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# News & Views

December 20, 2018

The City of New Hope's Employee Newsletter

## Police Station & City Hall Construction Update

The most noticeable recent exterior improvement is completion of the remaining glass installation on the north side of the city hall. Other activities on the city hall side include framing of walls in the council chambers and work session rooms and continuing with installation of fire sprinkler piping and HVAC duct, along with the hanging of gypsum.



On the police station side, the contractor is completing storm drain piping connections at the roof drains, completing wall framing and laying brick at the sally port. In-wall electrical and plumbing continues, along with the installation of HVAC ductwork and fire sprinkler piping.

Wold Architects met with the management team to start discussing furniture options and layout. Additional meetings will be held that will include affected staff.

## Park/Pool Planning Update

Stantec Engineering provided the Council with an update earlier this week. For the pool, design work has continued on elements including mechanical, interior building layout, electrical needs, security cameras, bathhouse interior materials, discussion on shallow water amenities, and other facility details. Staff is in the process of working with representatives from Ballard\*King & Associates on the pool operations study. A full report will be provided at the January work session. Staff has received notification that the city has been awarded a \$257,750 Hennepin Youth Sports Facility Grant for the project. The \$200,000 grant request to Minnesota Swimming Grant is pending.

Bid openings for the various components of the city hall/Civic Park demolition and Civic Park construction will take place in February and early March, and bids will be awarded in March.



## Mark Your Calendar

Dec. 24-25 — Christmas Holiday — City Offices Closed

Jan. 1 — New Years Holiday — City Offices Closed

Jan. 3 — Movie at the Ice Arena: "D2: The Mighty Ducks"

Jan. 17 — Wellness: Purge/Organize Event

Jan. 21 — Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday — City Offices Closed

## Thank You to Staff

*There have been many successes throughout the city in 2018 and I am thankful to each of you for your contributions. You accomplish your work with efficiency, thoughtfulness and congeniality. I have mentioned just a few of the highlights below. You should all be proud.*

Thank you,  
Kirk McDonald, City Manager

### Public Works

The staff at Public Works coordinated and/or performed the work for around a dozen major construction/maintenance projects in 2018, everything from the MSA infrastructure project on Boone Avenue to the North Water Tower bypass valve/repainting, and a lot of assistance on the police station/city hall construction project. They also performed the day-to-day functions of keeping water flowing (over 5,800 utility accounts!), maintaining all city vehicles and equipment, removing diseased trees, keeping the streets plowed, repairing water main breaks and assisting with special events such as Duk Duk Daze

### Parks and Recreation

Many hours this year have gone into planning the new pool and park facilities at Civic Park so that initial demolition/construction can begin in the spring and be ready to swing into full force once city hall is demolished next summer. The city was successful in securing \$2 million in state funding for the pool. Sunnyside Park equipment and courts were removed and replaced, along with the courts at Begin Park. The ice arena and golf course held many events including hockey and golf tournaments, and family gatherings.

### Finance

The city received a “clean” audit for 2017 and the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report again received the Excellence Award from the Government Finance Officer Association. With the continual increase in activity through the city comes the need to become more efficient at tracking the dollars that come in and go back out through the city accounts. The finance team has put much thought and planning into a new purchase and invoice processing system that will rollout in 2019, making it easier for employees to make purchases and management to monitor and approve the expenses. With each year also comes greater complexity in payroll accounting and reporting yet the team makes the time to learn and execute each new requirement.

### Police

Despite tight quarters, the police staff have continued to meet the needs of the city. Each member of the department continually trains and works to gain expertise in the quickly-evolving environment of law enforcement. Patrol staff monitor the roads and the general community to ensure activity remains safe and legal. Animal control puts effort and thought into best practices for the cohabitation of residents, their pets and wildlife. Management and office staff work to ensure that officers have the information and the equipment they need to do their jobs well.

### Community Development

Community members continually compliment city staff on the amount of commercial improvement and activity in the city. CD staff works with the many developers and business owners to foster interest and investment in the city. The inspectors and office staff ensure that the many private projects are completed legally and safely. Residents and visitors alike see the difference projects such as Alatus, Good Samaritan and the many scattered site conversions make.

### Communications

A credit to both the now-retired communications coordinator, representatives from each department and our new colleague, the city has a new website that have given the virtual image of the city an overdue update. The city has also seen a dramatic increase in online exposure and interaction via social media thanks to the expertise of our new coordinator.

### City Manager Department

Members of the City Manager Department continue to work with all departments to provide needed information to the City Council for decision-making purposes. The staff maintains all of the city’s legal documents and ensures that requests for information are responded to promptly. The new administrative specialist has quickly picked up on the new website and has been busily adding new sections to make it more consumer-friendly. In addition to her usual duties, the city clerk has had a huge role in keeping the new police station/city hall project on track and executed a successful 2018 election at the same time.

*(continued on next page)*

## Thank you to Staff

(continued from pg. 2)

### Human Resources

HR staff has facilitated the hiring of 8 new staff members, and the addition of one new code enforcement position. They partnered with the communications coordinators to launch the new city website and led 95 employees through open enrollment for 2019 benefits. They also led our IT vendors' efforts to ensure that each employee has the technology they need to complete their jobs efficiently and to a high standard, spending a considerable amount of time planning for the needs of staff in the new police station and city hall.

### City Council

The City Council sets not only the policies and budget for the city, but also the tone. And they have provided wise guidance and a positive tone. Staff is extremely grateful to the mayor and council members for both!



### Excellence in Financial Reporting

This month the city was notified by the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) that the New Hope CAFR for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2017 qualified for a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in governmental accounting and financial reporting, and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by a government entity and its management according to the GFOA. The city manager considers this a significant accomplishment for the city and extends appreciation to AEM, city staff and the City Council for the cooperation and teamwork in accomplishing this goal.



## World Of Wellness 2018-19

### Oct. 30—Healthy Soup and Comfort Food Workshop

Eight employees joined Hy-Vee Dietician Caity Nienow in learning some techniques and substitutions for preparing healthier versions of favorite comfort foods. Participants dined on Healthy Mac & Cheese, Vegetarian Chili and a salad with apples, pecans and cranberries, as well as had some to take home!

### 2018 Survey

Please watch for this. The Wellness Committee will be using the feedback and ideas to program 2019 events.

### Jan. 17, 2019—Declutter and Get Organized! (postponed from November)

This will be the start of a series of events aimed at decluttering our spaces throughout the city. Staff at city hall will have the specific goal of preparing for the move to the new police station and city hall next summer, but all employees will be given an opportunity to apply techniques and participate in their respective spaces. Lunch will be included. City hall employees should block their calendars for the afternoon as work schedules permit.

### New Recycling Option for Storage Media

By Jessi Weber, CD Admin Specialist

A media recycling box has been started in the empty cubicle near Beth Kramer (at city hall). Media items include DVDs, CDs, diskettes, thumb drives, flash drives, media storage cards, etc. These items cannot be recycled in the normal recycling bins, but can be specially recycled at the Hennepin County Drop-off Facility. As you purge work areas before the move and you come across any of these items, please place them in the box for recycling. Anything containing private information should be given to Rich Johnson or Walker Crawford for proper destruction. This does not apply to any media containing CJIS information, which requires special handling and a certificate of destruction.



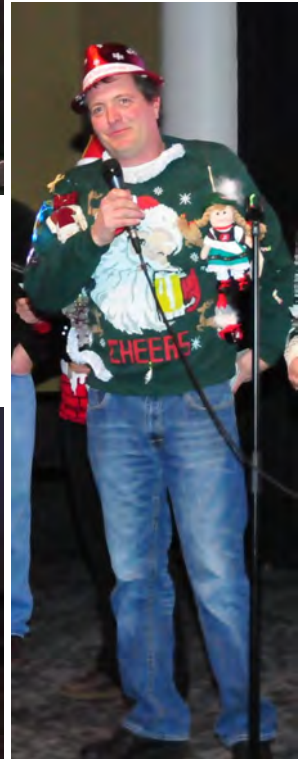
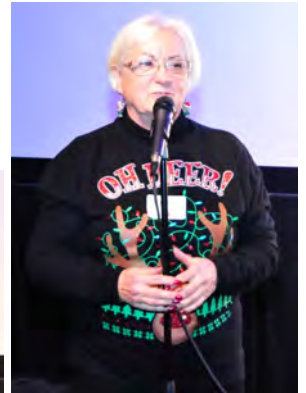
## Employee Recognition Event

Thank you to everyone who attended the Employee Recognition Event on December 6. Approximately 60 people were present to recognize 16 people that reached 5-year milestones in 2018 (listed below). In addition to the service recognition, the evening included a taco bar catered by the venue, New Hope Cinema Grill; guess the candy count; an ugly sweater contest; fantastic door prizes and the announcement of the 2018 Employee of the Year (featured on pg. 5). Prizes for the Ugly Sweater Contest were awarded to the following individuals that most offended our visual senses with their lack of fashion sense: 1st - Bill Broman, 2nd - Brandon Bell, 3rd - Mark Severson. The evening concluded with a send off of delicious cookies baked and packaged by Mayor Hemken.

*Thank you Public Works  
for a great event!*

*Congratulations to Employees Reaching 5-Year Milestones:*

- 30 years:** Val Leone  
**25 years:** Mark Severson, Tim Fournier and Nichole Korth  
**20 years:** Tom Mahan, Matt Remore  
**10 years:** Dave Fritzke, Mike TenEyck, Jeff Winkel, Jeana Allen-Hatcher, Carissa Hoyt, James Muellner and Ben Harty  
**5 years:** Shari Rains, Gena Abramovich and Eric Piper



Clockwise: Megan Albert & Steve Ellingson choose door prizes (apparently not quick enough for Megan's liking!). Jessi Weber crowns Shari Rains (held by Rich Johnson) Employee of the Year as Kirk McDonald presents. Mayor Hemken thanks employees. Bill Broman accepts his award. Mark Severson. Kirk & Marcy McDonald, Mic & Val Leone, Jeff Sargent. Our hosts for the evening: Carissa Hoyt, Bernie Weber, Dave Lemke & Brandon Bell.



## Cost of Living Adjustment Approved

At the December 10 council meeting, council members voted unanimously to enact the 3% COLA adjustment that was included in the 2019 budget proposal. Because all bargaining units for the city have a "me too" clause, employees represented by those bargaining units will receive the same increase. These increases will go into effect on January 7, 2019, and employees will see them on their January 25 pay advice. Thank you Council!

## Employee of the Year

### Shari Rains, Accounting Technician

*Excerpted from Kirk McDonald's presentation at the Employee Recognition Event*

Shari joined the city as an accounting technician in January 2013 and has performed a variety of duties in the finance area over the years. When she came onboard with the city, she brought a wealth of finance industry knowledge and skills and it shows!

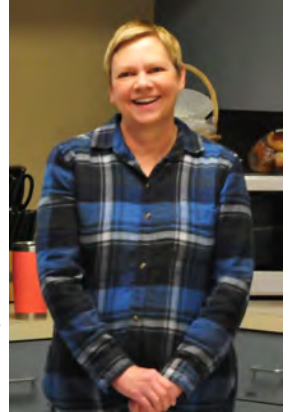
Shari was selected as the Employee of the Quarter for 2nd quarter, 2016 for her patience and diligence in processing all the reports that were mandated as a result of the Affordable Care Act. This was all new and uncharted territory with very vague instructions. Shari submitted the report several times only to get error notification after error notification (but never being told what the error was). Shari took on the challenge, persevered and through research and a bit of trial and error, the report was finally accepted!

Fast forward to early this year. As Eve was preparing to leave the HR coordinator position and we all knew there would be a gap prior to a new person filling that role. Shari stepped right up, learned the skills needed to fill that gap and Shari continues to perform some of those duties still today so Walker can concentrate on duties specific to human resources. Shari has become the city's JD Edwards go to person which is in itself quite a feat!

Shari's nominator expressed their appreciation for her by saying "Shari has taken on data entry of all new regular and seasonal employees and the coordination with LOGIS that goes along with these tasks. Shari has been an integral part of open enrollment for 2019 benefits, worked with HR staff on each and every step (39 to be exact) of JD Edwards setup and learned much of the material so that she could answer employee questions as needed. She pulls the mail each and every day from the city hall drop box be it through monsoon rains, finger-numbing blizzards or desert searing-heat."

I have to agree, Shari has always done an amazing job of keeping city operations running. She is always very pleasant and helpful, she ensures the city's bills are paid on time (as long as she is given the invoices timely), and most importantly, none of us have missed a paycheck on her watch!

Note: Shari was unable to attend, but she was surprised with the news the next day by a reception of her colleagues (photo above). She received a "diamond" tiara and a \$200 Visa gift card. She will also be featured in a Sun Post story on being named the 2018 Employee of the Year.



## Employee of the Year Nominations

We had a total of six nominations this year. As the city manager stated in his thank you to staff, we have had a very successful year and these nominations reflect that. All employees nominated for employee of the year will be invited to a lunch with the city manager. Congratulations to each of you!

**Keith Beise**, communications coordinator, for quickly integrating into his new position and finding ways to convey messages to the community in a timely manner.

**Aaron Chirpich**, community development specialist, for growing the scattered site program resulting in an increase of property values of almost \$4.4 million and transferring that knowledge to the development of the last city-owned redevelopment property.

**Walker Crawford**, human resources coordinator, for pitching in when needed, thinking of new ideas and taking the time to ensure the new employee in his previous role was well-trained.

**Beth Kramer**, for consistently providing exceptional service to both internal and external customers with a smile. She also continually interfaces with staff to garner more knowledge that she can put to use in her role and to share with others. She provides a positive attitude making a difference for those visiting and working at city hall.

**Dave Lemke**, public works operations manager, for always stepping up to fill in, always being happy to answer questions and not being afraid to get dirty. And he consistently goes above and beyond what is asked or expected.

## Employee of the Quarter Nominations Sought

Reminder...nominate one of your outstanding co-workers for Employee of the Quarter today. The deadline is Monday, Dec. 31, by end of day. Forms can be found on the "I:\Forms" (EOQ Nomination Form) or by emailing Human Resources.



## New Employee Spotlight

### Rodney Coons, Community Service Officer

Our much anticipated new community service officer, Rodney Coons, started work on December 3. So anticipated, in fact, that on day one the department had him in a uniform and riding along with other CSOs.

Rodney lives in Sauk Rapids with his wife Amber and their three canine companions, Lily (golden lab), Spike (mastiff) and Apache (bulldog). Rodney calls Spike and Apache their “foster failures.” They both came in as rescues from Ruff Start Rescue, an organization Rodney and Amber volunteer with and have “successfully” fostered 7 other dogs. But Rodney says that Spike and Apache have become part of the family and won’t be leaving. We are sure Spike and Apache are happy to be failures in this respect!



Rodney was born and raised in South Carolina. After joining the US Army, he was stationed in Kansas. He met Amber, now his wife of 9 years, when she was down visiting her brother-in-law (she came along to keep her sister company on the long trip) on the same base Rodney was stationed. Amber is from the Brainerd Lakes area and works for Sartell Schools in their food service department.

Rodney’s parents still live in South Carolina, as do his sister and brother. His father is retired from a career in law enforcement and security, and his mother from nursing. His sister is a teacher and his brother is a corrections officer (do we see a theme here?). Amber’s parents still live in the area she was raised and she also has a sister and brother.

Rodney is currently in school for law enforcement and plans to be a sworn police officer in the coming year. When not working or studying, Rodney and Amber enjoy being outdoors as much as possible. They enjoy camping, hunting, fishing and hiking. One of his favorite hikes thus far was Bear Head Lake State Park near Ely. This winter they have a trip scheduled for winter camping in the Duluth area. When hunting they shoot small game and waterfowl. Rodney also bow hunts deer and has applied for a bow license for bear hunting but hasn’t been chosen yet. They also enjoy off-roading. They recently traded in their Jeep for a vehicle with better gas mileage but look forward to owning another one soon so they can traverse the soon to be opened Border to Border Touring Route (B2B). B2B will give off-roaders a route from North Dakota to the shores of Lake Superior.

Welcome to New Hope, Rodney. We look forward to hearing more of your adventures, both on and off road!

## Police Clerk Recruitment

Internal recruitment for a new police clerk closed on December 17. Because there were not 2 qualified applicants, the position was posted externally and will be open until January 7. This is a slightly longer period than usual because it occurs over several holidays. The successful applicant will take the position Kate Larson will be leaving when she retires at the end of February. Please help us get the word out. Employee referrals are always important, but in the existing tight labor market, it is critical we not rely just on job seekers but actively recruit good candidates.

## Welcome to the World!



Congratulations to CSO William Leon-Aguilar and his wife Denise for the birth of their newborn, Natalia Yaretzi Leon, born on Dec. 10.



## In Memorial

Our sympathies to Dean Blom and his family for the passing of his mother, Pauline Blom, on Dec. 1.

Our sympathies to Andrew and Beth Kramer and their family for the passing of Andrew’s father, Howard Kramer, on Dec. 12.

## Employee Training

### Kaitlyn Baker, Police Officer

Kaitlyn spent a week of intense LIDAR and RADAR Instructor Training at the Southwest Metro Public Safety Training Facility in Edina the week of December 3-7. The training provided technical details on how both devices, used for checking vehicle speeds, function and are operated. RADAR (radio detection and ranging) devices use high and low Doppler to obtain the target vehicle speed, whereas LIDAR (light detection and ranging) devices use a single light source to measure time and distance. In addition to the operation of the devices, time was also spent learning about how to transfer the knowledge to successful court testimony.

After our conversation, Kaitlyn brought up her handheld LIDAR device so that I could feel how light and portable the device is. She said she prefers LIDAR over RADAR, as it allows her to be outside of her vehicle during nice weather. It's also much more accurate because you know for certain which vehicle the reading is coming from.

Kaitlyn said she had no idea going in how detailed or how much time with the class would take. She said that while the class was only 40 hours, she averaged 14 hour days during with the week due to the studying required to pass the exam at the end of the week. She learned about cosigns, angles, Doppler tones and much more. However, she and her 13 classmates were all certified at the end and are now certified instructors in the use of the technology. Congratulations Kaitlyn, I'm sure many of your colleagues here in New Hope are excited to learn the knowledge you have returned with!



### Jason Ryan, Police Officer

What do you have after 9 full days of in-class training, 12 drug evaluations in Arizona and a lengthy practical exam? One Drug Recognition Evaluator (DRE) Jason Ryan. Starting in October, this was the goal Jason has been working on.

During the 9 days of in-class training he learned to identify which of seven categories each drug that is used recreationally falls into and how each one affects the body. An evaluation of someone showing symptoms of drug use takes about 45 minutes and includes checking pulse three times throughout the period, blood pressure, pupil reaction, divided attention, Romberg (balance) test, walking and turning, left and right one-leg standing, finger to nose accuracy, and checking of the nose and mouth with a black light. Following the evaluation, a Miranda interview of the subject is performed.

They also learned the time lapse of drugs: what the period typically is for exhibition of symptoms vs how long it remains detectable in the body and how to interpret other non-DRE trained officers' observations of suspects. Jason and his classmates were required to memorize the material for an exam and score at least 80% to pass this first portion of the process. For the second portion, 11 students and 10 instructors traveled from Minnesota to the Maricopa County Jail in Arizona, where detained suspects were asked to volunteer for a drug recognition evaluation. In three days, each student had to conduct 12 evaluations at a 75% accuracy rate or above. If they accomplished that, they were allowed to sit for a practical exam. During the exam, students were presented with case scenarios where they were told what combination of drugs a suspect had consumed (Jason said that users typically do not use just one at a time) and the students needed to provide a narrative of what behaviors they would expect to see when.

Lastly, if they pass the practical exam, the officers submit the results of all of their training to the Minnesota State Patrol coordinator for the DRE Program. If that individual concludes that they have passed the program to the desired standards, they are placed on a call list provided to dispatch. Because of the few number of evaluators there are in a given area, Jason will likely be called to other jurisdictions to serve, just as New Hope has the option of calling others in if Jason is not available. To ensure a high level of training and to evaluate for accuracy, evaluators enter each evaluation into a national database followed by the entry of lab test results once received.

To maintain his certification, Jason will need to conduct two witnessed evaluations annually. When asked to serve as an expert witness in court, for each case he must provide a curriculum vitae along with all of his certifications. If acceptable, the judge will then certify him as an expert witness.

Jason feels this training is the best he has had and sees many applications in his daily work. The program is funded through a grant from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and all expenses of the DRE training plus his attendance at yearly Standardized Field Sobriety Testing and Toward Zero Deaths conferences are paid for, as long as he maintains his certification. Congratulations Jason, we appreciate the many miles you have traveled to develop this expertise for the New Hope community.



## Happenings

### Food Pantry Donations & Holiday Drives

In 2018, employees donated \$1,105 for Wacky Wednesday participation and collected 1,062 lbs. of food and \$35 for donation to NEAR through food drives over the course of the last year. Thank you everyone for continued contributions and thank you Susan Rader, parks and recreation director, for coordinating the effort.

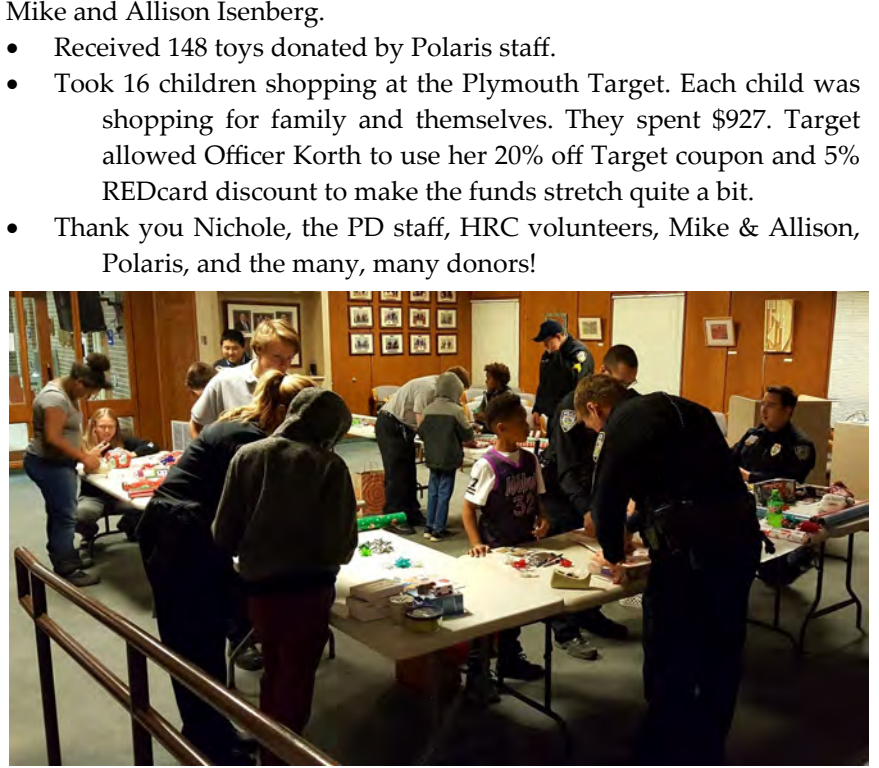
### Teen Toy Drive and Potluck

Jeff Alger, CD coordinator/mgmt. analyst, and Aaron Thelen, recreation supervisor, brought employees together on Dec. 1. The gifts and cash donated went towards the Toy Drive and Shop with a Cop effort coordinated by Nichole Korth, crime prevention officer. Thank you to everyone that shared delicious food and contributed toys and cash.

### Shop with a Cop

Nichole Korth coordinated the largest success to-date for the city of New Hope. Here are how the gifts stacked up!

- Received 822 toys, \$112 in cash and \$285 in gift cards from Toy Fest, an annual event hosted by New Hope residents Mike and Allison Isenberg.
- Received 148 toys donated by Polaris staff.
- Took 16 children shopping at the Plymouth Target. Each child was shopping for family and themselves. They spent \$927. Target allowed Officer Korth to use her 20% off Target coupon and 5% REDcard discount to make the funds stretch quite a bit.
- Thank you Nichole, the PD staff, HRC volunteers, Mike & Allison, Polaris, and the many, many donors!



### Working Hard and ..... Having Fun!

Employees have been showing the spirits of the seasons.



Cowboy (& Trusty Stead) Bernie Weber, public works director, made the rounds and is shown here with Ninja Carissa Hoyt, utility billing clerk, and Nichole Korth (t-rex).

Mrs. Marcy McDonald baked up a storm of treats and shared them with staff visiting city hall earlier this week.

Public Works staff saved a tree headed for the incinerator and gave it a new life!

