

Connections



1st Quarter 2025



Midway Chamber of Commerce
Congratulates

TEACHER OF THE YEAR 2024

Ms. Gabriela Torres
John Hancock College
Prep High School



www.midwaychamber.org

Midway Chamber of Commerce
Congratulates

FIRE FIGHTER OF THE YEAR 2024

Firefighter
Lisa Moroko



www.midwaychamber.org

Midway Chamber of Commerce
Congratulates

POLICE OFFICER OF THE YEAR 2024

Business Liaison
Officer Michael Power



www.midwaychamber.org

Welcome to our Newest Members!

We would like to extend a warm welcome to our newest members: *El Campeon- Andy Pena, *Flat Bottom Pretzels- Bill Cesarini, *Paychex- Pay Hedges, * Feedomlei State of Mind LLC- Maria Rodriguez, *Super Mall- Ed Kim, * El Campeon- Andy Pena, *51st Ward Books LLC dba Viva Los Libros- Nina Sanchez, *Hulpil Boutquie- Sonia Valdes, * My Sweet Paperie- Lissete Zavala, *Over the Rainbow- Anna Handzel, * Arod Midway LLC - Arturo Rodriguez, *Navarro Finace LLC- Martin Navarro, *Friendly Insurance Advisor Group- Mayra J Vargas, * CCCLX LLC DBA 100 N Out Wood Fired Pizza- Krystina Segura, * PayneDuo Productions- Juitte Payne. *We welcome you!*

Graduation Banners!

Celebrate your favorite graduate! Honor your graduate with a banner on Archer Ave and 63rd Street. The banners are a life long keepsake! The sale will be available on our website in **March** so be sure to save the date!



Benefits of Joining the Chamber

1. Business Promotions & Publicity
2. Acquire Customer Referrals & Networking Opportunities!
3. Business Education, Support & Advocacy!
4. Add Influence in your Community

If you would like to join the chamber or see more benefits of joining, scan the QR Code or go to our website:

www.MidwayChamber.org



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Annual Honorees

Congratulations to our 2024 Honorees!!

Police Officer of the Year- Business Liason- Officer Michael Power

Known for his unwavering dedication to the force and his close connection to the community, Officer Power is a shining example of service and resilience.

With 14 years in the Chicago Police Department, Officer Power has compiled a remarkable list of accolades that underscore his commitment to public safety. Over his career, he has earned 80 honorable mentions, one Life Saving Award, six Department Commendations, and was previously recognized as Police Officer of the Month.

A native of Canaryville, Officer Power attended St. Gabriel School before graduating from St. Rita High School in 2002. Afterward, he pursued higher education at Eastern Illinois University, earning his bachelor's degree in sociology—a degree that has no doubt shaped his understanding of community needs.

Since 2021, Officer Power has served as the district's liaison to the business community. This role is no small task, considering the district includes a diverse array of neighborhoods and as many as 3,000 licensed businesses. Power's work as a liaison has facilitated stronger relationships between local businesses and law enforcement, promoting both trust and safety within the area.



Firefighter of the Year- Lisa Moroko

A lifelong resident of the Midway area, Lisa's roots run deep. She grew up attending St. Symphorosa School before graduating from Mother McAuley High School in 2006. After a brief career as a hair stylist, she discovered her true calling when she decided to pursue a career in emergency medical services. With an initial focus on nursing, Lisa trained as an EMT and began ride-alongs with the Summit Fire Department during her studies. It was then that she realized her passion for paramedics and firefighting, and her career trajectory changed.

"I really wanted to be a paramedic," Lisa shares. "I started doing ride time in the suburbs, and I was like, 'I love this.' It was awesome, just so different—and that's when I decided to take the [Fire Department] test for Chicago."

Lisa's unwavering determination paid off after years of hard work and anticipation. She joined the Chicago Fire Department on July 22, 2020, and today serves as part of Engine 13, Battalion 1, located downtown at Columbus and Wacker.



Teacher of the Year- Ms. Gabriela Torres

The Midway Chamber of Commerce has honored Ms. Gabriela Torres of Hancock High School with the prestigious 2024 Teacher of the Year award, and it's no surprise to anyone familiar with her incredible dedication and passion for teaching.

Ask any parent whose child has been taught by Ms. Torres, and you'll hear story after story about her life-changing impact. Cindy Patino, a Garfield Ridge resident and parent of a student with special needs at Hancock, describes Ms. Torres as an extraordinary educator. "Her passion radiates from her," she shares. "She goes above and beyond for her students."

Ms. Torres, a proud product of the West Elsdon neighborhood, has been inspiring her community for years. She attended Pasteur School and Curie High School, graduating in 2011, before earning her bachelor's degree from Northeastern Illinois University and a master's degree from the University of Illinois. Her commitment to education began early when she was named a Golden Apple Scholar, a statewide program recognizing talented high school students with the potential to transform education.

Hancock High School and the Midway community are lucky to have an educator like Ms. Torres inspiring the next generation. Her award is a testament to her profound impact and enduring passion for creating meaningful change through education.

Congratulations, Ms. Torres, and thank you for shaping the future, one student at a time!



A Letter from the President

President's Letter: A Year in Review and Looking Ahead to 2025

How does a community continue to rise against economic challenges, grow its legacy of thriving businesses, and invest in future generations of leaders? The answer lies in commitment, creativity, and shared purpose. 2024 has been a year of incredible milestones for our business community, and as president, I'm both proud of what we've accomplished and eager to push forward into 2025. Together, we've built momentum, fostered innovation, and reinforced the value of a strong business ecosystem as the backbone of a thriving residential community.

Supporting Our Local Businesses with Innovation

Small businesses are the heartbeat of our economy, and ensuring their longevity amidst an unpredictable economic landscape has been a top priority. This year, one of our flagship achievements was the grand opening of the bizHub/ArtHub at Archer and Narragansett. Located in the repurposed Fifth Third Bank building, this center is more than just a venue—it's a game-changer for small business owners who are ready to transition from startup stages to stable storefronts. By offering small business resources, mentoring, and a central location to connect with the community, the bizHub/ArtHub removes significant barriers that many small businesses face.

Fostering the Next Generation of Leaders

Building a thriving business community doesn't just mean investing in today's entrepreneurs—it means preparing for tomorrow's. That's why our partnership with St. Laurence High School's internship program has been such an inspiring success. This year, local businesses opened their doors to student interns, offering them real-world experience and mentoring. The results are undeniable. The students gained invaluable skills and insights, and their enthusiasm reinvigorated everyone they worked with. If you participated, you already witnessed the power of nurturing young talent. And if you didn't? I strongly urge you to consider taking on a student intern in 2025. Expanding this program is critical to laying the foundation for a thriving next generation of entrepreneurs.

Celebrating Community and Collaboration

A strong local economy thrives on connection—between businesses, residents, and one another. This year, we've hosted several successful community events that have exemplified this belief and highlighted the vibrant synergy of our business and residential communities. From our bustling Farmers' Market to lively parades and comedy nights, our Back-to-School events, bar crawls, golf outings, and more, our business owners and community members have come together to create something truly special. These events aren't just about having fun—they're about building a shared sense of pride, strengthening relationships, and driving traffic and visibility for local businesses. Every volunteer, sponsor, and participant who made these moments possible deserves our gratitude. And as we look toward 2025, we're already planning even bigger and better opportunities to celebrate our community spirit.

Facing Challenges Together

While we have much to celebrate, we can't ignore the persistent challenges we face. Changing economic conditions, rising costs, and increasing competition mean we must remain vigilant in supporting our existing businesses while finding ways to attract new ones. This also means helping our generational businesses—the ones that are the backbone of our neighborhoods—continue to grow and prosper, while empowering their leaders to nurture the next wave of talent. And we must ask ourselves this critical question: How can we keep our small business community thriving while simultaneously advancing innovation and attracting new ideas? The answer lies in collaboration. By continuing to share knowledge, investing in resources like the BizHub/ArtHub, and engaging new programs like our internship initiative, we can meet these challenges head-on.

Our Vision for 2025

Next year, our goals are ambitious but achievable. From expanding successful programs to adding fresh initiatives, we're committed to making 2025 an even bigger success. Imagine a year where more storefronts thrive. Where more young leaders grow under the mentorship of local entrepreneurs. And where more events draw even greater support for local businesses. This vision cannot become a reality without your continued involvement. Whether it's participating in our events, volunteering your expertise, or simply choosing to support local businesses in your day-to-day life, your role as a business owner makes all the difference.

Call to Action

Now is the time to act. If you're ready to take on an intern, reach out to us—we'll help you find the perfect fit. If you want to learn more about the BizHub/ArtHub and what it offers, stop by and explore. And above all, continue to support our local business initiatives. Together, we're not just building stronger businesses—we're building a stronger community for us all. Here's to an even brighter 2025!

Warm regards,

Mary Ellen Brown

President – Midway Chamber of Commerce

Celebrate Our Businesses of the Month

January Business of the Month: **Uflacker Academy**

At Uflacker Academy, we believe Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu (BJJ) is more than just a martial art. Whether you're a child learning important life skills or an adult seeking personal growth, BJJ can help you face challenges with courage and strength. Since opening our doors in October 2007, Uflacker Academy has been dedicated to helping individuals of all ages unlock their full potential. From kids as young as 3 years old to adults of all ages, our classes cater to both male and female students at every skill level. New Year Special! To kick off 2024, we're offering an exclusive New Year Special. Whether you're a beginner or looking to refine your skills, now is the perfect time to join us and experience all the benefits that BJJ has to offer. Follow us on social media to get the latest updates, class schedules, and success stories from our students.



February Business of the Month: **Talerico Martin Bakery**

Talerico-Martin has been providing high-quality fresh bakery products for local community events, restaurants, convenience stores, and other wholesale customers for over 40 years. Talerico-Martin has established itself as a trusted name in the bakery industry by consistently offering top-notch, high-quality fresh bakery products. Our commitment to excellence extends beyond just the products we create; it encompasses the entire customer experience. Talerico-Martin Retail Bakery is an extension of our long-established wholesale division. We specialize in fresh daily donuts, pastries, cakes and other sweet goods. Whether it's a birthday, wedding, anniversary, or any special event, our personalized cakes are designed to reflect your unique style and taste. Let us craft the perfect centerpiece for your celebration. Whether you're longing for a delectable pastry or a mouthwatering cake, we're here to make your moments sweeter. We are located at 7334 West 63rd Street, Summit, IL 60501.



March Business of the Month: **Twisted Shamrock**

Events | Patio | Party Room - First and foremost, we'd like

to thank the community for its continued support! From our Cookout event, One Year Anniversary and all of our Holiday EVENTS, we truly appreciate you supporting a small family business! Although it's still a little chilly outside we are already gearing up for Spring and Summer, with highlighting **Midway's Best PATIO!** Make sure to come by and check it out. Just to highlight a few: Bag Tournaments and Cookout Events are going to be on our programming for 2025 so stay tuned and don't forget to follow us on our social media to stay in the know! As always if you are thinking about the next party you want to plan, please contact us about our PARTY ROOM availability. We are excited about our second year in business as we have a lot of things in the works and hope to see all very you! Slainte!

Upcoming Events:

Jan 12- Sports Trivia | Jan 16- Naughty Bingo | Jan 23- Mob Movie Trivia

Feb 13- Naughty Bingo | Feb 27- Friends Trivia March 16 & 17- St. Patty's Celebration |

April 13- The Masters Party



Biz Hub Grand Opening

The Biz Hub & Pop Up Art Gallery is not just a place for commerce, but also a space for creativity and community. We believe that by bringing together local vendors and artists, we can create an environment where ideas are shared, and connections are made.

Our grand opening was a huge success, with the 4th Annual Cookie Walk bringing in many eager visitors to explore our new space. We want to continue this momentum by inviting even more vendors and artists to join us in the Biz Hub & Pop-Up Art Gallery.

Not only does this provide an opportunity for businesses to showcase their products and services, but it also allows artists to display their work and gain exposure in the community. We encourage anyone who is interested in participating to reach out and join us in this exciting venture.

In addition, the Biz Hub & Pop Up Art Gallery will also be hosting events and workshops to further engage the community. From networking events for local businesses to art classes for all ages, we are dedicated to creating a dynamic space that benefits everyone involved.

So come visit us at the Biz Hub & Pop Up Art Gallery and see what our neighborhood has to offer.

We hope you will be inspired by the creativity and community spirit that can be found within our walls. Thank you for your support as we continue to bring new life to our neighborhood through the Biz Hub & Pop Up Art Gallery. We are constantly seeking ways to give back and support our local businesses and artists, and this space is just one way we can do that.

With the success of our grand opening, we are excited to see what the future holds for the Biz Hub &



Pop Up Art Gallery. We believe that by providing a platform for entrepreneurs and creatives alike, we can foster a strong community built on collaboration and looking to start your own business or showcase your artwork, consider joining us at the Biz Hub & Pop Up Art Gallery. Together, we can continue to make our neighborhood a vibrant hub of commerce and creativity.

Support the Businesses That Support our Community!

Membership Update



We're growing like never before, thanks to the incredible support and engagement of our members. Whether it's fostering connections, driving community initiatives, or collaborating with fellow businesses, our Chamber thrives because of you.

We appreciate your continued support and can't wait to see how we will grow together in 2025. Be part of this exciting journey—join us in building a stronger, connected business community!

Business of the Month 2024

January: Timeless Tattoos

February: Ciao Rigazzi

March: A-Ok Auto

April: Bookeeping By Design

May: City Block Candles

June: Mutts of Midway

July: Wintrust Sports Complex

August: College Hunks Moving

September: Yo Soy Vella Candles

October: Graphik Works

November: Lawlors Bar

December: Wantuck Comfort Solutions



Upcoming Events



Valentines Day Comedy Jam -Celebrate Love This Valentine's Day

Looking for the perfect way to spend Valentine's Day? Join us on February 14th at the European Chalet for an evening filled with fun, laughter, delicious food, and drinks! Whether you're celebrating love, friendship, or simply the joy of the day, this is the event for you. It's one of the year's most anticipated nights and tickets sell out fast—so don't miss out! Reserve your spot now and make this Valentine's Day unforgettable!

Restaurant Week-If you love food, this is the week for you! Visit our participating restaurants to enjoy delicious dishes, special menus, and exclusive deals. It's the perfect chance to explore a variety of cuisines, discover new flavors, or indulge in your all-time favorites. Whether you're a foodie or just looking for a fun outing, there's something for everyone. Who knows—you might even find your new go-to restaurant! Don't miss out—come hungry and leave happy!

Golf Outing-Mark your calendars for May 16—our popular annual Golf Outing is bringing joy to spring this year! Don't miss your chance to tee off at this highly anticipated event that sells out fast. Visit our website for all the details and secure your spot today!

Events Recap

Halloween- Day of Family Fun- Families enjoyed a full day packed with fun, including our lively Parade and the vibrant Second Annual Day of the Dead celebration. People of all ages came together, creating memories and strengthening our community bonds. We were honored to have our Grand Marshal -Olympic Medalist - Kennedy Blades Businesses, don't miss out—keep an eye on our upcoming events to connect, grow, and engage. We can't wait to see you all again next year!



Cookie Walk & Grand Opening! We're thrilled to share that the fourth annual Cookie Walk was a sold-out success—once again! This beloved event has sold out every year, and this time was no different. Thank you to everyone who came out and made it so special.

But the fun didn't stop there. During the Cookie Walk, we proudly celebrated the launch of the new Biz Hub/Art Hub—a huge milestone for the Midway Chamber of Commerce (MCC)! This grand opening brought together several amazing businesses, and we couldn't be more excited to welcome even more in the future.

If you're interested in opening your own storefront in the Biz Hub, we'd love to connect! Reach out to us at director@midwaychamber.org to learn more. Thank you for being part of this growing, thriving community





CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MONTHLY GENERAL MEETING - 1ST TUESDAY OF THE MONTH, EXCEPT JAN & JULY

01 January							02 February							03 March						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1	2	3	4							1							1
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
26	27	28	29	30	31		23	24	25	26	27	28		23	24	25	26	27	28	29
														30	31					



January



July

5k
Networking Event



February

Valentine Comedy Show
Restaurant Week



August

Back to School



March

St. Patricks Parade,
Spring Community Expo,
Graduation Banner

September



April

Veterans Banners
Networking Event



October

Sweetheart Comedy Show,
Halloween Parade,
Day of the Dead Celebration



May

Golf Outing,
Memorial Day Dedication



November

Pub Crawl,
Cookie Walk



June

Farmers Market- Thru
September, Pet Parade, Archer
Car Show, Patriots Day Parad



December

Snack with Santa,
Annual Dinner Dance



Check The Website For
Upcoming Events And
Current Up To Date Details
midwaychamber.org

If you have an upcoming special event you'd like to market on our events calendar, please make sure to share the details with us so we can help spread the word!
Upload them directly to the new website- www.midwaychamber.org or share them to our facebook!

Yo Soy Vella- Grand Opening

We're thrilled to spotlight the grand opening of Yo Soy Vella at 6623 W Archer Ave! Owned by the talented Mildred Rivera, who has been a valued member of our chamber for years, this storefront is a testament to her dedication and growth. Not only does it allow her business to flourish, but she's also creating space to support other local businesses within her location. Stop by this charming establishment and support a true pillar of our community!

Huge Shout Out ! Thank you Wintrust Sports Complex

A heartfelt thank you to the incredible team at the Wintrust Sports Complex in Bedford Park. Your generosity and support as host for the Midway Chamber of Commerce throughout the entire year have been invaluable.

The complex itself is nothing short of amazing—a space that showcases quality, functionality, and a welcoming atmosphere. More importantly, the staff's exceptional dedication and hospitality have truly made every event seamless and memorable.

We're beyond grateful for the opportunity to partner with such a remarkable venue. Here's to spreading the word about the fantastic work you do and encouraging others to experience all that Wintrust Sports Complex has to offer.

Thank you once again for being an integral part of our community!

Come out & join our community

To keep our community involved & successful we need you! Throughout the year we have many sponsorship and volunteer opportunities around our neighborhood.

Volunteers are what make our events so successful. Volunteer opportunities are available YEAR ROUND.

Save the date!!

Valentines Day Comedy Show - 2/14 **Restaurant
Week 2/9-2/18 **Golf Outing 5/16



Contact Us

Director@MidwayChamber.org
773-767-0014



If there is any information you'd like to see included in the newsletter or the website, Please reach out to director@midwaychamber.org