

## Mayor's Message

10.2.25

*This article was written by Madelyn Ventimiglia, a student at Miami of Ohio and a Darien resident. In this essay, Madelyn clearly states her love for the Darien community, and a strong rationale for why we say Darien is a "Nice Place to Live." I want to thank her for allowing us to use her essay in our Direct Connect newsletter.*

The dictionary defines the word "nice" as "pleasant, agreeable, fine, or even satisfactory." The adjective is often used in positive experiences, but in a most mundane way. For example, if you were describing something, you might say 'nice' if you thought it was just okay. Darien's town motto on their welcoming sign is "Darien, A Nice Place to Live." Bringing that mundane word "nice" to life is no easy task, but the community of Darien, Illinois, seems to accomplish that and more. Looking at this community from a more logistical perspective, Darien is not only a "nice" place to live but also "safe, clean, and beautiful." With our neighborhood streets lined with large oak trees, and classic suburban homes. On a summer day you may see children riding their bikes around the neighborhood, or residents walking their dogs, each street is home to its own smaller community within Darien. I know from my personal experience, I love living on Village Court in Darien, Illinois. As you turn the corner from Seminole onto Village Court you are met with a deep cul-de-sac where I have lived 18 out of 19 years of my life. Little did my parents know when they moved in when I was just 1 year old, that this would be our forever home. Our neighbors have become family, we have helped each other through times of hardship, had many laughs and last-minute gatherings. In relation to more public spaces, we have 4 community parks, where you often find families pushing their kids on the swings, high schoolers getting a round of pickle ball in, or couples taking a stroll.

Not only seen by those passing through, but also those that live there, with their town sign saying, "Darien, A Nice Place to Live," one may pass by without a thought, others may disagree with it entirely, but those who live in that community know that it is the people who genuinely give the word "nice" a real meaning. In eight different locations welcoming those to town, the simple sign, with simple words, but with a not-so-simple meaning, employs rhetorical appeals such as Kairos, pathos, and ethos to convey the essence of what it is like to live in Darien, Illinois.

The town of Darien is often what I like to call the "town between all towns," as everyone passes through us to get to other places. Especially with major towns as our neighbors such as Hinsdale, Downers Grove, Willowbrook, Burr Ridge, etc. We constantly have people driving through us. That is what makes our eight signs so valuable, because they are projected at various audiences who pass through. The sign embodies Kairos, making an argument at just the right time, as the eight of them are strategically placed at various entrances to Darien on the very busy streets of Cass Avenue, Plainfield Road, and 75th Street, among others. The city is trying to reach those

passing through our community and those who live there in an intentional and timely manner. When I enter Darien and see the sign “A Nice Place to Live,” I know I am home, in a place I love and where I have made memories. Others may see it and think, “There are nicer places,” and maybe there are physically nicer places to live, with million-dollar homes and fancy cars parked in front of them. Although that may be true, I believe it comes down to the individual's values, and if you value community, kindness, and generosity, then Darien is indeed one of the nicest places to live.

By appealing to pathos, with some of the values embodied in the word “nice,” the sign can invoke a positive feeling when you enter the town of Darien, and maybe even a question as to “how nice is this town really?” Saying Darien is a nice place to live is very subjective: some residents may argue that it is wonderful, while others may disagree. It also makes you question the word choice, as to why “nice” is used instead of something more specific. Why not amazing, gorgeous, or spectacular? Darien is a very small community with approximately 22,000 residents, and though some have argued against the phrase, others believe it positively embodies our community and represents it well. For those who live in this town, as they pass by, it can leave them feeling confident in their choice to live in Darien, reflecting on the times that Darien has been “nice” and much more.

The community as the creators of this sign give it credibility, by appealing to ethos, in standing behind it and giving value to the word “nice,” even though the adjective may be overused. As one of those community members, I have lived in Darien my whole life and have been a recipient of the town's generosity on many occasions. For example, my little brother and I were very ill at the same time, and unfortunately, he passed away from brain cancer at the age of seven in 2018. The town honored him in numerous ways, from a homemade bench, a tree planted in our local park in his honor, a mural commissioned and hung in the library of my brother, and even a local baseball field redone and renamed “Joey V's Memorial Field.” I can attest to the fact that Darien is, without a doubt, an extremely “nice” place to live.

As stated previously, I have been on the receiving end of Darien's generosity on multiple occasions. Looking more specifically at one of the examples I mentioned, the town created a field in honor of my brother, naming it “Joey V's Memorial Field.” Our town wanted this field to be more than just “nice,” which they accomplished with attention to every fine detail, from the red brick walls and the custom-engraved sign to the opening ceremony that honored my brother's life and memory. It was truly spectacular. Now, my parents and I get to pass by and see our local community gathered there on a late Friday night as boys and girls run the bases. Those who play on that field, or who watch their grandchildren hit their first home run, get to read the story of a little boy who loved baseball, and his hometown of Darien just as much. So, “Darien, A Nice Place to Live,” may be very accurate, or very false at times, but only because our community continuously exceeds the expectations of niceness.

Overall, rhetorically speaking all of these appeals, Kairos, pathos, and ethos, function in a way to help the rhetorician achieve their purpose of communicating to their intended audience, the community and those passing through, uniting everyone in that

Darien truly is “A Nice Place To Live.” Furthermore, appealing to Kairos by carefully placing the sign in eight different locations, appealing to pathos in provoking a positive feeling in the audience, and finally appealing to ethos as the community gives the sign credibility. Each appeal works unanimously together as stated before to bring the notion that “Darien” is a nice place to live to reality. Not only is it a “Nice Place To Live,” but the cleanliness and safety of Darien is something that I will never take for granted. In conclusion, I am truly blessed to live in a community such as this one, a place that I love and cherish so deeply.