

# FOCUS

ON  
THORNTON  
TOWNSHIP



Follow Thornton Township's social media accounts on:

333 E. 162nd Street • South Holland, IL 60473

708-596-6040 • www.thorntontownship.com

## SPRING EDITION

### Continuing to Work for Thornton Township



First, I wish to thank the residents of Thornton Township for their expression of support in electing our team of township candidates in the recent April 6th election.

But I would also like to thank those who chose not to support us, for taking time to exercise their right to vote and participating in the democratic process – a process that has faced serious challenges this past year.

By voting, each of us plays an important part in strengthening our democracy; our rights as Americans and the special responsibility we share in passing our freedoms to the next generation.

I believe I can speak for all the Thornton Township elected officials when I say that we shall continue to work collaboratively and tirelessly on behalf of all residents – keeping a laser-like focus on being fiscally accountable and responsible and simply doing more with less to improve the quality of life of every family.

#### Best Wishes

Long time Township employee (and friend) Troy O’Quin, decided recently to pursue new career opportunities. Troy was Director of General Services for the Township, helping thousands of residents over the years, in seeking and obtaining employment, housing, utility assistance, even their G.E.D. to improve educational offerings for prospective employers. Troy also oversaw our Food Pantry with especially effective and critical organizational skills – distributing food baskets to over 5,000 families each month during this most trying and challenging COVID-19 crisis year.

Troy has been a most valuable part of our Thornton Township family and he has proven himself to be one of the most dedicated, committed and passionate public servants I know. Every resident of Thornton Township owes Troy their thanks for a job well done.

I personally wish to thank you Troy, for the contribution you made to our administration’s overall success and wish you the best in your future pursuits. All of us at Thornton Township will miss you.

#### On the back page,

is the poem authored by an amazing young, African American woman, Amanda Gorman (age 23) who wrote this most eloquent verse especially for President Joe Biden’s Inaugural ceremony. Please take time to read it. Her words are truly inspiring and hopeful.

Sincerely,

Frank M. Zuccarelli  
Thornton Township Supervisor



**Upcoming Board Meetings:**

- Tuesday May 11, 2021
- Tuesday May 25, 2021

**Township buildings will be closed:**

- Memorial Day – Monday May, 31
- Fourth of July – Monday July, 5
- **Special Notice** The Riverdale location is closed until September due to construction.

**Senior Lunches**

- 1420 Huntington Dr., Calumet City  
Pick-up/Curb side only  
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday  
11:00 am – 12:30 pm
- 14200 S. Wentworth, Riverdale  
Curb-Side Pick-up Only  
Wednesday & Thursday  
11:00 am – 12:30 pm

**Senior Center**  
1420 Huntington Drive, Calumet City

- No exercise or dance activities
- No income tax services
- No weekly movie
- No bingo activities
- No group senior counseling

**Senior Center**  
14323 S. Halsted, Riverdale

- No exercise or dance activities
- No weekly movie
- No group senior counseling

**Youth and Family Services**  
14323 S. Halsted, Riverdale

- No childhood after school services

**Special Services Department**  
333 E. 162nd St., South Holland

- No dances or regularly scheduled events

### Congratulations to Thornton Township’s Newly Elected Board Members

<b>Frank M. Zuccarelli</b> Supervisor	<b>Darlene Gray Everett</b> Trustee
<b>Loretta Wells</b> Township Clerk	<b>Christopher Gonzalez</b> Trustee
<b>Cassandra Holbert-Elston</b> Township Assessor	<b>Gerald Jones</b> Trustee
<b>Geary DePue</b> Township Highway Commissioner	<b>Joyce Washington</b> Trustee

## CLERK'S CORNER: JACQUELINE E. DAVIS-RIVERA



The past 20 years with Thornton Township (18 years in office) have really been awesome as your Township Trustee then as your Clerk. When I started as a volunteer with Thornton Township, I was thrilled to be able to serve at various events in the 17 towns that make up our awesome Township.

In 2003, I officially became a Trustee of Thornton Township. I was overjoyed that the Lord was enlarging my territory to serve his people in so many ways available at Thornton township (food pantry, utilities, taxes, Senior Services & many other benefits).

In 2005, I was asked to run for one of the most exciting public service positions, Clerk of Thornton Township, which I've been blessed to serve in until my retirement in May 2021. I thank the Lord for these many years of Public Service and the Love, Respect and Trust the people have shown me.

Again, I want to emphasize my gratitude to the Supervisor and Elected Officials

of Thornton Township as they continue to provide the great opportunities for our residents. During this time, of COVID-19 pandemic, please stay safe and healthy in all ways. Wear your mask, keep your distance of at least 6 feet and prayerfully we will overcome this virus.

Currently our office is now located in the lower level of our building. Office hours are Monday through Thursday 9 AM to 4 PM and two of those days we are open until 6 PM. For more information or questions, feel free to call the clerk's office at **708-596-6040 ext. 3123 or ext. 3118**

As I start my Retirement journey, I want to thank you all for your support and love over the years.

Blessings Always,  
Jacqueline E Davis – Rivera  
Clerk, Thornton Township

## ASSESSOR'S OFFICE: CASSANDRA W. ELSTON



I would like to start off by thanking Supervisor Frank M. Zuccarelli, Thornton Township mayors, Cook County Assessor Fritz Kaegi, Commissioner Larry R. Rogers, Jr., Board of Review, other elected officials, and taxpayers for their involvement in our 2020 Triennial Reassessment Workshops. It has been my honor to serve as your township Assessor and it is my privilege to partner with other elected officials and governmental agencies in an effort to educate and assist Thornton Township taxpayers.

I want to provide you with important information as we navigate towards the 2020 exemption process. All exemptions from the Cook County Assessor's Office for the 2020 tax year will be automatically renewed for (1) one year only. However, should you receive an exemption form by mail from the Cook County Assessor's Office or if you are a new homeowner, please do not hesitate to contact us. And by the way, Welcome to Thornton Township, "People

Working with People".

If you filed for an adjusted tax bill/certificate of error in 2020 because your exemption or exemptions did not reflect on your 2nd installment property tax bill, you should contact us at **(708) 596-6040 ext. 3175** so that we can assist you in reapplying for any qualifying exemptions. Please have your property index number available when making your inquiry, if possible.

Also, your Thornton Township Assessor's Office is available to assist you on an appointment basis, in an effort, to reduce the spread of the Covid-19 virus. It is imperative that we always exercise all safety protocol with our taxpayers and the staff. Please contact us at **(708)596-6040 ext. 3140** to schedule an appointment. For all other inquiries **(708) 596-6040 ext. 3175**. Please understand that upon entering the Township building that you are required to wear a face mask. If you do not have a face mask, one will be provided to you. You will also be presented with Covid 19 questions to answer and be asked to participate in taking a forehead temperature. The township is taking these precautions so that we can continue to serve our residents and keep everyone safe.

**AS USUAL, BE BLESSED - STAY SAFE, REMEMBER TO WEAR YOUR FACE MASK, WASH YOUR HANDS FREQUENTLY AND PRACTICE SOCIAL DISTANCING.**

## Cook County Announces Third Large Scale Community Vaccination Site at South Suburban College

Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle and Cook County Health System CEO Israel Rocha announced today that Cook County will open its third large scale vaccine administration site at South Suburban College to continue vaccinations for individuals eligible under 1b.

Phase 1b includes individuals age 65 and older and essential workers such as first responders, manufacturing employees and grocery store personnel. While an estimated 600,000 suburban individuals are eligible for vaccine under Phase 1b, officials continue to remind the public that there is currently not adequate vaccine supply to vaccinate everyone.

"While current vaccine supply does not meet the demand and in fact has been exhausted – we are setting up large scale sites now to ensure that we are ready as vaccine supply is expected to increase in the weeks and months ahead," said Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle.

South Suburban College, located in South Holland, is the third large-scale site Cook County has operationalized following the Tinley Park Convention Center on January 26, 2021 and Triton College on February 2, 2021. When fully operationalized and when ample vaccine supply becomes available, Cook County Health estimates it will be able to provide more than 4,000 vaccines weekly at South Suburban College. To date, Cook County Health has provided nearly 70,000 vaccine doses which is only a fraction of what is needed to get us to the next phase.

"The South Suburban College Board of Trustees and our entire SSC team are proud to

collaborate with Cook County to provide a safe, convenient, COVID-19 vaccination site right here at our main campus in South Holland," said Frank M. Zuccarelli, Chairman of the SSC Board of Trustees. "We can accomplish so much more by working together. I applaud President Preckwinkle, the Board of Commissioners and medical professionals of Cook County Health for your tireless efforts to protect our community."

Vaccinations at all Cook County Health sites are provided by appointment only. Cook County Health will continue to only offer appointment slots based on the amount of vaccine expected and will add appointments as new vaccine shipments arrive. At this time, Cook County Health has exhausted its vaccine supply and cannot open new appointments.

As vaccine becomes available, Cook County Health opens new appointments at **vaccine.cookcountyil.gov**. Individuals without internet access or who need assistance scheduling may call (833) 308-1988 (from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday – Friday).

In addition to Cook County Health sites, the **Cook County Department of Public Health** has distributed vaccines to more than 90 partner locations including Jewel-Osco, Mariano's, Walgreens, Federally Qualified Health Centers and hospitals who are also offering vaccines by appointment. Additional sites can be found at **<https://coronavirus.illinois.gov/s/vaccination-location>**.

Residents not yet eligible for vaccine may also sign up at **vaccine.cookcountyil.gov** to receive updates on their phase and for information on dozens of additional vaccination sites across Cook County.



## Helping the Local Community

# T.F. North Students In Action

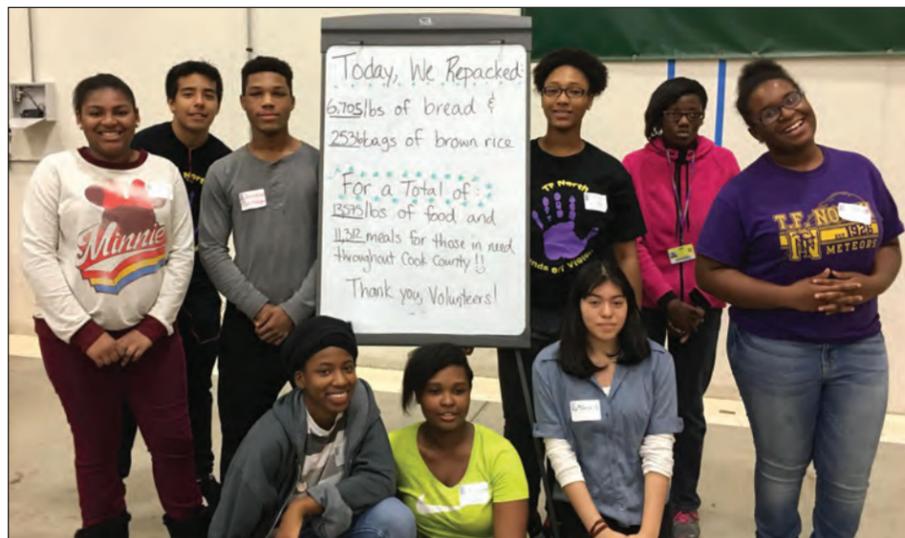
Thornton Township partnered with District 215 for several projects that produced food for community members as well as essential supplies for graduating seniors. The township helped sponsor an annual Thanksgiving dinner, which fed more than 300 people during the Thanksgiving and Veterans Day holidays. It was spearheaded through the Thornton Fractional North Student Action Team along with Thornton Fraction South students. This community service club of around 50 passionate students is sponsored by Ana Boesenberg, a TF North Spanish teacher and Ayanna Dowd, the school's Speech-Language Pathologist. Prior to COVID-19, the students did in-person monthly service projects including: cooking meals at various Ronald McDonald Houses, packing food at the Chicago Food Depository and Feed My Starving Children, playing bingo with the residents of St. Anthony of Lansing and sorting and packing clothing and toys at Cradles to Crayons,

During the pandemic, the Student Action Team has continued to serve St. Anthony's of Lansing retirement community by providing gifts and cards to its residents, provided toiletries and household items to TF North families in need, collected hats, scarves and gloves for children in need for Cradles to Crayons and bought lunch for a COVID-19 nursing unit at St. Margaret Hospital in Hammond, Indiana.

"Being part of the Student Action Team has really made me a better person. It has made me realize how much my community and communities around me really do need help and how much we are able to help," said Javier Garcia Merino, the organization's president and graduating senior. "We work hard to be creative during these tough times but we always make it work."

Mike Kawa, TF North activities director, has seen the program grow throughout the past four years. He said the students have amazed him at every step of the way.

"They help students connect with the community and serve the community. Some of their events and projects take months of organizing and pulling people together to make the events successful," said Kawa.



The Student Action Team's community projects are largely funded by donations by community partners such as: Thornton Township, Park Commissioner Vice-President, Nyota Figgs/Calumet Memorial Park District, Lions Club, Kiwanis-Chicago Heights, Mr. Submarine, Schoop's Hamburgers and various other business and private donors.

Co-sponsor Ms. Dowd says, "We are so grateful that God blessed us to have the support of the businesses and organizations in our community," said Dowd. "None of this would be possible without them. We have an amazing group of students and the support of our administration. We want to instill in our students the importance of serving, even when they become adults. Even if you don't have a lot of money, you can make an invaluable difference helping others."

Her fellow colleague agrees.

"I am able to see the students in action and the joy they get from helping others," added Boesenberg. "As a community we need to provide more opportunities for the students to go out and help."

If you would like to donate to the Student Action Team, please contact Ms. Dowd at [adowd@tfd215.org](mailto:adowd@tfd215.org) or Ms. Boesenberg at [aboesenberg@tfd215.org](mailto:aboesenberg@tfd215.org).

## Thornton Township Introduces Z-Mart

Thornton Township is planning to expand its food assistance program. The Z-mart would allow township residents to do their own shopping. The client choice food pantry also helps eliminate waste by allowing families to select the items that would best serve them.

The first location will be Thornridge High School, 15000 Cottage Grove in Harvey, and is anticipated to open this fall. Operating hours and more information will be available closer to the opening. A few families at a time would be permitted to shop while those waiting can be screened for eligibility into other programs. Thornton Township Food Assistance Center, 15340 Page Ave in Harvey, would provide the stocked food. General Assistance caseworkers, trained counselors and other staff will be on-site at each location for a social service triage. The program is sponsored by a grant from the Greater Chicago Food Depository.

The social service triage would assess what services are needed and when possible make the referrals on-site to provide maximum assistance to struggling families. Walt's Food Center will offer training for proper shelf stocking and product rotation and would look to the Z-Mart for new workforce needs. Community guests would be able to select so many products from various color coded labels allowing for an even distribution of ordered food supplies.

The township food pantry will also continue to serve the Thornton Township community by offering food resources to the most vulnerable residents of the township. Currently, we serve more than 3,000 area households monthly, allowing residents to stretch their limited resources by providing quality food products. Our employees distribute pre-assembled food boxes to every client that qualifies for the food resources.

## We're Updating Our Database

Want to stay in touch with the Township? You will receive e-mails, text messages and/or phone calls about services and events provided by Thornton Township.

### How to submit your information:

1. Take out your Smartphone and/or Tablet
2. Go to Camera
3. Scan this QR Code
4. Tap the pop-up on your screen
5. Fill out the information form\*



### You can also sign up by using:

- E-mail: [connectwithus@thorntontwp.com](mailto:connectwithus@thorntontwp.com)
- Phone: 708-596-6040 ex. 3213
- Text: 708-571-6107
- Web: [www.thorntontownship.com/customerservice](http://www.thorntontownship.com/customerservice)

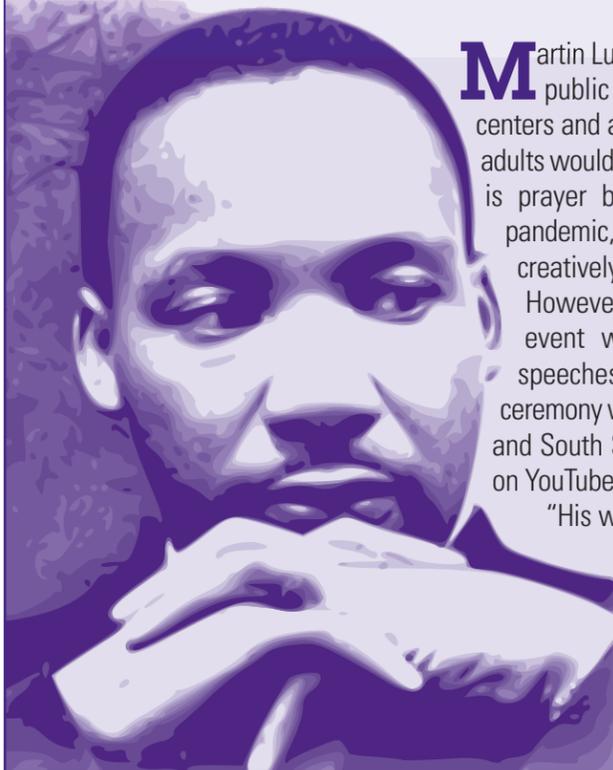
\*Please be advised that the information you provide will be used by Thornton Township for communication and marketing purposes.

## Relief for Texans

Thornton Township, W&W Towing and Walt's Food Centers collaborated together to send 15 pallets of water to Texas after the state was devastated by winter storms. The winter storm left dozens of Texans dead, millions without power and nearly 15 million with water issues. It could be the costliest disaster in state history, potentially exceeding the \$125 billion in damage from Hurricane Harvey.



## Honoring and Remembering Martin Luther King, Jr.



**M**artin Luther King, Jr. Day is usually a day filled with public celebrations around churches, community centers and auditoriums. In previous years, students and adults would gather together in large groups whether that is prayer breakfasts or luncheons. But due to the pandemic, public presentations were put on hold and creatively turned into a one-hour virtual performance. However that did not diminish the grandeur of the event with students performing music, poems, speeches and presentations. It was a joint ceremony with Thornton Township, School District #205 and South Suburban Community College, broadcasted on YouTube.

"His work that began with the civil rights moment in the 1950s and 1960s are not yet done," said Frank M. Zuccarelli Supervisor. "It is time for us to create lasting change together. Dr King kept marching and believing for the world to be a better place."

The keynote speech was delivered by

the Rev. Dr. Ozzie Smith, a retired pastor of the Covenant United Church of Christ in South Holland.

This King Day observance came on the heels of a pandemic that has killed more than 563,000 Americans, racial injustice and political protests. The theme was Sustaining the Dream through a Pandemic. Rev. Dr. Ozzie Smith said this summer's protests were the latest chapter in a long story. Smith said the events of the last year forced students to see Dr. King's message in a new light.

"2020 for the first time does not mean good vision, but a maddening loss of vision and a pandemic that slowed us down. It was a year we would like to forget but we cannot, because it is still hanging on," he said. "We need to learn from our experiences and pass the mantle."

Dr. Lynette Stokes, President of South Suburban Community College said it is up to students to complete Dr King's work.

"We know his work is not finished, but we honor his legacy by carrying on his mission in all that we do," Dr. Stokes said.

If you question whether you can make a difference, keep in mind everything you have experienced in the past and what you will experience in the future will serve as steps in the journey," said Dr. Nathaniel Cunningham, Jr., Superintendent of School District #205.

## Thornton Township Features a Virtual Black History Month Event

**T**hornton Township featured a virtual Black History Month event. The program was filled with spoken word, African dances and historical videos presenting Black Excellence. The annual event has taken place for the past 18 years. The video is featured on the township's YouTube and Facebook pages.

In previous years, Thornton Township has featured internationally-known civil rights activists and author Dick Gregory, national personality Roland Martin, stories of Tuskegee Air Men and three years ago renting out two showings in the Lansing theater of Black Panther, the highest grossing North American film in 2018. Dr. J. L. Weems, Thornton Township Youth and Family Services, read a response from LinkedIn when someone asked "Isn't Celebrating Black History Success Racist?". Weems read the response.

"Black people make a big deal about black success and progress in white spaces for the same reasons why people celebrate when a lost child is found, or submarine rescue is made, or soldiers return unscathed from battle, or a shepherd finds a lost sheep, or the prodigal son returns, overcoming seemingly insurmountable or stubborn hurdles is cause for special celebration. When you have been told you can't make it and you don't belong here, breaking through is cause for special celebration. Thriving during inhospitable times is cause for celebration."

The program featured award winning spoken word poet Heather Byrd along with the West African Dance and Drum Company and video featuring historical figures. The program's focus was understanding the rich history, achievement and innovation that African American have provided to the foundation of the United States. Black history is American history.

"There are so many ways that we divide ourselves that are unnecessary. History is history and it should be integrated into 12 months of people learning about everyone who has been instrumental," said Ernst Lamothe Jr., township communication manager, who helped create the Black History program. "A person's skin color is the least interesting thing about them and shouldn't be the focus of a conversation."

## Covid Restrictions Can't Dampen Thornton Township's Christmas Spirit

**D**uring the Christmas season, Thornton Township, the largest township in Illinois, once again gave away thousands of free toys and food boxes during its annual Christmas Care program. The program has been going on for more than a decade.

"This is one of my favorite programs all year," said Frank M. Zuccarelli, Thornton Township supervisor. "It's a great feeling when you see the excitement in a child's eyes when they see all the wrapped presents, and

then you see the parents so thankful that they can provide a good Christmas for their children."

In addition during the Christmas season, Thornton Township invited the community to enjoy a unique holiday photo experience. The Township took free family and friend photos with a Polaroid camera in front of our large Christmas tree outside our main township building, 333 E. 162nd Street in South Holland. Each person received a goodie bag and township calendar.



# Earth Day RECYCLING EVENT

*Thornton Township wants to help you get rid of your clutter to celebrate Earth Day 2021!*

## FRIDAY APRIL 23, 2021

10:00 am-1:00 pm

*Sponsored by Cook County Sheriff's Department*

**Cost: Free for Township Residents**

### *What can be recycled?*

Electronics (E-waste), Appliances, Printers, Computer & laptops, Scanners & Copiers, Monitors & Displays, Microwaves, Vacuums, TV's, anything that plugs into an outlet. Old medications and expired prescription drugs and paper shredding.

**Location: 333 E. 162nd Street, South Holland, IL 60473**

JOYCE M. WASHINGTON  
Trustee  
NORBERT CIPOWSKI  
Trustee  
STAFFORD OWENS  
Trustee  
GERALD "JERRY" JONES  
Trustee



FRANK M. ZUCCARELLI,  
Supervisor  
708-596-6040 • [www.thorntontownship.com](http://www.thorntontownship.com)

JACQUELINE E. DAVIS- RIVERA  
Clerk  
CASSANDRA W. ELSTON,  
Assessor C.I.A.O.  
GEARY DEPUE  
Highway Commissioner

# South Suburban College Success Stories

## The Best Investment You Can Make



**I**t doesn't get any better than 100%. But perhaps, equally as gratifying as watching all of your students get hired is knowing they are entering a workforce in desperate need of their newly learned skills.

"We couldn't be happier that 100% of our Echo graduates are embarking on their new career in healthcare, and we look forward to great things from them in the future of cardiac sonography," said South Suburban College's Echocardiography Program Coordinator, Zubeir A. Haroun, MPH, MBChB, RDCS, RCS. "The quality of our program and students just continues to grow and that is a direct benefit to our community and local healthcare providers."

An echocardiographer runs echocardiograms, which uses sound waves to produce images of the heart. This common but critical test allows a physician to see your heart beating and pumping blood. Doctors use the images from an echocardiogram to identify heart disease –the leading cause of death for men, women, and people of most racial and ethnic groups in the United States. One person dies every 36 seconds in the United States from cardiovascular disease and 655,000 Americans die from heart disease each year.

Two of those talented Echo students who graduated in the South Suburban College class of 2020 will be providing their much-needed expertise through Advocate Christ Medical Center in Oak lawn, Illinois, and Memorial Hospital in South Bend, Indiana.

For **Anna Kasa**, 45, of Orland Park, her journey to becoming a medical professional started by taking her friend to breast cancer chemotherapy. Every trip with her friend, she watched her receive an echocardiogram.

"The more times I went with her, the more something resonated with me how important this field is," said Anna, who was admitted into the SSC Echo Program in 2019. "Now you add a virus like COVID-19 to the picture and truly understand just how essential these early diagnostic tests are to treating patients and saving lives."

As a wife, mother of two, and returning adult student, Anna hopes to inspire others to pursue their dreams and careers. She said echocardiography married her love of helping others with her family's financial needs for college funds, wedding day finances and life's other special moments. She chose SSC because of its unique program, affordability and accommodating schedule.

"This is the best thing I have ever done for my family. This is a profession with incredible growth and I am so excited that I landed at Advocate Christ Hospital – one

of the best places you can be for cardiac issues," added Anna.

**Sabrina Dudley**, 25, of Harvey, began her journey to employment at Memorial Hospital in 2018. She considered several health-centric educational pathways at SSC before choosing echocardiography.

"There are so many people affected by heart conditions that you know you can make a difference," said Sabrina. One of those people is her father, who suffers from heart disease.

"Being able to fully understand my dad's condition allows me to help him and talk to him about it. I know the path to get him as heart healthy as possible. But if something were to happen, I would be able to see the warning signs of heart attack or a stroke," said Dudley.

"This is a demanding but very interesting and rewarding career, and I am happy I chose it!"

Anna and Sabrina wish to credit Professor Haroun for helping them in various ways to stay motivated and remain diligent in their pursuit of their newfound careers. Professor Haroun says 100% of the credit is theirs for choosing to become one of the future heroes in healthcare.



Tags: #echo #echocardiography #healthcare #education #career #SuccessStories

## Take Summer classes at South Suburban College

### and Benefit from Scholarships, Tuition Assistance Programs and Free Laptops

**S**outh Suburban College (SSC) continues its efforts to provide flexibility to college degree seekers interrupted by the pandemic with a virtual classroom and a wide range of tuition, technology and academic supports. Summer Registration is in progress online from [ssc.edu](http://ssc.edu). The 2021 Summer Semester begins the week of Monday, June 7th for both credit and non-credit classes. Summer students are encouraged to register early to secure grant opportunities and a preferred schedule.

The summer semester is an excellent opportunity for students to take the next step in their success by customizing a class schedule at a convenient, affordable institution. New SSC students should get started with the Online Application from [ssc.edu](http://ssc.edu). Once the application process is complete, new students will receive an SSC email account and a Self Service Username & Password via email which will allow access to student information and class registration.

The SSC Foundation extended its scholarship deadline to Friday, April 16, 2021, for new and current students. More than 150 scholarships with a wide range of criteria are available for the coming summer, fall, and spring semesters.

SSC previously announced the free laptop application and other technical supports such as hotspots to assist students with the virtual learning environment. Applications are accepted from [www.ssc.edu/technology-relief-fund/](http://www.ssc.edu/technology-relief-fund/). Former students make take advantage of a new one-time SSC Student Debt Relief Fund from [www.ssc.edu/student-debt-relief-fund](http://www.ssc.edu/student-debt-relief-fund).

Additionally, SSC's Workforce Equity Initiative (WEI) grant provides wrap-around services including comprehensive financial assistance and academic support to participating students within a variety of program areas providing stackable credentials. These programs will be highlighted at the upcoming Open Houses including Nursing, Patient Care Technician (PCT), Basic Nursing Assistance Training Program (BNATP), Community Healthcare Worker (CHW), Certified Production Technician (CPT), Solar Photovoltaic Installer, Forklift Operator, and the brand-new Barber College at the college's Main Campus. For more information about the WEI programs at SSC, please call (708) 596-2000, ext. 2413, email [workforceequity@ssc.edu](mailto:workforceequity@ssc.edu) or visit [www.ssc.edu/wei](http://www.ssc.edu/wei).

In addition to the live chat function at [ssc.edu](http://ssc.edu), prospective students may call (708) 210-5718 for assistance, or email [registration&records@ssc.edu](mailto:registration&records@ssc.edu) or [Counseling CenterQuestions@ssc.edu](mailto:CounselingCenterQuestions@ssc.edu).

SSC is a community college located in South Holland, Illinois serving 21 communities including parts of the Chicago Southland and northwest Indiana. SSC provides a variety of support services and leadership opportunities to its students in addition to a wide range of affordable academic programs

# South Suburban College Nursing Program Ranked Top 3 in Illinois by Nursing Advocacy Organization

The Illinois Community College Board announced last week the appointment of South Suburban College President, Lynette D. Stokes to its board. Dr. Stokes was one of just two new statewide appointments along with Dr. Larry Peterson, former President of Shawnee Community College, whom upon confirmation from the Senate will serve terms through June 30, 2021.

South Suburban College's (SSC) Associate Degree Nursing Program (ADN) has been named the #3 Ranked Nursing Program in Illinois by RegisteredNursing.org – a nursing advocacy organization. RegisteredNursing.org recently released its annual list of *Best RN Programs*.

Nursing programs are assessed on several factors which represent how well a program supports students towards licensure and beyond. RegisteredNursing.org also analyzes past and present first time NCLEX-RN "pass-rates" - weighted by year (more information on the methodology is accessible from <https://www.registerednursing.org/rn-ranking-methodology/>).

"Recognitions like these are the result of a lot of hard work by our instructors and students," said Dr. Linda Brown-Aldridge, Dean of Nursing at SSC. "It is even more rewarding and inspiring to see our students achieve success and become part of a workforce that needs talented, caring people more than ever."

The NCLEX (National Council Licensure Examination) for registered nurses is a standardized exam that each state board of nursing uses to determine whether or not a candidate is prepared for entry-level nursing practice. SSC's recent graduate success is the culmination of five consecutive years above the annual national average pass rates including multiple 100% passing graduated classes since the program reopened in 2013. The College's ADN Program has undergone a major transformation, from

revitalizing curriculum to providing innovative new student support systems and cutting-edge technology.

"Dr. Brown-Aldridge and her team have really taken the program to a new level since her arrival in 2019," said Dr. Lynette D. Stokes, SSC President. "We are excited about the opportunity for more significant growth as the pandemic slows."

Stokes said that South Suburban College is strategically working to increase awareness to expand the Nursing student population with an eye toward a state-of-the-art Allied Health & Nursing Center, which is quietly in development at the Main Campus in South Holland (email [foundation@ssc.edu](mailto:foundation@ssc.edu) for more information).

While the next admission cycle closed on March 1st for the Fall 2021 Semester, new prospective students are encouraged to begin their prerequisites as early as this summer by creating a plan with an SSC Counselor. The College also has plans for launching an LPN-RN bridge pathway this year.

The SSC Nursing Program is approved by the Illinois Department of Professional Regulations (IDFPR) and the college is accredited by the North Central Higher Learning Commission (HLC), both critical components to proper credentialing and certification upon graduation. It is a two-year Associate in Applied Science curriculum that provides learning experiences directed by faculty in local hospitals and health agencies to focus on the direct nursing care of patients of all ages.

For more information about Nursing and other Allied Health Programs at SSC, please visit [ssc.edu/success](http://ssc.edu/success) or call **(708) 596-2000, ext. 2260**. Email [CounselingCenterQuestions@ssc.edu](mailto:CounselingCenterQuestions@ssc.edu) for information about prerequisites and scheduling.



**COVID**  
CORONAVIRUS  
DISEASE  
**19**

## Help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19

Avoid close contact with people who are sick.



Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.



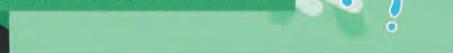
Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.



Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.



Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.



Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.



### Important Phone Numbers

Illinois Department of Public Health:  
**(800) 889-3931**

Cook County Health Department:  
Main **(708) 633-4000** / Oak Forest **(708) 633-8030**

Emergency Response:  
**911**

# The Hill we Climb

BY  
AMANDA GORMAN

National Youth Poet Laureate and Harvard graduate, Amanda Gorman, a young, 23-year old African American woman, wrote this poem explicitly for President Joseph Biden's Inaugural ceremony.

We've reprinted it here because her words are most hopeful and inspiring as is her personal story.

When day comes we ask ourselves, where  
can we find light in this never-ending  
shade?

The loss we carry, a sea we must wade.

We've braved the belly of the beast,

We've learned that quiet isn't always peace,  
and the norms and notions

of what just is isn't always just-ice.

And yet the dawn is ours before we knew it.

Somehow we do it.

Somehow we've weathered and witnessed a  
nation that isn't broken,

but simply unfinished.

We the successors of a country and a time  
where a skinny Black girl descended  
from slaves and raised by a single mother  
can dream of becoming president only to  
find herself reciting for one.

And yes we are far from polished.

Far from pristine.

But that doesn't mean we are striving to  
form a union that is perfect.

We are striving to forge a union with  
purpose, to compose a country  
committed to all cultures, colors,  
characters and conditions of man.

And so we lift our gazes not to what stands  
between us, but what stands before us.

We close the divide because we know, to  
put our future first, we must first put our  
differences aside.

We lay down our arms so we can reach out  
our arms to one another.

We seek harm to none and harmony for all.

Let the globe, if nothing else, say this is  
true, that even as we grieved, we grew,  
that even as we hurt, we hoped, that even  
as we tired, we tried, that we'll forever be  
tied together, victorious.

Not because we will never again know  
defeat, but because we will never again  
sow division.

Scripture tells us to envision that everyone  
shall sit under their own vine and fig tree  
and no one shall make them afraid.

If we're to live up to our own time, then  
victory won't lie in the blade.

But in all the bridges we've made, that is  
the promise to glade, the hill we climb.

If only we dare.

It's because being American is more than a  
pride we inherit, it's the past we step into  
and how we repair it.

We've seen a force that would shatter our  
nation rather than share it.

Would destroy our country if it meant  
delaying democracy.

And this effort very nearly succeeded.

But while democracy can be periodically  
delayed, it can never be permanently  
defeated.

In this truth, in this faith we trust.

For while we have our eyes on the future,  
history has its eyes on us.

This is the era of just redemption we feared  
at its inception.

We did not feel prepared to be the heirs of  
such a terrifying hour

but within it we found the power to author a  
new chapter.

To offer hope and laughter to ourselves.

So while once we asked, how could we  
possibly prevail over catastrophe?

Now we assert, how could catastrophe  
possibly prevail over us?

We will not march back to what was, but  
move to what shall be.

A country that is bruised but whole,  
benevolent but bold, fierce and free.

We will not be turned around or interrupted  
by intimidation,

because we know our inaction and inertia  
will be the inheritance of the next  
generation.

Our blunders become their burdens.

But one thing is certain,

If we merge mercy with might, and might  
with right, then love becomes our legacy,  
and change our children's birthright.

So let us leave behind a country better than  
the one we were left with.

Every breath from my bronze-pounded  
chest, we will raise this wounded world  
into a wondrous one.

We will rise from the gold-limbed hills of  
the west.

We will rise from the windswept northeast,  
where our forefathers first realized  
revolution.

We will rise from the lake-rimmed cities of  
the midwestern states.

We will rise from the sunbaked south.

We will rebuild, reconcile and recover.

And every known nook of our nation and  
every corner called our country, our  
people diverse and beautiful will emerge,  
battered and beautiful.

When day comes we step out of the shade,  
aflame and unafraid, the new dawn  
blooms as we free it.

For there is always light, if only we're  
brave enough to see it.

If only we're brave enough to be it.

