

Essay: What Makes Morton Grove Special?

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What makes Morton Grove special, you ask? I have so many reasons, but to start, Morton Grove is my hometown, and my mom grew up here as well. My mom was born in a Chicago hospital. On the day of her birth, my grandpa went to the hospital and told my grandma he bought a house in Morton Grove. By the time my mom and grandma were released from the hospital, they had a new home and began moving into their new city and house in Morton Grove. Similarly, my parents lived in another city when I was born, but on my 6-week birthday, my parents bought a new home in Morton Grove...5 minutes from my mom's childhood home and where my grandparents still live. For over 40 years, Morton Grove has been home to multiple generations of our family, and this makes our town so special to me and the many families that have chosen Morton Grove as the place to raise their families generation after generation.

Furthermore, all these families in Morton Grove are extremely diverse and diversity makes our town special. The people of Morton Grove come from many ethnicities, cultures, religions, and backgrounds. We have a variety of places of worship, a veterans' center, cultural centers, various ethnic restaurants, healthcare centers for all, and so much more. Even our amazing Morton Grove Library does an awesome job offering free events to celebrate all the cultures and ethnicities of the people of Morton Grove throughout the year. Being multicultural myself, I am grateful to see diversity all over Morton Grove, as it makes me feel like we all belong in our community.

Morton Grove also has a park district that always has fun and engaging activities for kids and adults of all ages. The front desk is always warm and welcoming, and ALWAYS willing to help. Every time I walk in I am kindly greeted by the front desk with a, "Hello," and followed by a friendly smile, or a, "Welcome back," also with a friendly grin to follow. I also love that there are a wide variety of activities and classes for kids or adults of all ages and that some of the activities you can do with a sibling. For example, the "sports and more" activity that I participated in this summer was for 6-12-year-olds. So, I was able to do a class with my sister which was really nice because I got to play and bond with her over something we both like, sports!

Another part that makes Morton Grove SO special is the neighborhood environment and the area that we live in. Everyone is really nice and friendly, and our first responders everywhere make Morton Grove safe and secure for us all. In the mornings when kids are crossing the street, there are crossing guards that make crossing busy main streets so much more safe and helps to avoid accidents. The police department, multiple fire departments, the village hall, and nearby healthcare centers and hospitals keep our village safe and help our community members whenever they are needed. Neighbors also help each other. From helping each other shovel in the winter, to having fun block parties, our friendly neighborhoods embody the spirit of Morton Grove.

Furthermore, our mayor and past mayors have contributed in making town decisions that make our town more fun and exciting for everyone. From building new parks or updating them, to upgrading our extremely fun pools, Morton Grove has something for everyone. Let's not forget access to great forest preserves and the newly built Sawmill Station, a completely new shopping, living, and enjoyable experience for all our Morton Grove community to enjoy! In that one area we have new restaurants, stores, a fitness center, and even a condominium building. Morton Grove keeps adding cool places for us to enjoy. When we see new places going up in Morton Grove, we get excited to guess what new and exciting place Morton Grove will have next (fingers crossed for a Denny's).

Morton Grove also has great educational opportunities. There are so many schools in Morton Grove such as: Park View Elementary School, Jerusalem Lutheran Church and School, Golf Middle School, Melzer, Hynes, and Montessori Academy of Morton Grove just to name a few. These are award winning schools that set students up for

success in high school and beyond! The history of Morton Grove not only includes amazing schools, but also a cool story. Walk into the Morton Grove Historical Museum and you can learn how Morton Grove all started in about the early 1800s when the village first gained recognition through its greenhouses and later through its bearing on gun control. English immigrants moved into the Lehigh-Beckwith area in the 1830s, followed by German-Prussian families a decade later. In 1872, the Milwaukee Railroad laid a single-track line, setting up a railroad terminal in our town. The residents of Morton Grove at the time named this town Morton Grove because of railroad financier Levi Parsons Morton. From there on, the town grew with more businesses and people.

Morton Grove is so extremely special for so many reasons. From our multiculturalism to our great schools, friendly neighborhoods, and overall incredible community activities, we have something for everyone. These are just some of the things I love about Morton Grove. I am so grateful that almost 41 years ago, my grandpa decided to move his family to Morton Grove and more than 11 years ago, mine did the same. Morton Grove is our home and that makes it the most special place for us all.