

# LAKEFRONT

N E I G H B O R S

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Meet  
the Noonans:  
The Couple  
Behind Tryon  
Farm

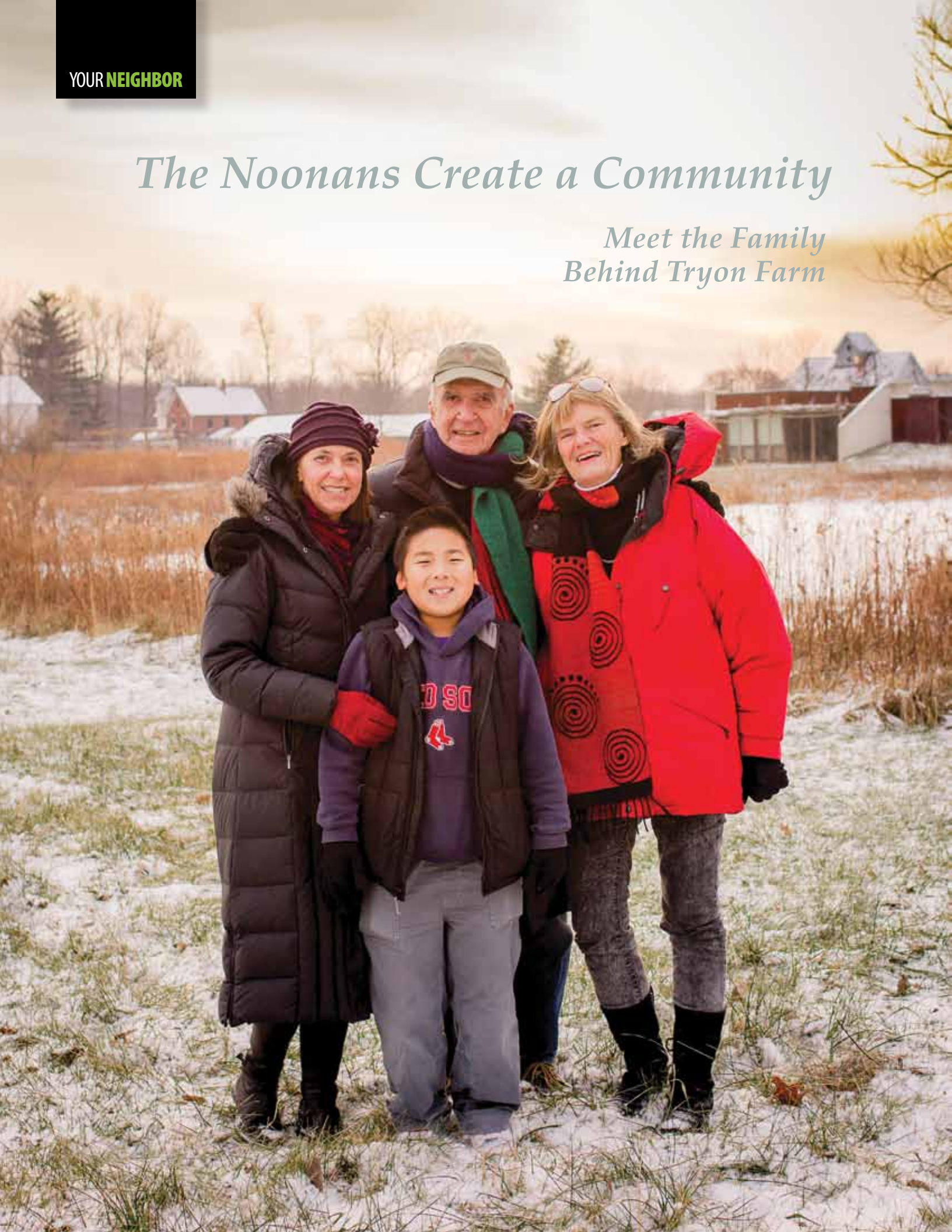


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# *The Noonans Create a Community*

*Meet the Family  
Behind Tryon Farm*



**A**s natives of Chicago's northern suburbs, Ed and Eve Noonan had typically vacationed in Wisconsin with their five children, but eventually started traveling the other way around the lake for family getaways on Mackinac Island. Soon, they discovered what they were missing along the way on the Indiana coastline.

"We loved the beach here—the warmer weather, the amazing sunsets," Eve said.

In 1990, the Noonans were living in Evanston when they found two long, narrow lots at Stop 3 in Sheridan Beach. Although other prospective buyers might have been scared off by the abandoned tennis courts left over from a former hotel, Ed, a seasoned architect, envisioned the property with four houses. With the enthusiastic support of the city, the couple got to work, and soon had completed their own vacation home, along with three additional houses they sold.

"We wanted a big enough house that everyone could be there," said Eve. "It was exciting to figure out how the lots would be set up, and in the end, all four houses had great lake views."

In the late 1990s, Ed and Eve found another piece of land that inspired them, a 170-acre property about a mile from Lake Michigan that had been a dairy farm in a past life. For years, the Noonans had looked at subdivisions and thought that there had to be a better way of designing neighborhoods than with manicured lawns, huge garages facing the street, and a lack of open public spaces. Now, they realized this might be their chance to make their vision a reality.

"We thought that we'd been complaining long enough, so let's give it a try," Eve said. "We wanted to do

something more environmentally-friendly and contemporary."

The Noonans' project became Tryon Farm. A unique conservation community, Tryon Farm lives up to Ed and Eve's goal of creating a neighborhood worlds away from the typical subdivisions, complete with wetlands, a working farm, and 120 acres of protected land. Over the years, Ed and Eve personally worked with each resident on building their own environmentally-sensitive homes. Today, this close-knit community is home to 65 families, which includes a mix of full-time and weekend-only residents.

"It's really fun to sit down and go over plans with people," Eve said. "Ed is the architect/builder, and I work on marketing, house furnishings, and events—that's my thing."

Although Ed and Eve enjoyed their beach house, they couldn't resist Tryon Farm's peaceful appeal and relocated there three years ago. The Noonans love being surrounded by nature—they even hear the footsteps of deer on their sod-roofed home that has been built into the landscape.

"Our daughter says it feels like you're in the middle of nowhere, but you're

really just minutes from CVS and a wonderful supermarket," Eve said.

Married 56 years, Ed and Eve stay busy with visits from family members, including their eight grandchildren, and casual community traditions like Saturday night gatherings in the garden for drinks, flying kites, and playing ball. They also host special events throughout the year, including wine dinners in their 1896 barn, tree-plantings for local schoolchildren, and the annual 5K/10K/50K trail run that takes runners through fields, creeks, and even over the Noonans' house.

"The people who live in Tryon Farm are amazing," Eve said. "For families, it's so perfect, because you can just let your kids go out and play in the creek and be outside."

While many neighborhoods go into hibernation after the holidays, it isn't the case at Tryon Farm, where Eve says you're likely to find residents enjoying a snowy hike, then warming their feet by the fireplace.

"I like it in the winter when it's silent and snowy—there's great sledding for the grandkids and cross-country skiing," Eve said. "Some people look forward to the winter more than the summer at Tryon Farm." ●



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