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# News & Views

November 9, 2023

The City of New Hope's Employee Newsletter

## Employee of the Quarter



Congratulations to **Rick Nelson**, maintenance worker, for being named Employee of the Quarter for July-September 2023. Rick was nominated for consistently providing outstanding work in his service to the City. His nominator shared that Rick is a leader in the example of work he provides for his coworkers, inspiring them to do the same. A couple of examples of where others benefit from this caliber of work include park users through his maintenance of fields and all that drive on the city streets in his performance when it comes to plowing snow. He also takes excellent care of the equipment he uses.

Rick started with the City in 2007 as a maintenance worker and is always one to volunteer when it comes to community events such as the vehicle fairs, City Day, etc. He also often participates in employee events such as wellness, service recognition and others. He's a joy to be around and we're fortunate that he's so engaged. Thank you for all your hard work, Rick!

*Congratulations and thank you to the additional nominees:*

**Tom Lesnikowski**, police officer, for spotting, pursuing on foot and aiding in the apprehension of an individual with an arrest warrant.

**Andrea Phinney**, accounting technician, for her continued coverage of the utility billing functions and training of the new utility billing clerk while maintaining her duties in finance.

**Johnny Vang**, housing/code enforcement inspector, for keeping up on the work of two inspectors as best he could while the department was short-staffed, and maintaining a high level of customer service to New Hope residents despite the extra demands on his time.

## Sergeant Robles and K-9 Drago Win Award

Congratulations to **Miguel Robles** and **K-9 Drago** for being named by The United States Police Canine Association as winners of the National Patrol Case of the Year Award for 2022. The award recognizes outstanding work by K-9 teams. The award is presented to the team selected as having performed exceptionally under challenging circumstances and with exceptional ability in law enforcement using a police service dog. The full story is available at [newhopemn.gov](http://newhopemn.gov).



## Mark Your Calendar:

Nov. 10 – Veterans Day – City Offices Closed

Nov. 14 – Open Enrollment Ends

Nov. 15 – Wacky Wednesday

Nov. 15 – Wellness: Mental Health

Nov. 23/24 – Thanksgiving Holiday – City Offices Closed

Nov. 27 – 2024 City Budget Public Hearing

Dec. 7 – Employee Service Recognition Event

Dec. 20 – Wacky Wednesday

Dec. 25 – Christmas Holiday – City Offices Closed

Jan. 1 – New Year's Day Holiday – City Offices Closed

Jan. 15 – Martin Luther King, Jr. Hol. – City Offices Closed

## New Employee Spotlights

### DeMeshé Baker, Community Service Officer

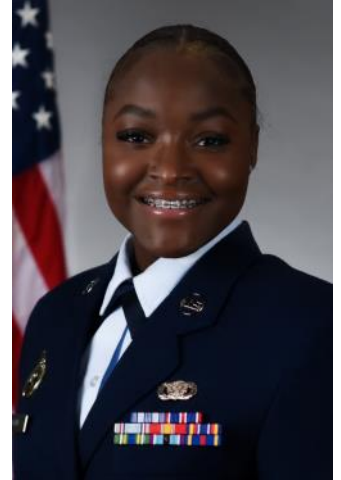
On Sept. 25, we welcomed the city's newest CSO, DeMe as she prefers to be called. DeMe was raised in and still lives here in New Hope with her mom and stepfather. She has two older brothers. One lives in Florida and is a child family therapist. Her other brother lives in Minnetonka and owns/operates a construction and janitorial firm. DeMe's mom works as the contract manager for the firm and her stepdad is an electrician. Her dad lives in South Minneapolis, is a chemical dependency counselor and owns a sober living home.

DeMe joined the U.S. Airforce when she was still in high school, as she wanted to see the world. She knew it would be a good way to travel and to earn an educational benefit. At this point, she has completed associate degrees in both general studies and criminal justice. When asked what her favorite place was that she visited while in the Airforce she promptly responded with Amsterdam. She said she enjoyed the fashion and nightlife of the city. If she were to move anywhere in the world, she thinks it would be Milan. It reminds her of New York where many people bike and walk to destinations, they dress up and the pasta is delicious! Her next international destination is Greece, where she plans to travel for her birthday next year.

When at home, DeMe enjoys baking – favorites include cookies, cakes and cinnamon rolls. In between bakes, you might find her watching one of her favorite crime shows or snuggled up with Melo and Lexy. She adopted her two domestic felines while stationed in Germany and brought them back with her when she returned to the States.

If she's out and about but not traveling, she'll likely be working out or shopping. While in high school she played rugby in Hopkins so it's important to her to stay active. She also spends time at the family cabin where she enjoys spending time on the water and hanging out with family, including her niece.

DeMe shared that she wants members of the community to understand that she and many others are trying to bridge gaps, even if they don't see it every day. We're very glad you chose to work in the community in which you live, DeMe!



### Tim Leick, Maintenance Worker

Hopefully you've had a chance to meet Tim Leick, the City's newest maintenance worker that started on Oct. 9. Tim is originally from New Ulm, but he now lives with his wife, Jessica, in Brooklyn Center (the photo is them on the north shore of Beaver Bay). After high school, Tim enlisted in the U.S. Airforce as a firefighter. While stationed in Japan he met Jessica. She is originally from the Philippines but was living in Japan with family and working as a dental assistant. She's now a dental hygienist.

Tim and Jessica have two sons. Junior is a machinist in-training in Plymouth. He lives in Medicine Lake with his girlfriend, Amanda. Tommy attends school at Anoka Tech. He and his partner, Isaac, recently moved to Northeast Minneapolis. Tim's mom lives in Hopkins and his dad has passed. His sister, who serves in the Navy, lives in Eden Prairie. He also has a brother in Florida.

Tim shared that Jessica is a gardener of both flowering plants and vegetables. She does most of the cooking, so he appreciates her interest in growing much of the food that she prepares for them. They do enjoy eating out as well and traveling. Despite their long-distance family and past adventures, one of their favorite places to spend time is the North Shore.

Prior to starting with New Hope, Tim worked for the Air National Guard in electrical power production and most recently for the Minnesota DOT maintaining highway signs. When on his own time, he spends a lot of time maintaining his several vehicles. He enjoys saving money by doing his own maintenance and said that with YouTube you can learn to do anything! Relaxing at home he and Jessica enjoy watching movies and TV. Loki is a current favorite.

Tim, we're very glad to have you here at the City and hope you enjoy the variety of work!

### Jason Brummer, MNSPECT Inspector

A few of you may have seen this individual walking around since he was posted with the City on Sept. 26. Jason works for MNSPECT and is working with the community development department as a code enforcement and housing

inspector while Eric Piper is out on leave. Jason and his wife, Chelsey, are both from Minnesota (Jason - Buffalo and Chelsey - Detroit Lakes) and met while going to different schools in Moorhead. After visiting a friend in Nashville, Jason decided that he wanted to move to Tennessee and invited Chelsey along. At that point, she was looking for schools where she could continue her education and Knoxville fit the bill. They both moved to Knoxville where they lived for five years while she finished her geotechnical engineering degree. It was while in Knoxville that Jason became a college football fanatic and that hasn't changed since. He admits that he is addicted to fantasy football, specifically Dynasty fantasy football.

From Knoxville, they moved to Atlanta for a job for Chelsey but neither of them enjoyed the area so they returned to the Cities after six months. Chelsey now works for MnDOT as an assistant foundations engineer. And prior to starting for MNSPECT in July of 2022, Jason spent five years repairing failing foundations.

Their son, Knox, pictured with Jason in the photo, will be three years old in January. The family enjoys being outdoors and doing things such as paddleboarding, hunting, fishing and spending time with extended family in the area. Jason loves to ice fish despite hating the cold. He has invested in his hobby accordingly and has an insulated tent and an ice castle to stay warm.

We're glad to have you here, Jason, and hope that you appreciate the heated CD garage come this winter!



## Recruitment Updates

**Maintenance Worker Josh Thomas** will start with the city on Monday. Look for his spotlight in the December issue of News & Views. Josh will be taking the position vacated by **Bruce Stanchfield** who will retire on Nov. 24 after almost 25 years with the City. More on his retirement in the next issue as well.

## Happenings



### Commissioner Bus Tour – Sept. 19

The annual commissioner bus tour was a success with 42 people in attendance, including several new city staff. The tour featured 17 projects from the last year, a stop at Liberty Park and dinner at Civic Center Park. Special thanks to **Jeff Alger**, community development specialist, for coordinating the tour and staff that contributed and helped narrate. *(photo credit: Communications Coordinator Beth Kramer)*

### Employee Golf Outing – Sept. 26

Parks and recreation staff **Jill Smisek**, office specialist; **Penny Spitzer**, admin. specialist; **Aaron Thelen**, recreation supervisor and **Mark Severson**, recreation facilities manager, arranged for a fabulous evening for the employee golf



tournament, even if the course was a bit soggy! Thirty-two participated with 28 golfing. Attendees enjoyed a delicious meal prepared by Jill and Penny and then prizes were awarded: Closest to Pin #1 – Matt Rowedder, Closest to Pin #3 – Tony Loser, Closest to Pin #5 – Mark Severson, Closest to Pin #8 – Tony Loser, Longest Putt #2 – Jeff Alger, Longest Putt #4 – Dave Lemke, Longest Putt #6 – Reece Bertholf, Longest Putt #7 – Aaron Thelen, Longest Putt #9 – Pat Cunningham. Low Gross Team went to Aaron Thelen, Susan Rader, Tony Portesan and Mark Severson with a score of 26. Everyone took home a fabulous door prize as well!



## Citizens Police Academy – Oct. 24 Graduation

**Brad Kallio**, along with others from the police departments of New Hope, Crystal and Robbinsdale led the attendees of the academy through seven classes on what it's like to be a police officer in the represented cities.

Members (pictured along with staff) graduated upon completion of their final scenarios. Thank you to Chief **Tim Hoyt**, Investigator **James Bardon**, and Officers **Tom Lesnikowski** and **Ben Rouse** for all your help!



## Wedding

Congratulations to **Tony Portesan**, recreation facilities supervisor and his wife, Whitney, on their marriage that took place on Oct. 7. They were married at Columbia Park Manor in Northeast Minneapolis.



## In Memoriam



Our sympathies to:

- **Matt Rowedder**, utilities maintenance supervisor, and his family for the passing of his mother-in-law on Oct 30.
- The family of **James O'Meara** with his passing on Nov. 3. James was a police captain that retired in 2006 after almost 27 years with New Hope.
- **Dave Lemke** and his family for the passing of his sister on Nov. 6.

## Wellness

### Summer Picnic and Grilling Safety – Sept. 28

Forty-four employees enjoyed a fall lunch hour outdoors with colleagues. As we ate, Deputy Fire Marshal Shelby Wolf presented on grilling safety and some of the grilling mistakes she's witnessed during her time as fire marshal. Thank you to **Matt Rowedder** and maintenance workers **Mic Rusk** and **Pat Cunningham** for serving up a delicious meal.

### Outdoor Activity Passes – September

Seventeen employees co-purchased Minnesota state parks permit, New Hope Golf passbooks or tickets to the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum!

### Fitness Room Workout – Oct. 25

Officer **Josh Arthur** led five employees through hands-on demonstrations in performing basic to intermediate-level exercises that are very useful in any fitness regimen. Protein shakes were provided to attendees.

### Mental Health: Let's Talk about It – Nov. 15

Come participate in a discussion led by **Linda Bergemann** and **Walker MacBeath** as we share our mental health journey and techniques we use for reducing stress and anxiety in our daily lives. Attendees will be encouraged to participate in the discussion. Participants will enjoy a Nautical Bowl during the discussion and then end the session with practicing some of the techniques discussed. If you're interested, give your \$6 and bowl selection to Walker or Gina by Nov. 13.

