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**Changes to
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2026 - Fourth Quarter

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From the
MAYOR

Upcoming Charter Proposals for Your Consideration

THIS November, Southgate has two proposals representing modifications to our City Charter. The first involves the elimination of term limits for elected officials. This change would return our Charter back to its original language that did not call for term limits.

This idea was brought to our City Council by a resident who felt that if someone is doing a good job, we should be able to continue to vote for them, and if they are not, vote them out. She believes that our city elections are the ultimate "term limit."

Southgate's voting history validates that position. Four of our eight prior mayors have been voted out of office during regular elections instead of through term limits. Over the last two election cycles, we have had seven new council members without relying on term limits to get new people involved.

City Council then voted to put the elimination of term limits on the ballot for our residents to decide.



Progress takes time and commitment. It took 16 years to eliminate our city's General Fund debt – from \$14 million to zero. Finding the right developer for the bank tower project and the redevelopment of the Aquinas site took over a decade.

Ultimately, the voters should decide who represents them and for how long.

The second proposal involves setting our bid threshold to meet the challenges of 2026 and beyond. Our current levels were established nearly 30 years ago and need to be updated for Southgate to remain competitive and get the best pricing from our vendors.

These amendments are important to the future of our community.

Please consider voting YES on these proposals to keep our city on a sound financial footing and preserving your right to vote without limitations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Kuspa".

Joseph G. Kuspa, Mayor



Important Contact Information

Police Department Non-Emergency
734-324-4438

Police Department Administration
734-258-3060

Fire Department
734-258-3080

Mayor's Office
734-258-3022

City Administrator's Office
734-258-3022

Finance Department
734-258-3020

City Clerk's Office
734-258-3015

Building Department
734-258-3030

Department of Public Services
734-258-3075

Water Billing
734-258-3018

Assessor's Office
734-258-3005

Treasurer's Office
734-258-3012

Veteran's Memorial Library
734-258-3002

South Winds Golf Course
734-258-3004

Parks & Recreation
(Civic Center)
734-258-3035

Senior Center
734-258-3066

28th District Court
734-258-3068

Downtown Development Authority
734-258-7770

Priority Waste is closed on New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. If your service day falls on a holiday, your service will be delayed one day. Returns will not be made for items not placed out on the correct day.

Visit our website
www.southgatemi.org

HERE'S WHAT'S HAPPENING AT YOUR LIBRARY *This Fall!*

● Young Child Programs

On Mondays from 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., we hold programs for babies and their caregivers to enjoy time socializing and learning together.

On Thursdays at 11 a.m., we invite toddlers and their adults to join us for programs designed just for them.

● Halloween Toddler Storytime

Thursday, October 29 at 11:00 a.m.

Children and their families are invited to join us for books, music and more! Feel free to let your little ones dress up for a small costume parade with a treat at the end.

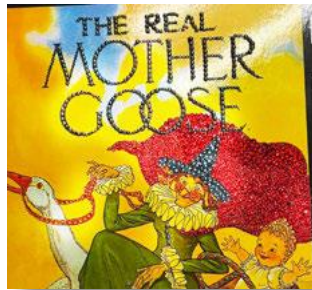
Other upcoming events

● Book Bedazzling

(Ages 14+)

Monday, November 9 from 6-8 p.m.

Back by popular demand! Come get your sparkle on and create a piece of glorious artwork for your bookshelf! This is a BYOB situation (bring your own book!) where you supply the book and we furnish everything else you need. If you already own your own bedazzling supplies, please feel welcome to bring and use them instead! Rhinestone as much or as little of your book as you'd like, but please note that full coverage of the front and spine would likely take considerably longer than this session. Plan accordingly!



● Saturday Morning Movies

Saturday, November 21 at 11 a.m.

Join us for a fun, family-friendly movie every third Saturday of the month. We'll provide the snacks – you supply your family and friends! This month, come join us for "Ratatouille" (Rated G).

● Teen Lo-Fi Lab (grades 6-12)

Wednesday, December 9 at 6 p.m.

Join us for Lo-fi and Low Pressure. Ditch the stress and find your flow at the library! Are you in school and have too much homework? Come hang out at Teen Lo-fi Lab. Whether you're working on an essay, filling a sketchbook or just need a quiet place to sit, we've got the beats and the space for you. This will be a place just for you to sit back, do your homework and relax. We'll also have snacks, fidgets and small crafts.

● Silver Strings Dulcimer Society

Monday, December 14 at 6 p.m.

You are cordially invited to our seventh concert by The Silver Strings

Dulcimer Society! This organization promotes the appreciation and knowledge of hammered dulcimers and has won multiple Mid-Eastern Regional Dulcimer Club Championships. About half of its musicians play the dulcimer, with the other half comprised of guitars, mandolins and other acoustic instruments. They've traveled to many places in Michigan and are an absolute delight. It's fun for the whole family, and we hope to see you there!

For more details on all events, check our social media, website or newsletter!



Hygiene Closet

Inside a cabinet in the lobby of the library there is our Hygiene Station. This is a collection of basic supplies free to anyone who needs them. Shampoo, deodorant, soap, band-aids, and more are all available. There is no need to ask – take what you need!

The library relies on donations to keep the station stocked, and will accept donations of new, unopened hygiene items. You can find more information, including a link to our Amazon Wish List and what items we accept, on our website Services page, <https://southgate.lib.mi.us/services>. If you have any questions about donations, please contact us at (734) 258-3002.

Public Display Case

The Southgate Veterans Memorial Library is opening its display case for use by nonprofit organizations, community groups and individuals. We want to give people the chance to show off materials of educational, cultural, civic, and intellectual interest to the community. Examples include individual collections, works of art or craft, informational materials, etc. The display case is right by the circulation desk and is seen by everyone entering the library.

This is a new offer – we're still working out the exact details. The policy and application for use of the display are available at the library, so stop in and let us know if you're interested in learning more! We plan to start taking applications in November 2026 and opening it for public displays in January 2027.





Celebrate the Season **IN SOUTHGATE**

Southgate's Annual Tree Lighting Ceremony

Friday, December 5th at 5:30 p.m.

Mayor Kuspa and Southgate Elected Officials will officially welcome Santa Claus to the City of Southgate and light the Municipal Christmas Tree at Kiwanis Park. Christmas Carols will fill the air as Santa is presented with the key to the City. Kiwanis Train Park is located at Trenton Road & Leroy.

17th Annual Santa's Christmas Express Train Rides

Friday & Saturday, December 5th & 6th from 6:00-9:00 p.m.

The Great Lakes Live Steamers offer train rides through our Winter Wonderland at Kiwanis Train Park. Enjoy a scenic route adorned with twinkling Christmas lights and festive decorations sponsored by local businesses. Donations to the Great Lakes Live Steamers are greatly appreciated.

Southgate's 7th Annual Light Up the Park

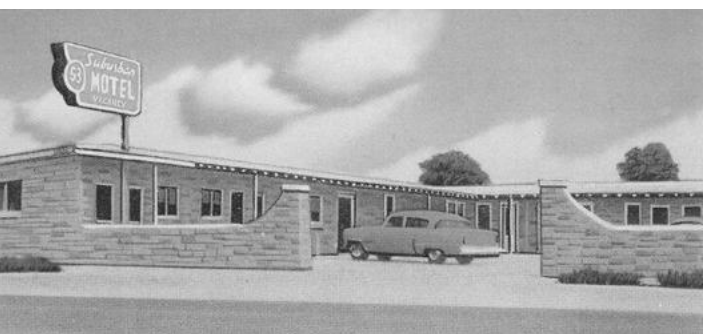
Thursday, December 11th thru January 1st from 6:00-10:00 p.m.

Market Center Park will be adorned with twinkling lights and festive decorations in the weeks leading up to Christmas. You can stroll through the park each night to admire the holiday lights. Don't forget to drop off your letter to Santa in the North Pole Mailbox.

Events brought to you by:



HISTORY



The History of U.S. 25/Dix-Toledo Road

By Tom Lewis, Southgate Historical Museum Curator

THE U.S. highway system was created by the federal government 100 years ago, in 1926, to connect the nation's cities and towns in the new age of the automobile. East-west roads were designated an even number, and north-south roads with an odd number.

Originally, U.S. 25 began in Port Huron and ended in New Brunswick, Georgia. In the early 1930s, Dix-Toledo Road was built and given the U.S. 25 designation. It became the main route between Toledo and Detroit. After World War II, many travelers used it on their way to Detroit and Northern Michigan. Many local entrepreneurs built gas stations, restaurants and motels to accommodate these tourists.

When Southgate became a city in 1958, Dix-Toledo Road U.S. 25 was a booming thoroughfare to eat, get gas and stay overnight that ran through the center of the city. There were over a dozen gas stations, with major brands like Gulf, Marathon, Shell, Sinclair Speedway 79, Standard, Sunoco, Mobil and Texaco.

There were many restaurants, diners and truck stops,

including Howard Johnson's, the first national chain in Southgate.

There were at least eight motels, with several of them having an AAA recommendation. AAA insurance offered its members a travel service that included maps, tour books and motel recommendations. The first national chain motel was Inn America, built around 1960.

In 1956, the Interstate Highway system was created, and I-75 was built in the early 1960s. When it was completed through Downriver, the U.S. 25 designation was shared with I-75 until 1973, when the U.S. designation was decommissioned in the state of Michigan. Some sections became a state highway and were renamed M-25.

Today, U.S. 25 still runs through Kentucky, Tennessee, the Carolinas and Georgia. In Southgate, most of the motels along the former U.S. 25 are long gone, and the restaurants and gas stations have either been torn down or converted into another business. If you look carefully, you might see a hair salon or pizza place that was once a 1950s gas station.



I can't see well enough to do my crossword puzzles –

Can You Help?

Ask the Doctor

Q: My doctor said I have moderate macular degeneration and diabetic retina damage, which feels pretty severe to me. I'm writing because it is almost impossible for me to do my crosswords even though I use large print puzzles and a magnifying glass. Having to hold my magnifier with one hand and trying to write has me so frustrated! What can you do to help me return to doing my crosswords?

~Carl N., 78 years old

A: To begin, it is encouraging to at least hear that your retinal doctor believes you have moderate tissue condition. You need to understand there is a difference between the amount of tissue damage compared to the impact on your ability to see and function.

There are three key steps that are required when someone needs help to see and write at the same time:

- 1) Proper magnification
- 2) A comfortable distance to work that allows you to write (not as close as you are used to)
- 3) The free use of your hands

In order to provide you with the best vision and ability to function in this situation, I prescribe special telescopic glasses. It is also important that you have the right lighting.

Having helped thousands of others over the decades who have had vision loss similar to you tells me that there are other areas of your life that can also be helped by improving your ability to function. It is helpful if you can identify other areas of your daily life in which your vision limits your ability to function.

It would be best if you could schedule an evaluation and bring the materials that you would like to see better when you come for your appointment.

Stop struggling with poor vision.

To schedule an appointment

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ABOUT BEYOND LOW VISION

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



To submit a question please email or write Dr. Jacobi at:

www.beyondlowvision.com

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Seen, Understood, Valued

Riverview Hospice provides peace, comfort during life's final chapters By Terry Jacoby

RIVerview Hospice Care is an organization based on providing compassionate, personalized and dignified in-home hospice care. Even the name, Riverview, symbolizes calm, reflection and the journey forward – a reminder that even in times of transition, there can be beauty, grace and connection.



Mary Reed

Founded on the belief that every person deserves to live with comfort, peace and respect during life's final chapters, Riverview Hospice was created to provide care that honors both the patient and their family. Their comprehensive services include skilled nursing care, home health aide support, social work, chaplaincy, and a team of compassionate volunteers – all working together to meet the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of their patients and their families during life's final stages.

"What makes Riverview Hospice Care unique is our deeply inclusive approach to caregiving," said Clinical Director/CEO Mary Reed. "We have intentionally built a diverse team of healthcare professionals who directly reflect the communities we serve – many of whom are multilingual and represent a variety of cultural backgrounds and religious faiths."

Today, Riverview Hospice continues to grow, reaching more families across our community while staying true to its founding promise – to provide compassionate, personalized hospice care that celebrates life, honors legacy and embraces peace.

"Our goal is to encourage, educate and empower the community," Reed said.

Riverview Hospice Care, Inc., is located at 1100 Eureka Road in Wyandotte. For more information or a FREE expert consultation, visit riverviewhospicecare.com or call (734) 575-5505.





SOUTHGATE SPIRITS

A True, One-Stop Shop By Terry Jacoby

A word that has multiple meanings is called a polysemous (or polyseme) if the meanings are related, or a homonym if the meanings are unrelated. When it comes to Southgate Spirits, the word spirit certainly has a double meaning, and they are both related and unrelated – so does that make it a “polynym”? At the very least, they are kindred spirits.

Spirits means distilled beverages with a high alcohol content, which Southgate Spirits offers in every size, shape and flavor. But spirit also can mean a person who is full of life and energy, and that perfectly describes Joseph Sakhria, owner of Southgate Spirits.

Sakhria is only 28 years old but has already become an experienced business owner, opening, closing and rebranding several businesses in the Detroit metro area and overcoming the challenges COVID had on small businesses. These challenges only made him smarter, hungrier and even more confident in what he wanted to do.

And that brings us to 14655 Northline Road in Southgate. Sakhria started construction on Southgate Spirits on August 1, 2025, and opened the doors to the public on July 1, 2026.

“I love that the location is surrounded by such a beautiful and safe neighborhood, and everyone has been so nice and welcoming, and they love coming back to see us,” Sakhria said. “I picked Southgate because I believed that there was something missing in this shopping center, and I believed it needed some energy. I was ready to take on the challenge and bring some life to the plaza and do what I love to do, and that’s put smiles on people’s faces

every time they are leaving. I wanted to let people in this neighborhood understand that this area is not dying and that Southgate is a beautiful city to invest, live and be in. I have met many amazing, hard-working people.”

Southgate Spirits is a locally owned liquor store offering a wide selection of wine, beer and premium spirits. They carry everything from everyday favorites to top-shelf whiskey, tequila, vodka, and craft beer.

“We have a wide variety of bourbon tequilas and carry every category in the book,” Sakhria said. “We are trying to build this into a one-stop liquor store and are dedicated to having one of the biggest selections Downriver. We also carry everything from value wines to most higher end wines and have a big beer cave dedicated to beer and craft and seltzers. We also carry a wide variety of vapes and are actually trying to integrate a small smoke shop section in the middle of Southgate spirits soon. We offer grocery products and endless snacks, and want to become a true one-stop shop.

“Whether you’re stocking up for the weekend, planning a party or looking for something special, our friendly team is here to help.”

Sakhria also is planning on adding a full-line deli and offering fresh subs and salads.

Southgate Spirits is located at 14655 Northline Road in Southgate. They are open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9 a.m. to midnight; Friday and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 2 a.m. and Sunday from 11 a.m. to midnight. For more information, call (734) 288-0305.





SOUTHGATE'S *Shop Small* SATURDAY



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Olympian Jason Brown Visits Southgate Figure Skating Club

THE Southgate Figure Skating Club and the Southgate Parks and Recreation Department recently welcomed Olympic figure skater Jason Brown for a memorable seminar filled with learning, inspiration and fun.

During the event, skaters participated in both on-ice and off-ice activities, led by Jason. He shared his skating knowledge, positive energy and encouragement while helping participants develop their skills and confidence.

Jason also ate lunch with the skaters and took the time to chat, answer questions and get to know them. To make the day even more special, he created a TikTok video with the group, which can be found on his social media.

It was an unforgettable experience for the Southgate skaters and a wonderful opportunity to learn from one of figure skating's most talented and inspiring athletes.



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Two Proposed Charter Amendments on the 2026 Ballot

SOUTHGATE voters will consider two proposed Amendments to the City Charter this November.

The City Charter is the foundational document that establishes how the City is organized and governed. Charter amendments change provisions of that document and are submitted to voters for approval.

The complete ballot language, proposed Charter changes and additional frequently asked questions are available on the City of Southgate website: www.southgatemi.gov

Charter Amendment to Sections 37 and 56: Remove Term Limits for Elected Officials

The first proposed amendment would remove the current term limits for the offices of Mayor, City Clerk, City Treasurer and City Council.

Currently, an elected official is prohibited from seeking re-election to the same office after serving three consecutive four-year terms.

If approved, the amendment would remove that limitation, returning the Charter to its original language which did not include term limits. The length of each term would remain four years, and voters would continue to choose who serves in each office through regularly scheduled elections.

What happens if the amendment passes?

The term limits for Mayor, City Clerk, City Treasurer and City Council would be removed from the City Charter. For Example: If the amendment is approved, Mayor Kuspa could run for another term as Mayor.

The amendment would not automatically extend anyone's current term of office. Elected officials would still need to seek election, and voters would continue to decide who serves in each office through regularly scheduled elections

Does removing the term limit guarantee that someone can remain in office?

Removing the term limit would allow an individual to seek another term, but it would not guarantee re-election. Voters would continue to decide who serves in each elected office through regular elections.

What is the history of term limits in Southgate?

Term limits have not always been part of the Southgate City Charter. When the city was founded in 1958, the Charter did not include term limits for elected officials.

Term limits for certain offices were first adopted in 1995. The term-limit provisions were subsequently modified in 2016 to their current form.

Would the amendment change how city elections are conducted?

The proposed amendment would not change the four-year term of office or the regular election process. It would remove the limit on the number of consecutive terms an individual may seek.

Charter Amendment to Article 5: Competitive Bidding and Council Approval Thresholds

The second proposed amendment would change the Charter's current fixed-dollar thresholds for competitive bidding and City Council approval of certain purchases, public improvements and contracts.

Why is this amendment on the ballot?

The current Charter establishes fixed dollar thresholds for when purchases, public improvements and contracts are subject to competitive bidding through sealed proposals. Those thresholds have not been updated in nearly 30 years.

The proposed amendment would replace the fixed competitive-bidding threshold with one based on the City's annual operating budget. This means the threshold would adjust as the City's budget changes rather than remaining at a fixed dollar amount.

The amendment would also authorize City Council to establish the dollar threshold at which purchases, public improvements and contracts require Council approval.

What would happen if the amendment passes?

The Charter would require purchases, public improvements and contracts exceeding 0.1% (1/1000 or .001) of the City's adopted annual operating budget to go through a sealed-proposal process.

City Council would also establish the annual threshold



for Council approval through a resolution adopted when the City's budget is adopted.

What is the sealed-bid process?

The sealed-bid process involves the City developing specifications for a purchase, public improvement or contract and advertising those specifications so vendors can review them and submit proposals. Interested vendors submit their proposals in sealed packages for opening at a specified date and time.

For expenses below the applicable competitive-bidding threshold, the City may solicit quotes from potential vendors.

What does this mean for residents?

The proposed amendment concerns the City's procedures for making purchases, completing public improvements and entering into contracts. It would not increase or decrease property taxes or city fees.

Learn More

Residents can review the complete ballot language, proposed Charter changes and additional FAQs for both proposed amendments on the City of Southgate website.

For official election information, including sample ballots and voting information, residents may also visit the City's City Clerk/Elections and Voting Information page.

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A New Life, With the Past Still on Display

The Bank Tower Apartments offer glimpses of history blended with amenities of today

WHEN the doors of The Bank Tower Apartments opened, a new chapter began for one of Downriver's most recognizable buildings.

But while the building has been transformed into a modern residential community, its developers have made a deliberate effort to ensure that its past has not been forgotten.

In fact, the building's banking history is woven throughout The Bank Tower Apartments – from its name and elevator buttons to its floor plans, lobby, vaults and architectural details.

Originally constructed in 1973 as the headquarters and main branch of Security Bank & Trust, the building spent decades as a place where Downriver residents opened bank accounts, obtained mortgages, visited safe-deposit boxes and conducted the financial business of everyday life.

Today, the building serves a very different purpose, but reminders of that history can be found throughout the property.

Perhaps the most obvious tribute is the name itself: The Bank Tower Apartments.

The building's elevators provide another connection to its past. While the elevator machinery has been completely modernized, the illuminated floor indicators, lobby doors and lighting have been restored to reflect their original appearance.

Even the elevator button for the building's lowest level carries a piece of its history. What was once simply called the basement is now known as "The Vault."

The Vault has been transformed into an area for residents that includes meeting rooms, recreational space and workout facilities. Fittingly, residents reach it by pressing "V" on the elevator.

Perhaps the most striking example of the building's banking heritage is found in the former safety-deposit vault.

The ceiling of the vault was opened up to the lobby, creating a distinctive social and party room. One wall still contains a bank of the building's original safety-deposit boxes, providing a tangible reminder of the room's former purpose.



The original vault doors have also been restored and remain in their historic locations.

The property's banking history also extends beyond the main building. The former drive-through banking structure has been retained and will be given a new purpose, serving as space for maintenance operations and electric-vehicle charging.

Another important piece of the building's architectural history has returned to prominence. The original bank lobby featured a distinctive mid-century modern luminous floating ceiling. Rather than discard it during the renovation, the ceiling was removed, restored and reinstalled as part of the new lobby.

Additional display cases throughout the lobby will feature artifacts from the building's banking history, giving residents and visitors an opportunity to learn more about the building and its role in the community.

The banking theme even continues into the apartment homes themselves.

Floor plans have been given names drawn from the world of finance, including The Portfolio, The Check, The Trust, The Bond and The Mint.

The larger two-bedroom residences carry names such as The Treasury, The Reserve and The Transaction.

During the grand opening ceremony, Mayor Joseph Kuspa reflected on the transformation of the longtime Southgate landmark.

"What once was a hub of financial activity has become a new standard of modern residential living," he said. "16333 Trenton Road is now the premier Downriver address to live, work and enjoy life."

While the finished project represents a significant transformation, the development also reflects a partnership between the private sector and the City of Southgate.



Alex Begin of Gordon Begin Properties praised Southgate officials for their involvement in the redevelopment, specifically recognizing Mayor Joseph Kuspa, City Council President Zoey Kuspa, City Administrator Dan Marsh, City Inspector Tim Leach and their respective teams.

"I have never experienced a city as thoughtful and helpful as Southgate," Begin said. "They could give lessons to other cities on how to support business investment."

These details may seem small, but together they tell a larger story.

The goal of the redevelopment was not simply to take an empty office building and turn it into apartments. It was to give an important Southgate landmark a new purpose while recognizing the history that made the building significant in the first place.

The result is a combination of old and new: a building with modern apartments, updated mechanical systems and contemporary amenities, but with its original banking character still visible in the places where it matters most.

For generations of Southgate residents, the building was a bank. Today, it is a home.

And throughout The Bank Tower Apartments, its history remains part of the story.

Learn more about The Bank Tower Apartments at: thebanktowerapts.com.



The Sage family at Southgate's recent Homecoming game: Karen (far left) and husband Shawn (second from right) with their kids Brooklyn, Jackson, Scarlett and Bronx.

Fun, Friendship, Community

New coordinator brings lifelong Southgate connection to Senior Center

By Kelsi Klein

FOR lifelong Southgate resident Karen Sage, stepping into her new role as the city's new Senior Center coordinator is another way to give back to the community she's called home her whole life.

Sage recently took over the coordinator position at the Senior Center after previously working as a premier substitute teacher for Southgate Community Schools. She and her husband, Shawn, have been married for 23 years and are raising four children who attend Southgate schools, just as they did.

"Giving back has always been important to our family," Sage said.

Over the years, she and her husband have volunteered as coaches for Southgate youth sports and remain actively involved in the community they call home.

Now, Sage is bringing that same community-minded spirit to the Senior Center.

"I feel this position is a wonderful fit because I love connecting with people, bringing people together and creating a welcoming place where everyone feels valued," she said.

Having the opportunity to train with her predecessor, Diane Grabowski, for a few weeks before her retirement has given Sage an inside look at everything that goes into directing the center.

"There's actually a lot more that goes into the Senior Center than people realize," Sage explained.

Beyond its social activities, the Senior Center provides various services for seniors in the community. Meals on Wheels operates through the center, providing more than 100 hot meals to Southgate seniors each day. They also participate in a monthly surplus food program for residents who qualify through Wayne County, providing those in need with two bags of

food per month. Also monthly is an Ensure (ready-to-drink nutrition shake) distribution available to qualifying residents.

Transportation is another major service offered through the Senior Center. Its busing program runs Monday through Thursday and helps elderly and disabled residents get to and from doctor's appointments, grocery stores and other necessary destinations.

Along with these essential services, the Senior Center offers plenty of opportunities for recreation and social connection for seniors in the community. Sage said the center is already one of the bigger senior centers in the area, with a strong group of regular participants and popular activities, like bingo and other games.

As she settles into her new role, Sage seeks to speak with the seniors themselves and hear their ideas and what they want to do as she coordinates future programming and events.

Her goal is to get everyone involved and encourage new members to join.

"Once they come in, most people really enjoy themselves and keep coming back," she said.



The personal connection is especially important to Sage, and she is excited to continue to get to know the seniors, hear their ideas and create activities and experiences centered around fun, friendship and community.

For more information about the Senior Center, stop by in person at 14700 Reaume Parkway Monday-Thursday from 9 a.m.-3 p.m., call (734) 258-3066 or visit www.southgatemi.gov.

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ENROLL TODAY!

CONTINUOUSLY ENROLLING FOR THE 2026-2027 SCHOOL YEAR



The Joy of Singing Together

Southgate elementary elective choir returns for second year, adds fifth grade By Kelsi Klein

LAST fall, Southgate Community Schools added a new extracurricular music offering for third- and fourth-grade students with Zero Hour Choir.

The elective choir program gives elementary students the opportunity to get involved in choir at a younger age and was modeled after the successful Zero Hour Band for fifth graders which was introduced two years ago.

Last year's choir program drew more than 80 students across all five elementary schools. This year, the program expanded to allow fifth graders to join choir in addition to band if they wanted to.

Returning to direct the nearly 90-student choir this year are elementary music teachers Anthony Richendollar, who leads Northpointe, Grogan and Shelters, and Natasha Zahor, leading Fordline and Allen elementaries.

Students participating in elementary choir will learn the fundamentals of singing and performing as an ensemble, focusing mostly on two-part harmonies.

"In our second year, we have a lot of returning members," said Zahor, who expects an increase with participation growing throughout the school year and the program receiving positive feedback from families and the community.

Richendollar explained that in addition to learning singing fundamentals, the choir program has provided students with a fun, stress relieving activity.

"There's times where choir ends and the kids don't want to leave," he said.

The teachers focus on making sure the kids are comfortable, giving them guidance and encouragement with the idea that great singers aren't born, but created.

"We all have our own unique fingerprints and our own

sounds," said Richendollar, who focuses on helping students find their voices just as his own choir teacher did with him.



Choir performances

This year, the elementary choir will once again perform a Veterans Day concert on November 11 at 6:30 p.m. at Anderson High School as their first major performance of the school year.

The concert will feature students from all five schools with performances recognizing all branches of the United States Military. The program will begin with "The Star-Spangled Banner" and an acknowledgement of veterans and their service and sacrifices.

Students will then perform individually by school, with each group representing a military branch, and sing an additional patriotic song.

Looking ahead to next spring, the choir will continue exploring a variety of musical styles during their spring concert. Last year's performance included familiar favorites like "Don't Stop Believin'", "Sweet Caroline" and "Country Roads."

Both Zahor and Richendollar are thankful for the community and parental support that has allowed the program to continue to grow. With returning singers, the addition of fifth graders and continued support from students, parents, the community and the school district, elementary students in Southgate get another year to discover the joy of singing together.

A MORE CONNECTED EXPERIENCE

Southgate Schools expands athletic approach with new coordinator system

By Kelsi Klein

THE athletic department at Southgate Community Schools introduced a new structure and programming this year designed to create more opportunities for students, strengthen communication between buildings and provide greater support for coaches and athletic programs both within the district and in partnership with the city.

The district's athletics programming is now centered around connecting experiences across all ages of development, from elementary to high school.

Youth athletics

Stephen Draper, who teaches at Anderson High School and coaches basketball, serves as the youth sports coordinator, working in conjunction with Southgate Parks and Recreation to provide year-round athletic opportunities for students from kindergarten through fifth grade.

This programming is an expansion of the partnership between the district and the Parks and Recreation Department that was launched last year with soccer and basketball.

This year, the program will offer soccer, basketball, volleyball and track and field to give students and the broader community the chance to participate in extracurricular sports outside of regular school athletic seasons.

"The work director Julie Goddard and the Parks and Recreation Department have done to help rebuild these youth sports programs has been great and has moved us in a really positive direction," Draper said.

Middle and high school athletics

The district's implementation of the new athletic coordinator structure has also strengthened sports programming at the middle and high school levels.

Brian Buchanan was hired as the district's new athletic director, overseeing athletics and supporting athletic coordinators and coaches at both Davidson Middle School and Anderson High School.

"His role has a strategic purpose, with broad oversight at Davidson Middle School and Anderson High School to focus on larger projects around the district and ensure that everything is moving in a positive direction for the future while linking these two buildings together," Draper said.

Under Buchanan are the district's other two new athletic coordinators: Joseph Smith at Davidson and Ian Norscia at Anderson, who are responsible for the day-to-day athletic operations at their buildings.

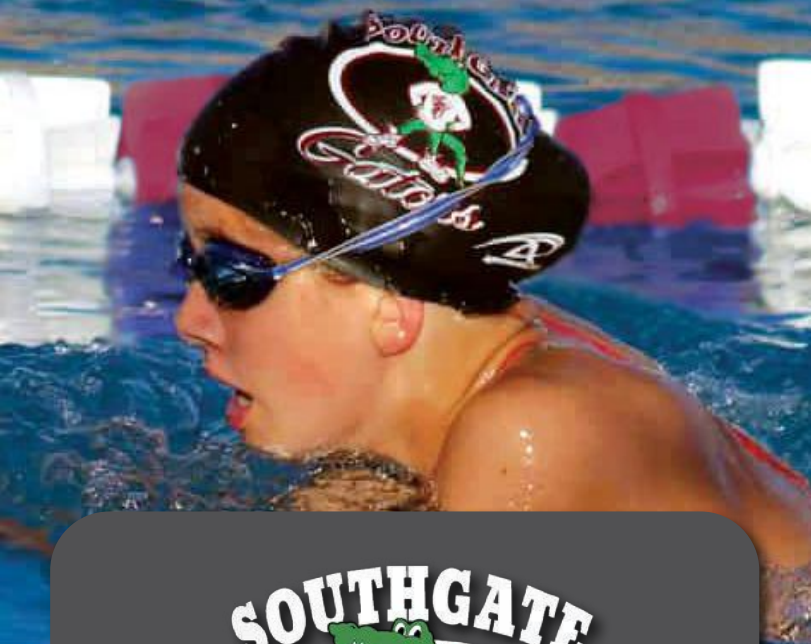
Smith previously worked as a program manager for Detroit Police Athletic League (PAL), where he managed and coordinated youth sports leagues, and Norscia is a Southgate alum and varsity wrestling coach.

Both coordinators' duties center around keeping the athletics programs functioning and flowing daily by coordinating tryouts, scheduling, transportation and other logistics for sporting events and games, being present at events, helping hire coaches, ensuring facilities are kept up and more.

The new coordinator positions are intended to provide more dedicated support to athletics instead of relying on administrators to manage those responsibilities alongside their other duties.

The district's overall goal is to expand opportunities and create a more connected athletic experience for Southgate students.





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January 18 - March 20

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Joyce Hollow at hollowj@sgate.k12.mi.us
or Elizabeth McNees at mcneese@sgate.k12.mi.us

SWIM & DIVE CLUB

WINTER 1 COMPETITIVE SWIM CLUB

Beginners (\$70)

December 7-9, 5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

Intermediate (\$80)

December 14-16, 5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Advanced (\$90)

December 7-10, 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Masters (\$90)

November 9 - December 18 (6 weeks)
Monday, Wednesday, Thursday
7:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.

WINTER 2 COMPETITIVE SWIM CLUB

January 18 - March 25 (10 weeks)

Beginners (\$145)

Monday through Wednesday, 5:30 p.m. - 6:15 p.m.

Intermediate (\$165)

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Advanced (\$190)

Monday through Thursday, 6:15 p.m. - 8:15 p.m.
Friday, 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Masters (\$130)

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WINTER 1 DIVE CLUB

November 9 - December 18 (6 weeks)

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Thursday, 5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Proficient (\$75)

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January 18 - March 25 (10 weeks)

(Same days and times as Winter 1)

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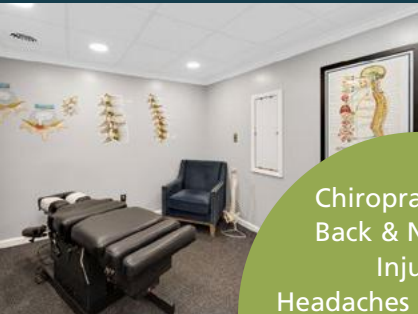
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39th Annual Prayer Breakfast

Featuring guest speaker Dan Allan

THE Downriver Prayer Breakfast is pleased to welcome Dan Allan as the featured speaker for this year's community gathering on Friday, December 4, at 7:00 a.m. at Crystal Gardens Banquet Center.



For Dan, this year's event is especially meaningful. It represents a homecoming to the community where he was raised. A Downriver native, Allan grew up in the area and was a standout baseball player at Trenton High School before beginning a lifetime of ministry that has impacted thousands across the country.

Following his graduation from Trenton High School, Allan earned a scholarship to Grace College, where he completed degrees in church music and music education before continuing his theological training at Grace Theological Seminary. This academic foundation shaped more than 40 years of devoted ministry built on the authority of God's Word and the transforming message of Jesus Christ.

In 1989, Dan became senior pastor of Ashland Grace Church in Ashland, Ohio, faithfully shepherding the congregation for over three decades. His leadership guided generations toward deeper biblical understanding and a vibrant, personal walk with Christ. After retiring as senior

pastor, he transitioned to pastor of ministry development, where he continues to mentor leaders, strengthen churches and preach regularly.

Individual tickets are \$20. An individual sponsorship of \$175 includes two tickets.

For a donation of \$775, sponsors receive 10 tickets. Student sponsorships are available for \$400, which allows 10 local high school students to attend. Canned goods will be collected at the door for Fish & Loaves Food Pantry. Tickets and sponsorships are available through Crystal Gardens. To order, send a check payable to the Downriver Prayer Breakfast, c/o Crystal Gardens, 16703 Fort St., Southgate MI 48195.

The banquet center staff will assign seats/table in order of purchase date. For more information, call (734) 284-7307.

About Dan Allan

Known for his authentic, engaging communication style, Dan remains passionate about helping people know Jesus personally and share Him with others. In recognition of his lifelong Kingdom impact, he received the 2023 Distinguished Seminary Service Award from Grace Theological Seminary.



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From Springwells to Southgate

Patty Fritz-Saenz built a life around family, faith and helping others

By Ryan M. Place

FOR Patty Fritz-Saenz, home has always meant community. Whether helping families buy homes, volunteering at a church food pantry, sponsoring youth baseball players, or cheering on the Detroit Tigers, the Southgate resident has spent decades investing in the people around her.

Born and raised in Southwest Detroit, Fritz-Saenz grew up on Springwells Street surrounded by family, neighborhood businesses and a close-knit community.

"My dad Leonard was a Detroit police officer in the seventh precinct," she said. "He was proud of serving the city and always taught us to help people whenever we could."

Patty attended St. Gabriel School and Holy Redeemer High School, where she met her future husband, Ruben Saenz, in ninth grade.

"Yes, we're high school sweethearts," she said. "We met in 1980 and married in 1987 and are still happily married almost 39 years later."

Patty remembers summers at Camp Dearborn, playing sports at Patton Park and visits to neighborhood favorites, like the Beacon bowling alley.

"It was such a fun time growing up then," she said. "Everybody knew everybody."

In 1998, Patty, Ruben and their son Patrick moved to Southgate.

"We've loved it ever since," she said. "Southgate is very close-knit. It has a small-town feeling but you're still close to everything."

A year later, Patty became a licensed realtor.

"I wanted something stable but flexible enough for family life," she said. "I discovered I really enjoyed helping people through the home-buying process."

More than 25 years later, she remains one of the top-producing agents in her office, averaging about 20 home sales annually and recently closing a million-dollar home on Grosse Ile.

Her career also led to a memorable chapter with the Detroit Tigers. From 2000-2014, Patty worked at Comerica Park, eventually serving as assistant manager of the team store.

"The 2006 season was unbelievable," she recalled. "When the Tigers won the American League Championship, merchandise was selling out every day. It was unreal."

Baseball has remained a family



tradition. Her son Patrick served as a bat boy for the Tigers while attending Southgate Anderson High School, later earning a degree in sports management before joining the organization full-time. Today, he manages the Tigers' spring training facility in Lakeland, Florida. He has lived in Florida for over eight years with his wife, Marissa, and 2-year-old son Ezra.

"We're very proud of him," Patty said.

Faith and service remain central to her life. Fritz-Saenz serves as director of Christian services at St. Cyprian Parish in Riverview, where she oversees the church food pantry and helps families facing difficult circumstances.

"We see people from all walks of life," she said. "If we can help somebody have a better day, that's important."

She also sponsors Southgate Little League, helping cover registration costs for children whose families may not otherwise be able to participate.

At home, the couple enjoys spending time with their Bernedoodles, Dexter and Cleo.

"Our first dogs were Doctor Detroit and Clutch Cargo," she said. "The D and C monikers became a tradition."

Some local Southgate favorites include "Angelina's for fajitas and taco al carbon," she said. "We also love the Kiwanis Train Park and the Southgate Dog Park."

After decades of helping others find a place to call home, Fritz-Saenz knows exactly what home means.

"It's family, friends, faith, and community," she said. "I've been blessed with all four."



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DECEMBER

December 5

Annual Tree Lighting Ceremony

5:30 p.m.
Kiwanis Train Park
Trenton Road and Leroy Street
Join Mayor Kuspa and Southgate's
elected officials in officially
welcoming Santa Claus to the city
and lighting the tree at the park
during this festive tradition. There will
be Christmas carols and holiday cheer
for the whole family. Learn more at
www.southgatemi.gov.

December 5-6

17th Annual Santa's Christmas Express Train Rides

6-9 p.m.
Kiwanis Train Park
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through the Winter Wonderland with
the Great Lakes Live Steamers for the
last rides of the year. Learn more at
www.southgatemi.gov.



December 11-January 1

7th Annual Light Up the Park

6-10 p.m.
Market Center Park
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festive lights and decorations and
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www.southgatemi.gov for more
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