



GALEWOOD:

A Neighborhood for the *Generations*

By Meredith A. Morris, Senior Communication Specialist

Chicago's Galewood neighborhood merges a suburban appeal with city conveniences. A tightly-knit community of mostly single-family homeowners, Galewood offers transportation, shopping, dining and architectural appeal. For buyers not enticed by those merits alone, it also presents attractive pricing.

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WELCOME TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Galewood



A step into European tradition



Thai dining on the border with Oak Park



Spacious home near Sayre public school

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"It's as nice an area as one can find in the city and yet still offers affordable homes," said Lydia Gutierrez, REALTOR® with Century 21 McMullen. Gutierrez's clients intrigued by the area are mostly first-time buyers with families, and young couples.

"Primarily they're coming because of the price. If they're ready to buy or just starting to look, they find the area is priced within their reach," she said.

A mélange of different cultural groups and generations, Galewood supports grass-roots community organizations and the types of businesses where owners know your name. Located west of Austin, south of Belmont Central and Montclare, and north and east of the leafy suburbs Oak Park, Elmwood Park and River Forest, Galewood maintains a smaller-town feel by restricting commercial development to major arteries, including North, Grand and Narragansett avenues.

The heart of Galewood stretches from Oak Park Avenue west to Harlem Avenue. That's "quintessential Galewood," said Julie Woodward-Trenker, REALTOR® with Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage-Lakeview.



Suburban appeal in the city

Galewood's tranquil streets are lined with trees and single-family homes in a range of architectural styles. Mostly dating from the turn of the last century to World War II, homes include a wealth of bungalows

and other styles typical to the time, such as Victorian, Georgian and Tudor homes.

"If you have a taste for vintage, you will love this area," said Woodward-Trenker, who has lived and worked in the area for eight years. Many of her clients come to Galewood for the pristine older homes, she said. Although many of the homes need extensive modernizing, they have had the same owner for decades and retain their original ornamental details.

What's selling in... Montclare?

FastSTATS 3rd Quarter 2011 (8018)

Attached Single Family	Detached Single Family
Units: 10	Units: 17
Median Price: \$70,000	Median Price: \$160,000

Check out neighborhood stats for all 77 Chicagoland neighborhoods and select suburbs at www.ChicagoREALTOR.com.

FastSTATS consists of average sales price, median sales price, market time, units sold and percent change for Chicago and the suburbs.

"Most homes in this area were custom-built over the years. You are challenged to find the same kind of craftsmanship elsewhere in the city," she said, adding that it's her dream to one day see a Bungalow Historic District in the neighborhood.

Many of Woodward-Trenker's buyers come from areas of the city directly east of Galewood, like Wicker Park.

"I see a lot of people gravitating west who find themselves in Galewood or Oak Park," she said. "When I meet clients in my Lakeview office, I educate them on Galewood. I'm a little biased, I'll admit, because I love my neighborhood. But when they see how much they can get for the money, they're amazed."

Woodward-Trenker also sees a fair number of buyers shifting between Galewood and Oak Park.

"They move to one community for a certain reason and then transfer to the other," she said.

Established in the 1830s by early landowners Abram and Sarah Gale, Galewood was home to one of the city's first golf courses and emerged

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Galewood businesses on Grand Ave.



Family-owned shops abound



Distinctive, charming homes

as an attractive residential area for affluent city residents. Galewood's population boomed for a decade beginning in the mid-1920s, when the majority of its homes were built. The neighborhood still offers generous lot sizes and plentiful parking. Many homes have stayed in the same family for generations; Woodward-Trenker noted that her neighbor has occupied her home for about 35 years.

There is a strong sense of community evident in Galewood residents' cooperative efforts on civic improvement projects and participation in the Garden Club of Galewood/Montclare, the Galewood-Montclare Community Organization and other local groups.

Tucked among the neighborhood's single-family homes are some two- and three-flats as well as five-plus unit buildings, Gutierrez said. Commerce also thrives in the adjacent Brickyard shopping center at Narragansett and Diversey avenues, saving families the need to travel further for essential goods.

Transportation options include a ten-minute drive to I-290 and two Milwaukee District West Line Metra stations at Mars and nearby Montclare. The Mars station is named for the Mars candy company plant, a longtime Galewood fixture on Oak Park Avenue.

Galewood also offers vibrant city parks, including Rutherford-Sayre Park on Belden Avenue – recently the focus of a three-to-four year project by local residents to install a new playground, Woodward-Trenker said – and Amundsen Park. Rutherford-Sayre screens free summer "Movies in the Parks" and Amundsen is home to kids' summer day camp programs and a youth sports series. Both offer open space, landscaped walking paths and athletic amenities.

The biggest challenge to selling in Galewood is the amount of renovation work needed by some of the older homes, Woodward-Trenker said. Whereas some buyers seek out this sort of challenge, others shy from it.

"Especially in this economy, some people are hesitant to take on the homes that need work. They might just need cosmetic attention but the concept can be overwhelming," she said.

Gutierrez has also experienced set-backs with buyers who are approved for home loans but not in amounts to also cover needed renovation costs, thereby cancelling the sale.

But for buyers who find their perfect home or take pleasure in renovation, Galewood can be ideal. For residents and many others, the neighborhood is a destination for a global array of shopping and dining, reflecting the Italian, Polish, Latin and other cultural groups that call it home.

"We've always been a little secret," Woodward-Trenker said. But noting that she's seeing a generational shift in new arrivals to the neighborhood, Galewood's many desirable features may be revealed. **CR**

Photos by Meredith A. Morris of the Chicago Association of REALTORS®



Outdoor dining patio on Harlem Ave.

Neighborhood Hot Spots

Amarind's Thai Restaurant
6822 W. North Ave.

Leo's Dancewear
1900 N. Narragansett Ave.

Amundsen Park
6200 W. Bloomingdale Ave.

Maria's Mexican Restaurant
1905 N. Harlem Ave.

Barnard's Schwinn Cycling & Fitness Center
6109 W. North Ave.

Reuter's Bakery
7177 W. Grand Ave.

Caputo's Fresh Market Produce
2400 N. Harlem Ave.

Rutherford-Sayre Park
6871 W. Belden Ave.

Il Giardino Del Dolce Italian Bakery
2859 N. Harlem Ave.