



HUMAN SERVICES

DECEMBER 2017

ONE BLOOMINGTON

Human Services has embraced new initiatives and partnerships to fulfill the City Council's One Bloomington plan and its priority of inclusion and equity. Bloomington is a community that includes all residents, united not by sameness but by diversity and the desire to build a strong community all can enjoy. Human Services does this work by listening to residents and working together to create programs that meet their direct needs.

BUILDING COMMUNITY IN NEW WAYS

Human Services and the Human Rights Commission began talking with representatives from more than 34 local businesses, nonprofits and organizations in 2017 to establish a way to create a feeling of community and belonging in Bloomington through sharing meals and culture. The group has been discussing how to launch welcome dinners to engage everyone, including people from different cultures, established and new residents, people new to the country and various organizations, businesses and agencies.

"The goal of these events is to foster an environment of fun, learning and connection," said Program Coordinator Amanda Crombie. "Anyone will be able to host a dinner and anyone will be able to attend."

For more information, contact the Human Rights Commission, follow the *Briefing* or view the website at blm.mn/humanrights.

BLOOMINGTON LEARN TO LEAD INITIATIVE

More than 30 residents attended this six-month program designed to empower individuals to become involved in local boards and commissions of city, school district and nonprofit organizations and discover what role these organizations play in the community. Human Services partnered with Public Health, Police and the City Manager's office to offer the program.

WELCOMING NEW CITIZENS

More than 100 people from 37 countries around the world gathered at Civic Plaza to become U.S. citizens at the fourth naturalization ceremony hosted by the Human Rights Commission in September.

New U.S. citizen Victoria Toroitich said she's been dreaming of immigrating to the U.S. from Kenya since she was a little girl.

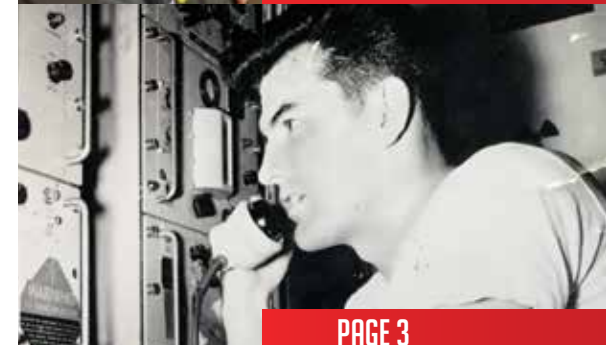
According to Toroitich, the more than year-long process of becoming a citizen was worth it. She loves Minnesota because of the "true sense of community" it provides. She has a lot of family and friends nearby, including her three-year-old twins Moriah and Milan who just started preschool.

"It feels so good to be an official citizen," Toroitich said. "I'm very excited for what the future will bring."

The City streamed the ceremony live on Facebook.



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WHO ARE WE?

Human Services provides support to people with disabilities, adults age 50 and older, immigrant and refugee individuals and families, multicultural individuals and families, children, youth, families with low income, and individuals and families who are homeless. Our vision is to strengthen Bloomington residents' quality of life by addressing relevant community issues through expertise, resources and partnerships. Our mission is to assure human services needs are met through the engagement of Bloomington residents.

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Human rights affect the happiness, health and prosperity of a community. Safeguarding these rights is important. The Human Rights Commission aids and advises the City Council in ensuring that all citizens have equal opportunity in employment, housing, public accommodations, public services and education and in other affairs that affect the social well-being of the community.

FIND US ONLINE
BLOOMINGTON MN.gov



CIVIC PLAZA

1800 West Old Shakopee Road
Bloomington, MN 55431
952-563-8733
(TTY only 952-563-8740)

CREEKSIDE COMMUNITY CENTER

9801 Penn Avenue South
Bloomington, MN 55431
952-563-4944



KITE DAY BY THE NUMBERS

More than 1,800 people of all ages and cultural backgrounds attended the 17th Annual Kite Day in July at Valley View Playfields. The event had more than 900 kites flying, cultural entertainment, inflatables and interactive and educational booths. Free kites and pinwheels were also distributed to children and youth.

The event brings people of all ages and cultural backgrounds together. It was made possible by 40 volunteers and 15 community partners including, businesses, nonprofits and faith organizations.



NEW CONNECTIONS

This year, a new more streamlined approach to help meet identified needs and deliver high-quality customer service was debuted. Connect with Human Services allows residents to connect directly with a coordinator through one phone line for resources, services, support, and information. Since its kickoff in June, Connect with Human Services has received between 70 – 85 calls a month. The greatest needs reported are financial, legal, food and transportation.

“This program allows staff to be available to provide resources and information for consumers while having more flexibility with other projects,” said Program Coordinator Melissa Wurst-Persaud.

Whether a resident is looking for information on financial or housing assistance, volunteer opportunities or other programs, Human Services coordinators are available to link them to the resources, services, support or more information they need. To connect with Human Services, call 952-563-INFO (4636) or email humanservices@BloomingtonMN.gov, Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 4:15 p.m.



DIVERSITY & INCLUSION IN GOVERNMENT (DIG)

Human Services has planned and implemented trainings for City staff that promote diversity, inclusivity and equity in 2017. One objective of DIG is to learn how diverse experiences impact daily interactions within the community and workplace and generate open and honest dialogue. Trainings included peer panels on LGBTQIA, immigration, aging, veterans and poverty. Professional speakers also presented on implicit bias, transgender 101 and immigration. After speaking to an audience of coworkers, one LGBTQIA staff panelist said that she received overwhelmingly positive feedback and that sharing her story was a freeing experience.

“No one knew what I went through to live my life authentically,” she said. “Sharing that gave me a freeness that I normally don’t feel. Maybe that means more allies, more openness and more LGBT people feeling free.”

STUDENTS IN GOVERNMENT DAY

The event provided an opportunity for 18 students to take an inside look at how cities operate, build relationships with mentors, learn about different roles within the City and participate in a City Council meeting. Students sat with and took on the roles of their mentors during the meeting.

“Overall, the event exceeded my expectations in terms of experiential learning for both the students and the mentors,” said former Assistant City Manager Elizabeth Tolzmann. “The students were engaged, astute, articulate and provided great overall feedback on the event.”



COMMUNITY SURVEY CONVERSATIONS

After the 2017 National Citizen Survey™, more than 150 people from underrepresented populations participated in facilitated conversations to make their voices heard. Human Services staff facilitated these conversations. Thoughts that emerged from the conversations were that quality of life is good in Bloomington, people feel safe and participants appreciate community amenities. Facilitators noted a number of concerns that also came up during the discussions surrounding affordable healthy foods, public transportation and affordable housing.

WORKING TOGETHER PAYS DIVIDENDS

Whether designing a ceramic piece, grabbing a meal or seeing a movie, longtime Bloomington resident Mary Jane loves spending time at Creekside Community Center. This has not always been true. She didn’t know about the range of programs and events available at Creekside until some City employees Christmas caroled at her door.

Human Services, Public Health, Environmental Health and Police employees regularly work together to identify residents who need help and connect them with City services such as free- or reduced-price groceries, social and enrichment events, flu shot clinics and more. This arrangement benefits not only residents because of the wide array of expertise available; it allows City employees the opportunity to collaborate and provide coordinated and efficient services.

Shortly after meeting Mary Jane, Human Services staff registered her for older adult programs at Creekside, which has become one of her favorite places to go.

“I like it because you can come, do fun things and meet new people,” she said. “Everyone should check it out.”



PERSON-CENTERED PLANNING

Everyone wants a good life. For all of us, making decisions about what that looks like can be overwhelming. Individuals with disabilities often face additional barriers in making these decisions. Person-centered planning is one way to help them get on the path to the life that they want.

Human Services along with Arc Greater Twin Cities hosted an event where 23 people with disabilities and their families tried out Arc’s new online tool for future planning. One participant said: “Thank you for a great event which will improve many lives!”



MAKING CONNECTIONS

While working at a read-a-thon event at Washburn Elementary School, a Human Services program coordinator learned about a concern school staff and parents had regarding traffic on 84th Street. She connected with a City engineer who conducted a traffic study and provided school staff with information about the entrance lane and intersection. Recommendations to improve safety included redirecting traffic and establishing and posting clear entrance guidelines for drivers.

Human Services staff often hear about concerns that fall outside of their expertise while working in the community and make the appropriate connections to meet the individual's needs.

COMMUNITY CENTER UPDATE

In 2016, a task force recommended that the City pursue a new community center to attract and retain people of all ages, families, diverse community members as well as current users. While Creekside has been well maintained, the building suffers from serviceability, flexibility and thermal issues typical of its age.

"What we've been hearing from residents and the task force is that we need a new community center," Community Services Director Diann Kirby said.

In August, the City Council approved a memorandum of understanding formalizing discussions between the City and the YMCA about a new facility in Bloomington.

Many details about the new facility are still undetermined. The City Council appointed a stakeholder group that will discuss things such as cost, funding, site locations, staffing and programming through the next year. The group hopes to break ground sometime in 2019 and open the new facility in 2020. This is all contingent on whether or not a bond referendum is needed to fund the project. If the stakeholder group determines that a referendum is needed, the estimated timeline will change.

HONORING VIETNAM-ERA VETERANS

The Vietnam War 50th Anniversary Commemorative Partnership is facilitated by Human Services and includes Vietnam veterans, American Legion Post 550, VFW Post 1296, Martin Luther Campus, Northwestern Health Services University, the Bloomington Historical Society, Home Instead Senior Care and BrightStar Care. Community donations cover approximately 60 percent of funding for the partnership. In 2017, the partnership held the following events to honor Vietnam-era veterans and their families.

APPRECIATION BRUNCH

Vietnam-era veterans and guests were invited to attend a free event with a brunch, music and an opportunity to visit with other veterans. Donations came from American Legion Post 550 and Home Instead Senior Care.

REUNION PICNIC

Vietnam veterans and their families were welcomed to a picnic where they met with representatives from the Vietnam Veterans of America Agent Orange Education Campaign and shared their stories with TPT – Twin Cities PBS. The event was funded by donations from American Legion Post 550, Taste of Scandinavia, Feldmann Imports, Culligan, Culvers, Saint's Commercial Food Service, Cub Foods on Lyndale, Cub Foods on France, Sam's Club, and Festival Foods.

A VIETNAM VETERAN'S STORY ONE WAR, TWO BROTHERS

As James Lee shuffled through old war medals and documents, it was evident he hadn't looked at several of the items in years.

Not coming from a military family, Lee and his twin brother both enlisted out of high school at the age of 17 and served from 1965 – 1968, Lee in the Navy and his brother in the Air Force. After boot camp, Lee became one of 1,200 crewman on the USS Saint Paul stationed in the Philippines. His brother was stationed in London. Although they served in different military branches and were stationed in different countries, Lee stayed connected to his brother and the memory of their high school rock band by playing music for the crew of the USS Saint Paul.

The most memorable moment during Lee's tour was when the USS St. Paul was shot in 1967. The ship was patched up in the Philippines and reporters



VETERANS APPRECIATION DINNER AND RESOURCE FAIR

More than 300 people attended a Veterans appreciation dinner and resource fair in November. It included a film produced by Dr. Chuck Sawyer with interviews of local Vietnam veterans. This was followed by a discussion between veterans who served in Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan. The events were sponsored by Human Services, Northwestern Health Sciences University and American Legion Post 550.

VETERAN MEMORIAL DISCUSSION

The commemorative partnership will continue to explore the possibility of a veteran memorial or park dedication in Bloomington. Community partners, Parks and Recreation and Human Services are partnering in this initiative. Discussion includes what a memorial for all veterans could look like and what sites are most desirable.

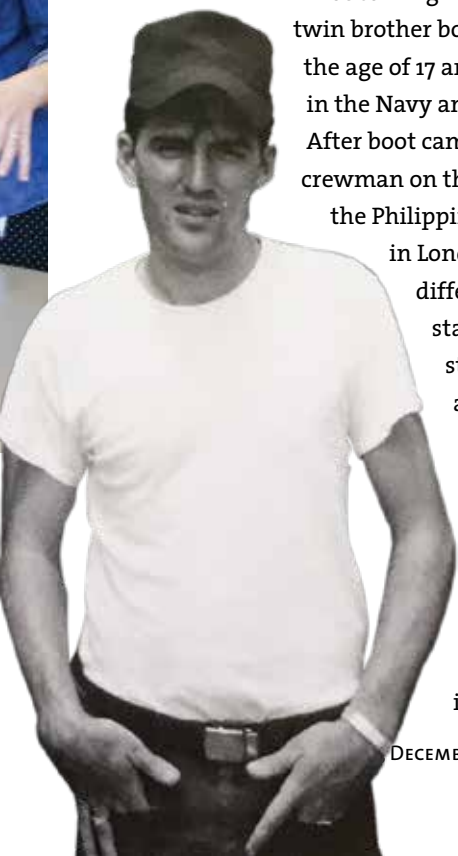


James Lee pictured above looking through old war medals and documents, and at left during his military service in the 1960s on the USS Saint Paul.

came from his hometown newspaper to get the story.

"I really appreciate the opportunity to take part in this commemorative partnership with the City," Lee said. "It has given me the opportunity to meet other Vietnam veterans and share our stories."

After his honorable discharge, Lee not only traveled for 10 years playing music and working other odd jobs, he also went to electric technician school. He refers to himself as a true jack-of-all-trades.





ADVANCING EQUITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

A retired library manager and teacher who spent 14 years with Bloomington Public Schools, Dennis Kane joined the Bloomington Human Rights Commission in February 2012. He will finish his third two-year appointment in December. He served as the commission chairperson from 2014 – 2017.

Kane has exemplified strong leadership and dedication to protecting human rights during his time on the commission. He has approached sensitive subjects head on and hasn't backed down from tough topics. During his six years of service on the Human Rights Commission, Kane has built a legacy of leadership in advancing equity and protecting human rights.



ARTISTRY

at Bloomington Center for the Arts

OMAR BONDERUD WINNER

The City Council and Human Rights Commission presented Artistry with the 2017 Omar Bonderud award in December. The award was given for Artistry's intentional effort to reach out to diverse populations ensuring access to the arts through a wide variety of programming. Artistry creates special opportunities for students, people with disabilities, older adults and individuals who have low incomes to make programs more accessible.

Artistry has recently been working with the commission to promote the experience of children of immigrant parents using art as a direct connection to sparking discussion about human rights, immigration and refugee experiences.

HUMAN SERVICES FACTS AND FIGURES

Human Services provides a wide array of programs, assistance and services to the Bloomington community and partner organizations. These figures are estimates and will be replaced with final numbers online at blm.mn/hs in the first quarter of 2018.

CONTRACT SERVICES
50 AGENCIES AND PARTNERS

Grants and in-kind support to nonprofit agencies and community partners give residents convenient access to human services. Providing resources to community groups leverages additional services and dollars to meet the needs of Bloomington residents. Human Services contracts or partners with an estimated 50 service providers resulting in services valued at an estimated \$200,000.

RESIDENT SUPPORT SERVICES
15,000 RESIDENTS SUPPORTED

Support for families and children with low income, people who are homeless, older adults, multicultural communities, immigrants, refugees and individuals with disabilities helps residents connect to services from local organizations and faith and business communities. Human Services also collaborates with other City departments and divisions to prevent and address environmental and nuisance concerns.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS
30 PROGRAMS 5,500 PARTICIPANTS

Community programs and events are developed in response to the changing demographics in Bloomington. At the request of and in partnership with stakeholders, Human Services has supported the planning and implementation of programs and events that celebrate the city's diversity such as Kite Day and Veterans Day celebrations. The division also supports the Human Rights Commission with activities including Diversity Day and Black History Month. Partners include youth, Bloomington Public Schools, faith and business communities and nonprofits.

ACTIVE ADULT PROGRAMS
80 PROGRAMS 18,500 PARTICIPANTS

The 2016 the U.S. Census estimates more than 18 percent of Bloomington's population is age 65 and older. Human Services provides a unique opportunity for older adults in the community to engage in planning, developing and implementing their own programs and services at Creekside such as woodshop, lapidary, ceramics, music, poetry, fitness and wellness, computer classes, brain fitness and card groups. All of these activities keep participants happy, healthy and socially connected to their friends and neighbors and allows them to continue living independently and contributing to their community.

MEAL PROGRAMS
13,200 LUNCHESES SERVED 33,700 DINNERS SERVED

A weekday lunch program and a partnership with Loaves and Fishes to provide a dinner program allow for families to stretch their food budget. Many Bloomington residents who attend these programs have low incomes and hold several jobs to make ends meet.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT
17 SERVICE REQUESTS

Human Services staff acts as the City Council-appointed Americans with Disabilities Act designee. Staff addresses and advises on areas of facility and program accessibility. In addition, the ADA designee is responsible for handling ADA complaints and inquiries.

VOLUNTEERS
250 VOLUNTEERS 29,500 VOLUNTEER HOURS

Volunteers provided their time and talent to the City valued at an estimated \$778,800 in 2017. They donated their time at the Senior Dining Program, Fare For All food distribution and at special events such as the Kite Day, International Peace Day, Veterans activities, welcome dinners, Diversity Day and the Peace Run.

Staff and volunteers provide Fare For All bulk purchasing



FOOD RESOURCES
1,300 FARE FOR ALL VISITS 130 SHARE IN THE FEAST DINNERS

and distribution of frozen meats, fresh fruits and vegetables to the public. Human Services also recruits volunteers to deliver meals. Share in the Feast is a partner program with Good in the 'Hood, Bloomington Covenant Church and Atonement Church that provides a traditional sit-down Thanksgiving meal for 154 people who were alone or homeless.



CREEKSIDE COMMUNITY CENTER
1,100 RENTAL MEETINGS
19,100 RENTAL MEETING ATTENDEES

The administration, building attendants and building maintenance staff at Creekside, at 9801 Penn Avenue South, are all in Human Services. Creekside offers 24/7 rental availability, meeting room space, notary services, free Wi-Fi, a library and a place to gather and meet new friends. Examples of rental groups include faith communities, veterans associations, homeowner associations, fraternal groups and support groups. The Bloomington Senior Program operates six days a week and three local and regional nonprofit human services agencies lease space and provide services to residents.