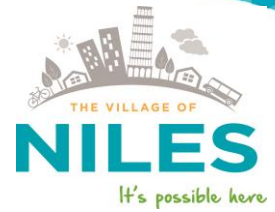


NILES NEWS



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NILES TEEN CENTER TO RELOCATE; RECEIVES \$200,000 IN ASSISTANCE

The Village of Niles Board of Trustees on Tuesday night approved the permanent relocation of the Niles Teen Center to a standalone location near the northwest corner of Milwaukee and Dempster. The move to a new location was anticipated due to the redevelopment of the Golf Mill Shopping Center. The anticipated date for the relocation project to begin is May 1, 2023. The new location will raise the profile of the teen center in the Niles community and beyond. The project has been in the works for roughly a year as the plans for the mall have developed.

As discussion for a relocation strategy grew, the Village applied for federal assistance in creating a state-of-the-art facility for the new vision of the center. In January 2023, the Village was notified that it had been approved for \$200,000 to assist in shaping the innovative center through Senator Dick Durbin's office. The new plans feature a commercial kitchen, sound studio, STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) equipment, video gaming equipment, creative suite with video and graphic design software, and a performance stage.

The new location is more centralized in the Village and strategically placed to serve the students of the local schools better. It is walking distance from Gemini Middle School without crossing any high-traffic roadways, is a short distance down Dempster Street from Maine East and Notre Dame high schools, and is also closer to Culver School.

"We're excited about the new Niles Teen Center," said Niles Mayor George D. Alpogianis. "The Center is something that's really important to the community and special about Niles. This administration has promised to keep children at the forefront of our initiatives, and the new Teen Center is one more way we're following through on that promise. I also want to thank Senator Dick Durbin for helping us to get the ball rolling. Children are the future of our Village, and we always need to provide a safe and engaging environment for them to flourish."

"The approval by the Village Board and Mayor Alpogianis is going to have a legacy impact on the future of students and our Village as a whole," said Niles Teen Center Coordinator Michael Trevino. "As a resident of Niles and a father of teenagers, I am appreciative to the leadership of this Village for believing in our students. This centralized new location will allow us to unify the families and students together in Niles and provide a state-of-the-art facility that will grow with us

into the future. The residents of Niles and the surrounding communities are fortunate to have a space that teens can call their own, designed with them in mind and staffed by trusted Village staff that truly care and champion them as citizens and as individuals.”

Participants of the Niles Teen Center will have access to the Village’s Family Services team to support them mentally and emotionally through stresses of adolescence by providing therapeutic services at the center for those that are interested, and all students are able to access the services provided as part of their attendance.

The Village of Niles Teen Center has been at Golf Mill Shopping Center since 2007. Sterling Organization and Golf Mill Shopping Center have been great hosts for the current center, where thousands of teens from Niles and the surrounding communities have “hung out” over the past 16 years. The center has been a safe and inviting environment for teens to socialize after school, functioning as a drop-in space to get help with homework, play video games, or participate in a wide range of groups and recreational activities.

The new center hopes to continue partnerships with local schools, and will offer skill building and learning, host local partner businesses and non-profits, offer mental health services, and create a setting designed to encourage social and emotional skill enhancement for attendees. This generation of youth continue to face unprecedented challenges post-pandemic as they develop, and the Niles Teen Center is poised and ready to engage them with a milieu designed to integrate their needs into the new-and-improved facility, amenities, and programming serving the students for years to come, and upgraded to handle modern stresses and challenges.

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About the Niles Teen Center: The Niles Teen Center exists to support youth development, mental health and wellness, and pro-social activities. The facility and programs are targeted to support and build into the individual student as well as to strengthen and bring unity and collaboration to Niles and surrounding communities. Participation in the new Center will provide students access to services such as educational assistance, homework support, therapeutic, social, occupational guidance, transportation, life skills, mental and physical health activities and awareness and innovative technology. The motto of the Niles Teen Center is to **develop, invest, and connect** students and the larger community together.

Develop

We believe each student is a unique individual equipped with specific talents and skill sets that can be used to benefit the world around them. We provide specific programming opportunities that encourage students to express their creativity, discover their identity, and foster personal development so they can make their mark on their community.

Invest

We want to see students thrive in all areas of their life. By providing a variety of life skill workshops and support, homework assistance, recreation and creative service opportunities we hope to deposit community goodwill into the lives of the students we serve.



Connect

No student is an island to themselves. We hope that when they walk through the doors of our Teen Center or participate in one of our many events, they discover positive friendships with local teenagers and establish mentoring relationships with staff and volunteers that will support them through their junior and high school years and beyond.