

TOWNSHIP NEWSLETTER

2023



TOP NEWS

2023 Grants and Sponsorships

This year's grants supported youth, seniors, health & wellness, creative arts, and more.

Historic new program for Violence Prevention

New IDHS-funded resources for a safer Joliet area

Services for residents

We offer services to help our residents (and pets!) in need.

A Message from Supervisor Angel Contreras

Announcing new services and opportunities



Dear Joliet Township residents,

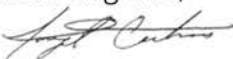
As your Joliet Township Supervisor, I'm excited to announce several new services and opportunities available to you, reflecting the spirit of inclusiveness, respect, and community empowerment within Joliet Township. Our team has grown significantly this year allowing us to expand and strengthen relationships and our footprint within the Township.

In 2021, we began discussions on the development of new permanent initiatives. Now, many are here, and I am honored for our residents to be able to learn about and take advantage of these valuable resources. Our new initiatives are here to address a wide array of various public needs within the township and beyond.

Through education initiatives and partnerships with Joliet Junior College, we aim to help students continue their education without bearing the modern burden of a lifetime of overwhelming student debt. We have also been awarded powerful grants from the Illinois Department of Human Services to aid in violence prevention in the greater Joliet area, collaborating with first responders, other grantees, and public entities. As part of our initiatives, we acquired the Peter Claver Center and renamed it the Ozzie and Peggy Mitchell Center to honor them as community leaders. The center will continue to serve the community.

We are also happy to announce the expansion of access to behavioral health services provided by Thriveworks to all residents within Joliet Township boundaries, which include all unincorporated areas and Rockdale as well. Partnering with PACE has allowed us to tackle local transportation issues that have impacted our most vulnerable.

I'm proud of all the work the staff has done to make the new initiatives a reality and look forward to continuing to expand public services for our residents. Wishing you all a happy and safe holiday season and a fantastic 2024.

Warm Regards,


Angel Contreras, Joliet Township Government Supervisor



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Joliet Township Youth Excellence Scholarships

Investing in education



We are thrilled to announce the launch of the Joliet Township Youth Excellence Scholarship, a significant initiative aimed at enhancing educational opportunities for any student in our community. Recognizing the paramount importance of education, this scholarship is designed to make higher learning more accessible for Joliet Township residents. We understand the pivotal role education plays in shaping the future of our youth, and we are committed to supporting their academic journey.

KEY DETAILS

Scholarship Coverage

The Joliet Township Youth Excellence Scholarship covers **four** credit hours at Joliet Junior College (JJC).

Eligibility

Open to all students residing in Joliet Township who have completed the Joliet Junior College 12x12x12 program at any high school.

We believe that education should be a gateway to limitless possibilities, and through this scholarship, we aim to empower all students to pursue their dreams without the burden of financial constraints.

This scholarship is a testament to our commitment to fostering educational excellence within the Joliet Township community. By investing in the education of our youth, we are investing in the future prosperity of our community.

2023 Grants and Sponsorships

A diverse tapestry of community support



In a dedicated effort to enhance the overall wellbeing and enrichment of our community, Joliet Township actively invests in various programs through grants, sponsorships, and scholarships. This year's recipients span a diverse range of initiatives, including youth programming, health and wellness services, and creative arts for our residents.

Joliet Township 2023-2024 Community Grant & Sponsorship Recipients

After the Peanut Foundation

The Art Movement, Inc.

Blue Print Agency NFP

Greater Joliet Area YMCA

Harvey Brooks Motivation & Development Foundation

Holsten Human Capital Development NFP

Including You, Inc.

Joliet Park District

Justice For Wives

Latino Economic Development Association

One Collective NFP

Prestige Athletic Club

Spanish Community Center

Step Into the Light

Joliet Public Library's Star Wars Day 2023

Joliet Township High School CEO Program

Joliet Active Shooter and Mental Wellness Conference

For more information about Joliet Township Government grants, please visit:

<http://www.joliettownship.net/services/grant-application/>

Grant Recipients In Action

Making a difference year-round



Thriveworks: Mental Health Counseling

Get quality therapy & psychiatry at no cost to you



We are proud to partner with Thriveworks to offer you affordable mental health care

Over 2,200 Expert licensed clinicians	Over 380 Locations across the U.S.	15 Years Clinician-founded and led, delivering care for over
 Get help when and where you need it, in person or by video	 Meet with your provider within 7 days of scheduling	 Work with clinicians who are supported & empowered to succeed

Exciting news! Joliet Township Government has allocated \$50,000 to enhance mental health services in our community. We've partnered with Thriveworks to break down barriers to access by offering telehealth psychiatry and therapy to Joliet Township residents. This initiative aims to address concerns about affordability, uncertainty in finding help, and challenges in consistent therapy.

Here's why it's important: Mental well-being is crucial for a fulfilling life. Our collaboration with Thriveworks enables you to tackle challenges like depression, anxiety, stress, trauma, and more. By providing accessible mental health coverage, we empower you to take control of your unique mental health journey.

Take the first step by scheduling your appointment at (855) 305-0540 or scan the QR code below. Your well-being matters, and together, let's create a healthier, happier Joliet Township.

Through your work with one of our providers, you can learn to manage your unique mental health challenges and live a better, more fulfilled life.

Get help with:

- Depression & anxiety
- Stress & life transitions
- Trauma & PTSD
- Grief & loss
- Relationship issues
- Family conflicts
- Sleep problems
- And more

Book a session

call (855) 305-0540

**OR SCAN THE
QR CODE**



New Violence Prevention Initiatives

Building a safer tomorrow



In a proactive move to address the impact of gun violence and promote community safety, the Joliet Township Government is proud to announce the launch of Violence Prevention Programming. The township was awarded a total of \$2.3 million in state grants to fund these initiatives, which aim to provide short-term trauma-based intervention along with comprehensive violence prevention measures to address the pressing needs of the Joliet community.

Program Overview: Peace Over Violence (POV)

The cornerstone of this new initiative is the Peace Over Violence (POV) program. Developed by the Joliet Township Government, POV focuses on fostering a safer and healthier community through a multifaceted approach. The program includes case management, street outreach, and victim advocacy, all geared towards reducing incidents of gun violence.

Operating out of the Joliet Township Ozzie and Peggy Mitchell Center, formerly known as Peter Claver, POV extends its services from 9 am to 6 pm Monday through Friday, with Saturday hours from 12 pm to 8 pm. Appointments outside regular hours are available upon request. The center is conveniently located at 172 S. Chicago, Joliet, Illinois 60432. For inquiries, please contact (815) 593-6901 or email jtvpdirector@joliettownship.net.

Community Collaboration: Racial Equity Impact Assessment League (REIAL)

To ensure a holistic and community-driven approach, Joliet Township has established the Racial Equity Impact Assessment League (REIAL). Comprising esteemed community leaders, the league meets monthly to discuss firearm violence prevention, coordinate emergency community engagement efforts, and assess the implementation of violence prevention programs. This collaborative effort includes representatives from various sectors, such as education, law enforcement, community engagement, and religious organizations. If your organization would like to join, please contact Leshae Hudson, Violence Prevention Council Coordinator at 815-593-3363 or via email at lhudson@joliettownship.net.

Trauma Informed Behavioral Health Program (TIBH): A Focus on Healing

As part of the Illinois Department of Human Services Greater Illinois Reimagine Violence Prevention grants, Joliet Township is thrilled to introduce the Trauma Informed Behavioral Health Program (TIBH). This program, staffed by three licensed trauma therapists, will provide mental health services to residents affected by trauma, with a particular focus on those impacted by gun violence. The TIBH team will offer education on recognizing and responding to signs of trauma, behavioral health therapy, and resource coordination.

By actively addressing the root causes of violence and trauma, Joliet Township is taking strides towards creating a safer and more resilient community for all its residents.

First Year For Summer Internship Program

Nurturing future leaders and community leaders



Joliet Township Government proudly launched its inaugural summer internship program this year, welcoming 12 enthusiastic students into a hands-on learning experience. This innovative program not only offers valuable opportunities for high school and college students to apply their knowledge in real-world scenarios but also serves as a platform to expand the township's community outreach to its over 86,000 residents.

Empowering Through Experience

The summer internship program at Joliet Township is designed to provide students with a paid opportunity to immerse themselves in an area of interest. Interns actively contribute to the daily operations of both the administrative and animal control buildings, as well as collaborate with external community partners. Interns also took to the streets, canvassing neighborhoods to raise awareness about township services, creating engaging social media content, and actively participating in data collection for public health services. This direct engagement with residents allowed interns to bridge the gap between the township and its community, fostering a deeper understanding of the diverse needs and concerns of the residents.

Collaboration with community leaders

This summer, interns were engaged in impactful projects at partnering agencies, playing a pivotal role in supporting and facilitating on-site registration for the Solstice Solar Energy Program. Working closely with esteemed community organizations such as African American Business Association, The Spanish Community Center, Forest Park Community Center, Holsten Human Capital Development, National Hook-up for Black Women, and the YMCA, interns experienced firsthand the impact of community-driven initiatives.

Positive Impact and Encouragement

Samantha Martinez, representing LEDA, a nonprofit organization that hosted two of Joliet Township's interns, expressed her hopes for the continuation of the internship program. She remarked, "I sincerely hope that the Joliet Township Government continues with their internship program. Providing students with opportunities to connect with their community and explore various organizations equips them with the tools to go out there and make a change."

The success of this pilot program not only reflects the commitment of Joliet Township Government to fostering the next generation of leaders but also highlights the potential for ongoing positive impact on the community. As these interns carry their experiences forward, they are not only equipped with newfound skills but also inspired to make a lasting difference in the community they call home.

General Assistance: For Residents In Need

Qualifying families may receive help with utilities & more



In a commitment to community welfare, Joliet Township offers vital assistance programs, ensuring that residents facing financial challenges can meet their basic needs. The General Assistance (GA) program provides monthly financial aid to those with insufficient income or resources.

General Assistance Services: A Lifeline for Basic Needs

The GA program extends support in various forms, covering essential areas like rent, mortgage, utilities, and car repairs. Services include access to the Medical Loan Closet, Notary Services, and temporary Handicap Placards. Workfare Services are also available.

LIHEAP: Easing the Burden of Utility Bills

In partnership with Will County Center for Community Concerns, the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) initiative seeks to help eligible low-income households manage winter heating expenses. To apply for LIHEAP assistance, visit the Joliet Township Government Office on Wednesday, December 20, 2023, or January 17, 2024.

To streamline the application process, ensure you have the following documents on hand:

1. Identification
2. Social Security Card/ITINS for all household members
3. Current electric and gas bills (both required)
4. Proof of gross income for the past 30 days for all household members
5. Pay stubs for current unemployment
6. IDES Unemployment Letter/UI Findings
7. Social Security Benefits Verification Letter
8. Letter of DHS Benefits

Additional documents may be requested during the application, and for furnace assistance, proof of homeownership, property tax statement, mortgage statement, or deed is also required.

For further information or assistance, contact Joliet Township at 815-726-4781. Your well-being matters, and Joliet Township is here to help you access the support you need.

Free Tax Assistance To Low-Income Families

Third season for VITA program, January through April



VITA sites offer free tax help to people who need assistance in preparing their own tax returns

Including:

- **People who make \$60,000 or less**
- **Persons with disabilities**
- **Limited English-speaking taxpayers**

Tax season is just around the corner, and assistance is at hand. In partnership with the IRS and Will County Center for Community Concerns, Joliet Township offers the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program, aimed at providing valuable tax support to those in need.

Patricia Venziano, a key figure in the program, expresses her passion for VITA, highlighting its significance in providing a much-needed free service to the community in a world where free services are increasingly rare.

Since its inception at Joliet Township in 2021, the VITA program is now entering its third season, aiming to alleviate the financial burden on low-income families. The program addresses the issue of overpayment for tax preparations and loans, with a staggering \$566 million left unclaimed each year by individuals who turn to commercial tax services.

In contrast, VITA meticulously examines available credits to ensure that individuals receive the full benefits they are entitled to. All returns are filed electronically, earning them a preferred status with the IRS. This means that VITA returns are processed ahead of commercial returns, ensuring a faster refund for those in need.

In the 2023 tax season alone, the program assisted in the preparation of 397 tax returns, following the success of supporting 321 returns in 2022. Operating five days a week, the program offers flexibility, allowing individuals to make appointments, pick up tax packets, or receive them by mail.

As Patricia Venziano aptly puts it, "It's a good free tax service, and we're fast. We work on them as they come in the door." The VITA program exemplifies the power of community-driven initiatives, demonstrating that a dedicated group of individuals can make a tangible difference in the lives of those they serve during tax season and beyond.

To benefit from this invaluable service, call Patricia at 815-726-4781 x 301 today and take the first step toward securing your financial future.

www.joliettownship.net | 175 W Jefferson Street | Joliet, IL | (815) 726-4781 | contact@joliettownship.net

Senior Tax Levy Programs

Bringing seniors together for meaningful moments



In the heart of Joliet Township, a vibrant community spirit thrives, especially among local senior groups. Each year, the township proudly extends support to numerous senior gatherings, providing a space where older adults can come together, share a meal, enjoy entertainment, and engage with guest speakers.

These monthly meetings serve a vital role in the lives of seniors addressing various objectives outlined in the Senior Citizen Programs offered by townships:

- A. Decreasing isolation and dependence
- B. Enriching social and intellectual life
- C. Promoting community contribution
- D. Improving the climate of living

2023 Senior Tax Levy Grant Recipients

Cathedral of Saint Raymond
Senior Club

Catholic Charities

Club 51 y Mas Club Social

Joliet Retired Teachers
Association

National Hook-Up of Black
Women

The Paulites

Prairie State Legal Services

Saint Joseph Seniors

Senior Citizens Association

Senior Outreach Ministry at
Second Baptist

SOAR

Spanish Community Center
Club Social

Meet Jeff Wallace, Senior Liaison for Joliet Township

Senior Liaison Jeffery "Jeff" Wallace, a dedicated advocate for seniors, understands the importance of these gatherings. He encourages seniors who may be feeling cooped up at home to consider attending one of the monthly meetings. Typically featuring a meal, entertainment, and guest speakers, these events provide not only nourishment for the body but also enrichment for the mind and spirit. Membership dues can range from no cost to \$10.

Jeff is eager to assist seniors in finding answers to their needs. "If you let me know what you need, I can help find the answer and get back to you," he says, emphasizing his commitment to supporting the community's older population.

For seniors seeking connection, resources, and social opportunities, Senior Liaison Jeffery Wallace is a valuable ally. He can be reached at his home phone number, 815-741-3888, or his cell phone number, 815-263-4499.



Joliet Township remains committed to enhancing the lives of seniors, fostering a sense of community, and ensuring that no one feels alone on their journey.

www.joliettownship.net | 175 W Jefferson Street | Joliet, IL | (815) 726-4781 | contact@joliettownship.net

Assessor's Office News

Potential savings for homeowners in the community



If you're 65+, own your home, and receive the General Homestead Exemption, qualify for an extra \$8,000 off your Assessment with the Senior Citizens Homestead Exemption, plus explore the Senior Freeze Homestead Exemption.

Good News! The recently created Public Act 102-895 makes changes to a couple Homestead Exemption amounts for Joliet Township Residents.

The General Homestead Exemption will increase from \$6,000 to \$8,000. Additionally, the Senior Citizen Homestead Exemption will increase from \$5,000 to \$8,000. Both increases will be for the 2023 Assessment year payable in 2024.

If you are 65 years of age or older and own your home and are receiving the General Homestead Exemption, you can qualify for the Senior Citizens Homestead Exemption worth an additional \$8,000 off your Assessment. There is also a Senior Freeze Homestead Exemption you may be entitled to.

The requirements for the Senior Freeze are as follows:

- Fulfill property residency requirement
- Maximum combined household income must be \$65,000 or less
- Complete and return the Senior Freeze application each year to either the Supervisor of Assessments Office (302 N Chicago St/2nd Floor) OR your Township Assessor's Office (175 W Jefferson St)
- Please remember that this exemption must be renewed and qualified for every year. Once you qualify, you will be mailed the Application each Spring to renew.
- Please note that this exemption freezes your assessment and does NOT freeze your taxes

If you think you may be entitled to the Senior Citizen Homestead Exemption, the Senior Freeze Exemption, or want to make sure you are receiving the exemptions you are entitled to, please give us a call (815) 726-5446 and we will be happy to assist you.

Clerk's Office News

A year of progress



As we approach the end of the year, we are excited to share some noteworthy updates from the Joliet Township Clerk's office. This year has seen significant strides in enhancing our community's infrastructure and facilities through a thoughtful bidding process.

Joliet Township 2023 Bids

In 2023, the Clerk's office oversaw the bidding process for three essential road improvement projects covering a total of 4.29 miles. These improvements aim to enhance the safety and quality of our roadways, ensuring smoother commutes for all residents. As we continue to invest in our community's infrastructure, these improvements contribute to the overall well-being of our township.

Beyond road improvements, the Clerk's office also managed a bid for the remodel of our Animal Control facility. This initiative seeks to create a more accommodating and efficient space for the welfare of our furry friends. We are dedicated to providing the best possible environment for the animals in our care, and this remodel is a step towards achieving that goal.

Monthly Board Meetings Open to the General Public

Board Meetings are typically held on the second Tuesday of every month at 175 W Jefferson St. Joliet, IL 60432 at 5 PM. Want to look over our meeting agendas and notes? Find them easily on our website right from our home page or under our Public Information Tab. The recordings of the meetings are also available on the same page. Note that you will be directed to Youtube where the complete video is uploaded.

Your Questions and Concerns

At the Joliet Township Clerk's office, transparency and accessibility are at the forefront of our service. If you have any questions or concerns regarding records or any other matters, we invite you to reach out to us.

Email us at contact@joliettownship.net or call 815-726-4781.

Joliet Township Municipal Vehicle Program

Expected to launch early 2024

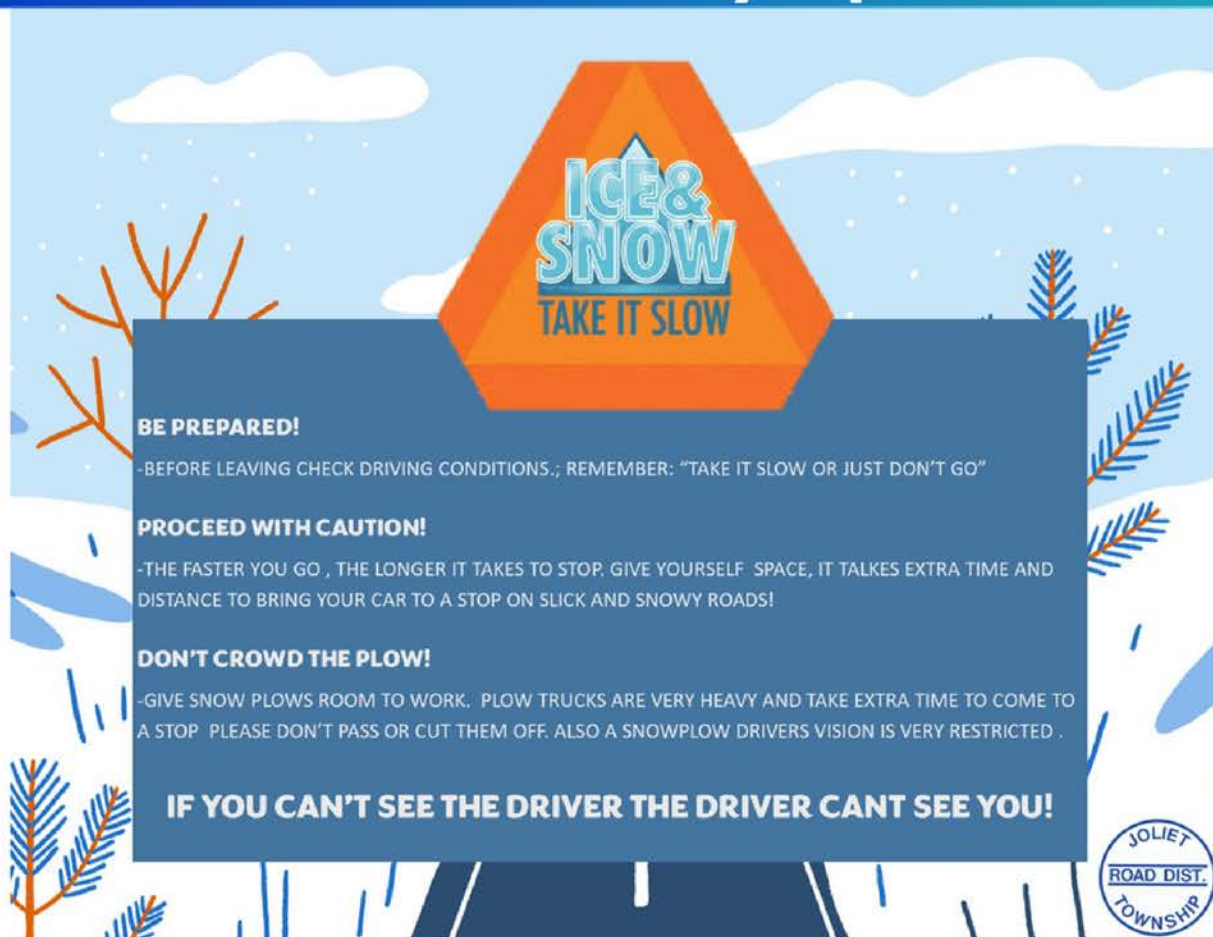
Joliet Township is excited to announce the launch of its Municipal Vehicle Program in partnership with PACE. The provision of transportation services to seniors and the youth population is a crucial undertaking in guaranteeing their access to vital appointments and after-school programs. This initiative goes a long way in ensuring that residents can attend critical medical consultations, as well as partake in academic and social activities.

The transit services will be offered within the Joliet Township boundaries extending from the NW quadrant at Theodore and Gaylord to the NE quadrant at Rosalind and Farrell Rd, to the SE quadrant at Cherry Hill and Schweizer Rd, and the SW quadrant at Laraway Road and Centerpoint Way of Joliet Illinois. Medical-only transportation outside of the established boundaries will be limited to an additional ten miles. Joliet Township aims to improve access, affordability, and user satisfaction of rides while increasing ADA-compliant transportation options.

Five passenger community vans will operate weekly for specific-use transportation as needed and scheduled through a paratransit model. The scheduling of trips will be done through the partner agency or through our website. Trips will cost \$2 for general residents and \$1 for senior and disabled residents.

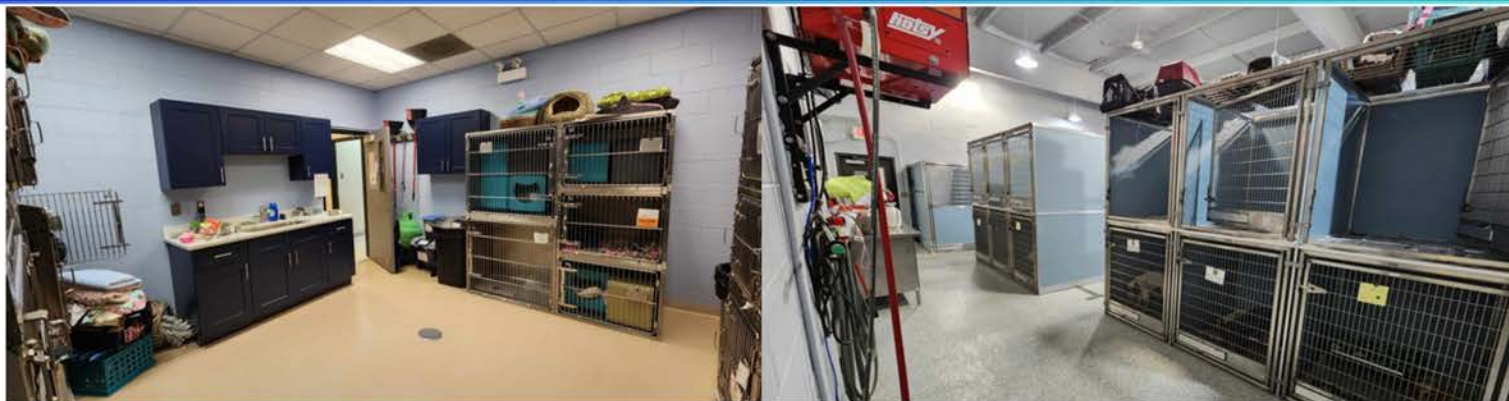
Currently, the Municipal Vehicle Program is in the process of hiring its staff and is expected to launch in January 2024. As a government agency, Joliet Township wants to ensure that reliable transportation services are available to all populations, particularly those with disabilities, to ensure that they have easy access to essential services.

Road District Winter Safety Tips



Joliet Township Animal Control News

Nurturing lives and finding forever homes



Kennel Renovations Completed

Our renovation of the kennels is complete! We have doubled the capacity in the dog room from twenty to forty dogs, and the intake garage can now comfortably house over sixty animals. The kennels, floor coloring, and wall colors were all chosen according to the fear-free method to reduce kennel stress in the animals housed here.



Field of Paws Fundraiser

We hosted the Field of Paws fundraiser at the Dog Day at Duly during a Joliet Slammers game this summer. We had four wonderful \$100 sponsors, and raised \$303 for our shelter pets during the 50/50 raffle. It was a perfect night to spend time with our pet loving community!

Donate - Pet Food Pantry

JTAC's commitment to animal welfare extends beyond the shelter walls. We operate a Pet Food Pantry that accepts donations for both shelter pets and those in need throughout the community. Dry dog, puppy, cat, and kitten foods, as well as canned cat and kitten food, are always welcome. Additionally, blankets, sheets, towels, Dawn dish soap, bleach, toys, and treats contribute to the well-being of our furry residents.



Volunteers needed - join us today

JTAC is actively seeking volunteers to join our team. We particularly need individuals to assist with walking dogs, providing much-needed exercise and enrichment for our shelter residents. Remember, a tired dog is a happy dog, and happy dogs find their forever homes more quickly. If you're passionate about making a difference in the lives of animals, consider becoming a JTAC volunteer.



482

pets adopted!

Adoptions Milestone: Pets Find Forever Homes

So far this year we have helped 482 pets get adopted by their new forever families! Last year at this time we had 451 adoptions completed.



For more information, contact us at (815) 725-0333 or visit our website at www.joliettownshipanimalcontrol.net.

Your Township Government



Angel Contreras
Supervisor



Tanya Arias
Trustee



Cesar Escutia
Trustee



Raymond Slattery
Trustee



Antione Edwards
Trustee



Alicia Morales
Clerk



Jim Brenzewski
Tax Assessor



Vince Alessio
Highway Commissioner



Archie Gavin
Tax Collector