In 1861, its founding motto was established: “Naturae et Scientiae Amor” (“Love of Science and Nature”). Lake Forest, Illinois is known for its creative culture and the energetic spirit of its founders and residents. Successful business people, entrepreneurs, actors, writers, architects, educators and shopkeepers have made Lake Forest their home town. A vibrant community of thoughtful planners, Lake Forest is about living, learning, thinking and giving.

Sitting high on a bluff overlooking Lake Michigan to the east, Lake Forest encompasses 19 square miles and has a population of just under 20,000. Native open spaces, ravines, trees and park-like settings provide a safe and tranquil environment. The natural beauty of the area is embraced by all generations.

New residents are drawn here and families choose to stay here because of its diverse neighborhoods, quaint business districts, the vitality of the community, access to railroad transportation, beautiful streetscapes, unique homes, religious institutions, outstanding public school education, tradition and philanthropy.
true community and strong values, define Lake Forest. Residents call Lake Forest as their “home base.” In an age where society is constantly balancing technology and tradition, the things that matter (Family, Education, Tradition, Philanthropy), a rare sense of true community and strong values, define Lake Forest.

Lake Forest is a community of philanthropically-minded families and individuals. Local institutions, including churches, schools, garden clubs, historic preservation, conservation, arts and cultural groups, would not exist if it were not for the generosity of Lake Forest residents. Scores of non-profit organizations have been established to fulfill missions involving a wide variety of causes benefiting the community. The humanities are thriving in Lake Forest through professional and community theater organizations, art, music and literary events. From quaint shops in the historic downtown to several national and international shopping outlets, Lake Forest is home to several of Chicagoland’s most popular retailers and a wide assortment of four-star and casual dining establishments. Railroad transportation on two separate lines is available for easy commuting to Chicago or elsewhere. The community enjoys easy access to major interstate highways, O’Hare International Airport and nearby executive airports.

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The Public Safety Building (255 W. Deerpath) houses the Police and Fire Departments, with the Fire Department also occupying a second station at 1111 S. Telegraph Road. These departments also offer programs to educate residents and businesses in life and property safety. Additional resident services offered: block party, garage sale and burn permits, as well as tent applications. The Compost/Recycling Center, located at 1010 N. Lakeview Avenue, accepts various recyclable and hazardous waste items. The Lake Forest Government website, www.CityofLakeForest.com, provides information on city services, events, and community organizations.

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In the CROYA Student Union just east of the Recreation Center at 400 Hastings Road, the Committee Representing Our Young Adults is an organization serving the youth of Lake Forest and Lake Bluff. All programs are conceived and planned by the kids, and range from social activities to personal development, peer training and leadership, retreats and community service projects.

Nestled on the Grove Cultural Campus at 100 Old Mill Road, Dickinson Hall serves as the hub of activity for adults aged 50+ offering a variety of programs, classes, special interest groups, social opportunities and trips. Additional services are designed to help older adults maintain their independence, including transportation and support services.

Sitting on top of a small hill at 360 E. Deerpath, the Library was given to the City by residents and was dedicated in 1931. The Library welcomes residents of all ages and houses an impressive collection of books, DVDs, online resources as well as other information and services.

Located adjacent to the ecologically-significant Middlefork Savanna at 1401 Middlefork Drive, Elawa Farm is one of the last remaining and intact examples of estate farm architecture in the Midwest. Elawa Farm offers environmentally-rich programming and events provided to the public by the Gardeners and Chef, Wildlife Discovery Center, Bee Keepers and more.

A distinguished building on the northeast corner of Illinois and McKinley Roads at 400 E. Illinois Road, Gorton Center is a privately-funded entity housed in a 1901 completely-restored public school building. Since 1972, Gorton has enriched the community by offering an attractive, supportive place for groups to host cultural, social and educational programs, services and events.

Located at Elawa Farm, 1401 Middlefork Drive, the Wildlife Discovery Center houses a public viewing area of a vast and unique collection of reptile and amphibian species, outdoor raptor exhibits, a venomous reptile exhibit, educational programs, nature hikes, bird and wildlife watching as well as conservation education classes.

In 1998, the Historical Society opened its first museum at 361 East Westminster, a former coach house and Masonic Lodge. The Lake Forest-Lake Bluff Historical Society was formed in 1972 by over 100 charter members to preserve the history of Lake Forest and Lake Bluff. With a robust collection dating back to 1860, the Historical Society is the place to research and discover the people, places and events from Lake Forest’s past.

Located at 1230 N. Green Bay Road and designed as the summer home of architect Howard Van Doren Shaw, Ragdale is one of the most complete examples of a turn-of-the-century retreat. Throughout the year, Ragdale offers readings, artist lectures, workshops, and special events designed to connect artists and regional audiences.