

CONNECTION

THE CLARE

ISSUE 225

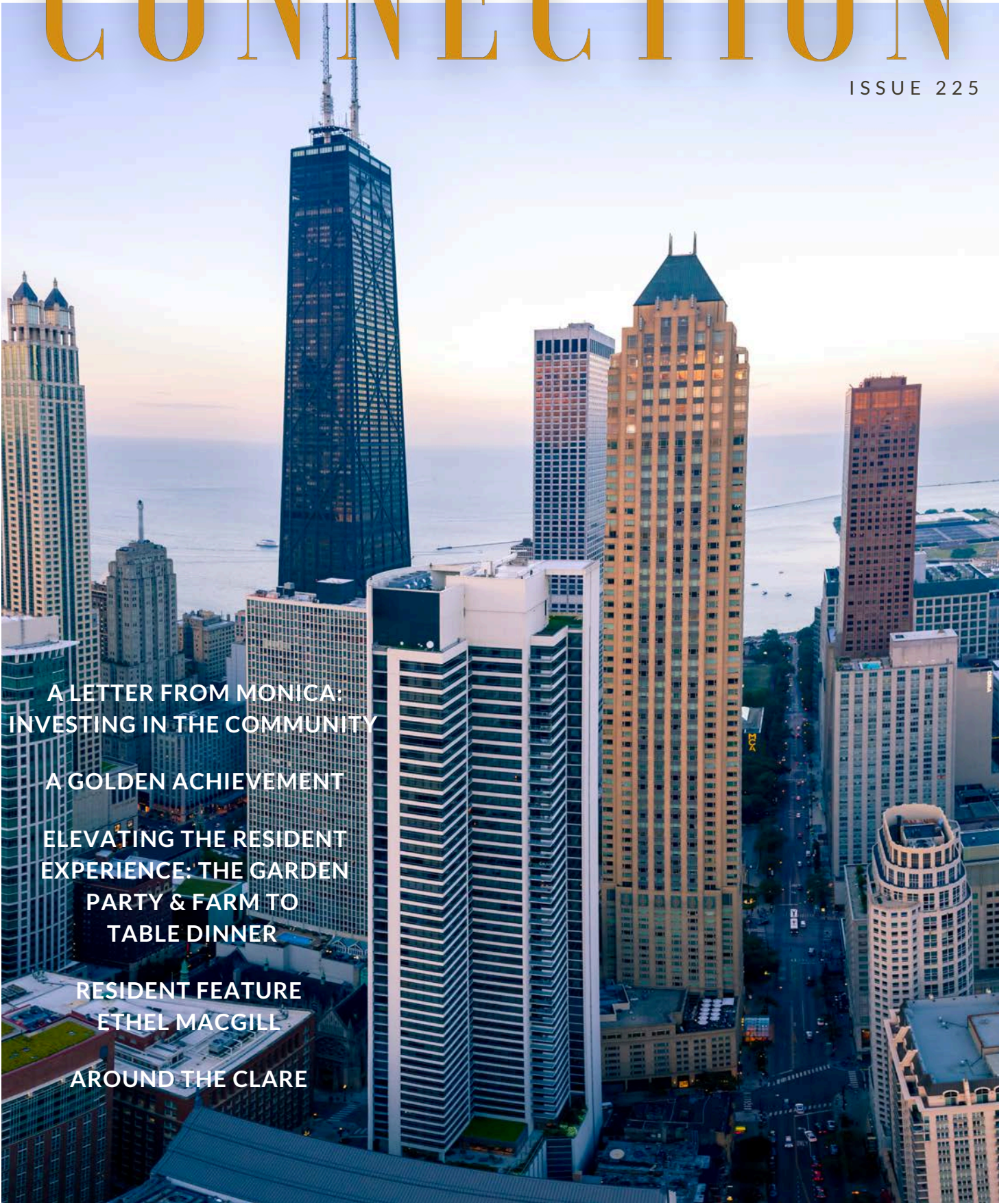
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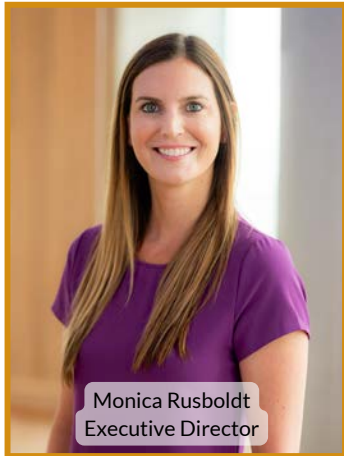




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A LETTER FROM MONICA

INVESTING IN THE COMMUNITY



Monica Rusboldt
Executive Director

FALL IS HERE and it's hard to believe that as I write this, we are considering the loose ends we need to tie up before 2025 arrives! Investing in our community— those who work and live here and the physical space that makes up The Clare— is a significant theme that has emerged this year. It brings me great joy to reflect on our commitment to providing the best service and atmosphere, not only to our residents but to our employees as well.

In early 2023, we began a project that we anticipated to be a lengthy endeavor, and we are thrilled that the Independent Living corridor project is in its final stages; artwork selections are being finalized with the help of our residents who provided feedback on what they would like to see in the hallways. As one project comes to a close, a new one opens, and we are anxious to begin renovations of the elevator cab interiors soon. A design has been finalized with the support of a resident committee, who provided feedback on not only the functionality of the design but also on a design that would tie in elements from the rest of the community for continuity.

2025 will be no different, as we are eager to renovate more resident spaces, such as the 19th floor Business Center, and refresh the common areas in our building that still have the original design from when the community opened in 2008. What continues to amaze me is that many capital projects are a direct result of residents and management working collaboratively, which shows trust on both ends. That vital connection between residents and management is very unique in a community setting, and something I believe is a significant contributor to The Clare's success.

Investing in the community will always be a priority, but investing in the employees is equally important. The Clare's leadership team, including directors, managers, and supervisors, recently went through a two-day training focused on developing managerial skills from a strengths perspective and how to better communicate interdepartmentally. It was a robust training, and exciting to see everyone in the same room actively sharing and providing insight on their best management practices. These types of training positively impact employee engagement scores and aid in keeping our turnover numbers low.

I hope everyone can savor the beautiful autumn weather in Chicago before we head into the winter months. We eagerly anticipate a strong finish to yet another fantastic year at The Clare!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Monica Rusboldt".

Monica Rusboldt, Executive Director

A GOLDEN ACHIEVEMENT

KEEPING EMPLOYEES MOTIVATED and engaged at work requires a lot of flexibility, patience, and, above all else, creativity. Somehow, The Clare's Human Resources Director, Michael Plowman, has found a good cadence for The Clare's ever-evolving team of 250+ employees. With the help of The Clare's ownership, Life Care Services (LCS), Michael has found an engagement tool for the staff by way of a signature program called Extraordinary Impressions.

In 2009— just a year after The Clare was built but before Life Care Services was brought in to manage the community — Extraordinary Impressions was created as a way for communities to ensure that hospitality is kept at the forefront of every interaction. The program was rolled out company wide with the hopes it would provide each community's management team with a formal tool to engage employees in delivering excellent service to our residents and, beyond that, create a nurturing and pleasant work environment.

Over the years, The Clare has adapted this signature program to meet the needs of our community, and it's always been a touch point with employees during new hire orientation and other events such as the monthly All-Staff Meeting.

In 2023, Michael decided to turn up the heat on implantation with the community by way of educating the staff and residents on the Extraordinary Impression's mission and the importance of its presence at The Clare.

Michael comments, "We have this great tool at our fingertips and we educate on hospitality day in and day out. When you have such a comprehensive program in front of you, you would be a fool not to use it. We have found way to make Extraordinary Impressions unique to The Clare that, in turn, excites the staff."

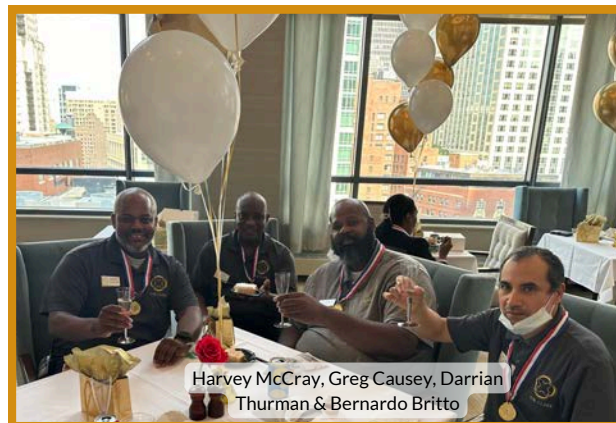
At the core of Extraordinary Impressions are 10 Hospitality Promises. The promises serve as the program's foundation and are quick phrases that are easy to remember, cover the basics of providing an exceptional experience, and uphold the LCS principle, "We serve the Customer First and Foremost."



Matthew Kyle, Rowland Mwakibete, Killi Gkigkinis, Monica Rusboldt, Angel Gray, Dan Rogers, Michael Plowman, Yao Aoussi, Jim Neven, Marco Alvarez, Emily Delaney, Jed Paguntalan & Cionne Stokes



Kelli Gkigkinis, Jed Paguntalan, Cionne Stokes, Helina Asefa, Mariah Collins, Elsie Jefferson & Deborah Bradshaw



Harvey McCray, Greg Causey, Darrrian Thurman & Bernardo Britto

"We have found a way to make Extraordinary Impressions unique to The Clare and in turn, that excites the staff."
-Michael Plowman, Director of Human Resources

THE CLARE'S HOSPITALITY PROMISES

1. We greet you warmly, by name and with a smile.
2. We treat everyone with courteous respect.
3. We anticipate your needs and act accordingly.
4. We listen and respond enthusiastically in a timely manner.
5. We hold ourselves and one another accountable.
6. We make you feel important.
7. We embrace and value our differences.
8. We ask, "Is there anything else I can do for you?"
9. We maintain high levels of professionalism, both in conduct and appearance, at all times.
10. We pay attention to the details.

Each LCS community is invited to introduce and implement the program as they wish. Still, for those hoping to go above and beyond, LCS was wise to put an incentive in place



to honor and recognize the communities who have fully integrated Extraordinary Impressions into the culture of their buildings. Communities were invited to fill out a scorecard including various sections and points associated with completed implementation. The number of points you earn gives you a certification of Gold, Silver, or Bronze.

Michael teamed up with The Clare's Executive Director, Monica Rusboldt, and together, they ensured that each step required to earn a certification was thoughtfully executed. They submitted evidence on various topics, including stories of how Hospitality Promises are carried out and promoted in the community, resident awareness of the program and its promises, completing training with each department, and best practices on hospitality education that were learned along the way.

"The goal was to make the party fun and memorable... we wanted employees to relax and enjoy themselves..."
-Monica Rusboldt,
Executive Director



Michael mentioned, "Sharing the examples of how our staff are carrying out the Hospitality Promises was my favorite item to submit. It allowed Monica and I to reflect on the staff's commitment to the program, which was super rewarding."

102 communities submitted scorecards to LCS, and 23 earned a Gold Certification, including The Clare. Michael and Monica were elated with the outcome, and knew they had to recognize the staff for this achievement in a big way. So, they began the process of planning what they referred to as "The Gold Party."

The party was complete with gold goody bags with gold candies, gold medals for each employee as they walked in, gold balloons, table decorations, and so much more. There was a party for the overnight and day staff to ensure as many employees could join in the celebration. The party also featured a few surprises—including gift cards to employees who could recite all 10 Hospitality Promises by heart and an original song that was created and performed by Nikki Gamble, Life Enrichment Manager, to the tune of "My Favorite Things" from The Sound of Music.

"The goal was to make the party fun and memorable. It's always easier to remember an initiative when you have something fun to associate it with." Monica says, "We wanted the employees to relax, enjoy themselves, and take a break from their work days. I think the party achieved that."

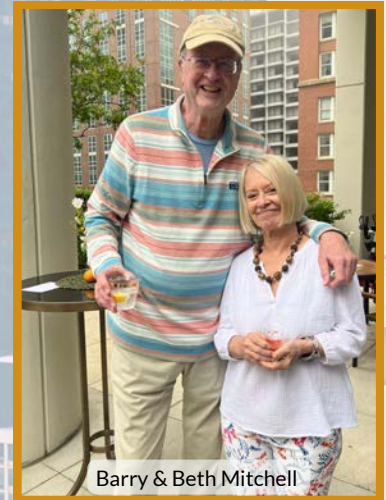
Now that the Gold Party is behind The Clare comes the real work: keeping the employees engaged and excited about a program that is so central to the community's operations. Monica states, "I'm hopeful that Extraordinary Impressions will continue to be successful now and in the future. I see so many examples with our staff daily, and if we continue to nurture and recognize those moments, we will remain on the right path."

ELEVATING THE RESIDENT EXPERIENCE

THE GARDEN PARTY & FARM TO TABLE DINNER

AS A TRUE CHICAGOAN KNOWS summertime in the city is meant to be spent outdoors. Clare residents took full advantage of the beautiful summer weather, attending many events and outings around the city. Francesco Tardio, Director of Dining, and Emily Delaney, Director of Resident Experience, were keen to plan events within the community that would exceed expectations while allowing residents to take full advantage of the recently reopened ninth-floor terrace and it's newly landscaped gardens.

Having planned many events in the past together, Francesco, Emily and Executive Chef, Hagop Hagopian, put their heads together and found inspiration to enhance the resident experience. They found that more is more and that the devil is truly in the details.



Barry & Beth Mitchell



Lise & Tom Lawson



Jackie Gilbert & Margie Staples



Barb Arsenault, Carol Niebling, Tom & Joanne Daly & Ralph Niebling



The Garden Committee: Joyce Johnston, Roberta Weisberg, Suzanne Turner & Claudia Boatright (not pictured: Jan Linn)



Ethel MacGill



Linda & Bob Jagla



Judith Podmore, Paul LeRoux & Peg Corwin



Anne Laubscher



Roberta Weisberg, Suzanne Turner & Chris Lyon



HD Mitchell, Jackie Milano & Beth Mitchell



Faye Hilder & Marilyn Garfin

THE FARM TO TABLE dinner showcased a thoughtfully curated vegetarian menu by Chef Hagop, featuring fresh and local produce from Nichols Farm, Four Star Mushrooms, and Urban Micro Gardens. Residents savored welcome cocktails and enjoyed a beautifully designed tablescape, creating a truly special evening.



Chef Hagop's chilled potato leek soup with fresh herbs

RESIDENT PROFILE: ETHEL MACGILL

A NEW CHAPTER IN CHICAGO

WHEN ETHEL MACGILL SPEAKS, her accent immediately signals she is not from the Midwest. After 87 years in Long Island, her accent remains unyielding, a testament to her deep roots on the East Coast. How did someone with such a long history in one place end up in Chicago? Her story is a representation of Ethel's adaptability, a trait that mirrors her sensible personality.

Born in Queens, New York, Ethel was the eldest of four children. She grew up in Nassau County on Long Island, helping her parents with her three younger brothers. When it came time for her to think about her future, she knew it was important to her parents that she and her siblings attend college. She was steadfast in what she wanted to study and knew she wanted to remain close to home.

"I always knew I wanted to teach. I enjoy children and played teacher to my brothers at home." Ethel recalls.

She enrolled at Adelphi University, earning a bachelor's and master's degree in education in just five years. Her college years were formative, not only for her professional development but also socially. She also formed lifelong friendships, and it was during those years that she met her future husband, Bruce.

Ethel dedicated the first decade of her career to teaching elementary school students across different grades. She later transitioned to working in Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) for the remainder of her professional life. In this role, she developed and implemented a GATE program for elementary students, enabling her to advocate for and champion high-potential students.

Ethel and her husband made their home in Suffolk County, Long Island, where they raised their daughter, Melissa. They cherished their waterfront property, spending weekends clamming, crabbing, and enjoying family time on their boat. Ethel was also actively involved in her community—she belonged to numerous organizations, including the historical society, chamber of commerce, women's club, and her local church.

After her husband passed away in 2011, Ethel continued to lead a vibrant life on Long Island. Regular trips to New York City to see Broadway shows and visit museums kept her connected to the cultural heartbeat of the city. She also continued a tradition that had started with her husband, making monthly visits to Chicago, ensuring she was an active part of her grandson's life.

As time passed, Melissa encouraged Ethel to consider a move to the Midwest. The practicality of moving to Chicago to be close to her family made the decision easy. Ethel's only caveat was ensuring she would see her daughter at least once a week—a term Melissa quickly and happily agreed to.

Her daughter lived in Chicago's Gold Coast neighborhood, which narrowed Ethel's options. They looked at numerous condominiums in the neighborhood. Melissa also pitched a visit to The Clare, and to her surprise, Ethel was excited to take a tour.

"I didn't know anyone in Chicago besides Melissa," Ethel admits. A trial stay at The Clare cemented her decision, and in August 2022, Ethel made the move.



Ethel and a student reading together during weekly volunteering through WITS (Working in the Schools)

"I didn't want everything new...I wanted to feel at home."

-Ethel MacGill

Ethel approached the transition with her characteristic sensibility. Downsizing from her home of fifty-five years to a one-bedroom apartment could have been a daunting task, but she viewed it as an opportunity to streamline her life. With the help of a local decorator, Ethel carefully selected which pieces of furniture and décor to bring.

“I didn’t want everything new,” she says. “I wanted to feel at home.” Her thoughtful planning paid off, and she found that everything fit perfectly in her new space. She even repurposed some of her favorite pieces—her dining buffet became a bedroom dresser, and a drop leaf table stored in her Long Island home’s attic for fifty-plus years became her dining table.



One of the many gatherings (Christmas Tea) Ethel has hosted in her new apartment

Her new apartment at The Clare is a sanctuary of comfort. “I love my kitchen,” Ethel beams.

With plenty of storage space and room to cook, she continues to indulge her passion for hosting dinners and cocktail parties. Her balcony, where she enjoys her morning coffee or an evening drink, offers a peaceful spot to take in the Chicago skyline. Though she parted with some artwork and kitchen items, Ethel was happy to pass on many items to Melissa, who lives just three blocks away. “If I ever need anything, Melissa has it,” Ethel laughs.

The transition from Long Island to Chicago has been much more than just a change of scenery. She has fully embraced life at The Clare, quickly becoming an active resident in the community.

“It was recommended that I go to breakfast as an easy way to meet people,” she explains. “You can sit at a different table daily and meet at least twenty new faces.”

Ethel wasted no time making friends and even joined the Resident Council within her first year, serving as the Life Enrichment Chair. This role gave her valuable insight into the needs and desires of her fellow residents while also providing her with a deeper understanding of how the community is run.

Ethel’s social calendar remains full. She plays bridge three times a week, enjoys Rummikub on Saturdays, and regularly participates in The Clare’s cultural outings, events and volunteer opportunities.

“One of my favorite memories since moving to The Clare was Dragon Boat Races...that and volunteering with WITS.” Ethel recalls.

When she is not at The Clare, she and her daughter are making good on their pact to see each other weekly.



Ethel & fellow Clare Resident, Jo-Ann Michalak at the 2023 Dragon Boat Races

For Ethel, the move to The Clare has brought a sense of safety and comfort. Living in a high-rise has its perks—there’s always someone available to help with any issues that may arise, and she doesn’t have to worry about the upkeep of a larger home or property.

“The service is wonderful,” she says. “I don’t have to worry about anything.”

Reflecting on the move she made just over two years ago, Ethel describes herself as “productive, social, and an adventurer.” These qualities have undoubtedly helped her navigate the changes in her life, from her days as a teacher in suburban New York to her new life in the heart of Chicago. And while she fondly remembers her Long Island life, Ethel is confident that she made the right decision.

“I’m very happy here,” she says with a smile.

“The service is wonderful. I don’t have to worry about anything.”
-Ethel MacGill

AROUND



Judy Blunck, Pat Terry, Jackie Gilbert, Bonnie Pritchard, Vivien Lee, Linda Jagla & Carolyn Stromberg



Bronze Medalists: ML Karth, Rosemary Tegano, Sally Park & Pat Terry



Margie Staples at Maggie Daly Park

IN AUGUST The Clare Summer Games coincided with the Summer Olympics, giving Clare residents the opportunity to embrace their inner athlete and demonstrate that a little friendly competition can be a positive, healthy and fun experience!



Betsy Kennedy, Rosemary Tegano & Peg Corwin throwing the "shotput" at Lake Shore Park



Linda Jagla, Rich Kaczmarek & Delta Greene at Maggie Daly Park



Kim Chalekian, Carolyn Stromberg, Judy Blunck, Linda Jagla & Jo-Ann Michalak at Oak Street Beach



Gold Medalists: Rich Kaczmarek, Harlean Barth, Joanne Celewycz & Jo-Ann Michalak



Silver Medalists: Bob Day, Jackie Gilbert & Carolyn Stromberg

THE CLARE



Roberta Weisberg & Gail Margolis at the Fabyan Japanese Gardens in Geneva, IL



Margaret McCamant



Our hosts for Misericordia's Sweets on Wheels Truck, Ann & Rich Carr



Ethel MacGill, Heather Ebner, Marlene Spigner, Janet Reece, Russ Hyman, Rich Pincus, Stan Heller & Rich Kaczmarek at Wrigley Field



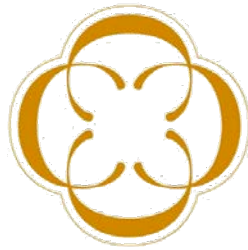
Sally Park, Vivien Lee, Emily Delaney, Joyce Johnston, Bonnie Pritchard & Paulette Popovich at a summer flower arranging workshop



Linda Shakno, Lil Scommegna, Judith Podmore, Tom Lawson, Judy Blunck, Gail Margolis, Joyce Johnston, Joanne Celewycz, Dave Andersen, Jan Holzheimer, Suzanne Chapple, Carolyn Stromberg, and Carolyn & Gordan Kirk exploring McCormick Place's rooftop farm



Maureen Schoenbeck, Peg Corwin, Dick Podmore, Sydney Feuchtwanger, Robert Asher, Rebecca Dixon, Rich Kaczmarek, Mary Ann Quick & Bob Day at Navy Pier



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