

Wheaton

Get to know this family-friendly community better

STORY AND PHOTOS BY **DAWN REISS**

There's a running joke in Wheaton that there's more traffic on a Sunday morning than on a Friday afternoon. Even though this college town is known for its religious bent, there's more to Wheaton than its namesake Evangelical Christian college.

For families, there's a lot of locally owned shops and restaurants with a centrally located downtown and thousands of acres of forest preserve with places to hike and explore.



GETTING THERE

Located 30 miles west of downtown Chicago and centrally located as the county seat for DuPage County, Wheaton has two train stops off the Union Pacific West Metra line (Wheaton and College Station) and interstate access to its east and south.



Photo courtesy of Cosley Zoo

Find more reasons to visit Wheaton at [ChicagoParent.com/LatestIssue](https://www.ChicagoParent.com/LatestIssue).



EAT

302 WHEATON

302 W. Front St., Wheaton

This has quickly become a popular hotspot known for its burgers, tap beers, kid (and adult) milkshakes and family-friendly outdoor patio. The inclusive atmosphere has brought rave reviews from parents of children with developmental differences and food allergies. (There's a separate fryer to ensure the fries are gluten-free.)

SHOP

LITTLE POPCORN STORE

111 1/4 Front St., Wheaton

This landmark spot is an institution. Only four customers at a time are allowed into the long and narrow spot that's only 49 inches wide and 60 feet long. Grab candy from bins against the wall filled with classics. There's only one type of popcorn — white popcorn that's freshly popped.

PLAY

COSLEY ZOO

1356 N. Gary Ave., Wheaton

This quaint zoo is a good spot for families who want an intimate, quieter interaction with animals. In October, Cosley Zoo hosts a Pumpkin Fest.

SENSORY GARDEN PLAYGROUND

4044 Naperville Road, Wheaton

Walk through a rainbow archway to see art sculptures, play outdoor musical instruments and slide. This "play for all" sensory park is geared towards toddlers and preschoolers.

EXPLORE

CANTIGNY PARK

15151 Winfield Road, Wheaton

This 500-acre park is best known for its outdoor Tank Park filled with military vehicles children can climb on and the First Division Museum with 14,000 military-themed artifacts from World War I through Vietnam. There's plenty of things to do, including an Idea Garden with a waterfall, bridge and stepping stones. Fans of the Disney film *Coco* will appreciate "Alebrjes: Creatures of a Dream World." **CP**