical Services and Reference Librarian (2006-2014), Interim Director (during 2007 and 2014), and Library Director, (September 2014–January 2, 2026).

Sarah's favorite memories include:

- "Trying to corner a chipmunk in the front hallway and shoo it outside.
- Holding a Kate Chopin book that was published in her lifetime.
- Good laughs with library and village colleagues.
- Hiring fantastic library staff who work well together.
- Seeing large groups of attendees enjoying themselves at library programs.
- Good collaborative meetings with library board presidents.
- Shopping the FOEGL book sales.
- The 'YES!' feeling of getting the financials reconciled each month before the library board meeting.
- Delivering books to a special homebound patron.



Photo by Lisabeth Passalis-Bain / The News-Independent

**Sarah Muench** reacts with delight as Village Manager **Tom Harrigan** reads a proclamation honoring her many years of service to our community.

- The pleasure of walking around the pond and park: smelling the scents of native wildflowers, seeing a muskrat swimming, hearing from migrators singing in the spring and summer, seeing turtles piled up on a platform to get the sun, feeling the benefit of being in nature and getting exercise."

(See SARAH MUENCH – Page 2)

### New Elm Grove Library & Recreation Directors Named

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HAPPY  
NEW YEAR!

"I Know Where You Live!"



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Profile: Sue Daniels

Director – Elm Grove Public Library (as of January 2, 2026)



\***Job Duties:** The Library Director is responsible for the overall management of the library but also purchasing materials and serving the public. (Previously, I was the Assistant Director and Head of Youth Services and have provided youth services for the last 20 years.)

\***Education:** My undergrad degree is from UW and I am still a Badger fan, but my library degree (MLIS) is from UW-Milwaukee.

\***What influenced your interest in your current profession?** I didn’t consider a career as a librarian until after I had tried some other fields. A friend told me about librarianship because she was pursuing a library degree herself, so I looked into it. I’m a lifelong library user and reader, and was influenced by an elementary school librarian early in my reading life, so it seemed like a logical fit.

\***Favorite subjects to read about:** Historical Fiction and mysteries are my favorite fiction genres, but I also enjoy non-fiction history.

\***Past and present communities of residence:** I grew up in a military family and have lived on both coasts, but I’ve spent most of my life in Wisconsin, first in the Madison area and now here.

\***Message to readers:** When you visit the Elm Grove Library, you can expect to continue to find the same friendly, comfortable library you are used to. We will always strive to provide you with the books and materials you need, as well as programs and other innovations when we can. Come see what is new at your library!

Profile: Isabella Naughton

Village of Elm Grove Recreation Manager



\***Job Duties:** As manager, I oversee the planning, development, and delivery of recreation programs, activities, and services that promote community engagement, well-being, and active lifestyles. My role manages staff, budgets, facilities, and partnerships to ensure high-quality, safe, and inclusive recreational experiences.

\***Education:** Brookfield East High School Graduate; University of Wisconsin La-Crosse B.S. Recreation Management- Outdoor; University of Wisconsin La-Crosse M.S. Recreation Management

\***Previous Employment:** 2019-2024 I served in the Wisconsin Army National Guard. In summer of 2023 I worked for the Village as the Recreation Assistant before moving to Alabama for 1 ½ year’s while my husband pursued Army Flight School. There I served as the Special Events Coordinator for Fort Rucker.

\***What influenced your interest in your current profession?** I have always had a love for the outdoors. Going to college and learning that I could play a part in helping to offer recreation and leisure experiences for others, where they can be connected to the outdoors was something I instantly found a passion for. With Mr. Rosa, (Burleigh Elementary physical education teacher) for a father, sports and recreation have always played a large role in my life. This was in part a way that I get to follow in my family’s footsteps.

\***Favorite recreational activities:** I love any opportunity to be outdoors. Hiking, camping, canoeing, having bonfires are all some of my favorite pastimes. I also enjoy spending time with my family, reading and crafting.

\***Past and present communities of residence:** I grew up in the area and attended school in the Elmbrook District. During my college years, lived in La-Crosse WI, before moving to Fort Rucker, Alabama. Last summer, I moved back to WI and my husband and I bought our first home in Wauwatosa.

\***Family:** I met my husband while serving in the Wisconsin Army National Guard. We married in February of 2023. In November of 2024, we welcomed our first child, Maverick. We also have a dog, Ruby.

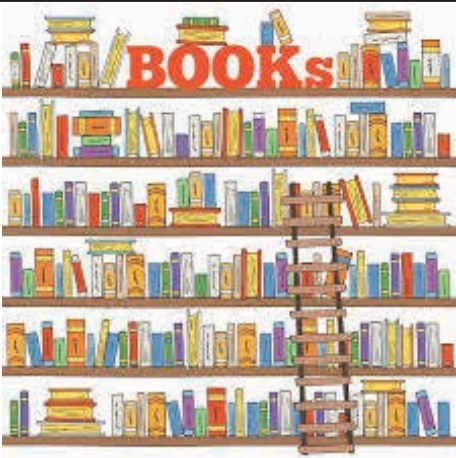
\***Special interests/ hobbies:** My husband and I are homebodies who really enjoy cooking and staying in.

\***Message to readers:** I am looking forward to continuing to provide high quality recreation and leisure services to this community. I am excited to step into the role and even more excited about what is to come. Thank you to those who have warmly welcomed me thus far. I am looking forward to meeting more of you and working with such a supportive and involved community.

SARAH MUENCH (Continued from Page 1)

When asked about her future plans Sarah noted, “I will begin by decompressing. After that, we’ll see! Also, definitely reading for extended and uninterrupted periods of time.”

Sarah’s message to *News-Independent* readers is this: “I have always tried to remember to ‘lead with love’ while working as a manager. A good leader sets a positive tone for the entire organization. It has been my experience that it is best to be honest, earnest, genuine. Also, asking for help can be a difficult thing to learn to do, but it pays off for all involved.”



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# Village Update

By Jim Koleski, Village President / [jikoleski@elmgrovewi.org](mailto:jikoleski@elmgrovewi.org)

Happy New Year!! It is hard to believe it's already 2026. This is a good time to get out and experience the fun activities winter brings to the Village and good luck achieving your New Year's resolutions.



As always, please drive safely as road conditions can change with the wide range in temperatures and the resulting thawing and freezing. Your public works team is staffed and ready to do their best to keep the roads free of hazards. To assist the team do their job effectively, please remember that street parking is not permitted during snow emergencies.

### Retirements

Two long-time members of the Elm Grove Staff are retiring in the New Year.

- **Craig Mayer, Police Detective** After 32 years of service in the Elm Grove Police Department, Craig is retiring. He was instrumental in successfully pursuing fraud, burglary and other crimes across state lines to close these cases. Craig is looking forward to improving his golf game and to his new position in private industry. Huge thank you to Craig!
- **Sarah Muench, Library Director** Sarah is retiring in January upon completion of 21 years of service to our Library, the last 11 as Library Director. Sarah led many of the improvements within the library from improved offering of materials to increasing accessibility to all residents. Many thanks Sarah.

Please join me and wishing them all the best in the next chapter of their life journey.

### Pathway Update

On December 10<sup>th</sup>, the Village had an open house discussing the 30% complete drawings of the Pathway along Highland Road from Gebhardt to Watertown Plank Road on the west side of the street. Many residents shared their input with the Design Team. Major themes included impact of storm water runoff and possible improvements, the need to save as many mature trees as possible and how the project will impact the grading of individual properties. The Drawings are available on the website ([www.elmgrovewi.org](http://www.elmgrovewi.org)) and further discussion of the 60% drawings will occur in February with the objective to release the bid for the project in April or sooner, if possible.

### Daylighting / Public Works and Utilities Committee

The Village's Engineering Firm is finalizing the revised bid documents, and the proposal will be released for bid at the beginning of January with responses due by the end of the month. In an effort to receive the most competitive bid proposals, it is planned to leave the start date flexible. The revised drawings are available on the website. I would like to thank the Committee and Village Staff for the time and talent dedicated to bringing this project to this exciting phase. To be sure, more hard decisions and work lie ahead, but it is rewarding to see the progress.

Another project is getting underway along Watertown Plank Road in 2026. Engineering has commenced on extending the Wauwatosa water main project from approximately Church Street to the CP Rail tracks in front of the BP convenience store. It is expected permits, regulatory approvals and engineering will be completed in 2026, with construction expected in 2027. This project was included in the development agreement for Tax Increment District #3 and will be funded from property taxes from this district.

### Property Tax Payments

A reminder to all residents that the first installment of your property tax bills is due by the end of January. Payments need to be made directly to Waukesha County as no payments will be accepted at Village Hall. Included in the mailing this year was a nice summary of the changes in the Village Budget and the spending increases expected. Thank you to **Crystal Turner**, our Village Clerk, for leading this communication, supported by **Brian Lahey**, Finance Director.

### Caroline Heights Update

As a reminder, as part of the Development Agreement approved in March, 2022 by the Village Board in place at the time, the Village will be paying the Developer \$8.5 million in incentives in January, 2026 as final occupancy has been achieved. This incentive and an additional \$9.8 Million in other non-cash incentives will be achieved by dedicating 100% of property tax revenue generated from the Project and new single-family homes to repay these commitments. Your Board is monitoring the additional service levels from police, EMS, fire and other Staff required to support this project to fully understand the fiscal impact on the Village.



Additionally, many trees were recently removed from the lot on the corner of Watertown Plank Road and Stephens Place. This action was approved as part of the original development agreement in March, 2022. These actions were approved to facilitate single family development. Please know that your Board is working diligently to enforce the landscaping commitments and tree replacements called out in the Project Plan. Additionally, the building board has worked extensively to meld the new project and single-family homes into the existing neighborhood. I will keep everyone posted on further information when available.

*Wishing everyone a healthy and prosperous New Year.*

## Letters to the Editor

**NOTE: Letters (150 words or less) regarding issues of concern to the Elm Grove / Elmbrook / Waukesha County community will be considered for publication on a space-available basis. Submissions must include the writer's name, community of residence, phone #.**

**E-mail: [elmgrovenews@yahoo.com](mailto:elmgrovenews@yahoo.com) (Subject line: Letters to the Editor)**  
**or Mail: EGNI, 14420 Watertown Plank Road, Elm Grove, WI 53122-2423.**

## Business Directory

### NOT LOOKING FOR HEROES, JUST NEIGHBORS

#### ELM GROVE FIRE & EMS DEPARTMENTS

If you've got the heart to serve your community and are looking for a dynamic group of individuals that make up a GREAT team, then we have an opportunity for you!

##### MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

- At least 18 years old
- Have a valid Wisconsin Driver's License
- Live within the department's response area

##### UPON ACCEPTANCE - FIRE

- Attend one semester of Firefighter 1 State Certification course at WCTC or MATC
- Attend Probationary Training held on Tuesday evenings at the Elm Grove Firehouse.



### MEMBERS ARE PAID ON CALL!

##### EMS - BASE REQUIREMENTS

- At least 18 years old
- Have a valid Wisconsin Driver's License
- Live within the department's response area

##### EMS - EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

- Complete Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) or Paramedic courses
- Pass Wisconsin state licensencing certifications
- Attend monthly refresher training sessions at the Elm Grove Fire Department

#### CONTACT CHIEF NAYLOR FOR MORE INFORMATION

262-782-6700 ext. 251      [EGFDchief@elmgrovewi.org](mailto:EGFDchief@elmgrovewi.org)

### \* Insurance

**Woller-Anger, a Relation Company**  
930 Elm Grove Road, Elm Grove, WI 53122  
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"Relationships Matter"

### \* Community Theatre

**Sunset Playhouse, Inc.**  
700 Wall St., Elm Grove  
**(262) 782-4430**  
**SunsetPlayhouse.com**  
"Entertainment Begins at Sunset!"

## Clubs & Organizations Directory



### Elm Grove Golden K Kiwanis Club

**Come Join with Us, Men & Women,** to serve the children of our community. We meet each Friday at 9:30 a.m. in the St. Mary's Senior Center in Elm Grove. We have stimulating speakers each week and offer socializing among all present.

**See us on Facebook**  
**[kiwaniselmgrove@gmail.com](mailto:kiwaniselmgrove@gmail.com)**  
**[www.kiwaniselmgrove.org](http://www.kiwaniselmgrove.org)**

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## In Memoriam



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# Our History: *Remembrances of Things Past*

## The Path to the Village of Elm Grove’s Incorporation

By Stephen K. Hauser

All of Elm Grove was originally part of the 36 square mile Town of Brookfield, extending from County Line Road (now 124<sup>th</sup> Street) on the east to Town Line (Springdale) Road on the west. The Town’s northern border was Lisbon Road and its southern boundary was Greenfield Avenue. Elm Grove, like Goerke’s Corners and Brookfield Junction, was an unincorporated settlement within the Town’s perimeters which had developed its own localized identity over the years.

Early organizational meetings to study Elm Grove incorporation were held at Leland School on Sunnyslope Road, at the American Legion Post 449, at Sezon’s Cat’n’Fiddle tavern on Bluemound Road, and in the homes of various Grove residents. Originally, Elm Grove’s village limits were to include the properties south of Bluemound Road adjacent to Bishop’s Woods. **Charlie Stackpole**, who worked on the original Elm Grove incorporation, later discovered that residents north of Bluemound had decided to exclude parcels south of the highway. He then joined in active efforts to incorporate the City of Brookfield, which received its municipal charter on August 8, 1954. (Stackpole is the only “founding father” who participated in both Elm Grove and Brookfield incorporation efforts). Of interest is the fact that Brookfield would actively oppose Elm Grove’s separate incorporation efforts in the courts, believing that the village area should not become its own municipality.

In November of 1953, Elm Grove’s first village elections were set for December 15, 1953, with voting to take place at Leland School.

The first candidate to publicly declare a run for a village position was attorney **Kneeland A. Godfrey**, who announced that he would campaign for village president. In addition, six village trustee positions were to be elected, along with the posts of treasurer, clerk, assessor, and justice of the peace. A village constable would also be sought. That search ended with the appointment of **Police Chief Theodore Fejnas**.

Along with the Town of Brookfield, some residents of the new village also opposed the impending incorporation. They organized a committee of several dozen members to plead their case. The group’s effort would no doubt have come to nothing had not Waukesha County circuit court judge **Allen D. Young** ruled Elm Grove’s 1953 incorporation invalid, as proper notification had not been placed in the *Elm Leaves*, the Town of Brookfield’s official newspaper of record.

Elm Grove’s 2,211 residents would have to wait awhile longer before becoming a village. Wisconsin state statute 61.075 stipulated that a new petition for incorporation could not be received until one year after a previous incorporation attempt had been rejected or overturned.

As for Chief Ted Fejnas, his tenure in office was short-lived. His small office, located in the Stenz Building (now the **Kurtz Realty** building) at 13545 Watertown Plank Road, was cleared out, and Chief Fejnas found himself looking for new employment.

Incorporation would ensure legally established borders, preventing later annexation by any adjoining cities or villages. In the attempt to gain approval, the would-be new municipality would need to show proof of adequate population and land mass and a tax base sufficient to support delivery of necessary services (police and fire protection, waste disposal, etc.) at a cost comparable to or less than what could be provided by an established municipality, if one was already in existence. Part of the goal of such a process was not only to ensure financial viability, but also to limit the growth of additional units of local government within close proximity, thus avoiding duplication of services.



Photo courtesy: Stephen K. Hauser

**Kneeland Godfrey**, a corporate attorney, was the first president of the Elm Grove Village Board of Trustees, serving five consecutive terms from 1955 to 1961.

To forward to 1955 when the village of Elm Grove was incorporated, the primary motivating force in this case was the fear of annexation by one of two sources. The city of Milwaukee was pursuing a policy of rapid expansion in the mid-1950s under the leadership of **Mayor Frank P. Zeidler** (serving from 1948-1960) who had argued that the city was being strangled in its growth by “an iron ring” of suburbs.

It was only a remote possibility that Milwaukee’s leaders would seek to cross into Waukesha County to attempt to add eastern portions of the Town of Brookfield to the city’s holdings. A more immediate threat came from other residents of the Town of Brookfield, where leading citizens, such as **Rolland Ruby and Franklin Wirth**, were attempting to organize the town’s more settled and suburbanized eastern portion into a new City of Brookfield. They counted on the population, businesses and property values in the Elm Grove area to be an important part of their new municipality.

Many Elm Grove residents felt differently, however. They believed that their portion of the town had a unique character and heritage all its own... and they feared that the cost of city services in Brookfield would result in higher property taxes and a bigger, more bureaucratic government. To be blunt: The village of Elm Grove was incorporated in 1955 to keep it from later being annexed by or being forced in some manner to become a part of the City of Brookfield. Others in Brookfield knew this full well, and rancor on both sides persisted for some years thereafter, with Franklin Wirth insisting at one point that Brookfield’s fire department should not be expected to assist in battling fires in the Village of Elm Grove.

Nonetheless, Elm Grove was incorporated as a village of roughly four-square miles on January 14, 1955 with its present borders of North Avenue to the north, County Line Road (124<sup>th</sup> Street) to the east, Bluemound Road to the south, and present-day Pilgrim Parkway to the west. The boundaries then were basically the same as one sees them today, although a few stray parcels fronting onto North Avenue were added in the 1980s. It is interesting to note here in passing that an early effort to include the old Bluemound Heights subdivision south of Bluemound Road was aborted, even though some residents there had initially worked on Elm Grove’s incorporation process. That neighborhood was shortly thereafter absorbed into the City of Brookfield.

**Stephen K. Hauser** is a long-time Elm Grove resident, a retired college history professor and the author of local history books and articles.

# Public Safety Reports

From the files of the Elm Grove Police, Fire, and Emergency Services Depts.

## \*Structure Fire: 860 Pilgrim Parkway, Elm Grove

On Sunday, November 30, 2025, at 11:52 a.m., Elm Grove Police, Fire, and Emergency Medical Services responded to a report of the smell of smoke coming from 860 Pilgrim Parkway. The first responding police units and fire command arrived at approximately 11:55 a.m. and observed heavy smoke throughout the interior of the residence. Officers also observed visible flames in the kitchen/dining area while looking through a picture window on the east side of the residence. Firefighters initiated suppression efforts and successfully extinguished the fire.

The structure involved is a side-by-side, four-unit condominium building. At the time of the incident, the homeowner of the affected unit was not home; however,

neighboring residents were present in their respective units.

The structure is assessed at \$371,000 (2025 assessment). Neighboring units were ventilated due to significant smoke intrusion.

No injuries were reported by residents or responding emergency personnel.

The following fire agencies assisted Elm Grove: City of Brookfield Fire Department, Wauwatosa Fire Department, New Berlin Fire Department, Menomonee Falls Fire Department. Change of Quarters: Milwaukee Fire Department, West Allis Fire Department, Tess Corners Fire Department. The following police agency assisted: City of Brookfield Police Department

## Calling 911 from a Cell Phone vs. a Land-line

*Elm Grove Emergency Services Recommendations*

When you call 911 from your cell phone, the call is sent to a centralized dispatch center in either Waukesha County or Milwaukee County, depending on what cell tower picks up your call. Before the call taker can transfer your call, they need to determine your location for transfer to the proper dispatch center.

In most cases, the county dispatcher will not be familiar with landmarks and business locations by name, and they will need an exact address before they can transfer the call to our Elm Grove Dispatch Center.

**We strongly suggest that you program our direct emergency line, 262-786-4141, into your cell phone to avoid delays in service for emergencies happening in Elm Grove.**

Our dispatchers have intimate knowledge of our geography and are capable of discerning your location quickly, with limited information. When it is your emergency, you will want to be speaking to the person who is talking directly to the responding fire, ambulance, or police unit that is coming to your aid.

**There are no changes to your current land-line 911 service.**  
**All land-line 911 calls continue to be answered by Elm Grove dispatch personnel.**

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Elm Grove Community Foundation

www.elmgrovefoundation.org

NEW at the Community Foundation

Happy New Year

Thanks for a Stellar 2025 - Looking Ahead to 2026!

The Community Foundation Board extends our sincere thanks to everyone who shared their time, talents, and generosity over the past year. Your support continues to strengthen our Village and make a meaningful difference in the lives of those who call Elm Grove home.

As we turn the page on the year’s longest night, we look ahead with excitement to all that 2026 has in store. From the Memorial Day Parade and Tunes on Tuesday to Fourth of July fireworks—and the **10th anniversary** of our much-loved **Oktoberfest** in Village Park this September—we can’t wait to come together again to celebrate the spirit of our community.

Thank you for being part of what makes Elm Grove truly special. Here’s to another year of connection, celebration, and shared impact in 2026!

BOOK IT! Oktoberfest - September 17, 18 & 19, 2026



# Calendar of Events – January 2026

## Thursday – JANUARY 1



- **BLOOD DRIVE**, coordinated by Elm Grove Junior Guild and Versiti at Elm Grove Village Hall, 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Register at: <https://donateblood.versiti.org/donor/schedules/drive-schedule/11622505>

## Friday – JANUARY 2

- **Elm Grove Kiwanis Club – Golden K** Club Board Meeting at St. Mary’s Senior Center. [kiwaniselmgrove@gmail.com](mailto:kiwaniselmgrove@gmail.com)

## Sunday – JANUARY 4

- **Elm Grove Beautification Committee Invasive Species Task Force** meets at 11 a.m. at Elm Grove Village Park. Volunteers needed. [beautification@elmgrovewi.org](mailto:beautification@elmgrovewi.org)

## Monday – JANUARY 5 NATIONAL BIRD DAY

## Tuesday – JANUARY 6

- **Deadline (5 p.m.)** to submit required paperwork to run as a candidate for **Village of Elm Grove Trustee / Elmbrook School Board** in the next Election.

## Friday – JANUARY 9

- **Elm Grove Kiwanis Club – Golden K** Meeting – 9:30 a.m. at St. Mary’s Senior Center. Speaker: Amber Moore, Volunteer Coordinator; Topic: “*Salvation Army Today*”. [kiwaniselmgrove@gmail.com](mailto:kiwaniselmgrove@gmail.com)

## Sunday – JANUARY 11

- **Elm Grove Beautification Committee Invasive Species Task Force** meets at 11 a.m. at Elm Grove Village Park. Volunteers needed. [beautification@elmgrovewi.org](mailto:beautification@elmgrovewi.org)

## Tuesday – JANUARY 13

- **Elmbrook School Board** Public Meeting at the District Office, 3555 North Calhoun Road, Brookfield. Agenda & Live Stream at [www.elmbrookschoools.org](http://www.elmbrookschoools.org)

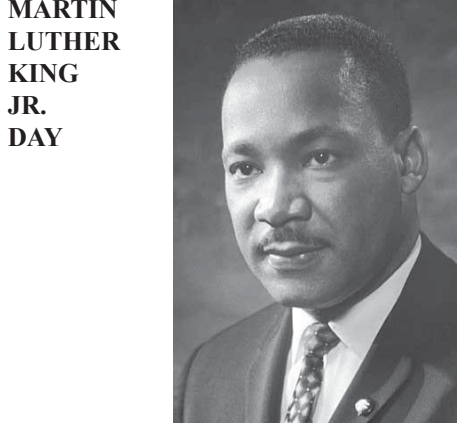
## Friday – JANUARY 16

- **Elm Grove Kiwanis Club – Golden K** Meeting – 9:30 a.m. at St. Mary’s Senior Center. Speaker: **Linsay Johnson**, Director of Administration – St. Mary’s Visitation Church; Topic: “*St. Mary’s and Elm Grove Kiwanis – Working Together*”. [kiwaniselmgrove@gmail.com](mailto:kiwaniselmgrove@gmail.com)

## Sunday – JANUARY 18

- **Elm Grove Beautification Committee Invasive Species Task Force** meets at 11 a.m. at Elm Grove Village Park. Volunteers needed. [beautification@elmgrovewi.org](mailto:beautification@elmgrovewi.org)

## Monday – JANUARY 19



## Tuesday – JANUARY 20

- **Elm Grove Building Board** Meeting – 5:30 p.m. at Village Hall. Agenda: [www.elmgrovewi.org](http://www.elmgrovewi.org)

## Friday – JANUARY 23

- **Elm Grove Kiwanis Club – Golden K** Meeting – 9:30 a.m. at St. Mary’s Senior Center. Speaker: **Craig Luther**; Topic: “*Revolutionary War*” [kiwaniselmgrove@gmail.com](mailto:kiwaniselmgrove@gmail.com)

## Sunday – JANUARY 25

- **Elm Grove Beautification Committee Invasive Species Task Force** meets at 11 a.m. at Elm Grove Village Park. Volunteers needed. [beautification@elmgrovewi.org](mailto:beautification@elmgrovewi.org)

## Tuesday – JANUARY 27 INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

- **Elm Grove Board of Trustees** Public Meeting – 7 p.m. at Village Hall Courtroom. Agenda & Live Stream at [www.elmgrovewi.org](http://www.elmgrovewi.org) (262) 782-6700

## Friday – JANUARY 30

- **Elm Grove Kiwanis Club – Golden K** Meeting – 9:30 a.m. at St. Mary’s Senior Center. Speaker: **Allan Haupert**; Topic: “*Taxes in Retirement*”. [kiwaniselmgrove@gmail.com](mailto:kiwaniselmgrove@gmail.com)



## Enter a Virtual Prayer Room for Peace



SSND Shalom North America offers a virtual prayer space for peace every Friday, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. EST (9 a.m. to 9 p.m. CST). School Sisters of Notre Dame, their Associates, and friends can enter a peaceful space to unite for the needs of the world by using this link: <https://video.ibm.com/channel/hPdUcdR6Qp9>

## Red Cross Blood Drive Set for January 13th, 2026

(BROOKFIELD) The Red Cross Club at BEHS is proud to sponsor a blood drive on Tuesday, January 13th from 8 a.m. – 1 p.m. at Brookfield East High School, 3305 N. Lilly Road, Brookfield.

Sign up by using this link: <https://redcrossblood.org/give.html/find-drive>

Those who donate blood can receive:

- Hot chocolate provided by the Red Cross Club
- Vouchers for free individual pizzas from Lou Malnati’s on Bluemound
- Slice of chocolate cake from Portillo’s in Brookfield

Here are a few reminders:

- Complete your pre-donation reading and health questionnaire online before you come to the blood drive at [RedCrossBlood.org/RapidPass](https://RedCrossBlood.org/RapidPass). This will save about 15 minutes of your time.
- Bring your driver’s license or Red Cross donor card to the blood drive.
- Students who are under 17 years old will need a signed parent permission form.
- Drink an extra 16 ounces of water or noncaffeinated fluids before the donation.
- Eat a healthy meal before the donation and get a good night’s sleep the night before.

Snacks and refreshments will be available immediately after donating.

Your donation means so much. Patients in need count on drives like ours to provide a steady supply of blood. Each donation can help save more than one life!

Please reach out to **Kristin Newhouse** ([newhousek@elmbrookschoools.org](mailto:newhousek@elmbrookschoools.org)) with any questions.



## Girl Scout Troop Coat Drive

(BROOKFIELD) - Grade 2 Girl Scout Troop 37289 will be hosting a Winter Coat/Gear drive at Swanson Elementary School, 305 N. Calhoun Road, Brookfield, from January 5th through 16th. They will be collecting any new or gently used winter gear in children or adult sizes.

Donations will be given to Street Angels, a mobile outreach organization dedicated to assisting individuals in ending their unsheltered homelessness, as well as students at U.S. Grant Elementary in Milwaukee.

Call the school at (262) 789-2540 for more information.





# Report from The Capitol

By Robyn Vining, State Representative – Assembly District 13 \*Serving Elm Grove & sections of Brookfield & Wauwatosa

## What School Funding Has to Do with Your Property Taxes

This year’s property tax bills have been met with anger and frustration, understandably so. Property tax levies for K-12 schools grew by an average of 7.8% across the state this year—the largest percent increase since 1992 according to the Wisconsin Policy Forum. So, this month I want to talk about the factors contributing to these property tax increases.

You may remember my column last May when I raised concern that we need to fund public schools. Every child in Wisconsin has a constitutional right to an adequately funded public education—our state is somewhat unique in that—and after over a decade of cuts to education, property taxes are rising, leading to higher housing costs. School districts have proposed referendums to fill funding gaps, asking Wisconsinites to raise their own taxes to deliver Wisconsin kids the education they’re promised in the constitution. From January 2024 to April 2025, 96 of the 99 State Assembly districts had at least one school district that went to referendum, and the fall of 2024 saw the most referendums passed in state history. *And this is all happening when Wisconsin has a multi-billion dollar surplus!*

Public schools are part of the heartbeat of our communities, and their impact extends far beyond the classroom. Strong public schools are good for our workforce, good for our property values, good for our economy, and good for Wisconsin. When I say I want to “Save Our Schools,” these are all reasons why. It’s also my job to protect your constitutional rights.

What is the problem?

Two poor policy choices caused the increased property tax bills many of you are seeing today: there was a zero increase to general school aids for the first time in decades; and a failure to meet the special education reimbursement rate set in the 2-year budget.

### General School Aids Left Unfunded

In a shocking and rare move last July, General School Aids were funded at a \$0 increase in the new state budget. This is a huge culprit for why you may see a sudden spike in your property taxes. General school aids support basic operating costs such as classroom instruction, staffing, and student services. Schools (like all of us) are facing rising costs and pressures from inflation, and no increase in general aid means they’re effectively getting even less money. Most school districts are getting less state funding than last year, leaving property taxes as their only revenue source to fill even part of the gap. I expressed my outrage and concern over this poor policy choice in my July budget speech, and in my argument to try to amend the state budget.

### Special Education Reimbursement: A Broken Promise

Schools are also getting even less than what was promised in the state budget passed in July. The budget promised schools a 42% special education reimbursement for this year, but a slight difference in wording left school districts with only 35%. The budget made this reimbursement rate *sum certain*, instead of *sum sufficient* (which would have accounted for inflation and rising needs), leading to a lower reimbursement rate. This means that schools may have to pull from their general aid funds to make up for this loss (and remember—they got a \$0 increase in general aid this year). This ultimately hurts all students as schools increasingly have to do more with less.

How do we solve it?

### Save Our Schools

All of this is why I introduced Save Our Schools: a K-12 education bill that would raise the special education reimbursement to 90% *sum sufficient* (the rate already guaranteed to private schools participating in special needs vouchers), index per pupil funding to inflation, and provide grants for teacher education. This bill would help stop the cycle of referendums across the state, allow school districts to budget sustainably, and support the wonderful teachers in our classrooms.

### Keep Our Promise

I am also a co-author of the Keep Our Promise bill, which would fix this year’s budget issue by making the special education reimbursement rate promised in the current state budget *sum sufficient*, meaning that schools would still get the reimbursement that they were promised and that they budgeted for.

And let’s do better next time—let’s commit to fund general aid in the next state budget, and fund it adequately. I don’t want Wisconsinites, especially during an affordability crisis, to see sudden, unexpected hikes in their tax bills that they cannot afford. *I voted against the state budget that led to these hikes.*

I am hopeful that as a legislature we can find common ground on school funding, because public schools certainly serve the common good.

Forward together,

Robyn Vining  
State Representative, 13th Assembly District



Photo courtesy: Assembly office of Robyn Vining  
Robyn Vining speaks about her Save Our Schools bill.

WATCH:  
“This isn’t partisan”

State budget  
Speech: Education

Save Our Schools  
Press Conference

PHONE (608) 237 9113 / (888) 534-0013

EMAIL REP.VINING@LEGIS.WISCONSIN.GOV

f@REPROBYNVINING      @REP.ROBYN

🌐 <https://legis.wisconsin.gov/assembly/13/vining>

## News’ Hounds & other beloved animals

### Adopt a Pet at the Elmbrook Humane Society

By Morgan Pelon

Meet **Loofy**, a sweet and gentle guy who loves attention and a good petting session. He can be a little unsure in new places at first, but with a calm environment and a bit of patience, he warms up quickly. Loofy enjoys the company of people and has done well with another cat in a previous home. He might do best in a quieter household and may prefer older kids who can respect his gentle nature. If you’re looking for a mellow, affectionate companion who just needs a little time to feel at home, Loofy could be the perfect fit! Loofy’s adoption fee has been sponsored by: **Amelia Brideson**.

The EBHS is at 20950 Enterprise Avenue, (off Barker Road) Brookfield. Call (262) 782-9261 for more information.



Photo courtesy: Elmbrook Humane Society

Loofy

## News Briefs

### Register to Receive Landscape Pesticide Advance Notices

MADISON – The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) invites homeowners and renters to sign up for 2026 growing season notices in the landscape pesticide registry through February 1, 2026.

Registrants receive advance notice from commercial lawn care companies that apply pesticides to lawns, trees, and shrubs on nearby property. Members of the public can submit addresses that they want to receive notifications for that are located on their block or adjacent blocks. There is no cost to register. Those wishing to be notified of pesticide application must re-register every year. To register online or to submit a paper application by mail, visit [https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs\\_Services/LandPestReg.aspx](https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/LandPestReg.aspx).

The landscape pesticide registry will start March 15, 2026, when pesticide applicators are required to notify registrants at least 12 hours in advance of treating nearby properties with pesticides. The registry applies only to commercial landscape applications. The registry does not apply to:

- Homeowners or landlords who do their own pesticide applications
- Pesticide applications to the inside or outside of buildings; including around a workplace, school, or daycare center
- Pesticide use in agriculture

“Pesticide” is a broad term that can include herbicides, fungicides, and insecticides. To learn more about the landscape pesticide registry, visit [datcp.wi.gov](https://datcp.wi.gov). The registry is a service offered by DATCP. For the 2025 growing season, approximately 3,900 addresses were registered to receive notice.

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(888) 485-4400

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# News Briefs

The Elm Grove Public Library's 2026 Winter Reading Program for Adults (18+) begins on Monday, January 12.

This Winter's theme will be bingo! No registration is required. Pick up your bingo sheets at the library and keep track of your reading by marking off squares that correspond to your book. After you get 5 in a row, bring your bingo sheet into the library to receive a prize entry drawing.

The challenge ends on Friday, March 13. **Happy Reading!**



### Make A Paper Hat!

1. Fold Newspaper in Half. (Like it comes.)

2. Fold top down to meet bottom.

3. Fold right and left sides towards the middle to form a point.

4. Open bottom, and fold bottom up on back and front.

5. You may use a piece of elastic to hold the hat in place, if needed.

## Winter Word Search

### Let it snow!

BLIZZARD  
COAT  
COLD  
DECEMBER  
EARMUFFS  
FEBRUARY  
FIREPLACE  
FLURRIES  
FROZEN  
GLOVES  
HOT CHOCOLATE  
ICE  
ICE SKATES  
ICICLE  
JANUARY  
MITTENS  
SCARF  
SHOVEL  
SLED  
SLUSH  
SNOWBALL  
SNOWFLAKE  
SNOWMAN  
SWEATER  
WINTER

A snowman wearing a top hat, scarf, and mittens, with snowflakes around it.

Word search grid:

H A H D S  
M J X O H H K  
I A S T J O J  
Q N L C S V J  
N U E H B E D  
A D O L L  
H F R M C I T W F  
M X L Y H O Z L O O M  
U F K U W Q L Z R H E L U  
F C A R O F A A W G A B V  
P L M R J E T R U J R M Q  
X K S I Z B E D J S M U J  
J T N E P R C S S W U M K  
F O S D U Q N N E F Z  
W T E A F O O A F  
O C M G C R I W W T S U Z  
H M L A L E Y R F B E V X N P  
I W Y N O M H E L A R U Y V U  
V Y F C S V B S P A L S L U S H U  
V R R O W E E C L K L I C I C L E  
T L O L N S R A A E W F Y G Q D U  
E Z Z D C P W R C Y S V H X W K M  
I C E M O N E F E M I T T E N S C  
E K N X A W I N T E R O W D Q T R  
J L Q T A I C E S K A T E S L  
M M N V P J Q Q A X P B J

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Library News and Programs

## January 2026

13600 Juneau Blvd., Elm Grove, WI 53122  
262-782-6717 | [elmgrovelibrary.org](http://elmgrovelibrary.org)

#### First Friday Films: *The Fantastic Four: First Steps* / Friday, January 2, 1:00 p.m.

A matinee film series for adults. On the first Friday of every month, a new release movie is screened in the O'Neill Room at 1:00 p.m. Popcorn and water provided. Movie ratings and contents vary. Not all movies will be suitable for all audiences. Free admission, no RSVP needed. January's movie is *The Fantastic Four: First Steps*. Film description: Forced to balance their roles as heroes with the strength of their family bond, the Fantastic Four must defend Earth from a ravenous space god called Galactus and his enigmatic herald, the Silver Surfer. PG-13. 115m.

#### El Greco: A Greek Bearing Gifts of the Ecstasy of the Soul / Tuesday, January 13, 6:30 p.m.

Presented by Karri Fritz-Klaus of Cornerstone Symposium, this engaging art history program explores the dramatic vision of El Greco—one of Spain's most distinctive and transformative painters. The program examines his broader body of work, revealing how he fused Byzantine tradition with Renaissance innovation to create a style entirely his own. Centuries later, El Greco's bold spiritual intensity continues to influence modern art and captivate audiences around the world. This is the first lecture in a five-part series, "The Push and Pull of the Soul." Mark your calendar for the next presentation (2/10: Rodin). Free to attend. No registration required.

#### Maximize Your Medicare Benefits / Tuesday, January 27, 1:30 p.m.

Learn more about your Medicare options! This presentation will provide an overview of Medicare Parts A, B, C and D as well as supplemental insurance and an explanation of how they all fit together. The program will also include information about Medicare's upcoming annual open enrollment period (October 15 – December 7) and an explanation of how to use and understand the plan comparison tool on Medicare's website. Important information will be shared about special programs for Medicare beneficiaries with limited income that may help them pay their Medicare costs (Medicare Savings Plans) and also help pay for their Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage ("Extra Help"). Free to attend. Registration is requested but not required.

ELM GROVE BEAUTIFICATION COMMITTEE  
WINTER LECTURE SERIES

# MOVIE NIGHT

21  
Wednesday | JANUARY | 6:30 pm

ELM GROVE LIBRARY  
O'NEILL ROOM

## A Chickadee's Guide To Gardening

Yes! There will be popcorn!

BRING A BOWL...AND A CUP FOR PROVIDED WATER!





# Young Writers & Reporters

## Brookfield Central Key Club: Making an Impact

By Hailey Dooyema  
Brookfield East High School

The Kiwanis Key Club at Brookfield Central, a student-led service organization sponsored by the Elm Grove Kiwanis Club, empowers students to make a difference through service. The club provides many events every year which help students gain hands-on volunteering experience. Every week there are new events to get involved in - whether it's helping at a 5k, a Turkey Trot, or the Holiday Folk Fair in Milwaukee.

At these events, students take on a variety of roles, such as cheering on runners, handing out water, serving food, guiding participants and visitors, cleaning up afterward, and more. Every volunteer has something meaningful and impactful to do. Brookfield Central has many dedicated Key Club leaders who help guide each project, and the events wouldn't be possible without both the student volunteers and board members.

The Brookfield Central Key Club also collaborates with the Key Clubs at Brookfield East, Marquette, and Menomonee Falls. The Gold Out game between Brookfield East and Brookfield Central is always a big success, and it is because of both schools' Key Clubs that everyone is able to purchase a gold out shirt and raise money for childhood cancer research.

This year, the Brookfield Central Key Club has over 360 members, and in a typical year, members complete more than 20,000 service projects. Co-presidents **River Foy and Stella Hu** say students should join Key Club because it is a meaningful way to make a difference in the community and be a part of something bigger than themselves. Together, Key Club and Kiwanis show the powerful impact service has on our community and how little acts of kindness can go a long way.

### The Big Change

By Jai Gandhi

Level 6 – Brookfield Academy

It was a hot July day, the day that my family was moving from Chicago to Brookfield. I was feeling a little anxious, but also excited. Quickly, I changed out of my plaid pajamas and threw on a grey t-shirt, Adidas shorts, and some white socks. Walking down to the kitchen, I poured myself a bowl of cereal. My parents were already loading our suitcases in the car. They told me to go in the backseat of the car with my older sister, Kavya. As my dad started driving, I pulled out my blue and red Nintendo Switch to play some games, but promptly fell asleep. When I awoke, I saw a beautiful white house. The grey door of the car slid open and I jumped out. I walked into the house and immediately noticed the three-way staircase. As I sauntered further into the house, I noticed it was larger than my old house. Climbing up the staircase, I found my room. There were millions of brown boxes, and the only thing that was set up was my big bed. I dropped my bag on the floor and ran downstairs to see the rest of the house. After eating some delicious pizza for lunch, my dad asked me if I wanted to go to Papaji's house (my grandpa). I replied with an enthusiastic yes. So, we drove to his house which used to be two hours away and is now only ten minutes away. On the way, I saw a huge brick building and asked my dad what it was. He told me it was my new school, Brookfield Academy.



NOTE: Ayush and friends started Future Wealth Foundation, a registered nonprofit that advocates for personal finance awareness.

## PERSONAL FINANCE: The Quiet Power of an Emergency Fund

By Ayush Dadgale – Brookfield East High School

In an age of rising costs and financial uncertainty, one of the most underrated tools for stability is also one of the simplest: the emergency fund. Unlike long-term investments or complex budgeting apps, an emergency fund is straightforward. It's cash set aside strictly for life's unpredictable moments. Yet its impact is anything but simple.

Most Americans cannot cover a \$400 unexpected expense without borrowing. That lack of cushion creates a cycle where emergencies like medical bills, car repairs, sudden job loss can turn into long-term debt. An emergency fund breaks that cycle. It turns a crisis into an inconvenience, not a financial derailment.

The target is clear: three to six months of essential expenses. For many, that number feels intimidating, but the power lies in consistency, not perfection. Starting with even \$20 a week builds momentum. Over time, this single habit creates both financial and psychological security.

An emergency fund doesn't just protect wallets, it protects your choices. It allows families to decline predatory loans, switch jobs without panic, and make decisions based on values rather than fear. In a world you can't control, an emergency fund is one thing you can. It's not glamorous, but it's freedom in its most practical form.



### The Turning Point

By George Gosman

Level 6 – Brookfield Academy

When I was in second grade, I got mad at my mom one morning. I was mad at her because she had forgotten to wash the clothes that I wanted to wear that day. Specifically, my favorite school sweatshirt, the only one I was allowed to wear because of the uniform. When she dropped me off at school, she said she was sorry, but I didn't respond. At school later that day, I got so mad at myself. I was so sad that I had left the morning with a bad attitude. It is embarrassing to say, but during that day, I was so sad that I asked the teacher if I could go to the bathroom. While I was "going to the bathroom," I was actually crying in one of the stalls. While tears were dripping down my face, I came to realize that never again would I leave the house and go to school while being mad at my mom. It made an impact on me because I promised to myself never to leave my mom (especially during the school day) with a bad attitude. I haven't always stuck to this rule, but I always keep it in mind. I came to appreciate that experience because if it did not happen then, it could have happened later in life. It is always better to learn things like that early on. Looking back on it, I definitely learned from this experience. I learned that leaving the house angry is not a good thing to do. That is why this experience definitely shaped me into the person that I have become and who I am today.

### When I Got Bit by a Pitbull

By Charles Paulsen, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade – Tonawanda

Have you ever got stitches before? It was 10:00 in the morning. Me, my mom, my dad, my brother and my grandma were sitting right by the fireplace. The snow outside made the power go out. So, we went to my grandma's house, so my mom could shower. As she was showering their dog started to attack me! My mom rushed downstairs. She grabbed my brother first then my grandma picked me up. He bit my mom first in the bottom, then he bit me in the thigh. It was very scary! I hope it never happens again.

### Rock and Roller Coaster Jitters

By Seth Parkin, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade - Tonawanda

Have you ever been on a Rockin roller coaster? Well, I have, and this is the story of the first time I rode it. There was a 30-minute wait, which is short for the rock and roller coaster. While we were waiting, we played a movie. Then, it was time to get on. I was horrified, but my cousin was practically pushing me on the rockin roller coaster. The ride starts with a 6-mile-an-hour take off, then dase 2 loopy loops and then a corkscrew. It was amazing, so in the end, I faced all of my fears and went on the rockin roller coaster.

### A Time of Adversity

By Shivam Mistry

Level 6 – Brookfield Academy

An experience from the past that helped me shape who I am today was the death of my great-grandmother. I was four when the tragedy occurred, once my family heard the bad news everyone felt like a deflated balloon. Personally, who I think got hit the hardest from the loss was me. It was me because my grandmother used to bathe me, feed me, and care for me even when she was sick. My family knew that we were going to have to overcome this time of adversity. Fast forward a few days it was the funeral, when everyone reached the funeral home the atmosphere was very grim and sad. Many people also had things to say on how they loved her, and how kind she was. Almost the entire time I was sobbing in my seat with my head in my mom's lap. An impact it made on me was having someone that dearly loved me pass away. Something I learned from this experience was to work through tough losses even at young ages.



### Frisbee in the Snow

By Rohit Singh

Level 6 – Brookfield Academy

There was a massive blizzard causing six to eight inches of snow to appear in my yard. The snowplow piled up the snow into a huge "mountain" that lays on the edge of our back yard. After I saw this outside, I started towards my friend Will's house. As I was jogging, coincidentally we met up in the middle of the road, because he was also headed to my house! When we met up, I told him how I made different sledding hills with a shovel. My favorite slope was where it starts as a slight hill and turns into a ninety- degree drop. It was basically like falling off a mini cliff. Will and I arrived at my house, and rushed to the slope with a ninety-degree drop. With our snow gear on, we jumped onto it with our sleds and rode it. We actually didn't go straight down, but we flew off the drop. The impact hurt a bit and sometimes even flung you off your sled. After we sledded, Will threw a snowball at me causing a snowball fight. I retreated to the snow mound as Will ran away. I grabbed a frisbee and rushed to Will. I scooped up snow with the frisbee and flung it at him. Doing this over and over again I eventually won. Sadly, Will left, so I went inside and drank hot cocoa to end the day. That day was the best day I had that week, on Sunday.

## Introducing: Robotics Team FTC 19417 Superstellar

By Hasini Manne  
Brookfield East High School

We are team FTC 19417 Superstellar, an all-girls student-led team, united by one mission: to learn, grow, and inspire through robotics. Our main goal is to build competitive robots and share the excitement of STEM with our community.

Our outreach activities range from hosting STEM workshops at local schools to mentoring younger robotics teams. We also organize community demos, bringing robotics to libraries, fairs, and other public events. The goal of these efforts is simple: to spark curiosity, make STEM accessible, and empower the next generation of problem-solvers. One of our most successful outreach initiatives is our yearly two-day summer program, Camp Cosmo, designed for elementary and middle schoolers, igniting lasting interest in STEM.

We are proud to be part of the FIRST organization, which provides opportunities for students worldwide to develop technical skills, teamwork, and leadership through robotics. Technical skills are valued, but so are soft skills that help in the professional world.

Our journey proves robotics helped our team grow in more than one way. By promoting FIRST and sharing our passion, we show how teamwork and creativity can truly make a difference in the real world.

Follow our journey on Instagram: @ftc19417 or visit <https://19417superstellar.org>

### New Year's

By Odette Walker, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade – Tonawanda

New Year's Day is fun and gay!  
With laughing and fun for everyone!  
You will start the day early  
and end the day late!  
There's so much fun you hardly can wait!  
Then there's the countdown excitedly  
FUN

10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1!  
**HAPPY NEW YEARS!**

### Elm Grove Park

By Nic Dobbe, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade – Tonawanda

The park of Elm Grove is cool.  
It has it all!  
A pool, splash pad, playground, parties,  
soccer, tennis, basketball, camps, and a  
sledding hill! I listed nine different things  
that are AMAZING about Elm Grove Park!

### New Year's Eve

By Rose Trandem, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade – Tonawanda

New year's resolution  
Everything positive  
Waking up to a new year  
Yum a lot different foods  
Enjoy yourself  
Adventure and romance  
Reading new books  
Starting nice and fresh  
Every holiday  
Vacuum your house  
Every year

### Playing Twister with My Dogs

By Sydney Sosalla, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade - Tonawanda

Have you ever played Twister? First, I wanted to play Twister but none of my siblings wanted to play. So, I thought that maybe my dogs could play. I was excited to play Twister.

Next, I got my dogs to come. It took me a while to get my dogs to come. My dogs' names are Summer and Daisy. Summer is a golden retriever and Daisy is a Teddy Bear dog.

Finally, we played Twister. I placed treats on the boxes so they would stay. It was difficult to get them to stay. I was happy to play Twister because it is my favorite game. It was an amazing game.



Old(er) Writers

\*Readers (age 18+) may submit poetry, short fiction, life stories / reminiscences (200 words maximum) to: [elmgrovenews@yahoo.com](mailto:elmgrovenews@yahoo.com) or EGNI, 14420 Watertown Plank Rd., Elm Grove, WI 53122

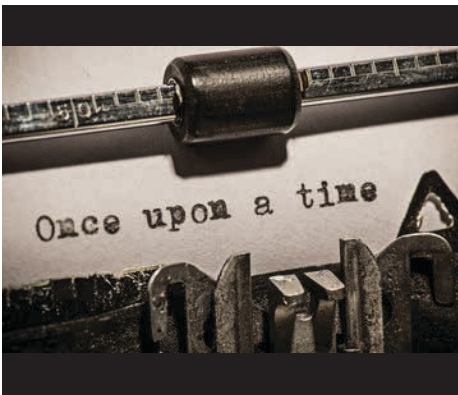
**Celebrating**  
**Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**  
**By Sister Lillia Langreck, SSND**

Our Father...  
Voices raised  
As one family we sing!

Hearts and hands joined;  
Yahweh’s love energy  
Flowing through our assembly!  
Firing, fueling, strengthening, empowering  
And for one fleeting moment  
    Yahweh’s dream  
    Martin’s dream  
    Your dream  
    My dream  
Becomes reality!

Our family proclaiming loudly, proudly,  
“The kingdom, the power, the glory  
Are YOURS!”

May this be done  
May our hearts be one  
May all hearts be one  
Now --- and in ages to come.  
AMEN! AMEN!



**A Composer’s Thought**  
**By Gary Kerslake**

In days gone by when thought was clear,  
I use to think that I could hear,  
The sounds that none believe exist,  
And yet I heard and still insist,  
To feel or sense the tone not there,  
Is a sound of which none can compare.  
O please don’t let me cease to dream,  
For if I stop, thus ends life’s scheme.

NOTE: The following item arrived after our DECEMBER 2025 edition had already been published, but the sentiments expressed are valuable throughout the year.

**A Tribute to My Husband & Our Elm Grove Fire Department**  
**By Shirley B. Woodward Spahr**

I wrote this as a Christmas card greeting to honor my husband, **Roger H. Spahr**, and all the people who serve on **The Elm Grove Volunteer Fire Department**. Most of Wisconsin’s fire departments are served by volunteers. They do a wonderful job and they do care about the health and property of others. It is very refreshing to know there are people who serve out community who are so generous of heart. My husband served 50 years. He is not alone.

**Have you ever stopped to think about all the things Santa and a fireman have in common?** Well...

- They both wear hats to keep their head warm and suspenders to keep their pants up.
- Both wear gloves, a heavy coat and big waterproof boots.
- Both have rosy cheeks and love the colors red and white
- Both do most of their work at night and in all kinds of weather.
- Both see lots of folks in their night clothes.
- Both have vehicles powered by many animals.
- Both know exactly where they are going.
- Both are recognized all over the world.
- Both are a welcome sight.
- Both are usually in a hurry.
- Both end up on roof tops.
- Both love children and are helpful, kind and sincerely care about others.
- Both have a very responsible job to do.
- Both work very hard.
- Both return from their work thirsty, hungry and very weary.
- Both are ready for a good rest after work.
- Both do many wonderful things which we will never know about.
- Both have someone at home concerned that everything went well.

YES, Santa and a fireman have these things in common and a great deal more.  
HAVE A MERRY CHRISTMAS!



Young Writers

**Winter Sky**  
**By Sydney Sosalla, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade - Tonawanda**

The snow makes a glow  
high in the sky  
Flakes over the lakes  
blowing and glowing  
the moon will leave soon  
for the rise of the day

**Couches**  
**By Max Swain, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade - Tonawanda**

Couches are comfy,  
SOFT and feel really good!  
It is fun to fall asleep on a couch.

**My Last Football Game**  
**By Will Holt, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade - Tonawanda**

Starting the game. It was a sunny afternoon at the football field. Our team ran through the tunnel to the field and started the game. Scoring with zero seconds left in the second quarter. There were forty seconds left in the second quarter and our coach said bet open so we did. First, I threw a fifteen-yard pass to Law then he ran to the end zone and scored with zero seconds left!!!! The second half started and we had a 14-0 lead. The other team scored one more touchdown but we scored two more and we ended up winning.

**Hockey Equipment**  
**By Jack Horning**  
3<sup>rd</sup> Grade - Tonawanda

Have you ever put hockey equipment on? It is hard at first but you will get used to it. You will need: long underwear, shin guards, socks, chest pads, elbow pads, a jersey, a helmet and gloves. First, put on your long underwear. Then, put on your shin guards. Now, you can put your socks on. Next, put your hockey pants on. They are also called breezers. PRO TIP: Tape your socks below the shin guards to keep them from falling down. Then, put your chest pads on. Then, put your jersey on. Next, put your helmet on. Now, your gloves go on. Congratulations now you know how to put your pads on. Soon you will be a pro!

**How to Go Sledding**  
**By Ryan Kelly, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade – Tonawanda**

Have you ever wished to go sledding? This will teach you how to sled. You will need: snow, a hill, a sled, and snow gear. First, get on your sled. Cautiously push yourself down. PRO TIP: It’s best to push yourself with your hands. Next, get going and make sure to hold onto the string on the sled. PRO TIP: If there is no string hold the edges. Then, if the hill has turns, turn with it. Grab onto the sides and lean toward the way you want to turn. After that, you can add a little bump if you want. Grab some snow to make a bump. You may go over it but you might go right through it. Last, if you want you can try to dodge snowballs getting thrown at you. Get someone to throw snowballs at you who has good aim. Congratulations! Now you can go sledding! Now you can teach other people how to sled. How you have a great time sledding! Follow similar steps to go snowboarding.

**Friendship**  
**By Odette Walker, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade - Tonawanda**

Friends come and go but the one always remains, friendship never stays the same. The older you get, the harder friendship gets. You always try to be more cool so friends will like you but that isn’t the real way to make friends. Friends like people who are kind and loving and empathetic!

If your friends don’t like the way you act or you feel weird around them then it’s time to find a new friend! What you need is someone who likes what you like. Who wants what you want! A good friend is someone who likes you the way you are!

Friends are people who you can tell secrets to and who you don’t feel awkward around. Friends are people who you want to be with.

**About Emotions**  
**By Rylan Cainion, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade – Tonawanda**

Emotions are about feelings and there are many types of emotions. Like happy, sad, afraid and mad. It is ok if you have lots of emotions. You can feel all these things. You can say emotions are feelings. Feelings are normal Thank you for reading this. That made me feel happy.

**New Years**  
**By Nora, 4th Grade - Tonawanda**

Next year	Yummy food
Excellent year	Energetic year
Winter	Amazing things
	Remarkable year
	Spectacular year

**Winter**  
**By Amelia, 4th Grade - Tonawanda**

Winter Wonderland
Icicles
New Year
Treats
Elves
Reindeer

**How to Play Basketball**  
**By Jadon Rauscher**  
3<sup>rd</sup> Grade – Tonawanda

Have you e4er wondered how to play basketball? If you haven’t, now is a good time! Follow these steps and you will already be a master. You will need: a basketball, jersey, shoes, hoop, a ref and finally water. First, don’t touch the ball with your foot. That is called a foot violation. PRO TIP: When the ball is on the ground don’t touch it with your foot, pick it up with your hands. Next, try to shoot! It will be very helpful to get points on the board. Then be aggressive! Slap the ball. PRO TIP: Slap the ball, but not the player! After that, dribble the ball and move when you pass it. Last, play ball and have some fun. Congratulations! Now you know how to play basketball and don’t forget you can teach your friends!

MR. HUGH’S HISTORY by Drew Sternitzky @mrhughshistory on Instagram





# Young Writers & Reporters

## United by Gratitude and Cheer: Spreading Holiday Hope to Veterans

**By Janavi Wagle – Brookfield East High School**

The holiday season can be especially hard for veterans who are away from their families while staying in hospitals or rehabilitation units. Many veterans experience loneliness during this time, which can affect both their mental and physical health.

On December 15, **Brookfield East High School’s Health Occupations Students of America and Raise Your Voice clubs** worked together to create holiday greeting cards for **veterans at the Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center**. These cards were more than just simple “Happy Holidays” messages. They were a way to show hope, gratitude, and appreciation.

According to a report published in *The Hospitalist*, more than half of U.S. veterans report feeling lonely sometimes or often, and nearly one in five veterans experience frequent loneliness. This isolation can have a serious impact on health, as isolated veterans

are more likely to be hospitalized due to worsening medical conditions.

To show their gratitude and offer a sign of hope, club members used colorful pens and their artistic skills to create messages focused on health, positivity, and holiday cheer. Many of these students hope to become future health and mental health professionals and advocates for wellness. More than 15 club members came together to make more than 30 greeting cards while sharing smiles, positive energy, and creativity. By giving their time and creativity, they showed compassion and support for veterans during the holiday season.

This project shows how small acts of kindness can mean a lot. A simple card and a thoughtful message can bring comfort, joy, and hope to someone who may be feeling alone during the holiday season.

### January

**By Amalia N., 4th Grade – Tonawanda**

I love January when the new year has started and family and friends are together.

There  
Is  
Still  
Snow  
But  
You can still go outside.  
It’s  
Humid  
And  
Almost  
Spring and fun to  
Jump in puddles all day.

### 5 Rules of Basketball

**By Miles D., 4th Grade - Tonawanda**

- Rule #1. The game is the ball, the ball is your heart, your heart is the game.
- Rule #2 You play hard, you practice harder and the next day you do it again.
- Rule #3. Never stop playing the game you love so much.
- Rule #4. Don’t be worried about the last play, be focused for the next one.
- Rule #5. The score never matters, because one play you’re down, and the next play you’re up.

### Winter

**By Madelyn F., 4th Grade- Tonawanda**

Warm and cozy  
Icicles  
Not lonely  
Together with family  
Everlasting snow  
Run in the snow

### My Dog

**By Will Peterson**  
Level 6 – Brookfield Academy

The time I got my dog was an experience like no other. It was February as my Mom was driving me to the dog store to get a dog. My sisters and Dad were busy so they couldn’t come. I was so excited as we drove down the newly paved road. “Are we there yet?” I asked for the ninth time. “Yes,” my Mom said. “Let’s go!” I almost yelled. I could hear the dogs barking loudly. We had preordered the dog online. The dog had bright yellow fur and a strong build. His little tail was wagging as he looked at me with piercing black eyes. “He’s perfect,” I said. I picked him up with my arms. He was extremely light. I had loved him from the very start. We purchased a bed and crate for him. My family decided to call him Knox the night before because my mom was born in Knoxville, Tennessee. We hopped into the black Wrangler jeep and put Knox in the big trunk. When my sisters saw him, they loved him from the very beginning. “He’s perfect. Isn’t he?” I said.

### The Snow Day

**By Kensi Kler**  
Level 6 – Brookfield Academy

Have you ever had a day where all you did was play outside and spend time with your family? That happened to me last winter when my family and I were going to West Bend to snowboard/ski all day. On the drive there, I saw many snow-covered roads and a plow truck on the highway. Sadly, I fell asleep so when I woke up, I saw the ski lifts coming into sight and people on the hills going down at great speeds. I could not wait to go snowboarding because it was my first time since Covid. Anxiously sitting in the trunk putting on my snow pants I thought of the enjoyable time I was about to have with my brother. Going into the building to get my snowboard, I could see all the different slopes, jumps, and steepness of the hills. Starting to put on my snowboard boots and attaching the board, Kieran (my brother) was already done with his skies. Going outside, the cold air nips at my face and I started on the warm up hill. I proceed down side to side gracefully. Finally, I went to the hill where the first challenge came from Kieran. He suggests that we should race down the hill. I accept and start to make my way up the hill until. Two girls fell and collided on the way up so I had to get off half way up the pulley system. Kieran, seeing what happened, met me in the middle of the hill and we started the race. I was winning until there was someone in my way so then I had to veer off to the side almost hitting Kieran. After that we did stuff like that the rest of the day until it was time to leave.

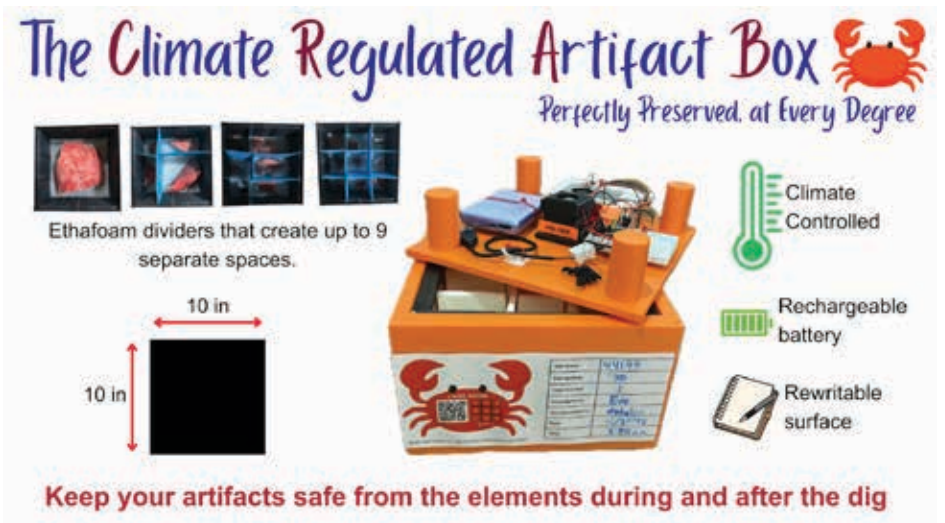
### The Spring When I Sprang Into Action

**By Nikhil Gorantla**  
Level 6 – Brookfield Academy

This specific trip was crazy! By that I mean that it was like a jungle of surprises. It started when my family and I got off an airplane and went to an apartment in Florida. My family was super excited since Florida has really nice beaches so everybody agreed to go there which led to a catastrophe for me. At the beach my family was chilling on some chairs looking at the magnificent ocean while I was building a sandcastle which was going well until I saw a big wave coming right to me. I made a mistake by just sitting and looking at the wave instead of running for my life since I felt so surprised to see a heap of water over double the size of me and because of that the wave hit me at full force and I was pushed at least four feet back. When the wave hit me was not the worst part, the actual worst part was when the wave hit the sandcastle I was building which made sand go into my eyes. The pain was excruciating at first but it soon went away. Then the most amazing part happened when a shiny, glimmering, and beautiful rock washed up on shore. I threw it into the ocean which caused ripples to form that looked just like the rock. In conclusion, this spring in Florida was fantastic because it was crazy and when I told my family this story, they said this was the spring where I sprang into action.

## A Solution to Artifact Decay

**By Siddarth Vasudevan, Pilgrim Park Middle School**



Team B.U.I.L.D. is a First Lego League Challenge team made up of students from grades 5 through 8.

Every challenge season, we are given a theme, and our objective is to identify a problem and engineer a solution related to the season’s theme. This season’s theme is archeology.

The problem that we chose to solve was that artifacts rapidly decay when excavated and degrade significantly before being transported to a lab or museum, causing archeologists to lose vitally important data that causes us to lose vital insight into the past

The solution that we developed is a Climate Regulated Artifact Box. Otherwise

known as “C.R.A.B.”. C.R.A.B. utilizes a peltier device, gel silica packets, and humidity packets paired with a Raspberry Pi to mimic the climate of the ground where the artifacts came from. C.R.A.B. is also portable, a stark contrast to current climate regulated containers. This allows for artifacts to be immediately stored in C.R.A.B. upon excavation, this results in minimal decay of the artifact.

With this invention, we can ensure the highest possible preservation of artifacts and learn so much more about the past such as civilizations, art pieces, and even ancient languages that used to exist!

# Coloring for Kids (of ALL ages!)



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## Fire Safety during Winter Storms

Winter storms can happen almost anywhere. They can cause us problems. Know what to do before, during and after a storm. This will help keep you and your family safe from a winter fire.

- Test all smoke alarms. Do this at least once a month. This way you will know they are working. Install carbon monoxide alarms in your home. Test the alarms.
- Plan two ways out of the home in case of an emergency. Clear driveway and front walk of ice and snow. This will provide easy access to your home.
- Make sure your house number can be seen from the street. If you need help, firefighters will be able to find you.
- Be ready in case the power goes out. Have flashlights on hand. Also have battery-powered lighting and fresh batteries. Never use candles.
- Stay aware of winter weather. Listen to the television or radio for updates. Watch for bulletins online.
- Check on neighbors. Check on others who may need help.
- Generators should be used outdoors. Keep them away from windows and doors. Do not run a generator inside your garage, even if the door is open.
- Stay away from downed wires. Report any downed wires to authorities.
- Be ready if the heat stops working. Use extra layers of clothes and blankets to stay warm. If you use an emergency heat source, keep anything that can burn at least 3 feet away.
- Turn portable heaters off when you leave the room. Turn them off when you go to bed.

### IMPORTANT REMINDER

There are more home fires in winter than in any other season. Half of all home heating fires happen in December, January and February.

As you stay cozy and warm this winter season, be fire smart!





### Fact

Nearly half of all space heater fires involve electric space heaters.



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