

Chicago's Property Tax Relief Program

Dear Homeowners,

As you know, we are currently experiencing the worst economic global recession since the Great Depression 70 years ago. We are very concerned that so many people here in Chicago are struggling to make ends meet and keep their homes.

During these tough times, we are doing all we can to protect Chicago's working and middle-class families, our seniors and all other residents. New higher city property taxes are the last thing we should be asking homeowners to pay next year. Homeowners need property tax relief, and they need it now.

That is why we worked together to pass the City of Chicago's Property Tax Relief Program.

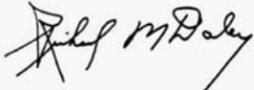
It is meant to provide relief between \$25 and \$200 to City homeowners hit hardest by increases to their 2008 property tax bill for their primary residence. This program is needed largely because of the phase-out of the state law that put a 7% cap on the annual increase in the taxable value of home property, and because of the drop this year's exemption under that law went to \$20,000 from \$26,000.

The amount of relief you might receive is based on a combination of income level and property tax increase. The lower your income, and the higher your property tax increase, the more relief you will be eligible for. Please apply early as funding for this program is limited.

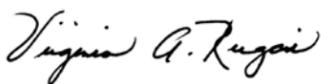
Please visit www.the19thward.com and click on the City of Chicago Property Tax Relief icon to find an application, instructions, and other tools to help you participate in this program.

Chicago's working families are the heart and soul of our city. We hope the Property Tax Relief Program will provide you with some assistance during these tough times.

Sincerely,



Mayor Richard M. Daley



Alderman Virginia A. Rugai

Delivering What Southside Moms-To-Be Have Been Craving

When it comes to fashion-forward maternity apparel, Chicago's newest maternity boutique, belle up maternity, is second to none, and best of all: it's right in our backyard! By opening its doors in early December in the heart of Mt. Greenwood, belle up (pronounced "belly up") proudly planted its flag as the only independently-owned and operated maternity boutique on Chicago's Southside.

The first task, said belle up's owners—a Beverly husband-wife duo with two young children—was to create a space where vibrant, sophisticated moms-to-be wanted to shop. And create they did! In fact, in a matter of months, they transformed a storefront that had most recently been home to a dog bakery into a boutique that rivals any on the Magnificent Mile and that has, literally, stopped traffic on 111th Street on more than one occasion.

Just as important to the owners as the look-and-feel of the space, however, was the quality of the apparel and services the boutique would offer. So, belle up's team set out to fill the boutique with a well-balanced mix of classic and edgy, designer maternity apparel that would appeal to the ever-growing number of professional moms-to-be, as well as the work-at-home-moms—with a particular eye toward pieces that their clients could wear during pregnancy and beyond. According to belle up's Manager and Buyer, Carlynn Dockery, "the key is to select pieces that are comfortable, flattering to many body types, and that closely resemble pre-pregnancy styles."

belle up features veteran maternity designers, like Olian, Maternal America, Japanese Weekend and Glamourmom, alongside up-and-coming designers such as Ripe, Hatch and Zula Maternity.



You will also find a variety of diaper bags and other gear, accessories and baby items.

However, belle up is about more than just fashion. While the owners admit that their primary focus is retail, as members of the Beverly/Mt. Greenwood community, they admit feeling a larger obligation to be

consultation services twice a month. Additional wellness, fitness and social mom-centered events are coming soon.

The belle up team is looking forward to Spring 2010. "We have a fantastic spring collection coming that we look forward to showcasing during our Grand Opening weekend," says Dockery. She's tight-lipped about specifics for the weekend (March 26-28), but says it will definitely include a can't-miss fashion show and party.

belle up is located at 3440 W. 111th Street. Visit the boutique Monday-Friday from 11 am to 7 pm, Saturday from 11 am to 6 pm, or Sunday from noon to 5 pm, or shop online at www.belleup.com. By combining designer maternity apparel with an approachable atmosphere and unparalleled customer service, belle up is undoubtedly just what fashion-conscious Southside moms-to-be have been craving!



a source of information, education and support for Southside moms-to-be. Thus, for example, belle up has teamed with a local registered nurse to offer free, in-store lactation

