

New iMerge Community Center Opens and Rings In New Year On December 30

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
December 27 2022 4:40 PM



ALTON - Alexander Graham Bell once said, “When one door closes another one opens.” While the name, “Riverbender Community Center” has ended, the mission continues to thrive in the form of the “iMerge Community Center,” a new 501(c)(3) nonprofit.



Daniel Nosce, Assistant Director says, “We are proud to open our doors once again to the families and youth of the Riverbend area. With the help of Brigit Holt, her family, and the community, the legacy of the center can continue to flourish.”

The grand opening of the iMerge Community Center is set for 6:30 p.m. Friday, December 30, 2022, to help ring in the New Year. There will be activities, music, a balloon drop, and much more.

Tickets can be purchased online here: <https://imergecommunitycenter.org/>

When you pre-purchase a ticket online you will be immediately emailed a printable voucher with a unique barcode.

"Sometimes our email may end up in your spam folder so make sure you check there," Nosce said. "Simply print your ticket and bring it with you the night of the event. Your pre-purchased ticket ensures we will have room for you. Capacity is limited so without a pre-purchased ticket, you will not be able to get in.

"All games and activities are included with your ticket price of \$12. You may want to bring a little extra money with you for concessions or the kitchen. Please note our times for **FRIDAY NIGHT OPEN PLAY** have changed and are now 6:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m."

Founder and past volunteer executive director, John Hentrich said "as much as I have really enjoyed the break and know there is a lot of work ahead during this transition process, I am super excited to see someone willing to take on the responsibility of re-opening the community center. After a few failed attempts to pass on the center, I was getting pretty worried our mission would not continue. I'm so thankful to Brigit and her entire family for stepping up to the plate! I know she will need our support and the support of the community to pull this off. It's a lot of work to keep the center going and keep all those kids safe. I hope everyone supports her as much as they have supported me in the past."

Hentrich and his wife Cathie, and a few other members of the RBCC board, plan to continue volunteering at the center for at least through June of 2023. Volunteers are needed in all areas including Technology and Gaming, Cleaning, Building Repair, Chaperoning, Fundraising, Kitchen and Concession, and New Program Development. Obviously, donations are an important part of the puzzle as well. To make a donation contact Brigit directly at 618-433-8997 or give online at <https://imergecommunitycenter.org/>

The new community center will also be open on Saturdays in the future during the day, Holt said. The exact times of Saturdays at the community center have not yet been announced.

"iMerge has been thinking about how the Community Center is geared toward adolescents, and we also wanted to connect to younger kids and the community at large," she said. "That is why we are going to be open on Saturdays in the near future."



PICK-UP INFORMATION: "Please DON'T Show up too early when picking up your children," Nosce said. "We don't let the kids out of the center until 9:50 and the pickup process does not start moving until about 9:55 p.m. Parking in the street or blocking parking places and the intersections are not safe and not courteous to our downtown neighboring businesses. If you would like to pick your children up early you can do that at the front door before 9:30 p.m."

Nosce said he feels hopeful for the legacy and the mission of the community center to continue to grow and provide an opportunity for youth in the Riverbend area for camaraderie, to socialize, and the experience of meeting new people they wouldn't normally meet.

"It will be a mixture of students from not just Alton public schools, but private schools and a mixture of kids from towns from all over the region."

Holt said there will be a balloon drop and a countdown for the youth that will begin at about 9 p.m. Friday at the community center that will resemble the normal New Year's Eve count to midnight.

Holt said she and the others with the new community center are "so excited to be able to open."

"This should kick off a wonderful new year," she said.

CJ from Our Daily Show interviewed Brigit Holt and John Hentrich back in November about the goal of re-opening the teen center. Watch the Full Interview Below:

[Daniel Nosce also contributed to this story.](#)