

# Villa Park REVIEW

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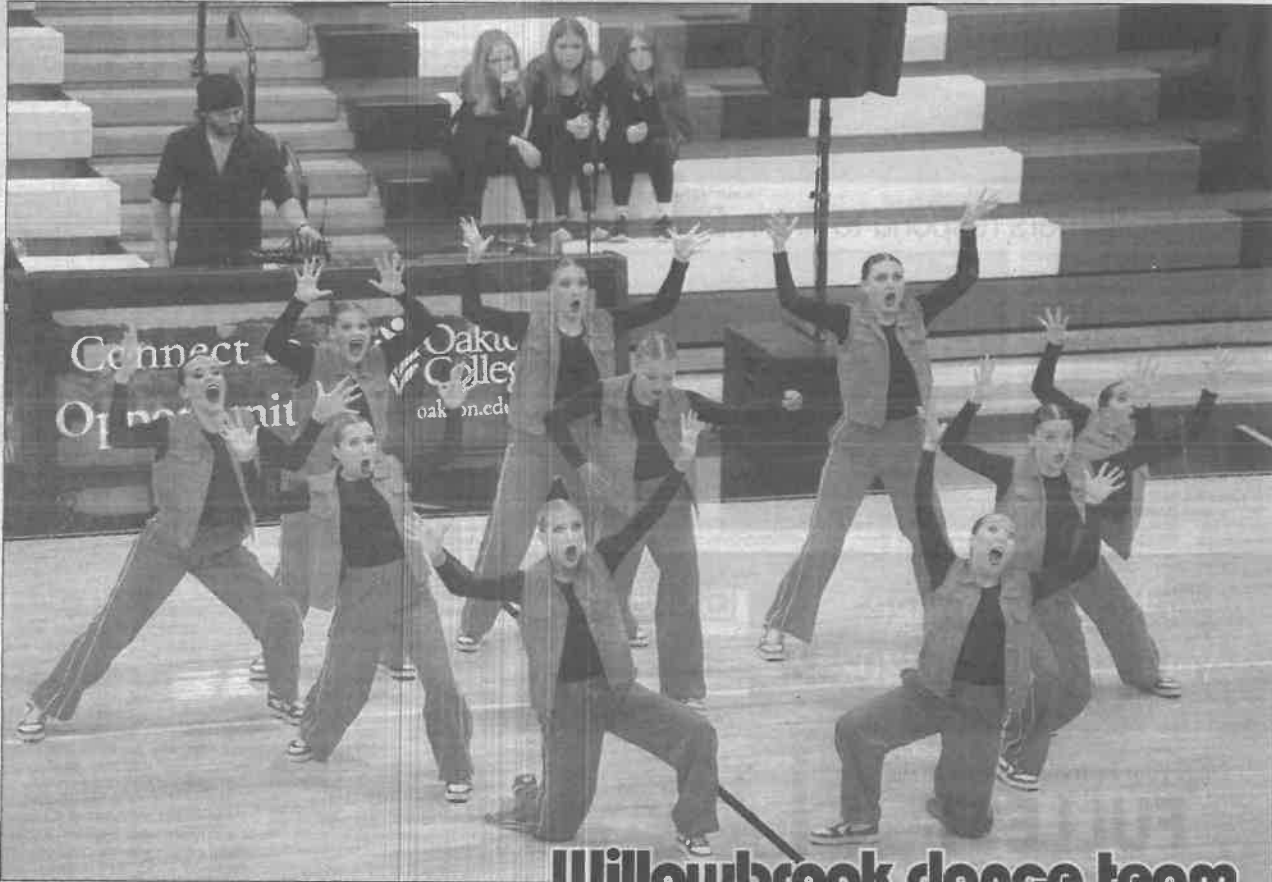
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THURSDAY, JAN. 30, 2025



## Willowbrook dance team qualifies for the state meet

CHRIS FOX PHOTO Villa Park Review

Willowbrook High School's dance team will participate in this week's IHSA competitive dance state meet in Bloomington. The Warriors earned a berth in the state meet with their third-place finish in the 16-team 2A-2 division at Saturday's sectional competition at Malne East High School in Park Ridge. The top six teams in each division at the sectional qualified for the state meet. Benet Academy won the 2A-2 division's sectional title at Malne East with its score of 88.73. Fenton (88.57) placed second, while Willowbrook (87.45) finished third. The members of the Warriors' state-qualifying team are: seniors Gianna Glampaoli and Kelly Kramme; Juniors Ava Jovanovich, Maddy McEllin, Gedvina Mickeviclus and Cecilia Oddo; sophomores Kyri Burritt, Elizabeth Deany and Amanzia Termini; and freshman Brianna Flemming. The state meet takes place this Friday and Saturday at Grossinger Motors Arena in Bloomington.

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## Apply now for AAUW Scholarships

The Elmhurst Area Branch of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) is now accepting applications for three \$4,500 scholarships for women in need of financial assistance to continue their education at the undergraduate or graduate level. The deadline to apply is April 15. AAUW's mission is to advance gender equity through research, education and advocacy.

To be eligible, women must be 23 or older and residents of Elmhurst, Addison, Bensenville, Berkeley, Northlake, Oak Brook, Oakbrook Terrace or Villa Park. Applicants must have al-

ready completed 12 credit hours at an accredited community or undergraduate college or university. Applicants may be full-time or part-time students.

For an application and/or more information, visit [www.aauwelmhurst.org](http://www.aauwelmhurst.org). Call 630-207-4851 after your application is submitted to confirm receipt.

The AAUW Elmhurst Area Branch is a not-for-profit 501(c)3 organization. Funds from the Elmhurst Branch's annual used book sale are used to support the local scholarships, national AAUW research and programs for women and girls.

## Blair-Sherlock introduces series of property tax relief measures

Responding to homeowner concerns about the cost of property taxes, state Rep. Diane Blair-Sherlock, D-Villa Park, has introduced legislation to raise the senior homestead exemption's income limitation, increase the persons with disabilities exemption and strengthen transparency requirements on tax bills.

"We should look to take responsible action to drive down costs for homeowners, especially for those who are on a fixed income," Blair-Sherlock said. "These proposals are needed updates, and would be a good starting point to further build on with reforms to make our property tax system better for taxpayers."

### Blair-Sherlock's proposals include:

- House Bill 61, which would re-

quire tax bills to clearly show how much of a taxpayer's bill is going toward a local ballot initiative or referendum, as well as when that specific item will expire.

- House Bill 69, which raises the Low-Income Senior Citizens Assessment Freeze Homestead Exemption limitation from \$65,000 to \$75,000.

- House Bill 70, which increases the homestead exemption for persons with disabilities from \$2,000 to \$4,000.

"Our existing exemptions must properly reflect the effect of inflation and changes to the cost of living," Blair-Sherlock said. "Every dollar matters, so let's take real action in Springfield to deliver real relief for local residents."

For more information, contact StateRep46@gmail.com.

## DuPage Care Center hosting Valentine's balloon fundraiser to benefit residents

The DuPage Care Center will host a fundraiser for the community to send Valentine wishes to center residents.

For a \$5 donation, community members may send a balloon to a Care Center resident to spread cheer and warm wishes. In the past, the public sent nearly 1,000 heart-shaped, helium balloons to line the corridors and rooms on Valentine's Day.

Volunteers and staff deliver the balloons to the residents living at the Center, brightening their days, and bringing lots of smiles along the way.

"During cold winter days, fundraisers like this warm the hearts of the residents of the Care Center," said Greg Schwarze, chairman of the County's Human Services Committee. "Every

year, we hear incredible stories from the residents about how this event lifts their spirits. It's a wonderful way to let our friends at the Care Center know how much we appreciate and cherish them."

Balloon donations will be accepted until Feb. 13, and may be ordered online through the DuPage Care Center Foundation's website. Balloons will be delivered on Feb. 14.

Funds from the sale of balloons will benefit the Resident Recreation Fund, which provides programs and activities to improve the quality of life of residents living at the center.

For more information, contact Linda Gray at 630-784-4303 or email [linda.gray@dupagecounty.gov](mailto:linda.gray@dupagecounty.gov).

## Court grants state's motion to detain pre-trial four Venezuelan migrants charged with robbery from Oak Brook Sunglass Hut

DuPage County State's Attorney Robert Berlin and Oak Brook Chief of Police Brian Strockis announced last week that Judge Joshua Dieden has granted the state's motion to detain four men accused of stealing nearly \$5,000 worth of merchandise from the Oak Brook Sunglass Hut store.

Jaidera Rincon-Jaramillo, 24, with no known address; Jonamer Barrios-Moreno, 28, of Chicago; Gregory Mendoza-Rivas, 25, with no known address; and David Vivas-Esis, 21, of Chicago, appeared in First Appearance Court, where each was charged with one count of burglary (Class 2 felony), one count of robbery (Class 2 felony) and one count of retail theft (Class 3 felony).

Additionally, Rincon-Jaramillo and Barrios-Moreno are each charged with one count of aggravated fleeing and eluding (Class 4 felony).

On Jan. 20 at approximately 2:37 p.m., officers with the Oak Brook Police Department received information about suspicious activity involving a silver Ford Fusion parked in the Oakbrook Center parking lot. Officers located the Ford and began surveillance.

It is alleged that as officers surveilled the Ford, they alerted employees at Sunglass Hut about three individuals, later identified as Mendoza-Rivas, Barrios-Moreno and Vivas-Esis and an unknown individual entering their store. It is alleged that Mendoza-Rivas, Barrios-Moreno, Vivas-Esis and

the unknown accomplice entered the Sunglass Hut, selected 13 pairs of sunglasses worth a total of approximately \$4,960, and attempted to flee the store without paying for the merchandise. It is alleged that after a brief struggle during which the defendants pulled an employee to the ground, the four men fled the store with Mendoza-Rivas, Barrios-Moreno and Vivas-Esis returning to the Ford and the unknown accomplice fleeing into the mall.

It is alleged that after committing the robbery, Mendoza-Rivas, Barrios-Moreno and Vivas-Esis ran to, and then entered, the Ford. Officers activated their emergency lights and siren, at which time the Ford, allegedly occupied by Rincon-Jaramillo, who was

waiting in the vehicle, fled. It is alleged Rincon-Jaramillo was driving the Ford and as he fled, he reached speeds of approximately 93 mph on Butterfield Road and ultimately made his way to eastbound I-290.

It is further alleged that the Ford continued to flee from officers on I-290 and ultimately exited the expressway at southbound Mannheim Road after officers successfully deployed spike strips. It is further alleged that the Ford turned westbound onto Harrison and pulled over. All four defendants were taken into custody at that time.

The next court date for each defendant is scheduled for Feb. 18 for arraignment in front of Judge Ann Celine O'Hallaren Walsh.



SUBMITTED PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing

## Brennan named 88's Best for January

Willowbrook High School senior Maggie Brennan of Villa Park was recently honored as her school's recipient of the 88's Best award for the month of January. Brennan was recognized during the District 88 Board of Education's Jan. 13 meeting. She is pictured (right) at that meeting with Willowbrook Principal Dan Krause (left). While speaking during the board meeting, Krause read comments from some of Brennan's teachers, who described her as a standout student who is mature, kind, dedicated, hard-working and conscientious. Brennan is an Advanced Placement Scholar with Distinction and an Illinois State Scholar. She has been named to Willowbrook's Distinction Honor Roll during each semester of her time in high school. Brennan is the president of the school's National Honor Society chapter. She is also a member of several other honor societies, including the Tri-M Music Honor Society, as well as the English, Math, Science and World Language honor societies, along with Willowbrook's social studies honor society—Civitas. Brennan is a member of the school's orchestra and choir. She is also a co-captain of the school's speech team. Additionally, she is a cast and crew member in the school's theatrical productions, and she reads the daily announcements at Willowbrook. She also serves as a student ambassador to assist transfer students, and she is a leader in the New Beginnings program, which helps freshmen adjust to the transition to high school. Brennan has also been a member of Willowbrook's girls cross-country team. Responding to a board member's question about what advice she would give to incoming freshmen, Brennan stated she would tell them to take risks and push themselves outside of their comfort zones. Brennan stated that there are so many opportunities for students at Willowbrook, and that high school is a great time to have fun and explore who you are. After she graduates from high school in May, Brennan plans to attend the University of Iowa, where she intends to study nursing.

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CHRIS FOX PHOTOS Rock Valley Publishing

## Warriors split two conference games

The Willowbrook boys basketball team played a pair of West Suburban Gold Conference home games last week. The Warriors defeated Morton 62-55 in a conference game in Villa Park on Jan. 22. Three days later, Willowbrook suffered a 66-49 home loss to conference rival Hinsdale South. The Warriors fell to 7-15 overall and 3-3 in conference play following Saturday's loss to the Hornets. Morton led Willowbrook 16-13 after one quarter of last week's contest. The Mustangs held a 35-32 lead at halftime. Morton owned a slim 45-43 lead at the end of the third quarter. The Warriors then rallied in the game's final eight minutes, when they outscored Morton 19-10. Junior Otis Powell scored a team-high 22 points for the Warriors in last week's victory over the Mustangs. Senior Filip Palutkiewicz added 12 points. Junior Jaylen Griffin provided 10 points, while seniors Mark Murrell and Jaden Royal contributed eight points each. The Warriors trailed Hinsdale South 12-6 after the first quarter of Saturday's game. The Hornets led the Warriors 30-20 at halftime and 46-34 at the end of the third quarter. Hinsdale South's lead grew to 66-40 during the fourth quarter. Willowbrook scored the game's final nine points to trim the Hornets' margin of victory. Powell (No. 2) scored 21 points in Saturday's home loss, which completed the first half of the Warriors' conference schedule. Royal contributed 10 points, while Palutkiewicz (No. 23) provided eight points. Griffin and Murrell supplied five points each. Willowbrook's schedule this week featured a non-conference game at Glenbard East on Jan. 28.

## •Raids (Continued from page 2)

The Chicago Police Department confirmed to Capitol News Illinois Jan. 21 it would not assist federal immigration authorities with civil enforcement. CPD also does not document immigration status.

"To be clear, the Chicago Police Department will not assist or intervene in civil immigration enforcement in accordance with the City of Chicago Municipal Code," a CPD spokesperson said in an emailed statement. "As always, we will continue to enforce the law if a crime occurs, regardless of the citizenship status of those involved."

Texas Republican Gov. Greg Abbott began busing migrants to Chicago in 2022 as part of what critics, including Pritzker, called a political stunt. Since August 2022, nearly 52,000 people seeking asylum arrived by bus and plane through Dec. 18, 2024, according to city data.

The governors of Arizona and Florida also bused migrants to various cities, including New York City and Washington, D.C.

Chicago has been a sanctuary city for immigrants since 1985 and reaffirmed the protections during the first Trump administration.

A lone counter-protester stood across the street during the Jan. 20 demonstration, swinging an American flag back and forth chanting "America first!" He declined to give his name.

### Advocacy organizations warn undocumented clients

Since late last year, advocacy organizations have been warning and preparing their undocumented clients by hosting "Know Your Rights" sessions, including roleplay workshops on what

to do if a loved one is detained.

La Villita Community, an organization in the majority Hispanic Little Village neighborhood, provided instructions on social media ahead of reported ICE activity.

Other groups like the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights serve Illinois communities beyond Chicago.

Dulce Ortiz, the ICIRR board president, came to the U.S. from Mexico without documentation when she was 10 years old. The now 43-year-old is a U.S. citizen, and she's providing resources to people who are in the same shoes as she was as a child.

"I had to make some decisions when I was young, (and) I hope young women will never have to make those decisions in order to become a U.S. citizen," Ortiz said.

ICIRR, which primarily serves Lake County and parts of McHenry County, defines its mission as to empower and integrate immigrants into their communities.

The organization recommends preparation ahead of possible confrontations with ICE officers, including renewing any visas or permits five months ahead of their expiration. Ortiz, the ICIRR board president, suggests a three-step process: don't open your door, remain silent and ask for a lawyer.

"We don't want to create even more fear in our community, but at the end of the day, the fear is already there," Ortiz said. "And I rather argue to be ready and prepared and alert and aware than us, you know, trying to protect their feelings and do nothing."

Ortiz and other ICIRR advocates have been meeting with state legislators, ensuring staff and volunteers are keeping an eye out for any ICE presence and hosting mental health workshops.

Another group, Immigrant Solidarity DuPage, provides services to immigrants in the Chicagoland area, organizer Cristobal Cavazos said.

Cavazos attended the Federal Plaza protest alongside a dozen members of the organization, saying that although there is fear, it's important to translate that fear to action.

"We want to show Trump that we are many and we are more united than ever," Cavazos said in an interview conducted in Spanish. "He's not going to make us feel like strangers in our own home."

Ashley N. Soriano and Ismael M. Belkoura are graduate students in journalism with Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism, Media, Integrated Marketing Communications, and Fellows in its Medill Illinois News Bureau working in partnership with Capitol News Illinois.

## Warriors in action



CHRIS FOX PHOTOS Rock Valley Publishing

The Willowbrook girls gymnastics team faced the Downers Grove co-op team in last week's dual meet in Villa Park. Downers Grove outscored the Warriors 144.0 to 131.9 in the Jan. 23 meet's team standings. Willowbrook senior Naomi Campbell delivered a first-place performance in floor exercises with a routine that earned a score of 9.05. Campbell placed third in the meet's all-around standings with her total of 35.50. She finished third on the balance beam (9.15), tied for fourth on the vault (9.2) and placed fifth on the uneven bars (8.1). Campbell is pictured while approaching the vault. Junior Kala Capulong of Willowbrook placed sixth in the all-around

standings with her score of 32.4. Capulong is pictured during her routine on the balance beam, which earned a fourth-place score of 9.1. Sophomore Lilli Macias of the Warriors finished seventh in the all-around competition (32.0). She placed sixth on both the vault (9.05) and the balance beam (8.6). Sophomore Mallory Yeazel of Willowbrook finished eighth in the all-around standings with her score of 30.75. Willowbrook freshman Ella Paulsen earned a ninth-place all-around score of 29.75. The Warriors earned a second-place finish in the team standings of Saturday's Bulldog Invitational at Riverside Brookfield. The Hinsdale South/Lemont co-op team won the event's title with its score of 142.25. Willowbrook earned a second-place score of 129.2. Campbell finished second in the invite's all-around competition with her score of 35.15. Capulong earned seventh in the all-around standings with her total of 33.35. Campbell placed second on the vault (8.9) and fourth on both the balance beam (9.05) and the uneven bars (8.45). Capulong placed third on the vault (8.8) and fifth on the balance beam (9.0). Paulsen turned in a fifth-place score of 8.5 on the vault. The Warriors will host an IHSA regional competition on Thursday, Feb. 6.

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