



CHAMBERConnections

The Newsletter of the OPRF Chamber of Commerce

Fall 2009

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- Rita Schelstraete, Office Manager

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- Loretta Daly, Business Development Manager, Village of Oak Park
- Steven V. Gutierrez, Village Administrator, River Forest

From the desk of

PAUL MCKENNA, MARKETING CHAIR

November 2009

Welcome to the fall edition of ChamberConnections, the newsletter of the OPRF Chamber of Commerce.

As the chair of our marketing committee, it's my job to help show the residents of our communities, Chamber members and potential Chamber members the value of belonging to this hardworking business organization.

As a member of the Chamber who is actively involved, I am constantly reminded of the Chamber's value in growing my own business at the restaurant, as well as helping to run and promote the theatre. Perhaps some of my experiences as a member might ring true for you as well:

Success Story #1

I recently received a call from a client who works out of town and is planning to hold a series of seminars in our area. She was looking for a caterer (me) and a venue at which to hold her programs. After listening to what she needed, I called Jim Doss, executive director, for referrals for other OPRF Chamber members. Jim gave me no less (not kidding) than 15 different member businesses to call to check for presentation rooms!

"This is what we do, we help businesses by providing the referrals that help them grow," said Jim. (Each month the Chamber refers an average of 600 inquiries to member businesses!)

I began calling references, and, in a matter of 10 minutes, had a presentation room for my client. Thank you Jim!

Success Story #2:

No sooner had I hung up the phone—no kidding, this is absolutely true—than it rang again. It was a new customer who was looking for catering for two events in the area. She isn't a local resident, but had found my number in the OPRF Community Guide.

I know from personal experience that membership helps build my business, so I'm sold on Chamber value: it's part of an effective marketing mix for both the Starship and the Village Players Theatre.

Relationships are what it's all about.

It is no secret that good relationships build a strong business. Joining the Chamber allows members a wonderful opportunity to nourish their relationships with both residents and other business members of our community. You never know where that next sale will come from!

What happens when you join?

- When you join the Chamber, you're invited to member events, including Business After Hours (BAHs), BRAGS, and workshop and seminars.
- You'll also be invited and encouraged to get involved by joining a committee or volunteering for a special event. This investment of time in your business is well spent. Getting more deeply involved with the Chamber and your fellow members builds a bigger network of connections and a bigger rolodex. A bigger rolodex (or PDA!) means your phone will ring more frequently, and that means more business opportunities!

On the move

Your executive director and staff, Chamber board of directors and committees meet monthly to serve and promote the organization—and all our businesses! For the marketing committee, this takes on many forms from reviewing newspaper ads, to re-designing our Web site, to partnering programs into reality with other Chamber committees, and more. Our newest initiative is the Ambassadors Ribbon Cutting Program, which you will read more about in this issue. What are your ideas? We welcome you—and your great ideas—to become a part of enriching the Oak Park River Forest Chamber of Commerce. ••

Paul McKenna

Starship Restaurant & Catering, Forest Park

President, Board of Directors, Village Players Theatre, Oak Park

Photo by Tasha Schalk ©2009.

New Business Initiative:

Ambassadors Ribbon Cutting Program

By Rick Schuler, Within Your Reach

In July, the OPRF Chamber reintroduced its **Ambassadors Ribbon Cutting Program**. The program is anticipated to become a significant recruiting tool for our organization, and your support is important.

The Ambassador's Ribbon Cutting Program is open to all new local businesses opening in Oak Park and River Forest. The period of time between July and December will be used as an evaluation period. At the end of this timeframe, the programs will be reviewed for its effectiveness.

Goals of the program are:

- **To promote opportunities** for local press coverage for the new business owner and for the Chamber
- **To build business community awareness**, with the anticipation of increasing long-term Chamber membership
- **To build awareness of the OPRF Chamber within the community at large**, enhancing and building the image of the organization
- **To connect the new business owner** to OPRF officers, Ambassadors and established members within the OPRF Chamber of Commerce
- **To build knowledge of, and participation in**, such Chamber business-building events as the Business After Hours (BAHs), and more

Here's what you should know:

- **Ribbon cuttings are scheduled for the third Friday of each month** and limited to four (4) businesses per month. We expect that the date and number of participating business will expand.
- **Each ceremony is limited to 30 minutes** with the goal that at least 10 Ambassadors will attend. The most efficient use of time is to schedule new business openings back-to-back, with Ambassadors considering the possibility of carpooling from ceremony to ceremony.
- **Ribbon cuttings will occur at the place of business for newly established, local businesses, OR** at the Chamber office for out-of-area businesses.
- **The ceremony will consist of cutting the ribbon and a picture** for distribution to the local media, as a memento for the business owner and to be used on the Chamber's Web site.

WE WANT TO HELP YOU BUILD YOUR BUSINESS!



**Be an active member of the
OPRF Chamber of Commerce**

In addition, the new business also receives:

- The end piece of the ribbon with a gold seal attached (the "official gold seal" indicia of the OPRF Chamber) for display purposes
- The ceremonial "first dollar" affixed to a certificate, also for display
- A business card resource folder with Chamber staff cards and Ambassadors' cards
- A Chamber Directory and Map
- A guide for submitting a press release, along with contact information for the local media
- Businesses who are OPRF Chamber members also will receive a sheet of Chamber logo stickers and a Chamber member door decal

We welcome your ideas and suggestions. OPRF Chamber Ambassadors, your involvement for a successful program is crucial! Contact **Rich Schuler** at rich@orgwithinreach.com for info. ••

Check out the Ribbon Cutting
for DIVINE CONSIGN at
www.oprfchamber.org!

Welcome to these new OPRF Chamber members!

by Stephanie McDonald, Everything But Time, Inc.,
Mari Telios, President, Source Telios, Inc. & Tom Wendorf, Money Mailer of Chicago West

WELCOME to our new Chamber of Commerce members –and, thank you for your support!

Membership in the OPRF Chamber of Commerce is one of the most valuable business tools you can have. We encourage you to get involved in the many networking and educational opportunities the Chamber has to offer.

If you have not already done so, be sure to attend the next New Member Orientation Breakfast. E-mail the Chamber at info@oprchamber.org to be added to the list. The orientation breakfast is a great introduction to the Chamber and is held quarterly.

Divine Consign

Contact: Kellie Scott
111 N. Oak Park Ave., Oak Park
(708) 386-3366
www.DivineConsignOakPark.com

Upscale 3,500 sq. ft consignment furniture and decor showroom in the heart of the Oak Park. Now accepting upscale furniture, art, rugs, lamps and other whimsical items on consignment. A great source for reasonably priced upscale home furnishings!

Functional Health & Wellness

**Contacts: Ryan Todd, DPT
& Kyle Todd**
1042 Pleasant Street, Oak Park
(708) 445-3965
www.fxnlhealth.com

State-of-the-art physical therapy clinic dedicated to the treatment of individuals suffering from orthopedic, sports and work-related injuries. Their goal is to make their patients pain-free, and provide them with the tools they need to ensure successful injury recovery.

Triple A Services, Inc.

Contact: Tom Whennen
2637 S. Throop Street, Chicago
(312) 225-5040
www.tripleaservices.com

Triple A Services, Inc. offers organizations and their employees a wide variety of vending (snack, soda, frozen and fresh food, Dippin Dots), office coffee systems, five gallon water bottle, or filtered water systems and industrial catering trucks.

Gunther's Grades, LLC

919 Thatcher Avenue
River Forest
(708) 752-2886
cpawlak@gunthersgrades.com
www.gunthersgrades.com

A Web meeting place where families and friends can access, rate and share information regarding long-term care and facilities in Illinois (nursing homes and long-term acute care). Gunther's Grades believes that quality long-term care should be accessible to all—their goal is to influence that outcome by enabling future caregivers, through knowledge and support, to be stronger advocates and participants in their loved one's care.

E-chx Inc.

Contact: Carol Mancini,
district sales manager
18W140 Butterfield Rd. #1525,
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E-chx Inc. is a payroll processor providing high value, competitively priced state-of-the-art technology and service solutions to businesses, accountants and benefits providers. Ex-chx offers seamless integration with a variety of vendors that service various businesses—including yours! ••

OUR MISSION

The Oak Park-River Forest Chamber of Commerce is a leadership and educational organization, which fosters and promotes businesses and business interests in the Oak Park and River Forest areas.

Upcoming Chamber Events

November

Thursday, November 12, 2009

Workshop:

Now's the Time to Focus on Customer Behavior

Presenter: William Cusick, CEO of Vox, Inc.

Location: Cheney Mansion, 220 N. Euclid, Oak Park

Owned and Operated by Park District of Oak Park

Registration: 5:30 p.m.

Program: 6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Cost: \$10, Chamber Members • \$20, non-members

Call the Chamber office at 708-848-8151; seating is limited.

Visit the OPRF Chamber of Commerce online at www.oprfchamber.org for news and more coming events!



What are the benefits of becoming a Chamber Member?

INCREASE YOUR CUSTOMER BASE

by making new customer contacts and attracting more business.

STAY INFORMED

The Chamber offers a wealth of information and professional resources to help you keep your business growing.

BE HEARD

The Chamber serves as the unified business voice of Oak Park and River Forest, representing your business interests at the government level.

JOIN THE OPRF CHAMBER TODAY!

2009 Holiday Special Event!

The Village Players Performing Arts Center
Announces the First (ever!) Annual Holiday Party:

Take Your Office Holiday Party to a Whole New Level!

- Who:** Open to all area businesses
- What:** Party includes fun, food, drinks and a great, soon-to-be famous holiday show!
- Cost:** \$35 per employee. The first 10 companies to register will receive two (2) complimentary tickets—with the purchase of 10. Don't wait, for reservations call the Box Office at 1-866-764-1010 today!
- Dates:** **Thursday, Dec. 10** and **Thursday, Dec. 17** at **5:30 p.m.**
Village Players will roll out the red carpet to all party goers. Ticket price includes, hearty hors d'oeuvres, desserts, beer, wine and soda.
- The Production:** ***Chad Morton's TV Christmas Miracle***
by Jack Crowe • directed by Doug Long
- A modern Christmas fable set in TVland of the 1960s, this is the story of a fading star who fights the odds to hang on to his beloved television special. The production is a musical comedy based on the passing of musical tradition from Bing Crosby to David Bowie. A heartwarming, holiday comedy.
- Fun!** Join in on our grab bag by bringing a wrapped gift to be exchanged. (\$10 & under, suggested) • Office/Holiday attire

Village Players
 performing arts center

1010 W. Madison Street • Oak Park, Illinois • www.village-players.org