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News & Views

July 21, 2022

The City of New Hope's Employee Newsletter



Pictured Above: New Hope staff pose with outgoing City Manager Kirk McDonald on May 24. Left to Right, Back to Front: Beth Kramer, Susan Rader, Walker MacBeath, Tony Portesan, Melissa DeLeeuw, Lorilee Stafford, Scott Slawson, Jason Ryan, Jeana Allen-Hatcher, Dave Johnson, Jill Smisek, Art Sorenson, Penny Spitzer, Steve Ellingson, Mark Claycomb, Tom Evans, Aaron Thelen, Kelly Thompson, Dan Peacock, Brad Kallio, Bruce Stanchfield, Kirk McDonald, Steve Rohloff, Jeff Sargent, Pat Cunningham, Jessi Weber, Rick Nelson, Andrew Kramer, Kevin Zurn, Valerie Leone, Matt Rowedder, Bill Broman, Shari Rains, Brad Johnson, Brandon Bell, Carissa Hoyt, Rich Johnson, Dave Lemke, Gina Karstens, Tim Hoyt, Linda Bergemann, Nick Macklem, Vicki Thompson, Jeff Alger, Andrea Phinney and Johnny Vang

Mark Your Calendar:

July 21 – Aug. 6 OMBT's "Joseph/Amazing Technicolor..."
July 27 – Wacky Wednesday: jeans or shorts
July 27 – Music in the Park: Blue Ox Trio
Aug. 2 – National Night Out
Aug. 5 – Wet and Wild Water Day
Aug. 10 – Music in the Park: Salsa del Soul
Aug. 17 - Wellness: Picnic and Games in the Park
Aug. 19 – Food Truck Fridays end

Aug. 21 – Aquatic Park closes for the season
Aug. 24 – Wacky Wednesday: jeans or shorts
Aug. 25 – Movies in the Park – "Remember the Titans"
Aug. 31 – Music in the Park – Teddy Bear Band/Rich & The Resistors
Sept. 5 – Labor Day – City Offices Closed
Sept. – Wellness: Outdoor Passes Program
Sept. TBD – Wellness: Vaccination Clinic
Sept. 24 – Farmers Market ends

Employee of the Quarter

The city received four nominations for the Employee of the Quarter.

Congratulations to **Andrea Phinney**, accounting technician, on being selected Employee of the Quarter for April-June 2022. Andrea started with the city in January of 2020 and has been the shepherd of many projects and initiatives that have greatly benefited staff and the city. A few specifically named by her nominator include: SWAT cost management, vehicle leasing, electronic invoicing and online alarm registrations. She's also put her knowledge of spreadsheets and organization to use both within her department and to the benefit of other departments.

It was also noted that Andrea, "always has a smile, a kind word and a wonderful sense of humor!" I'm sure that her nominator is not the only one that has noticed this. As well as her eagerness to help with the many questions finance receives on a daily basis. Thank you for being a fantastic coworker and source of inspiration, Andrea!

Additional nominees:

Linda Bergemann, community development office specialist, for the organization she has brought to the department's filing system and trainings just to name a couple. She's also volunteered to assist with Food Truck Friday's, the Curbside Appeal Program and other department programs. And she initiated and organized the now annual Employee Club's Dip-off!

Dan Fitzmaurice, police officer, for extra work on one of the city's problem properties. His work resulted in the identification and arrest of a suspect that was connected to the property and had felony warrants issued for his arrest.

Jill Smisek, parks and recreation office specialist, for coming in on opening day of the aquatic park to solve an issue that was preventing seasons passes from being used at admissions. As well as her many extra hours leading up to the opening, many of which were spent selling season passes.



Employee Kudos



City receives Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting

At their June 13 meeting, the City Council accepted from the Government Finance Officers Association the above named award for the city's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) for the fiscal year ending Dec. 31, 2020. 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 team and Abdo for helping the city achieve this goal again this year.

New Hope Aquatic Park, Civic Center Park Receive Award of Excellence

by Beth Kramer, communications coordinator

New Hope Parks and Recreation has received an Award of Excellence from the Minnesota Recreation and Park Association (MRPA) for its Civic Center Park and New Hope Aquatic Park project in the organization's "Parks and Facilities" category. Elizabeth Owens, MRPA Awards Committee Co-Chair, presented the award to Recreation Supervisor **Aaron Thelen** and Recreation Facilities Supervisor **Tony Portesan** at the June 27 New Hope City Council meeting.

The MRPA Award of Excellence program recognizes agencies or organizations in Minnesota for outstanding achievements in parks, recreation and leisure services. A primary goal of the program is to increase public awareness and appreciation for the excellent parks, trails, recreation and leisure services available throughout Minnesota. The Park and Facility Award of Excellence for the Civic Center Park and New Hope Aquatic Park project was based on several criteria, including



working with internal and external partners throughout the planning process, the project goals, use of technology in the plan design, funding, overall community support and impact of the project.

Article truncated – see newhopemn.gov for complete copy.



SWAT Members Thanked for Mutual Aid

On June 28, Chief Hoyt received a letter of appreciation from the St. Michael City Council which included the following excerpt, “This letter is to extend our sincere gratitude for mutual aid provided by the West Metro SWAT team several of your staff members are part of during the active shooter event that took place in St. Michael last week (sic). We truly believe the help from your department was critical in the successful outcome of this dangerous situation.

We are grateful that no law enforcement officers, or general public were injured during the event, and cannot thank you enough for all you do each and every day to keep us safe.”

Reserves Thanked for Community Participation

On July 7, Chief Hoyt recognized the New Hope Reserves for their participation in community events. His communication included the following, “I wanted to give a shout out to our Reserve Corps for helping the city of Champlin during their Father Hennepin Parade. Our Reserve Team consistently helps other communities when they have large scale events.

Our Reserves consistently volunteer 1,000’s of hours annually and I wanted to take a second and recognize them as they usually do not want to be in the spotlight.”



New Employee

Cole Anderson, Maintenance Worker

Join me in welcoming the city’s newest maintenance worker. Cole comes to us from Forest Lake. He has spent most of his life in that area and he shares a house there with his fiancé, Brianna, and daughter, Reyna, who is seven. Brianna is a special education teacher for elementary age students. Cole’s dad ran his own concrete business until recently and his mom works in administration at Forest Lake Area Schools. His sister, also a teacher, and her family recently moved back to the area from Sun Prairie, Wisconsin. And his brother, an attorney, and his family live in North Branch.

Cole has a degree from St. Cloud State in environmental studies/sciences but after finishing school he went to work in concrete and has been doing that since. He really enjoys being outside and seeing the results of his work. He applied at New Hope after his previous employer decided to dissolve the business due to difficulties in hiring employees.

Cole and Brianna used to ride the school bus together, separated ways and then reconnected a few years ago. In addition to Reyna, they also share their home with Ford, a bulldog, and Moose, a lab mix. And in October, they will be welcoming a baby to the family! They enjoy being outside fishing, boating and gardening. Reyna is really enjoying gardening and picking vegetables with dad. Cole also hunts, and they spend a lot of time with family as a family. Their parents live within a mile of each other in Forest Lake.

Cole and Brianna both also really enjoy country music and have attended Winstock Country Music Festival together the last couple of years camping and attending shows. When asked what they do when they can’t be outside, Cole said, “ice fishing!” But he then added that they do also enjoy playing cards/games, and they have a membership to the YMCA. Brianna swam competitively in high school and college and is now a coach at Forest Lake Schools, so they spend a lot of their time at the “Y” swimming.

We hope you enjoy it here in New Hope, Cole! And we hope you won’t hold it against us that your first days here were some of the hottest of the summer. (pictured: Brianna, Reyna and Cole on Independence Day this year)

Transitions

Both **Isaiah Gorman** (*pictured right*) and **Matthias Waldemar** (*pictured far right*) have been promoted from community service officers to police officers following an internal recruitment for the position. Their first day as officers was July 18. Congratulations, Isaiah and Matthias!



Kade Madden, community service officer, finished a brief time with the city on July 1. Kade will be working as a deputy with the Anoka County Sheriff's Office. We wish him the best of luck!



Peacock Retires

Danny Peacock, Maintenance Worker

Dan's last day with the city was June 30. The day before he left, I sat down with him and learned a little about his career here at the city and his plans post-retirement.

Before starting with the city, Dan attended Hennepin Tech. As part of the program he was enrolled in, he was required to complete an internship with a public works department. Dan applied with New Hope and was hired as a seasonal employee in May of 2010 and worked through the summer to meet the internship requirements. The following January, after being contacted by city staff and encouraged to consider a position the city had open, Dan applied for a full-time maintenance worker position and was hired on March 1, 2011. Dan said that at that point he fully planned on finishing his career with the city.

He said what he has enjoyed the most over the years is getting to work outside and the variety of work that he had. After having spent 17 years prior to the city working inside in a factory doing the same thing over and over, it was a welcome relief.

Dan shared that the city has been a good place to work and that he is grateful for the opportunity to work with so many great people. His words of advice are to "be prepared to deal with social security!"



Dan and his wife Carol are in the process of buying an RV. Carol will be working for a few more years so once they have the RV, they will take some shorter adventures. Dan has two cousins with property up north where they can camp. One of the cousins lives on Dan's grandparents' farm, where he spent a lot of time during his childhood. Once Carol retires, one journey they are looking forward to is the Circle Tour of Lake Superior. He will also be staying busy with landscaping projects, fishing and kayaking and spending more time with Rudy, their Dachshund/Pomeranian mix.

We appreciate everything you've done for us, Dan, especially the smile you shared often and that you always had a warm hello for everyone you met. We wish you the fullest of enjoyment in this next stage of your life.

Recruitment Updates:

Maintenance Worker – Following Pat Cunningham's move from parks to utilities, Steve Rohloff transferred from streets to parks. And on Monday, Cole Anderson started as a new employee on the streets crew.

Community Service Officer – The city currently has three openings for this position. Three candidates have been given conditional offers and will be undergoing the pre-employment process over the next several weeks.

Happenings

Stantec Community Day – June 22

Several Stantec staff participated in their annual community day by volunteering for projects at Fred Sims Park and the New Hope Golf Course. As part of the day, the group of 18 cooked up lunch and invited all New Hope employees to attend. (pictured Stantec employee volunteers including Dan Boyum, Ann Ackerson and Craig Larson that work with the city). Thank you, Stantec, for being wonderful partners to work with!



NEAR Update

Susan Rader, parks and recreation director, shared the following totals for 2022 to-date as of the end of June: 603 pounds of food and \$560! Thank you to everyone that has given for our community.



Upcoming!

Off-Broadway Musical Theatre Season

In celebration of 50 years of theatre under the stars, OBMT will be producing the musical, "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat", at the city's Performance Center. The dates for this year's productions are July 21-23, July 28-30 and Aug. 4-6. All performances will start at 8 p.m. A donation of \$5 per person is suggested to help offset some costs of productions. OBMT will also be collecting donations for the local food shelf.



Dip-Off Competition – Aug. 23

The City of New Hope Employee Club will be sponsoring this event that was premiered in 2021 and extremely well-received. Employees can enter their favorite summer dips and other related foods for judging by their peers. Prizes will be awarded! \$3 for nonmembers, free for members. Entries are not required to participate. Final details to be announced soon.

Employee Insurance Committee to Meet—August/September

The employee insurance committee, composed of approximately 18 employees, will meet in August/September to discuss changes in the 2023 insurance offerings by the city. If you would like to volunteer for the committee or have other input, please let Walker MacBeath know.

Open Enrollment Save the Date

The dates for Benefits Open Enrollment 2022 have been set. Materials will be distributed the week of Oct. 24th and Open Enrollment will run from Oct. 28 through Nov. 15.



Welcome Baby

Congratulations to Aundrey Wallace, maintenance worker, and his family on Baby Elliana born on May 21. In addition to Dad and Mom, Elliana has two older sisters welcoming her home.





In Memoriam



Our sympathies to:

- The family of Aaron Thelen for the passing of his grandfather on July 3.

Wellness

Step To It! – May

Thanks to Aaron Thelen, recreation supervisor, for leading the New Hope community's participation in Hennepin County's 2022 Step to It program in May. Aaron reported the following results:

Total Steps Per Group (158 groups): 1st - Hennepin – 90,487,902 steps (447 participants), 46th – New Hope Staff – 3,044,028 (11 participants)

Average Daily Steps per Employee (52 organizations): 1st – Brooklyn Center North Memorial Team – 18,678 steps, 17th – New Hope Staff – 10,872 steps

Aquatic Park Introduction – June 8

Eight participants donned their swim gear and joined Tony Portesan, recreation facilities supervisor, as he guided us through the park providing a tour of the features the park has to offer and ways to use park features that make for a great low impact workout for all skill levels. Staff then stayed and tried out things on their own, including the awesome waterslides!

Group Ticket Purchases – Deadline Extended to Friday!

Renaissance Festival – Staff may prepurchase discounted festival tickets for admittance and food. The prices are: adult admittance \$18.25 (\$25.95 at gate), child admittance \$12.50 (\$16.95 at gate) and \$6 food books for \$5. If you're interested in purchasing, please give Walker MacBeath your payment by the end of the week.

Summer Picnic and Games in the Park – Aug. 10

Get outside and challenge your colleagues to some healthy sport of lawn games! Games in the past have included horseshoes, bag toss, Frisbee and bocce ball. When you sign up, be sure to select the game you would like to play and if you have specific employees you would like to challenge. To make sure everyone has a chance to play, those not making selections will be randomly assigned to games and opponents to follow the provided lunch! Raffle prizes to be drawn following score submissions. There is no charge for this event and sign-up is available at I/Wellness.

Outdoor Activity Passes – September

This program has been well-received over the last two years, so we are continuing it in 2022. For a small copay, the city will provide passes to assist employees in getting out and enjoy outside activities. Look for more details next month.

Vaccination Clinics – Sept. 13 and 14

These will again be held at city hall in conjunction with Hy-Vee pharmacy. Final details have yet to be set but in addition to flu, we anticipate hepatitis b, shingles, pneumonia and COVID-19 vaccinations being offered.





7 Ways to Save Money on Your Grocery Bill

According to the USDA⁵, the average adult spends between \$169.40 and \$392.70 dollars on food at home each month, with an average being \$263.08. (This does not include food costs associated with take-out or dining out.)

Here are 7 ways to save:

Stock up and save. Take advantage of weekly sales and buy-one-get-one deals. Warehouse clubs also offer significant discounts also offer significant discounts when you buy in bulk.

Be loyal. Sign up for a rewards program at your favorite local supermarket to maximize your reward points. Staying loyal to a single chain will help you accumulate points and take advantage of more offers.

Simplify your menus. Choose recipes with fewer ingredients. This will not only reduce your grocery bill, but it may also save you time in the kitchen.

Buy in season. When it comes to produce, focus on the fruits and vegetables that are in season. For everything else, opt for frozen or canned.

Use a cash back credit card. Use your cash back credit card at the supermarket and put some grocery money back in your wallet.

Maximize leftovers. Find creative ways to use leftovers. This will reduce the number of meals you need to prepare at home each week and reduce your overall grocery bill as well.

Buy the store brand. Choose store brands when possible and save up to 25%⁶, according to some estimates. Many store brands are manufactured⁷ by familiar national brands, so you may not even notice a difference.



With some careful planning you can reign in your food budget with just a few adjustments in your shopping habits.

5. <https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/media/file/CostofFoodMay2021.pdf>
6. <https://www.consumerreports.org/>

7. https://plma.com/about_industry/store_brand_facts