

Happy 50th Birthday Darien! 1969-2019



My How Time Flies and So Much to Celebrate!

This year is a very significant one for the City of Darien. Fifty years ago, on December 13, 1969, Darien became a city when the voters made the decision to incorporate. To commemorate and celebrate **Darien's 50th Birthday**, community and civic groups are coming together to plan several events for the entire city. Please mark your calendars for one of the first events – The Darien Historical Society Ice Cream Social - taking place on Wednesday, June 19th, 2019 starting at 5:30 pm at the Old Lace School House located at 75th and Cass. Hot Dogs, Ice Cream, music and historical timelines will be highlighted... something for everyone, young and old! Continue to watch for other announcements of events throughout this coming year celebrating this monumental event.

All are invited to the city's Birthday Party events...
Who doesn't like birthday parties!

So much to be proud of... Since 1969 . . .

With significant new housing attracting young families in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Darien's population boomed. Its cross streets of 75th and Cass Avenue have been widened twice to accommodate increased traffic. Also, the city's five wards with two aldermen have grown to seven wards represented by one alderman. Darien's original City Hall now houses the Old Lace Schoolhouse and Museum and a new police station was completed in 1995 with a City Hall in 1997.

City resources and services have expanded to meet the needs and wishes of the residents. Flooding issues have been addressed. Working with DuPage County, almost all of the 27 miles of ditch projects have been completed as well as the basins that were needed to direct water run-off. All the city streets and ditches have been catalogued and each year the city repaves up to 5.5 miles of streets that are scheduled for repair. Three years of planning by city administrators, engineers, and the City Council resulted in a new water tower built in 2007. The new tank, with its "lighthouse" design, was named Tank of the Year by the Steel Tank Institute/Steel Plate Fabricators.

The hard work of invested citizens led to a voter approved merger of the Darien and Willowbrook Public Library Districts and the creation of the Indian Prairie Public Library District on July 1, 1988. The Indian Prairie Public Library has grown from a volunteer operated bookmobile to a state-of-the art facility that opened in 1996 with a major building renovation completed in 2010. Its mission has grown to becoming a valued community center providing a place to learn and gather.

Darien students attend one of three separate elementary/junior high schools districts: Darien District 61, Cass School District 63, and Center Cass District 66. All three elementary districts now are organized by grade level centers. A continuing influx of young families has stabilized the school age population. Darien high school students attend either Hinsdale Township High School District 86 or Community High School District 99, depending on their geographic location.

The Darien Park District offers a wide range of programs for all ages. The Park District Sportsplex includes three National Hockey League sized ice rinks and an indoor soccer field. The Darien Youth Club began as the Lace-Marion Hills Youth Club in the 1950s and has continued to provide opportunities for children to have fun and hone their skills by participating in a variety of athletic endeavors.

In addition to many service oriented businesses, shopping areas now include stores located in Brookhaven Shopping Center, Darien Towne Centre, Darien Towne Centre II, Chestnut Court, Darien Plaza, and Hinsbrook Plaza. Darien Pointe Plaza is the city's newest enterprise with a Clock Tower and fountain marking a cornerstone of Darien.

Civic pride and a commitment to volunteering is evidenced in numerous ways. Darien has strong and vibrant organizations which contribute to the community. The Darien Lions Club is one of the largest in the state with residents also benefitting from the commitment of the Darien Woman's Club, the Rotary, the Chamber of Commerce, Safety Village, The GoodWorx Sunny Patch Project, the VFW, and numerous places of worship. Darien groups sponsor Darien Fest which brings residents together each fall to enjoy music, food, and camaraderie, Arbor Day, Veteran's Day, the Independence Day Parade, the Annual Lions Halloween Party, a Hoe Down, as well as music concerts and activities throughout the year. In addition, these groups' philanthropic endeavors include food pantries, holiday giving, clothing drives, art and writing events and scholarships, to name a few.

The volunteer-run Darien Historical Society emerged out of the nation's bi-centennial celebration. The society preserves the artifacts and archives that tell the history of the city in Old Lace Schoolhouse and Museum, a former one-room schoolhouse.

Darien is home to the National Shrine Museum of St. Therese. It is located on the 40-acre Carmelite Campus that includes the Carmelite Spiritual Center, the Carmelite Meditation Garden, and the Shrine Museum devoted to the saint. The museum holds relics and memorabilia of St. Therese.

Darien's location has also been a draw for residents. The commuter train is three miles to the north and part of the south border is the I55 Expressway, Waterfall Glen Forest Preserve and Argonne National Laboratory. Now with a 50 year history, Darien continues to live up to its motto: "A Nice Place to Live. "