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News & Views

July 24, 2023

The City of New Hope's Employee Newsletter

Employee of the Quarter



Congratulations to **Tony Portesan**, recreation facilities supervisor, for being selected as the employee of the quarter for 2nd quarter 2023. Tony was recognized for some long/early/late hours. Early in the season, someone pulled caulking out of a joint in the current channel. Tony worked late into a Saturday night to drain the pool, was back early the next morning to make the repair, spent the day overseeing the filling of the pool and was then back early Monday morning to balance the chemicals and make sure that the pool was ready for the public at 8 a.m.

Tony started with the City in January of 2020 with the primary assignment of managing the aquatic park. However, during the off-season you will often see him working at the golf course and ice arena as well. Tony always has a smile and is willing to lend a hand wherever needed. In 2023, he also initiated a new tot time program, moved turf mowing for the facility in-house and assisted with securing grant money that was used for lifeguard training.

Thank you, Tony, for making sure that everyone that visits the New Hope Aquatic Park has a fantastic place to play and relax! *Photo credit: Beth Kramer, communications coordinator*

Additional Nominees:

Melissa DeLeeuw, evidence technician, and **Jason Ryan**, drug task force officer, were co-nominated for their extraordinary work in purging and organizing the City's evidence storage. Each item was returned to rightful owners, disposed of, transferred to appropriate agencies or made easier to access when needed.

Gina Karstens, admin. specialist; **Andrea Phinney**, accounting technician; and **Shari Rains**, accountant were co-nominated for their many hours of extra work covering the utility billing clerk position while a replacement recruitment process is underway. Due to the time-sensitive nature of the monthly processes that go into meter-reading, accepting/recording payments and issuing bills this would be a tough job at any point. However, add to it the complexity of being in the midst of an ongoing meter switch out and they're doing yeoman's work! (continued on pg. 2)

Mark Your Calendar:

July 26 – Wacky Wednesday

July 26-29 – OBMT: Sound of Music

Aug. 1 – National Night Out

Aug. 2 – Music in the Park – Kashimana

Aug. 4 – Wet and Wild Water Day

Aug. 9 – Wellness: Foundations of Investing

Aug. 16 – Music in the Park – Innocent Reggae Band

Aug. 18 – Final Food Truck Friday

Aug. 20 – Aquatic Park Closes for the Season

Aug. 24 – Movie in the Park – Minions: Rise of Gru

Aug. 23 – Wacky Wednesday

Aug. 30 – Music in the Park – Red Pine Revival

Sept. 13-14 – Wellness: Vaccination Clinic

Sept. 14 – Annual Dip-Off Competition

Tom Lesnikowski, police officer, for making sure that a group of kids didn't have their outing to the New Hope Aquatic Park ruined due to a dead phone. He paid for their admittance out of his own pocket!

Matt Remore, recreation facilities supervisor, for his work in reinstalling the south rink ice. The planned install was pushed back due to delays in other projects happening in the same space. Ultimately he made the decision to move forward, working with the crews of the other projects to make sure it could all happen at the same time, but it still required late nights and full weekends to have the ice ready for the first rentals of the season.

Ricky Plemel, golf superintendent, for everything that went into the repair of two greens damaged this winter by vandals. The wet spring prevented the work from being performed prior to the start of leagues, so extra pressure was on to complete it quickly and with minimal disruption to course patrons.

Scott Stephan, arena maintenance operator, for applying almost 50 gallons of paint throughout the New Hope Ice Arena with very little assistance. Everything from walls and floors to bleachers throughout the building received a fresh coat of paint making the whole place absolutely shine. Many, many compliments on what a difference it made!

New Employee Spotlights

Sundae Meyer, Police Clerk

Welcome to our newest police clerk! Sundae comes to the city with varied experience, most recently as an executive assistant for a packaging distributor and before that as a contract administrator for a road construction contractor. Sundae will be working the day shift with Lorilee Stafford's promotion to administrative specialist.

Sundae and her husband, Steve, met as students at Osseo High and have been married for over 30 years. They live in Brooklyn Park where Steve is originally from. She is originally from Maple Grove and her parents still live there. Together, Sundae and Steve also lived in California for a few years.

Steve is a purchasing manager for Running Aces Casino, Hotel and Racetrack in Columbus. Their daughter, Ciara, lives in downtown St. Paul where she works for the State as a policy analyst. They're a dog-loving family. Sundae and Steve adopted Ava (a pitty mix) about six years ago and Ciara recently adopted Kahlua (a shepherd).

They love to be on the road, both traveling and finding new delicious places to dine. Favorite destinations have included New York City's Lower Manhattan, Florida, New Orleans and Jamaica. A favorite restaurant is J.D. Hoyt's in Minneapolis. When on the road, you'll sometimes find them on two wheels as they love to bike both around Hennepin County and when traveling.

Sundae said that she can't think of anything that would surprise fellow employees about herself, but she did say that she was excited to be here at the City. Sundae, we're excited to have you here too!



Reece Bertholf, City Manager

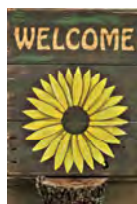
Many of you have had a chance to meet our new city manager, but if you haven't, please stop by and say hi. Reece is originally from the Clearbrook/Ogilvie area, but no longer has family up there. From there, he joined the Marine Corps with whom he spent four years. For a portion of that time, he was stationed in Japan where he met Mikie, who is now his wife of 22 years. Mikie is from Kawasaki City, Japan, a 10-minute walk to Tokyo, but had previously spent time in Calgary, Alberta.

Reece and Mikie have two children. Kiwa will be attending the University of Minnesota this fall to study kinesiology. And Kai will be a middle schooler when classes resume this fall. They are both very active with Kiwa working as a football sports trainer and Kai training in jujitsu (he enjoys computer programming as well). They also have a goldendoodle, Waterloo.

While in South Carolina the family spent a lot of time on the beach, participating in community events and Reece greatly enjoys fishing and hunting. They all enjoy being outside and are excited to experience the outdoors in a new region.

Eagerly anticipated activities include ATV trail riding and ice fishing. Reece truly is “back home” as he’s an avid Minnesota sports fan including most sports but especially hockey.

When they’re looking for something to do indoors, the family enjoys attending Broadway shows. A recent favorite is Hamilton. Reece said that he was in seven musicals in high school but can’t sing. Perhaps we’ll find out at the employee recognition event this winter!



Carrie Reid, Office Specialist – Community Development

It is my pleasure to introduce Carrie. She has spent the last several years working as a special education clerical for The Academy for Sciences & Agriculture (AFSA) High School. She and sons Jack and Sam live in New Brighton with Daisy, a Shih Tzu/Pomeranian mix. Jack is a union laborer working on gas lines and Sam is attending Bethel College for engineering (type to be determined!).

Both of Carrie’s parents have passed and she is the youngest of seven siblings and five of them live nearby. The other two are in Duluth and Iowa. They are all close, and six of the seven recently vacationed to Glacier National Park and Banff together. Carrie and the boys enjoy traveling together as well. Their most recent trips were Carrie and Sam to Texas and Carrie and Jack to Mexico.

Driving is something they find pleasure in, so while it’s not always the way they travel, they don’t shy away from long road trips.

When close to home, they share a lot of meals. Sam often does the cooking as he’s an aspiring hobby chef and the boys prefer his cooking over Carrie’s, as her cooking reflects her focus on healthy eating! Sam’s specialty are breakfast items.

Carrie said she might come across as a bit shy, but she has an adventurous soul and is always willing to try new activities – a favorite is snorkeling! She also enjoys artistic projects including refurbishment of furniture. Her current project is an 1800’s couch.

We’re glad to have you here, Carrie. We’ll see what adventures we can find for you here in New Hope!

Departures

Jessi Weber, administrative specialist for community development, resigned effective April 14. Jessi had been with the city since January 2017, first as an office specialist for CD, then being promoted to administrative specialist that September. You will find her working for the Champlin parks and recreation department now, a much shorter commute to home! (*apologies for omitting this in the last issue*)

Martice Clark, CSO, resigned effective June 27. Martice only just started with the city in December of last year, but the pull of family has him moving back to Chicago.

Brandon Bell, CD coordinator/management analyst, resigned effective July 14. Brandon started with the city in March 2017 as an office specialist for CD. In September of that year, he was promoted to the administrative specialist for public works. Then in July of 2019, he was promoted to the community development assistant. In January of 2022, he was promoted once more, this time to CD coordinator/management analyst. He will be working with Elevate Hennepin, where he will be assisting businesses with development.

Recruitment Updates

Police Clerk: Magaly Velasquez started with the city today. She will be training first on days and then moving to evenings.

Police Officer: Chelsea Smith will start with the city on Aug. 7 as a police officer. With Chelsea's hire, the city has filled all 34 sworn positions currently budgeted for.

Utility Billing Clerk: Krissy Barthel will start with the city on Aug. 28. Her space will be adjacent to Andrea Phinney and Shari Rains in the finance area at city hall.

Community Service Officer: The external posting period for this position closed today and staff interviews will be held on Friday. The targeted start date is early September.

Maintenance Worker: The internal posting period for this position will close on July 31 and be moved to external if two qualified applications are not received. The targeted start date is early October.



Happenings

Cop on a Rooftop – May 20

Staff from New Hope and Robbinsdale police departments worked together with Dunkin' Donuts and contributed to the over \$36,000 raised by the Minnesota Special Olympics throughout participating communities. Pictured includes staff from both agencies and Special Olympic athletes that were present to talk with donors who stopped by to make a gift. *Photo credit: Beth Kramer*

Dorothy Mary Park Clean-up – May 23

Thank you to staff for participating in both The Great Shingle Creek Watershed Clean-up on May 3 and the Dorothy Mary Park Clean-up on May 23. Pictured l to r: Bernie Weber, public works dir., Scott Slawson, police captain; Dave Lemke, operations manager; Jill Smisek, office specialist; Valerie Leone, city clerk; Shawn Markham, city forester; Mike Isenberg, council member; and Penny Spitzer, admin.



specialist *Photo credit: Susan Rader*



Employee Appreciation Picnic – May 23

Employees enjoyed a picnic at the golf course hosted by the management team as a thank you for fantastic work throughout the year! Pictured l to r: Jeff Sargent, community development dir.; Susan Rader, parks and recreation dir.; Rich Johnson, HR/admin. dir.; Valerie Leone; and Tim Hoyt, police chief *Photo credit: Beth Kramer*

Young Mudder Run – June 10

Members of the Phinney family (pictured l to r: Clay, **Andrea** and Jack) were captured on “film” at this very popular annual event for the New Hope and Crystal parks and recreation departments.

Photo Credit: Susan Rader



Stantec Community Day – June 20

Several Stantec staff participated in their annual community day by volunteering for projects at Fred Sims Park, Northwood Park and the New Hope Golf Course. As part of the day, the group of 25 cooked up a BBQ lunch and invited all New Hope employees to attend. Thank you, Stantec, for being wonderful partners to work with! Pictured below are Stantec employee volunteers including Dan Boyum, city engineer, and Craig Larson that work with the city. *Photo credits: Susan Rader*



Law Enforcement Torch Run – June 23

Several members of the New Hope Police Department participated in the Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics that routed through New Hope. Pictured below are members of multiple police departments, community members and Olympians. *Photo credit: Beth Kramer*



Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting – June 26

At their June 26 meeting, the City Council accepted from the Government Finance Officers Association the above-named award for the city’s Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) for the fiscal year ending Dec. 31, 2021. It is the highest form of recognition in government accounting and financial reporting, and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by a government entity and its management. Congratulations to the finance and Abdo team for helping the city achieve this goal once again.



Department Photos

Communications Coordinator **Beth Kramer** recently captured photos of two of the City's departments.



Public Works Department (bottom of this page and next)

L to R: Aundrey Wallace, maintenance worker (m.w.); Bruce Stanchfield, m.w.; Art Sorenson, m.w.; Kevin Zurn, m.w.; Scott Fendrich, m.w.; Nick Macklem, stormwater specialist; Matt Rowedder, utilities maint. supervisor; Mark Claycomb, m.w.; Bill Broman, m.w.; Pat Cunningham, m.w.; Cole Anderson, m.w.; Bernie Weber; Dave Lemke; Brad Johnson, m.w.; Rick Nelson, m.w.; Gina Karstens; Andrew Kramer, streets/parks supervisor; Steve Rohloff, m.w.; Kelly Thompson, m.w.; Dan Boyum—Not pictured: Bill Robberstad, central garage supervisor; Mic Rusk, m.w.; Jeff Winkel, mechanic



In Memoriam



Our sympathies to:

- **Council Member Andy Hoffe** and his family for the passing of his wife, Juanita, on June 6.
- Sergeant **Miguel Robles**, members of the New Hope Police Department and the many others than knew K-9 Kody. From Chief **Tim Hoyt**: "...retired K9 Kody (July 18) passed away last night. He was 11 years old and served our city from 2013-2021. Those who knew Kody saw that he was a dedicated servant who loved to patrol the streets of New Hope and protect our community. During his career, he was a key component in a countless number of narcotics searches, and apprehensions of those who were committing crimes in our city. He retired to live with his handler, Sergeant Miguel Robles where he enjoyed hanging out and relaxing after an exciting and productive career. He was put to rest on July 18 with Sergeant Robles by his side. Kody will truly be missed and will live forever in our hearts."



Parks & Recreation Department (opposite page)

Back row, l to r: Bruce Stanchfield, maintenance worker (m.w.); Susan Rader; Shawn Markham; Steve Rohloff, m.w.; Rick Nelson, m.w.; Ricky Plemel; Mark Claycomb, m.w.; Mark Severson, recreation facilities manager; Jill Smisek; Front row, l to r: Scott Stephan; Penny Spitzer; Steve Ellingson, athletic supervisor; Aaron Thelen, recreation supervisor; Andrew Kramer, streets/parks supervisor; Tony Portesan; Matt Remore



Engagement Celebration

Congratulations to **Ricky Plemel** and his now fiancee, Sarah Beck, on their engagement on June 25. That same weekend they also welcomed Bunker the Boxer to the family!



Food Truck Fridays

As we're sure you have noticed, community development staff brought the very popular food trucks back to city hall this summer. The kick-off event was June 9 and will run weekly through Aug. 18 from 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. Choose from tried-and-true favorites or try something new! More information and a list of scheduled vendors is available at newhopemn.gov/foodtruckfriday.

Wellness

Golf & Lunch – June 6

Thirteen individuals putted and chipped along in contests at the New Hope Golf Course under the careful tutelage (for some of us) of **Ricky Plemel**. **Jason Ryan**, police officer, and **Susan Rader** won the 4-hole putting contest and **Jason Ryan** and **Aaron Thelen** won the chip off. Congratulations were given and gift cards awarded!

PERA: From Hire to Retire – July 11

Employees attended a virtual meeting with a member of PERA's outreach team to discuss PERA from the beginning of employment into retirement. Twenty-eight members of city and West Metro staff were in attendance.



Foundations of Investment – Aug. 9

Staff are invited to a presentation by Aaron Lindman with Edward Jones. Aaron will cover developing an investment strategy, using high quality investments and focusing on what you can control. If you're interested in attending, please let Walker MacBeath know.

Save the Dates:

Annual vaccination clinic held in conjunction with Hy-Vee pharmacy staff – Sept. 13/14
Summer Picnic & Grilling Safety – Sept. 28 (tentative date)

Renaissance Festival Tickets

The City will again be organizing a discounted ticket purchase for the Renaissance Festival if there are enough individuals interested. Adult tickets will be \$19.25 (gate price \$26.95), child tickets (5-12 years of age) will be \$13.50 (gate price \$17.95) and food books will be \$5 (\$6 value). Submit your order and payment by Thursday, Aug. 4. If you are writing a check, please make it payable to the "City of New Hope." Tickets will arrive before the festival weekends begin and are valid for any of the dates listed below. Because the more tickets we buy, the lower the price goes, I will refund any overpayment to individuals when the tickets are distributed. Tickets do NOT need to be purchased for employee use – you can buy them for anyone you would like!

