



# EXPANDING HORIZONS

## Student & Family Experience Catalog

Waukegan to College • 2026–2027 School Year

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*Every college visit, career site tour, and community experience your student can take part in this year — what it is, when it happens, and why it's worth the trip.*



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# Semester I — Fall 2026

July 1 – December 30, 2026

**Waukegan to College**

# Career Fair

**WHEN**

Sat, Sept 12, 2026

**WHERE**

SSC – Student Success  
Center (on-site)

**VALUE TO STUDENTS & FAMILIES**

Meet dozens of employers and programs in one morning and walk away with real contacts — not just pamphlets

A no-pressure way to practice a professional introduction, a skill that pays off in every interview and campus visit after this one

**ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE**

Held right on-site at the Student Success Center, this fair brings area employers and program representatives together under one roof. It's a low-pressure way for students to practice professional conversations, and for parents to see the range of options open to their student.

**LITTLE KNOWN FACT**

*The word “career” comes from the Latin carraria, meaning “road for vehicles” — a fitting root for a fair built around charting a path forward.*

# National Louis University

**WHEN**

Mon, Oct 12, 2026

**WHERE**

Wheeling, IL

**VALUE TO STUDENTS & FAMILIES**

Plant the idea early that college is a real place a middle schooler can picture themselves at — not something to figure out later  
A first, low-stakes chance to walk a campus and ask questions, so the next college visit feels familiar instead of overwhelming

**ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE**

National Louis University's Wheeling campus is known for practical, career-connected programs, especially in education. For middle schoolers, this early visit plants the idea that college is a real, reachable place — not something abstract to worry about later.

**LITTLE KNOWN FACT**

*National Louis University was founded in 1886 as a training school for kindergarten teachers, making it one of the oldest teacher-education programs in the country.*

# UW–Milwaukee

**WHEN**

Mon, Oct 12, 2026

**WHERE**

Milwaukee, WI

**VALUE TO STUDENTS & FAMILIES**

Get a feel for what a big public university actually feels like day to day — lecture halls, dorms, and student life

Learn about tuition programs that could make an out-of-state school more affordable than most families assume

**ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE**

UW–Milwaukee is a major public research university with a wide range of majors and a lively urban campus on Lake Michigan. Students get a firsthand look at lecture halls, dorms, and student life at a bigger school than most have visited before.

**LITTLE KNOWN FACT**

*UWM's campus sits directly on Lake Michigan, and its School of Freshwater Sciences is one of only a handful of graduate programs in the world focused entirely on freshwater research.*

**WAUKEGAN TO COLLEGE**

UW–Milwaukee

# Lake Forest Open Lands

**WHEN**

Fri, Oct 23, 2026

**WHERE**

Mellody Farm – Lake Forest, IL

**VALUE TO STUDENTS & FAMILIES**

A full day outdoors that doubles as stress relief and hands-on learning — no worksheets required

Opens the door to a conservation or environmental career path that doesn't start with a four-year degree

**ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE**

Mellody Farm and the surrounding Lake Forest Open Lands preserve are managed for habitat restoration and public education. Students explore trails and prairie-restoration projects while learning what a career in conservation or environmental work actually looks like day to day.

**LITTLE KNOWN FACT**

*Lake Forest Open Lands protects more than 900 acres nearby, including remnant prairie that has never been plowed — a rare living link to the landscape that existed before European settlement.*

**WAUKEGAN TO COLLEGE**

Lake Forest Open Lands

# Valparaiso University

**WHEN**

Tue, Nov 3, 2026

**WHERE**

Valparaiso, IN

**VALUE TO STUDENTS & FAMILIES**

See a smaller private university where students say they're known by name, not just a number. Meet admissions staff who work directly with first-generation and transfer students — the conversation many families need but don't know who to ask.

**ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE**

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Valparaiso University is a private university in northwest Indiana known for close faculty relationships and strong professional programs. This joint middle and high school visit lets younger students preview what's ahead while older students start building real admissions relationships.

**LITTLE KNOWN FACT**

*Valparaiso's campus is home to the Chapel of the Resurrection, one of the largest university chapels in the country, with a striking wall of stained glass.*

# FermiLab

**WHEN**

Tue, Nov 3, 2026

**WHERE**

Fermi National  
Accelerator Laboratory –  
Batavia, IL

**VALUE TO STUDENTS & FAMILIES**

Walk the grounds of a real national research laboratory most adults have only read about. Transportation and lunch are covered — the two biggest reasons families skip a great opportunity are already handled.

**ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE**

Fermilab is a U.S. Department of Energy national laboratory dedicated to particle-physics research. Fermilab is providing transportation and lunch for this visit, removing the two biggest barriers families usually worry about for a full-day field trip.

**LITTLE KNOWN FACT**

*Fermilab keeps a real herd of American bison on its grounds — they've lived on site since 1969 as a living nod to the tallgrass prairie that once covered the land.*

# Milwaukee Art Museum

**WHEN**

Wed, Nov 11, 2026

**WHERE**

Milwaukee, WI

**VALUE TO STUDENTS & FAMILIES**

Experience striking architecture and centuries of art in one afternoon — a different kind of field trip than students expect

Build the confidence to talk about art and ideas in a group setting, a skill that carries into every classroom discussion after

**ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE**

The Milwaukee Art Museum is famous for its lakefront, Calatrava-designed addition, whose wing-like brise-soleil opens and closes daily. Beyond the building itself, students explore galleries spanning centuries of art, guided by the museum's group-tour education staff.

**LITTLE KNOWN FACT**

*The museum's moving "wings," the Burke Brise Soleil, span about 217 feet — wider than a Boeing 747 — and open and close each day, weather permitting.*

# Dominican University – Chicago Campus

**WHEN**

Wed, Nov 11, 2026

**WHERE**

1805 S Paulina St,  
Chicago, IL 60608

**VALUE TO STUDENTS & FAMILIES**

Meet undergraduate admissions in person and get real answers about cost and aid — not just what's on the website

See a college option close to home, which matters for families weighing commute, cost, and staying connected to community

**ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE**

Dominican University's Chicago campus serves students pursuing degrees close to home in the city. Families can connect with the undergraduate admissions office on site and get real answers about cost, aid, and what day-to-day student life looks like.

**LITTLE KNOWN FACT**

*Dominican University's main campus library, the Rebecca Crown Library, was designed by architect Barry Byrne, who trained under Frank Lloyd Wright.*

**WAUKEGAN TO COLLEGE**

Dominican University – Chicago  
Campus

# Golden Wing Aviation

**WHEN**

Sat, Nov 21, 2026

**WHERE**

Waukegan National  
Airport – Waukegan, IL

**VALUE TO STUDENTS & FAMILIES**

Get hands-on exposure to an aviation career path right in Waukegan — no flight required to see what the job looks like  
Discover that piloting and aircraft maintenance are real, reachable careers that don't always start with a four-year degree

**ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE**

Golden Wing Aviation operates out of Waukegan National Airport, giving students a rare close-up look at general aviation. It's a chance to explore flight training and aviation careers without leaving town.

**LITTLE KNOWN FACT**

*Waukegan National Airport has operated since the 1920s, making it one of the older continuously operating airports in the Chicago area.*

**WAUKEGAN TO COLLEGE**

Golden Wing Aviation

# Destress Fest

## WHEN

Dec 9–10, 2026

## WHERE

SSC – Student Success  
Center (on-site)

## VALUE TO STUDENTS & FAMILIES

A guaranteed pressure-release valve scheduled right before finals, when students need it most. Walk away with a coping strategy they can actually use again later — not just a one-time feel-good event.

## ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE

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Destress Fest is a two-evening, on-site wellness event timed to land before end-of-semester finals. Activities focus on healthy coping strategies, giving students permission to slow down while reinforcing that their well-being matters as much as their grades.

## LITTLE KNOWN FACT

*Studies on stress-relief activities have found that even short bursts of hands-on tasks like journaling or coloring can measurably lower stress hormones — the same idea behind Destress Fest's stations.*

# Adler Art Center

## WHEN

Date pending —  
planning meeting

## WHERE

Scheduled  
Location TBD

## VALUE TO STUDENTS & FAMILIES

A working-studio experience, not just a look-but-don't-touch museum visit

A chance to build a piece for a portfolio —  
useful for any student even casually  
considering art or design programs

## ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE

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The Adler Art Center visit is still being finalized, with logistics confirmed at an upcoming planning meeting. Once scheduled, it'll give students a working-studio alternative to the more formal museum experiences elsewhere in the calendar.

## LITTLE KNOWN FACT

*Community art centers like this one often exhibit visiting student work publicly — for many young artists, it's their very first real gallery show.*

# Chicago Voyagers

## WHEN

Proposal expected  
September 2026 —

## WHERE

date TBD  
Location TBD

## VALUE TO STUDENTS & FAMILIES

Team-building and outdoor-challenge activities that build trust and confidence with peers a student sees every day  
Bringing MS and HS students together creates near-peer mentorship moments that don't happen in a normal school day

## ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE

Chicago Voyagers is expected to submit a new program proposal this fall. Once confirmed, this joint MS/HS outing will bring students together for a shared outdoor or team-building experience outside the normal classroom routine.

## LITTLE KNOWN FACT

*Modern outdoor team-building programs trace back to Outward Bound, founded in the 1940s to build resilience and teamwork through shared physical challenges.*

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# Semester II — Spring 2027

January 1 – June 30, 2027



**Waukegan to College**

# MS City of Waukegan (City Hall & Police Dept.)

**WHEN**

Mon, Jan 18, 2027

**WHERE**

Waukegan, IL

**VALUE TO STUDENTS & FAMILIES**

Demystifies “the government” by putting real faces and names to it — people a student might see again around town  
Builds early civic confidence, so speaking up in a public setting someday feels normal instead of intimidating

**ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE**

This visit takes middle schoolers inside Waukegan's City Hall and Police Department to see local government and public safety up close. For many students, it's a first look at how the city they live in actually operates.

**LITTLE KNOWN FACT**

*Waukegan was originally called “Little Fort” by early settlers before the city adopted the name Waukegan in 1849.*

**WAUKEGAN TO COLLEGE**

MS City of Waukegan (City Hall & Police Dept.)

# Summer Learning Fair

**WHEN**

Sat, Jan 30, 2027

**WHERE**

SSC – Student Success  
Center (on-site)

**VALUE TO STUDENTS & FAMILIES**

Compare multiple summer programs side by side in one visit instead of researching each one separately

Booking early in January means first pick of the best programs, before they fill up in the spring scramble

**ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE**

The Summer Learning Fair gathers summer program providers on-site so families can plan ahead. Booking summer plans in January, rather than scrambling in May, gives students first pick of the strongest programs.

**LITTLE KNOWN FACT**

*Researchers have a name for the academic dip that happens over summer break — “summer slide” — and structured summer learning is one of the best-known ways to counter it.*

# University of Illinois Chicago

**WHEN**

Mon, Feb 15, 2027

**WHERE**

1200 West Harrison  
Street, Chicago, IL 60607

**VALUE TO STUDENTS & FAMILIES**

A large public research university close enough that families can visit more than once before deciding

A direct line to a college recruiter, so questions about admissions get answered months before application season starts

**ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE**

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UIC is one of the largest public research universities in Illinois, located just west of downtown Chicago. Students will meet with a UIC college recruiter, who can speak to admissions requirements and campus programs long before application season arrives.

**LITTLE KNOWN FACT**

*UIC's east campus includes the Jane Addams Hull-House Museum, preserving the settlement house where the pioneering social reformer and Nobel laureate did her early work.*

# MS Career Fair

**WHEN**

Sat, Feb 20, 2027

**WHERE**

SSC – Student Success  
Center (on-site)

**VALUE TO STUDENTS & FAMILIES**

An early, pressure-free way for a middle schooler to start thinking about interests before it feels urgent  
Builds the habit of talking with adults about goals — a skill that gets harder to build for the first time in high school

**ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE**

This on-site fair introduces middle schoolers to career exploration years before it becomes urgent. It builds the habit of thinking about interests and future paths early, without any of the pressure that comes later in high school.

**LITTLE KNOWN FACT**

*Career fairs as we know them grew out of youth employment programs in the 1950s that first connected students directly with local employers.*

# HS City of Waukegan (City Hall & Police Dept.)

**WHEN**

Mon, Apr 12, 2027

**WHERE**

Waukegan, IL

**VALUE TO STUDENTS & FAMILIES**

Connects civics class to something real — the same city hall a student can vote in and interact with as an adult

Introduces public-sector careers in city administration and law enforcement that aren't usually part of a typical career conversation

**ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE**

High schoolers get the same behind-the-scenes look at Waukegan's City Hall and Police Department, but with more advanced conversations about civic careers and local policy. It's a natural pairing with civics coursework and a chance to see government as a real workplace.

**LITTLE KNOWN FACT**

*Waukegan sits along one of the oldest settled shorelines in Illinois, with a documented municipal history stretching back to the 1840s.*

**WAUKEGAN TO COLLEGE**

HS City of Waukegan (City Hall & Police Dept.)

# University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

## WHEN

Spring 2027 — date  
TBD (no Monday tours)

## WHERE

Urbana-Champaign, IL

## VALUE TO STUDENTS & FAMILIES

Tour the state's most competitive public university and get a realistic sense of what it actually takes to get in

A direct relationship with the Campus Visit Coordinator means real answers, not a generic brochure

## ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign is the state's flagship public research university, with nationally ranked programs across engineering, business, and the sciences. The visit is being scheduled for spring semester, working around the campus's no-Monday-tours policy.

## LITTLE KNOWN FACT

*Researchers at Illinois helped build Mosaic, one of the first widely used web browsers — software that helped shape how the entire world would later use the internet.*

## WAUKEGAN TO COLLEGE

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

# Chicago Botanic Garden

**WHEN**

Fall or spring — follow-up expected

**WHERE**

Glencoe, IL

**VALUE TO STUDENTS & FAMILIES**

A full day outdoors exploring hundreds of acres — a welcome change of pace from a typical classroom or campus tour

Introduces horticulture and environmental science as real areas of study, not just a hobby

**ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE**

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The Chicago Botanic Garden in Glencoe spans hundreds of acres of themed gardens and natural areas. Garden staff have suggested both fall and spring dates, so the visit will land whichever semester works best for the group.

**LITTLE KNOWN FACT**

*The garden is built across nine islands connected by bridges and walking paths, spread over 385 acres.*

# BCU

**WHEN**

Mon, Apr 12, 2027 —  
details being confirmed

**WHERE**

Location TBD

**VALUE TO STUDENTS & FAMILIES**

See what actually happens behind the teller window — a career path in finance most students never picture for themselves  
Learn what banking and lending careers really require, often less than students assume

**ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE**

BCU is a member-owned credit union based in the Chicago area, serving individuals and select employer groups. This site visit introduces students to financial-services careers most never consider until well into adulthood.

**LITTLE KNOWN FACT**

*BCU traces its roots back to 1935, when it started as a small credit union serving Chicago-area teachers.*

# Lake Forest College

**WHEN**

Date TBD

**WHERE**

Lake Forest, IL

**VALUE TO STUDENTS & FAMILIES**

A small liberal-arts college minutes from home — a completely different feel from the big public universities on this calendar. Gives families a nearby option to compare against, so “small vs. big” isn’t just a hypothetical conversation.

**ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE**

Lake Forest College is a small private liberal-arts college a short drive from Waukegan, offering a very different campus feel from the large public universities elsewhere on this calendar. Scheduling details are still being finalized.

**LITTLE KNOWN FACT**

*Parts of Lake Forest College's wooded campus were shaped by the Olmsted Brothers landscape firm — the same family behind the design of New York's Central Park.*

**WAUKEGAN TO COLLEGE**

Lake Forest College