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News & Views

June 3, 2024

The City of New Hope's Employee Newsletter

Employee of the Quarter



Congratulations to **Lee Larson**, police officer, for being selected as the January-March 2024 employee of the quarter. Lee's exceptional work in supporting crime victims and her peers has not only earned her two nominations but also had a significant impact on the community. Her proactive approach, going beyond the completion of reports to assist in follow-up investigations, has aided the investigations division and her diligence also led to the identification of a suspect in multiple thefts across Minneapolis and the surrounding suburbs. Lee's commitment to service is evident in her consistent willingness to take calls above basic response, and finding resolutions and resources for the individuals she assists. Her victim and problem-centered approach, utilizing various department resources, has not only benefited the department but also helped to build public trust.

Lee started with the City in October of 2020. Her dedication and contributions over this time have been instrumental in her recognition as the City's Employee of the Quarter for the first quarter of 2024.

Congratulations and thank you to the additional nominees:

Krissy Barthel, utility billing clerk, for quickly learning her position and going above and beyond in providing customer service both in-person and over the phone. She was also recognized for her collaboration with other staff/departments.

Ricky Plemel, golf superintendent, for researching, selecting and implementing a new point of sale system for the golf course clubhouse. He was also recognized for opening the golf course on March 1, the earliest date on record for New Hope.

Mark Your Calendar:

June 1 – Aquatic Park Opens for Sat/Sun
June 6 – Aquatic Parks Opens for Summer
June 7 – Food Truck Friday begins
June 11 – Wellness: Disc Golf Intro
June 14 & 15 – Citywide Garage Sale
June 19 – Juneteenth: City Offices Closed
June 21 – Law Enforcement Torch Run
June 26 – Wacky Wednesday – Jeans/Shorts

July 4 & 5 – Independence Day: City Offices Closed
July 10 – Wellness: Resistance Bands – Hands-on
July 12 – No Food Trucks/AP Closed for Weekend
July 17-27 – OMBT presents Bye Bye Birdie
July 24 – Wacky Wednesday – Jeans/Shorts
Aug. 6 – New Hope's Night to Unite
Aug. 13 – Primary Election Day
Aug. 16 – Food Truck Friday Ends

New Employee Spotlights

Chris Audet, Housing/Code Enforcement Inspector

Welcome to Chris who started on March 4. Chris comes to the City from Mint Properties where he was their inspection specialist and maintenance supervisor for several years. Over his lifetime, Chris has crisscrossed the United States being born in New Jersey, living in Arizona until he was ten and then landing in the Twin Cities. His parents now live in Shoreview. They are both retired, his mom from Medtronic where she was a director and his dad, a consulting engineer, from a CEO position. His older sister Teresa lives in Pennsylvania with her fiancé. She has a master's in art and operates a woodworking studio. Chris and his wife, Holly, live in Roseville. They met in 2020 via mutual friends. Holly is a trainer for Ecolab. Their youngest, Sunny was born in 2022. Chris' daughters Malia, who's ten, and Frankie (Frances), who's seven, also live with them half of the time. The other half they live with their mom in Saint Paul. Though Malia tends more towards the artistic and Frankie more towards the athletic, they both enjoy dance, acrobatics and taking virtual art classes with Aunt Teresa.

Chris said that much of their time is spent with the kids' activities, specifically Malia and Frankie's acrobatic program. However, the two of them make time to box at a local gym giving them time together and exercise. They also enjoy spending time together walking outside and with the family husky, Kiah who's four, and German shepherd, Raven, who's two (and has learned to howl from Kiah!). They enjoy traveling and spending time with his large extended family who he's remained close to over the years.

When asked what might surprise us about him, Chris said that at one time he owned and operated a recording studio. He studied music theory for a while but found that he enjoys the doing more than the studying. These days he primarily plays keyboard, guitar and percussion. Welcome, Chris!



Abby Greene, Accounting Technician

Welcome to Abby who started on April 15. Abby, originally from Eden Prairie, now lives in Savage with her two Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retrievers. Willow is two and Breeze (*pictured*) is eight. Abby's parents and older brother still live in the area as well. Her younger brother lives in Florida. Her dad is a retired attorney and is enjoying refereeing youth soccer. Her mom works as an occupational health nurse for Met Council and is still working.

Abby has many hobbies including reading mysteries and thrillers such as Mary Higgins Clark and David Baldacci novels. She's also currently writing a fantasy novel. She enjoys watching soccer and basketball as she played soccer through high school and Division I basketball through her first year in college in Maine. If she's looking for a more relaxing evening, you'll likely find her turning on a murder mystery or fantasy show. She says she can cook if she needs to, but she really enjoys baking treats including cookies, scones and brownies.

She enjoys being active by walking Willow and Breeze regularly and hopes to spend more time this summer exploring up north.

When asked what might surprise her colleagues about herself, she shared that when she first moved to Florida she lived on a boat. But no, she doesn't know how to sail.

Welcome, Abby. We'll try and make sure you get some time away to enjoy some up north exploration!



Mark Anderson Jr., Maintenance Worker

Welcome to Mark who started on May 6. Mark is a Stacy native where he and his family currently reside. Melissa, his wife, is originally from Forest Lake and is a detox nurse at Hazelden Betty Ford Treatment Center. They originally met in high school and have been together for over 20 years. They have a son and two daughters. Mark III, and Madeline are 16-year-old twins. Mark enjoys video games and school. Madeline works retail in Wyoming and enjoys cooking and baking. Their younger sister, McKinley (age 13), enjoys animals and has the high energy to match. They share their home with French bulldogs Millie and Merlin (sensing a naming theme here?).

Mark's dad retired from driving for BTI/Republic but is now driving for Chisago Lakes Sanitation because he has a hard time sitting still. His mom is a surgical technician and travels around the region for her job. Mark's two younger sisters also still live in Minnesota, Nicole is in Bemidji and Cassandra is in Forest Lake.

Mark and his family are very active. They swim in their pool and ride ATVs daily. His parents live on Forest Lake, so if they want to be on the water instead of in it, you'll find them out in a boat. When they're looking to relax, Melissa enjoys cooking for the family and Mark enjoys firing up one of his three grills (pellet, charcoal and flattop). Mark's favorite items to prepare include smoked ribs, chicken breasts, steaks and fried rice. They also often have bonfires and cookouts with family and friends.

Mark and Melissa enjoy traveling, whether it be their annual trip to Vegas or one offs such as a recent trip to Cancun. When asked what might surprise his colleagues Mark said that despite his size, he's hard to rile. Mark, we're glad to have you here bringing your calm to the streets of New Hope!



Rob Dyson, Maintenance Worker

Welcome to Rob who started on May 6. Originally from Savanna, Illinois he now lives in Zimmerman with his wife, Jackie, who is originally from Coon Rapids. They met when Jackie was attending Winona State and Rob was attending Madison Tech in Madison, Wisconsin. Rob and Jackie have two daughters, Bennet and Rivia. Bennet is four and a half and loves to fish and ride dirt bike. Rivia is two and a half and enjoys riding around with dad. They share their home with Remington, their 13-year-old yellow lab. Julie works in the medical field, so they spent a few years in La Crescent while she was working for Mayo Clinics in Rochester. She now works as a medical science liaison with Janssen Pharmaceuticals.

Rob's parents live in Annandale. His dad is a retired railroad conductor and his mom is a retired butcher. Rob's brother, Derek, and nephew, Axel, also live in Annandale.

Rob and the family enjoy being active and outside. Rob enjoys deer hunting and fishing. He, his dad and brother make an annual trek up north for a fishing trip. Rob and Jackie enjoy ice fishing. Jackie spent time between college terms backpacking Europe and she's passed the travel bug on to Rob. In addition to traveling around the United States, they've been to Ireland twice and spent two weeks in Thailand. Rob said they attended cooking classes while in Thailand and they continue to make some of the dishes they learned. They enjoy camping and attending concerts. One of their favorites was Ham Jam that they attended in Iron River, Wisconsin and involved many bands and a pig roast.

One of the things that might surprise his colleagues is that Rob played Minor League Baseball and was in the process of being recruited by the Cincinnati Reds when shoulder issues took him out of the running.

We're glad to have you here with the City, Rob!

Alaina Bialke, Police Clerk

Welcome to Alaina who started on May 13. Alaina hails from Big Lake originally but has lived around the Twin Cities and in Denver, Colorado for a few years. Alaina is from a big family with five brothers and two sisters. The family now also includes three nephews and a niece.

Alaina and her fiancé, Josh, live in Maple Grove. They met through family and have been together for about three and a half years. Josh is originally from New Hope and his parents still live here. He operates a snow removal business in winter and works for Martin Marietta in the summer. They have several four-legged companions starting with Rosco, a Norwegian elkhound, and Rosie, a golden retriever (*both pictured*). Plus, four rabbits: companions Lenny, a Flemish giant (*pictured*), and George, a crossbreed, and companions Miss Honey, a Holland lop, and Norman, a Dutch. All six are rescues.



Alaina and Josh will be married on Sept. 21 this year and

plan to honeymoon in Alaska next year. In addition to wedding planning, they have many other things to keep them busy including yard projects. This year they built a stepped garden system in their backyard with four very large, raised garden beds. Alaina expects to fill them with flowers and vegetables alike, including many greens for the rabbits.

Away from home they spend time up north boating and camping where Josh's family has a cabin on a lake island near Aitkin. Back inside, Alaina loves to entertain by cooking and baking for friends. When she has time alone she'll turn on old comedic favorites such as That '70s Show and Cheers and play video games such as Fortnite.

Welcome, Alaina! We're glad to have you working here in New Hope, rather than just visiting.

More to Come...

The next issue will have employee spotlights featuring Mark Ales, maintenance worker, and Makenna Dickey, police clerk, both of whom started with the City today.



Promotion

Congratulation to **Riley McIlrath** on her promotion to police office supervisor. Riley was promoted on April 15 to give her time to learn the position before Jeana departed. She started with the City as a police clerk in November 2020 and worked overnights until earlier this year. She's done a great job of learning a lot of information over the last month and a half and is a fantastic communicator if you have any questions for her.

Departures

Congratulations to **Jeana Allen-Hatcher** who is retiring from her position as police office supervisor this summer. Her last day in the office was Friday. Expect a full write-up in the next issue.

The City has had several other employees depart since the publication of the last issue. We thank each of them for their service and wish them the best of luck in the future.

- **Pat Cunningham**, Maintenance Worker
- **Isaiah Gorman**, Police Officer
- **Brad Johnson**, Maintenance Worker
- **Steve Rohloff**, Maintenance Worker

Kudos



Kallio Earns Above & Beyond Award

Chief Hoyt commended Community Relations Officer **Brad Kallio** for being recognized by Lang Nelson Properties staff for his community outreach with Emerald Pointe Apartments' residents and management staff. "Brad epitomizes the vision of this department to professionally serve, as well as represent our diverse community as we strive for togetherness through accountability and transparency, all while ensuring New Hope continues to be a safe place to live, work and visit. Thank you, Brad, for going 'Above and Beyond' with Emerald Pointe Apartments, and thank you to all New Hope PD staff who have volunteered their time to connect with our residents."

Baker Awarded Cannon Memorial Scholarship

From newhopemn.gov: On May 22, New Hope Police Department Community Service Officer **DeMeshé Baker** received the Law Enforcement Opportunities Steve Cannon Memorial Scholarship at an award presentation at the Mall of America. New Hope Police Chief **Tim Hoyt** and Captains **Scott Slawson** and **Dave Johnson** (pictured left to right with Baker) attended the event. This scholarship honors individuals who demonstrate dedication to achieving their goals in life.

Community Service Officer Baker is currently a student at Metropolitan State University and serves in the Air National Guard at the 133rd Air Lift Wing. The scholarship's selection criteria included participation in community service and academic excellence.



School Resource Officers Return to Cooper High

Following a revision of Minnesota Statute, school resource officers are back at Cooper High School. Congratulations to Officer **Justin Janson** (left) who was reappointed and Officer **Josh Arthur** (right) for his new appointment to this position!



Recruitment Update

Police Officer

Staff interviews for the City's officer vacancy took place last week. One candidate moved forward to the personnel board for an interview this week.



In Memoriam



Our sympathies to:

- The family of **Gail Keykal**, retired community development office specialist, for her passing on May 7.
- **Eric Hanson**, building official, and his family for the passing of Eric's father on May 27.

Happenings



Arbor Month – On April 8, the City Council proclaimed May as Arbor Month in the City of New Hope. Thank you to the city forester and public works staff for their work in maintaining New Hope as a designated Tree City USA for the last 26 years and for their diligence in combating the emerald ash borer.

Building Safety Month – On April 8, the City Council proclaimed May as Building Safety Month in the City of New Hope. Thank you to the building code and inspections staff as well as fire prevention officials for ensuring the safety and desirability of New Hope properties through their work.



Great Shingle Creek Watershed Cleanup Week – On April 8, the City Council proclaimed May 5-11 as Great Shingle Creek Watershed Cleanup Week. On May 8, Council member **Mike Isenberg**, City Manager **Reece Bertholf** (*left in photo*), City Forester **Shawn Markham**, Public Works Director **Bernie Weber** (*right in photo*) and Parks & Recreation Director **Susan Rader** plus nine community members participated in the Shingle Creek Watershed clean-up event.

National Police Week – On April 22, the City Council proclaimed May 12-18 as National Police Week in the City of New Hope. Thank you to all of the police department staff for their vital role in maintaining the city as a safe and secure community.



National Public Works Week – On April 8, the City Council proclaimed May 19-25 as Public Works Week in the City of New Hope. Thank you to public works staff for maintaining the city's infrastructure to provide a safe and healthy environment for the community.

Upcoming



From **Lorilee Stafford**, admin. specialist for police (*edited*):

"The Law Enforcement Torch Run Final Leg is returning the week of June 17 – 22, leading up to the Special Olympics Minnesota Summer Games Celebration. Law enforcement agencies across the state will carry the Flame of Hope in honor of Special Olympics athletes.

The West Metro route will be traveled this year on Friday, June 21. More route information and timing will come from Special Olympic Torch Run organizers in the coming weeks, but we typically start our leg from the ice arena between 10:30 and 11 and end at Zachary Park in Plymouth. Everyone is invited to participate and you do not have to run. In past years, we have had runners, bikers, rollerbladers, tricycle riders, etc. Participants are also welcome to invite family members to join us on our leg of the Torch Run. Last year, we had the children of three city employees riding their bikes with our group.

See me for the merchandise flyer for the shirts and hats. All money goes to support the athletes and their participation in the Special Olympics events. Pre-orders are due no later than June 7. Additional orders beyond that will be hand delivered the day of the run. Please note that while they will do their best to fulfill all orders, orders placed after June 12 cannot be guaranteed. If you are interested in ordering a shirt or a hat let me know.

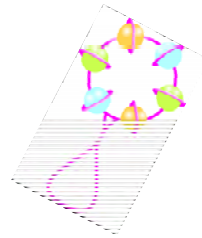
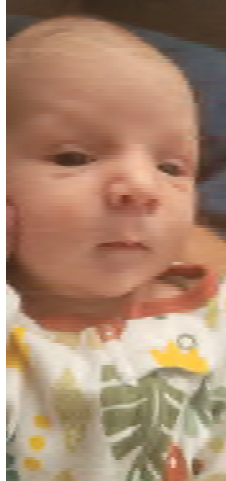
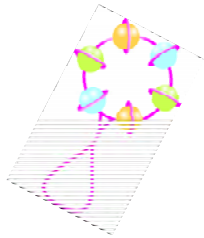
I would love to see our group continue to grow again this year. Don't be discouraged from participating because the word RUN is in the title, as I said there are many options to get you from start to finish. It's a great event to be a part of!"



Celebrations!

Our City family has been blessed with many little ones over the last few months. Congratulations to the following staff and their families! (pictured left to right)

- **Nick Macklem**, stormwater specialist/project coordinator, welcomed Oscar to his family on March 30.
- **Jared Kuyper**, police officer, welcomed Noah to his family on May 15.
- **Thomas Ford**, social worker, welcomed Trayce to his family on May 29.



Parks and Recreation Discounts

Did you know that regularly scheduled full-time and part-time employees can:

- Reserve a picnic pavilion at no charge. Pavilions are located at Civic Center, Hidden Valley and Northwood parks and are available from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. between May 1 and Sept. 30. If you're looking for a place to hold a birthday party or family event, we may have the space for you!
- Purchase half-price golf passes for \$8.50 (staff use only).
- Purchase recreation programs or aquatic park passes (for staff or immediate family) at the resident rate.



Penny and Jill at the parks and recreation counter can help you with all the above!

Additional Parks and Recreation Events

June 5 - Music in the Park: Mpls. Commodores
Barbershop Acapella Chorus

June 8 – Young Mudder

June 12 – Music in the Park: Kid Power with Rachel

June 13 – Movie in the Park: Indiana Jones and the
Dial of Destiny

June 26 – Family Storytime in the Park: Belle

July 10 – Family Storytime in the Park: Flexi Girl

July 10 – Music in the Park: Los Rebeldes

July 31 – Music in the Park: Pan Handles Steel Drum Band

Aug. 1 – Movie in the Park: Cool Runnings

Aug. 2 – Wet and Wild Water Day

Aug. 7 – Family Storytime in the Park: The Nanny

Aug. 7 – Music in the Park: The Michael Handler Project

Wellness Tip

Val Leone, city clerk, shared the following wellness tip. The state of Minnesota is currently offering a rebate for the purchase of e-bikes. For more information go to www.revenue.state.mn.us/electric-assisted-bicycle-e-bike-rebate

Wellness

Using Resistance Bands – March 13

Josh Arthur led four attendees through classroom instruction on the many uses of resistance bands that employees have access to in the City Hall fitness room.

Ice Arena Open House and Open Skate – April 10

Mark Severson, recreation facilities manager, led six attendees on a tour of the ice arena, sharing information on the history of the facility and the many current activities that take place on a daily basis. Attendees were able to take a spin on skates and on the infamous Zamboni (pictured with **Penny Spitzer**, parks and recreation admin. specialist).



Hiking Tips and Hike at Dorothy Mary Park—May 15

Hiking enthusiast **Linda Bergemann**, admin. specialist - community development, shared tips and tricks she's learned from her experiences with six attendees. She brought along equipment to demonstrate as well. Following the presentation, the group took a short hike around the beautiful Dorothy Mary Park.

Upcoming

Disc Golf—An Introduction—June 11

Have you ever wondered what the deal is with the fancy frisbees or the dangling chains with baskets on poles? Come hear an explanation of the game and see a demo by our very own Recreation Supervisor **Aaron Thelen**. Following Aaron's brief intro, everyone will have an opportunity to try their hand at throwing discs and playing a few holes. Afterwards you can eat lunch at the park or take it with you.

Using Resistance Bands Part 2 – July 10

Josh Arthur will lead attendees through hands-on instruction in the fitness room on the many uses of resistance bands that employees have access to in the City Hall fitness room. Protein supplements will be included as part of the workout.

Renaissance Festival Tickets—July

The City will again be organizing a discounted ticket purchase for the Renaissance Festival. Options include adult, child and food tickets. Tickets will arrive before the festival dates begin. More information to follow via email in June/July.

