

SOUTH HOLLAND

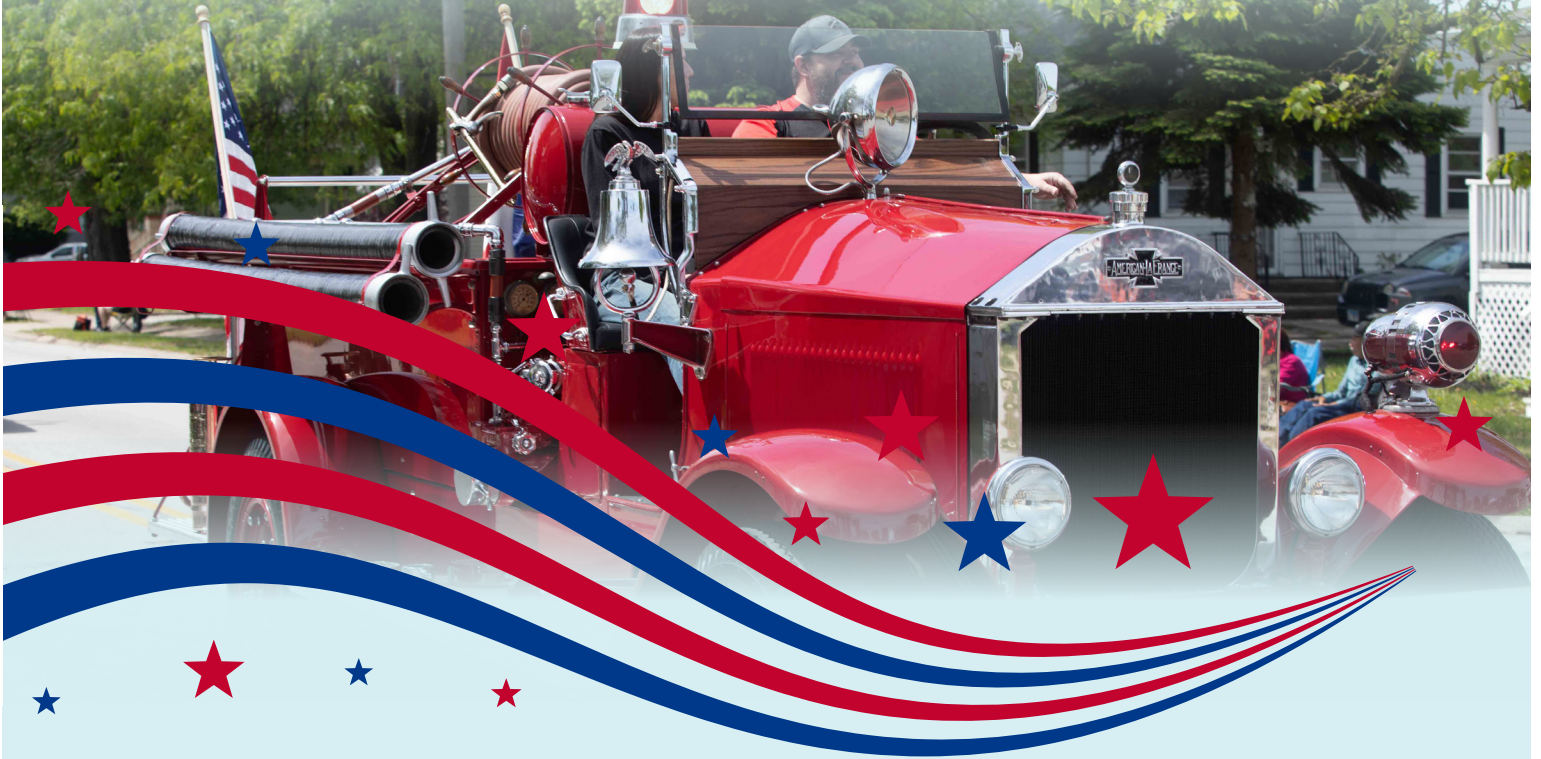
May | June 2026

Living



Honoring Those Who Served on Memorial Day

Memorial Day Parade



Monday, May 25, 2026
11:00 am

**South Park Ave from 170th St
to Veterans Memorial Park**

**Remembrance Ceremony immediately following
at Veterans Memorial Park**

southholland.org

FROM YOUR MAYOR

Dear South Holland Residents and Friends,

The warmth and energy of summer have arrived! In our South Holland history, so many hearts and hands come together to create true community at this time of year. We continue today, as in the past, to till our fertile soil, no longer through farming, but by economically developing venues providing more products and services. We raise our faith and family banner, strategically planning more and more vigorously each year, creating innovative ideas, and providing an even higher quality of life for our residents and guests.



Mayor De Graff in Memorial Day Parade

In this issue, we look forward to the exciting events escorting us into a very active summer season. This 2026 summer season is truly historic as we approach the celebration of the 250th birthday of the United States of America, coinciding with the complete renovation of our historic downtown Town Center district. These two milestones converge and invite us not only to reflect on our nation's remarkable journey, but to come together in unique ways as a community.

Without hesitation, we will continue to honor our Faith and Family values with resilience in the context of our shared history as a nation. As we approach the 180th year of our Village's settlement, we have the truly special opportunity to participate in the exuberance of recreating, redeveloping, and building upon our history as a "Village like no other." We are proud to mark this summer season with vibrant and meaningful celebrations—opportunities for our residents and guests to connect with our nation and our village story in new and memorable ways.

In addition to the traditional family barbecues and picnics, this summer we will also experience the openings of our new SoHo Shops at Town Center and the Gallery at Town Center. We'll come together to enjoy our festive Memorial Day Parade and the meaningful Juneteenth freedom celebration. We'll also celebrate our 4th of July 250th birthday of the USA, which will conclude with the greatest fireworks extravaganza at Veterans Memorial Park you've ever witnessed. This summer promises to be so exciting and one we will never forget!

We are truly blessed as a village as we continue to make tremendous strides forward. The success of "Coming Together 2030" is demonstrating the strength of our shared vision and the power of collaboration, and it's fun experiencing it together!.

Don A. De Graff
Mayor

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VILLAGE NEWS

WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND SOUTH HOLLAND



VEHICLE STICKERS

Any vehicle registered to a South Holland address is required to have a South Holland vehicle sticker. This applies whether the vehicle is parked on the street, in a driveway, or garage. The 2026-27 vehicle stickers are available starting now and must be displayed before July 1.

Sticker Prices

Passenger Car: \$40 (\$20 seniors) Truck C and higher: \$95
Truck and motor home: \$55 (\$27.50 seniors) Motorcycle: \$30

Stickers are available at the Customer Service Center, 16220 Wausau Ave. You can also purchase your tickets online at southholland.org/vehiclestickers.



GRASS MAINTENANCE

The Village asks that grass be trimmed so as not to exceed 6 inches in length. Also, as we enter the summer months, it is important to keep trees and bushes trimmed so as not to obstruct the sidewalks or streets. This is especially vital for any shrubbery that may block the line of site for motor vehicles. These steps help keep South Holland looking clean, bright and beautiful.



SHAWN MICHELLE'S NOW IN SOUTH HOLLAND

The Village of South Holland is proud to welcome Shawn Michelle's Homemade Ice Cream, an award-winning and nationally recognized brand, as it expands from Chicago's historic Bronzeville neighborhood into the south suburbs. It is now located at the former SoHo Cafe, 16129 South Park Ave.

In addition to its signature ice cream and dessert offerings like peach cobbler and butter cakes, Shawn Michelle's will also be serving coffee and food options. The Village is excited to welcome Shawn Michelle's and invites residents and visitors alike to experience what has made this brand a standout across the country.



GUIDELINES FOR PRIVATE GATHERINGS

As we enter the summer season, we kindly remind residents who plan to host gatherings to do so with consideration for their neighbors. Any residential event with more than 50 attendees requires a Large Residential Gathering Permit, which can be found at southholland.org. There is no fee for this permit. Hosts must also provide written notification to all neighbors within 500 feet of the event. Please also be mindful of the Village's noise ordinance, which states that noise should not be audible beyond 75 feet from its source.

South Holland is a safe, family-friendly community rooted in respect, courtesy, and neighborliness. We encourage you to enjoy this festive season with friends and family in ways that reflect these shared values.

OUT AND ABOUT

FACES FROM EVENTS AROUND THE VILLAGE

EASTER EGG HUNT

South Holland children filled Veterans Memorial Park for a festive Easter Egg Hunt on a beautiful spring day. Kids ages 1-10 scoured the grounds for eggs filled with candy, then celebrated with face painting and photos with the Easter Bunny.



OUT AND ABOUT

FACES FROM EVENTS AROUND THE VILLAGE

PANCAKES WITH THE POLICE

The South Holland Police Department welcomed residents to a community breakfast at the Heritage House. Police Chief Shawn Staples kicked off the morning with a presentation on public safety and the SHPD's ongoing community engagement efforts, followed by an open Q&A and plenty of good conversation.



OUT AND ABOUT

FACES FROM EVENTS AROUND THE VILLAGE

ARTISTS' GALLERY

More than 25 talented artists showcased their work at the 2026 South Holland Artists' Gallery, hosted at the Community Center. The event launched with a reception celebrating the artists alongside their friends and family, with the public gallery opening its doors the following day. Attendees enjoyed a rich variety of work spanning paintings, photography, digital art, and woodcarving.



OUT AND ABOUT

FACES FROM EVENTS AROUND THE VILLAGE

COMING TOGETHER 2030 MEETING

The Village brought together leaders from the community's five key sectors—churches, schools, businesses, service organizations, and neighborhood groups—to review the latest progress on the Coming Together 2030 strategic plan. The gathering featured updates from each group, followed by an opportunity for attendees to connect and network.



The Village of South Holland would like to
thank our generous sponsors of the
2026

Easter EGG HUNT

AJ Tires
Divine Food Market
Excel Printing and Mailing
Laren Montessori School
Providence Bank & Trust
Reliance Safety Lane & Service

SOUTH HOLLAND

THE AMAZING RACE

Lace up and hit South Park Avenue for a walkable scavenger hunt through the heart of our community. Follow clues, complete challenges, and race to the finish.

SATURDAY, JUNE 6
10AM-NOON
TOWN CENTER COMMONS
16117 SOUTH PARK AVE

Teams of 2-5 | Ages 10+ | \$5 per person

Cash prizes up to \$250

Spots limited to 60 participants

Register at southholland.org

An initiative of Coming Together 2030



CALENDAR OF EVENTS



May 17 and 31 SOUTH HOLLAND MASTER CHORALE CONCERTS

*May 17: 4pm, Thorn Creek Reformed Church,
South Holland;*

*May 31: 4pm, St. John the Evangelist,
St. John, IN*

Enjoy a free concert by the South Holland Master Chorale. The Chorale will be accompanied by a pianist, organist, and the SHMC Chamber Orchestra.

May 22 SOHO SHOPS AT TOWN CENTER GRAND OPENING

Noon-8pm, 16114 South Park Ave

The SoHo Shops at Town Center is officially opening! Come explore 10 one-of-a-kind storefronts, meet the makers behind the products, and celebrate South Holland's newest destination! The grand opening kicks off at noon.

May 25 MEMORIAL DAY PARADE

11am, South Park Ave

South Holland will hold its annual Memorial Day Parade, which kicks off at 11am from 170th Street and South Park Avenue. A remembrance ceremony, commemorating those who have given their lives for our country, will follow the parade at Veterans Memorial Park.

June 2 MAYOR'S COFFEE

*7pm, South Holland Community Center
501 E 170th St*

South Holland residents are invited to have coffee with Mayor Don De Graff. This informal meeting provides the opportunity for residents to meet with Mayor De Graff and other Village officials to ask questions, share comments, and express concerns. Coffee and refreshments will be served.

June 6 COFFEE WITH FIREFIGHTERS

9am, Fire Station 1, 16230 Wausau Ave
Coffee with Firefighters is held on the first Saturday of every month. South Holland residents are encouraged to stop by the Fire Station for conversation, a tour, and a cup of coffee with our local firefighters.

June 6 SOUTH HOLLAND AMAZING RACE

*10am-noon, Town Center Commons
16117 South Park Ave*
Residents are invited to be a part of a scavenger hunt through South Holland! Participants will follow clues to local community groups and businesses, completing a unique challenge at each stop along the way. Visit southholland.org for more details and to register.

**June 9
COMMUNITY POLICING
MEETING**

*10am, South Holland Community Center
501 E 170th St*

The South Holland Police Department hosts a Community Policing Meeting on the second Tuesday of every month, alternating mornings and evenings. This is an opportunity to address any questions or concerns for the Police Department.

**June 12
SUMMER BINGO**

*11am-2pm, South Holland Community Center
501 E 170th St*

The South Holland Police Department is hosting a summer bingo event for South Holland residents ages 55 and up. Food will be provided, and prizes will be awarded. Visit southholland.org for details and to register.

**June 18
SOUTH HOLLAND MUNICIPAL
BAND CONCERT**

7pm, Veterans Memorial Park, 500 E 160th Pl

Join the South Holland Municipal Band for a concert in South Holland's premier park! Entry is free; bring a chair or blanket and enjoy live music from the longest-running municipal band in the south suburbs!

**June 20
COMING TOGETHER ON
JUNETEENTH**

*Noon-4pm, Veterans Memorial Park
500 E 160th Pl*

Join the South Holland Ministerial Association and the Village of South Holland for a celebration of African-American history. The event includes inspirational speakers, live music, historical displays, vendors, food trucks, and more!

**July 4
4TH OF JULY CELEBRATION**

Daytime Festivities: Noon-4pm

Fireworks Show: Gates open 6pm

Veterans Memorial Park, 500 E 160th Pl

Celebrate America's 250th birthday in South Holland this Independence Day! Enjoy food, live music, and a slew of fun activities, culminating with an extra special fireworks show in the evening. South Holland residents can enter the fireworks show for free; non-residents will be charged \$10 (\$8 in advance). Daytime festivities (noon-4pm) are free to all. Visit southholland.org for more information.

AT THE LIBRARY

The following programs are held at the South Holland Public Library, 16250 Wausau Ave, unless otherwise indicated. Visit shlibrary.org for a list of all upcoming events.

May 14

THINK FAST NOSTALGIA TRIVIA

*5:30pm, Thornton Distilling Co., 400 E
Margaret St, Thornton*

Join us for a fun trip down memory lane at Thornton Distilling Co.! Come compete, reminisce, and enjoy a lively trivia experience! Ages 21 and over.

June 1-July 25

SUMMER READING

Summer Reading is a seasonal program that encourages people of all ages to keep reading during the summer through fun challenges, events, and rewards offered by the library. This year's theme is "Plant a Seed, Read."

June 6

SUMMER READING KICKOFF

12pm

Join us for our Summer Reading Kickoff Party, where our "Plant a Seed, Read" theme comes to life with nature-inspired activities, hands-on fun, and everything you need to grow your love of reading all summer long.

June 9 and 10

AARP SAFE DRIVERS COURSE

12-4pm

Refresh your driving skills and possibly qualify for a discount on your insurance. There is a fee of \$20 for AARP members and \$25 for non-members, payable at the first class. Attendance at both sessions is required. Registration is required.



The South Holland Ministerial Association
and the Village of South Holland Presents

*Coming Together
on*

JUNE TEENTH

Saturday, June 20
Noon-4pm

Veterans Memorial Park | 500 E. 160th

Join us for a celebration of African-American history!

FOOD
TRUCKS

AFRICAN
DANCE
GROUP

GOSPEL
MUSIC

BOUNCE
HOUSES

PRAYER
TENTS

HEALTH &
WELLNESS
VENDORS



FAITH IN

Motion

LORD, SHOW US YOUR GARDEN

By Reverend Wanda E. Simpson, Staff Chaplain at Ingalls Memorial Hospital

I begin my spring/summer seasons by going with my friends to the Woldhuis Farms Sunrise Greenhouse, located in Grant Park, Illinois. The plan is always to purchase only the specific plants we need for our individual gardens and leave. Once we arrive at the nine-acre, fully covered facility, all caution is cast to the wind. First, we choose the plants we need, and then we choose the plants we want. We are like kids in a candy store. However, personally, I don't know if I am more excited about purchasing the plants or being with my friends and going out to lunch with them after. I find that both are cheerful occasions that bring the entire day together. We give one another advice on when, how, and where to place our specific plants in relation to our homes. Finally, when we each go to our individual abodes, we are on our own. It is then that I begin to ask God for His guidance not only in planting, but in the survival of my garden so that it will represent His majesty by producing beautiful flowering leaves throughout the summer.

I can only imagine how beautiful the Garden of Eden must have been after the Word spoke it into existence. I picture the many different kinds of shrubs, trees, flowers, fruits, nuts, and vegetables. It was during this time that water rose from the ground through the vines and roots from which the plants received their nourishment. Before the bite of the apple, I'm sure that Adam and Eve enjoyed the beauty and abundance

of food and water-producing plants. We tend to think that they were only in the garden for a few days, but let us not forget 2 Peter 3:8: "But beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years is like one day." The variety of plants in the Garden of Eden flourished because of their connection to one another through the vines. John 15:5 states, "I am the true vine, you are the branches. If a man remains in me, and I in him, he will bear much fruit. Apart from me you can do nothing."

Once I have planted all of my foliage, I water them daily until the roots have taken hold of the soil and connected to each other under the dirt. Despite the differences, like my friends and me, the plants begin to flourish, and like us, they look toward the Son (SON) from whom comes our help. God has given us many signs and wonders from the very beginning to show us His existence and our existence through Him, in spite of our differences.



Reverend Wanda E. Simpson



SOUTH
HOLLAND

4TH OF JULY

Celebration

SATURDAY, JULY 4, 2026



Veterans Memorial Park
500 E 160th Place



FAMILY FUN FESTIVAL - NOON-4PM

**Games • Inflatables • Roller Skating Rink
Food Vendors • Live Music • And More!**

Tents and grills are not permitted. The park will close at 5pm to prepare for the fireworks show, and will reopen at 6pm.

FIREWORKS SHOW/AMERICA'S 250TH

Food Trucks / Live Music / America 250 Displays

Park Opens: 6pm

Fireworks Begin: Shortly After Dusk

ENTRY FEE (Fireworks show only):

South Holland Residents: FREE

Non-SH Residents:

\$10 at the door, \$8 in advance

(purchase at southholland.org or at Community Center)

**FOR MORE INFORMATION,
INCLUDING PARKING, VISIT
SOUTHHOLLAND.ORG.**



FROM THE CLASSROOM *to the* COURTROOM

ONE STUDENT'S PATH TO PURPOSE

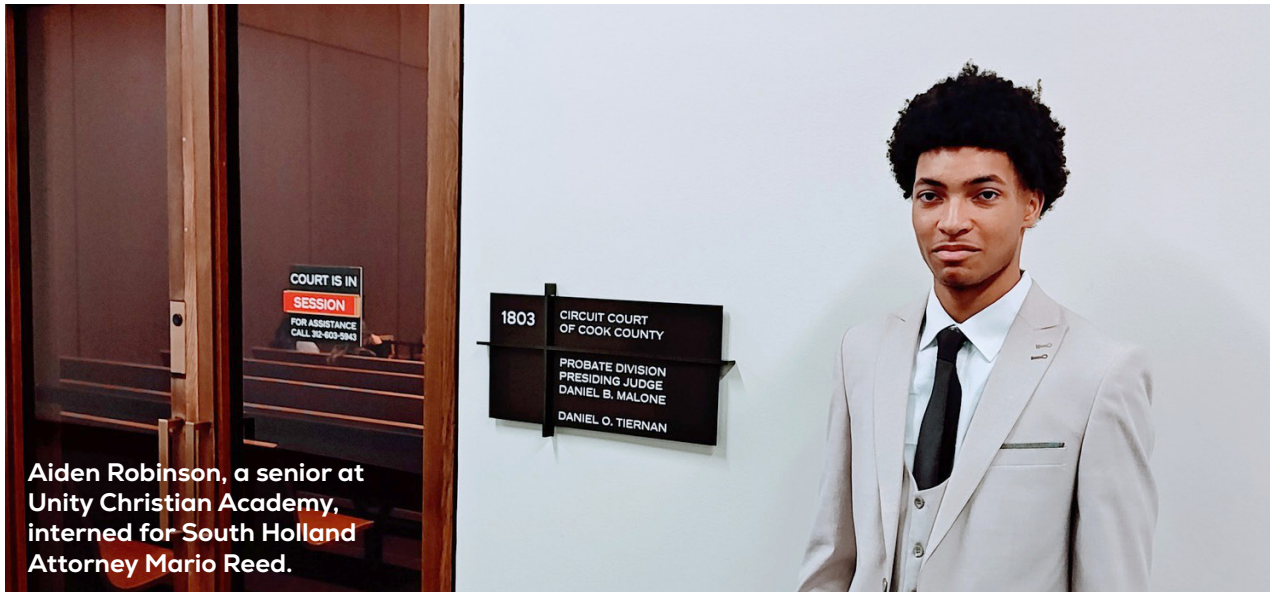
By Josh Bootsma

Photos courtesy of Mario Reed

Unity Christian Academy senior Aiden Robinson wants his professional future to involve helping people. As he was considering what internship he wanted to pursue, he thought again about an area that has always interested him: law. Just a few weeks after a Google search and an email connected him to The Law Offices of Attorney Mario A. Reed in South Holland, Aiden was working as an intern at the firm.

A similar process played out for each of the seniors at Unity Christian Academy last fall. As part of their senior year at the South Holland high school, students like Aiden spend a full quarter of the school year interning in a profession of their choosing.

"It's a part of the UCA educational experience that's very unique and important," says Kenyatah Austin, UCA's Post-Secondary Liaison. "Our students want to pursue a variety of post-secondary



Aiden Robinson, a senior at Unity Christian Academy, interned for South Holland Attorney Mario Reed.



Attorney Mario Reed and Aiden Robinson

pathways, and our responsibility is to help them prepare for decisions about their future. Our internship program is integral to this process.”

Attorney Mario Reed remembers feeling “ecstatic” when he saw Aiden’s request.

“The toughest part that I run into in the practice of law is that I need help. There’s a maximum capacity that I have,” Reed says.

Aiden’s introduction to law wasn’t gradual. On his first day he went to court with Reed at the Daley Center in Chicago. There, he met Judge James P. Murphy, a Cook County Circuit Judge in the probate division.

“It was a crazy introduction. But it was a good way to start off,” Aiden says.

Among the many things Aiden learned from Reed—who specializes in estate planning, probate, real estate, and business law—one of the most memorable has been the way he interacts with and walks alongside people.

“He just deals with a wide variety of people, and it’s interesting to see how such a vast range of knowledge is required for what he does,” Aiden says.

In the spring of 2019, Attorney Reed left government work to open his own law firm. For the first three months, The Law Offices of Mario A. Reed was located at his dining room table in his South Holland home. It was a visit to Aurelio's on 170th Street that first got him interested in the property at 625 E 170th Street, where his office is now located.

"In my opinion, there is no better southern suburb in Chicago, if you have a family, to be in than South Holland," Attorney Reed says.

Beyond the bounds of the courtroom, Reed calls himself the "Education Esquire," regularly hosting seminars and events to educate the public about planning for the future and keeping one's affairs in order.

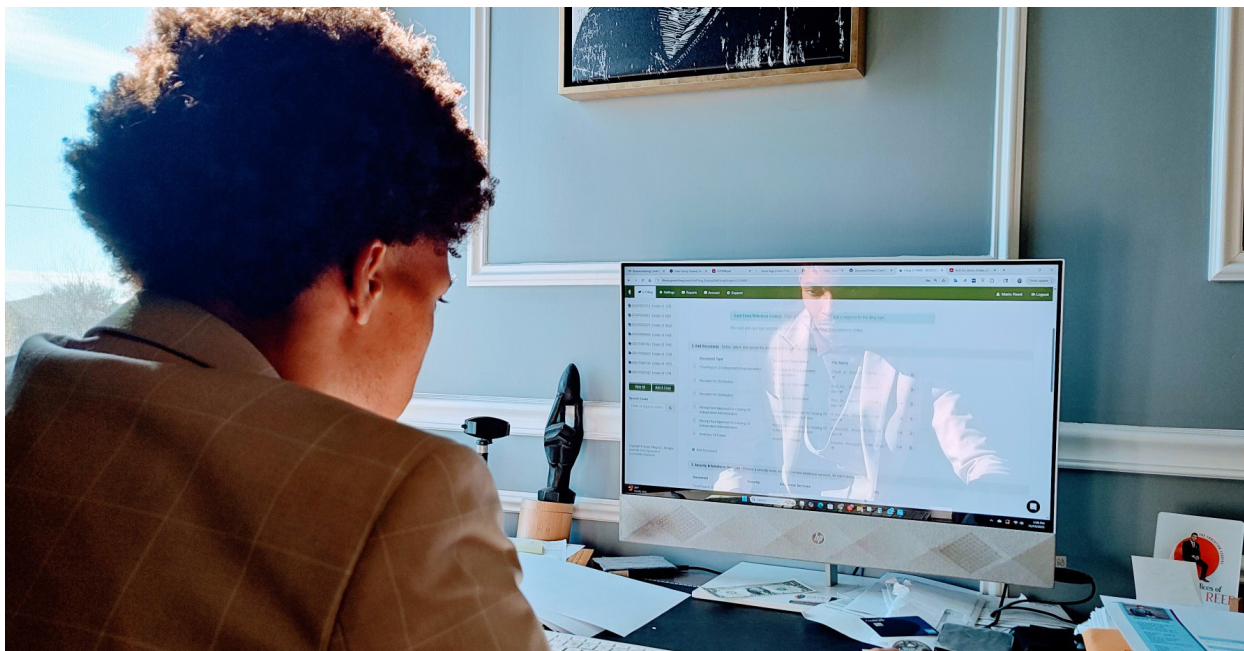
During his internship, Aiden has overcome the language barrier that comes with the legal profession. "That was one of the main things I was chasing after, to understand the law and not be so intimidated by it," he says. "I feel like that's one of the main barriers for people."

Aiden learned the language not only in conversation, but by doing. He filed court documents on behalf of Reed, including real estate closing documents and a motion to reconsider. He also helped prepare case briefs.

From Unity Christian Academy's perspective, Aiden's internship had exactly the effect the school hopes all students feel—an empowering experience that brings clarity to future aspirations. One of the school's core values is flourishing, which it describes as a "desire for our students to experience and contribute to flourishing by building up their community and using resources well, with faith that God will finish the work."

For Aiden, he now has a vision for how he can build up his community.

"I feel a relatability to people [who need legal help]," he says. "They're asking the same questions I was asking. I really care about helping those people because I know we're not that different. ... My prior understanding of the law wasn't enough for me to feel confident in my future. But now I know I do want to go to college, I know what I want to get out of college, and I have goals for after college." 🔥



SOUTH HOLLAND'S

A M A Z I N G

R A C E

AN ADVENTURE THROUGH SOUTH HOLLAND...
NO RUNNING REQUIRED

When most people hear the words "Amazing Race," they picture frantic airport dashes and globe-trotting chaos (from the popular TV show by that name). But South Holland's spin on the familiar format is something altogether different.

On June 6 from 10am to noon, Town Center Commons will transform into the starting line for the South Holland Amazing Race, a walkable scavenger hunt that winds through the heart of the village along South Park Avenue. Teams of two to five will follow clues to local businesses and community organizations, tackling a unique challenge at each stop before racing to the finish line for a chance to win cash prizes.

The event is an initiative of Coming Together 2030, South Holland's community-building effort





that unites the village's five key groups—churches, schools, businesses, service organizations, and neighborhood groups—to coordinate resources and services for the betterment of the entire community. That spirit of collaboration is woven into the race itself: while a handful of stops are local businesses, most are tents set up by South Holland's service organizations, giving participants a firsthand look at the groups quietly doing good work throughout the village.

Even though the word "Race" is in the event title, "it's not a 5K," organizers are quick to clarify. "You don't need to be a runner." What participants do need is a good pair of walking shoes, a competitive spirit, and at least one teammate who's good at decoding clues under pressure. The entire course stays within a two-mile radius of Town Center.

The event is open to anyone ages 10 and older, making it a rare opportunity for families, friend groups, and co-workers to compete together on equal footing. With a registration fee of just \$5 per person, the barrier to entry is low, and the prizes are rewarding. The first-place team takes home \$250, second earns \$100, and third walks away with \$50.

The South Holland Amazing Race isn't just a game. It's a chance to see familiar storefronts and neighborhood organizations in a new light, and to discover who's working behind the scenes to make South Holland stronger, all while doing something enjoyable with people you care about.

Spots are capped at 60 participants, which means the window to register is narrow. Teams can register and find full event details at southholland.org. 🔥

SOUTH HOLLAND AMAZING RACE

Saturday, June 6
10am-noon

Town Center
Commons
16117 South Park Ave

Learn more and
register at
southholland.org

THEN & NOW

SOUTH SUBURBAN COLLEGE REFRESHES ITS TRIBUTE TO SOUTH HOLLAND'S STORY

By Kyli Williams



In 1994, South Suburban College created a Historical Wall to honor the Village of South Holland, the long-standing home of the institution. At the time, the display stretched wall-to-wall with black-and-white photos capturing the village's earliest days.

More than 30 years later, in March 2026, the college unveiled an updated version. The refreshed display highlights not only South Holland's history, but also its growth, diversity, and everyday life today.

Originally founded in 1927 as Thornton Junior College, the school began as an extension of Thornton Township High School in Harvey, Illinois. As its reach expanded across the south suburban region, the institution was renamed South Suburban College in 1988 to reflect the broader community it serves.

South Holland has seen just as much change. Established in 1846 by Dutch farmers seeking religious freedom, strong community ties, and opportunities for small business ownership, the village has grown into a diverse and active suburb. Through that growth, it has remained grounded in its core values: Faith, Family, and Future.

The Historical Wall is part of a larger effort by the college to recognize communities across the Chicago



South Holland Historical Wall



Southland. Similar displays throughout campus highlight the stories of neighboring cities and villages, helping preserve local history while making it accessible to the public.

Before the update, the South Holland wall offered a glimpse into a very different time. Photos of onion fields stretching for acres, horse-drawn buggies traveling along dirt roads, and families ice skating on the frozen Little Calumet River captured scenes that feel far removed from today's pace of life.

Many of those original images remain, now joined by new photos highlighting South Holland's most recognizable landmarks, local businesses, and everyday community life. Together, these additions create a display that blends past and present in a way that feels both reflective and current. Relocated to the first floor, the exhibit is also easier for visitors to find and enjoy.

The South Holland Historical Wall is open to the public during South Suburban College's regular hours, Monday through Saturday from 6am to 10pm. Admission is free, making it an easy and meaningful stop for anyone interested in the village's story. 🔥



Mayor's Coffee

Tuesday, June 2 | 7:00 PM

South Holland Community Center
501 E. 170th Street



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YOU ARE INVITED

SoHo Shops at Town Center is officially opening! Come explore 10 one-of-a-kind storefronts, meet the makers behind the products, and celebrate South Holland's newest destination!



Live Music | Meet the Vendors | Giveaways

Learn more at southhollandshops.com

Friday, May 22
Kicks off at noon
Open through 8pm
16114 South Park Ave



southholland.org