

# CITY NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2022



The new City Hall is part of the Alatus development on 40th and Central, seen here under construction, which will also include more than 200 apartment units and a cafe. More on page 6.

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**COLUMBIA HEIGHTS**  
REDISCOVER THE HEIGHTS

SEE FLIP SIDE FOR RECREATION PROGRAMS

# City Now Accepting Nominations for 2022 Outstanding Citizen

Do you know of someone making a positive impact in our community? Someone who's gone unrecognized for the great things they've done to make the City a better place? Every year, Columbia Heights seeks nominations for an Outstanding Citizen. If you have someone in mind, please visit [www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/outstanding](http://www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/outstanding) to print out a nomination form, or stop by City Hall to pick one up. Completed nomination forms can be dropped off at City

Hall, mailed back to Ben Sandell at 590 40th Ave NE, or emailed to [bsandell@columbiaheightsmn.gov](mailto:bsandell@columbiaheightsmn.gov).

Nominations for 2022 are being accepted until May 3. Please call 763-706-3615 if you have specific questions.

The past three winners of the Outstanding Citizen Award were Drake Pham (youth), Linda Fowler, and Patricia Sowada. For a full list of winners dating back to 1976, visit [www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/outstanding](http://www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/outstanding).

## 2021 Employee of the Year Award Goes to Nancy Becker

The 2021 Employee of the Year, the 42nd employee to win the honor, is Human Resources and Administrative Assistant Nancy Becker. Her co-workers described her as the center of their department, a team player who performs diligent and detailed work, with a wealth of knowledge. Employees from all departments can attest to her wisdom, kindness, and professionalism, as well as her sharp sense of humor.

Nancy's work duties keep her incredibly busy, but even so, she drops what she's doing to assist any colleague with a project or answer questions without complaint. Everyone she interacts with relies on her for prompt follow up and correct information, and she always delivers. If she doesn't know an answer to a question, she will know the right person to ask. Nancy regularly partners with all departments within the City and is known as an information source.

She's usually the first one in the office in the mornings, and, much too often, the last one to leave.

She greets job candidates and offers water or coffee to them as they wait to be interviewed. She's the first point of contact for potential new employees, and newly hired employees, and is always kind and helpful to people as they complete the process of filling out an application or scheduling an interview. As the administrative assistant for human resources, Nancy is the key person for hiring and onboarding. She is constantly executing her tasks at the highest level possible. Without her attention to detail and hard work, the City could not maintain its staffing levels and proper placement of employees in time sensitive roles. She may not be the person apprehending the suspect or plowing the street, but she is the person making sure that the right staff member is there to do the important jobs that support all citizens.

Everyone who strolls through the Administration office chats with Nancy as they come and go, and they always seem to leave in a better mood than when they came. If you don't notice immediately when she's not at work, you will soon figure it out by the number of people who comment on her absence. She is very much missed on the days she's gone.

In her 10 years with the City, Nancy has been trusted many times to do major projects outside of her job description, like assemble the Annual Report or coordinate the Mayor's breakfast. She helped fill in for the City Clerk position multiple times when that position was vacant, and acted as a deputy city clerk during the highly stressful 2020 elections. She takes the best notes, can explain policy and procedure in an accessible way, and knows the ins and outs of the software programs that can sometimes get the best of us.

On an annual basis, all Columbia Heights employees have the opportunity to nominate themselves or another employee(s) for the award based on three criteria: Public Relations, Consistency of Performance, and Significant Accomplishments.



Nancy Becker, right, receives the 2021 Employee of the Year plaque from City Manager Kelli Bourgeois.

We congratulate Nancy Becker for meeting these criteria and being an asset to our entire workplace and our lives!

### More About the Employee of the Year Award

The Employee of the Year nomination review committee is composed of former Employee of the Year recipients who are still employed by the City. When a person is selected as Employee of the Year, their name and year of award is engraved on a large plaque displayed in the Council Chambers. They receive a congratulatory letter, a day off of their choosing (with pay), an article and picture in the City Newsletter, a month-long announcement on the electronic bulletin board outside City Hall, and a featured role in the annual Jamboree parade. On rare occasions, more than one employee is selected in a given year.

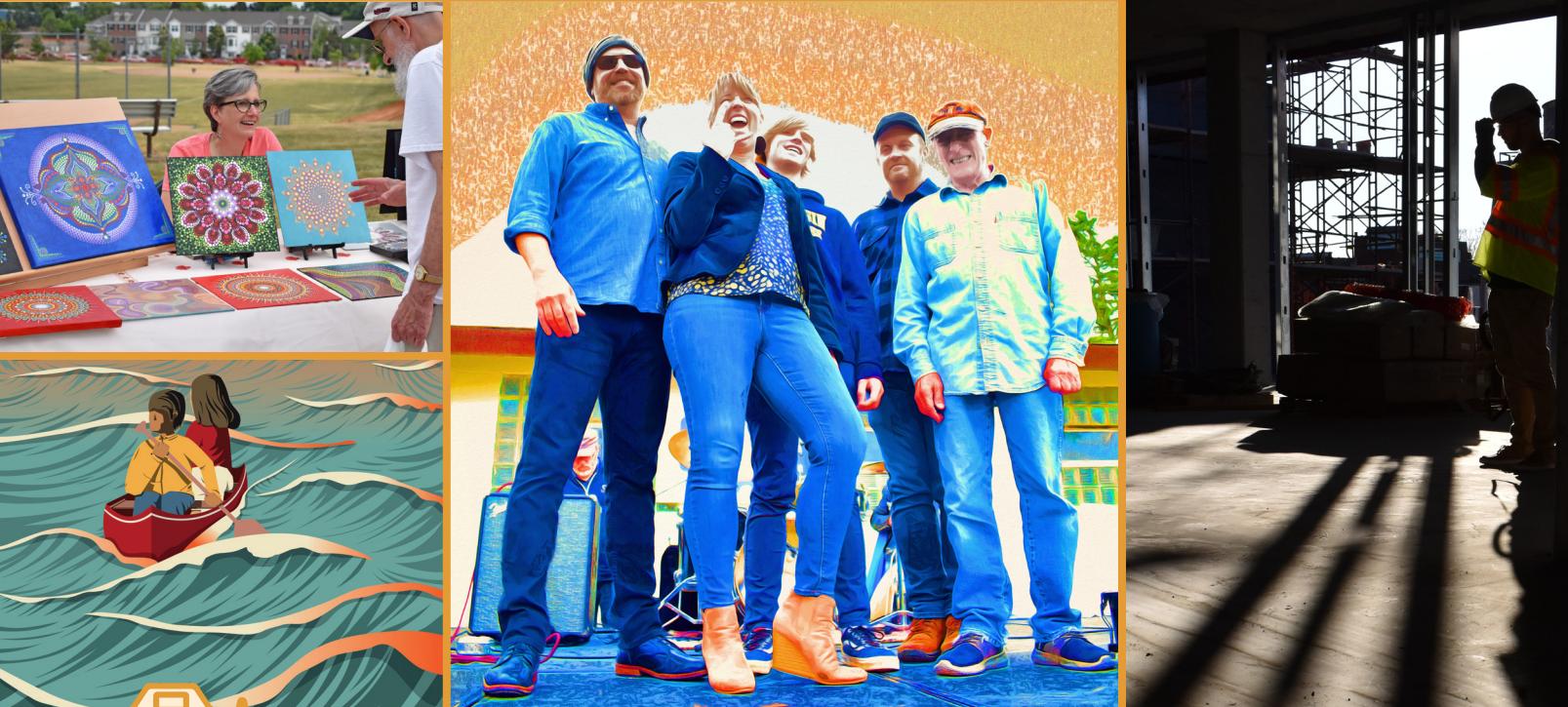
# Sign Up for the City's Monthly E-Newsletter!

We're looking for more ways to reach residents with important and timely updates about our City. Columbia Heights launched a monthly e-newsletter last year to keep residents informed on upcoming events, deadlines, construction projects, and much more! At the start of each month, the City of Columbia Heights monthly e-newsletter is emailed to anyone who subscribes to it.



## Register Your Email Address Today!

Visit [www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/enews](http://www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/enews) or email [wrottler@columbiaheightsmn.gov](mailto:wrottler@columbiaheightsmn.gov) to sign up.



## ART OF COLUMBIA HEIGHTS 2022 CONTEST

Calling all photographers and artists! The City is making a 2023 calendar, with important date reminders relevant to Columbia Heights, that features select photos and images relating to art in and of Columbia Heights. Three categories of submissions are eligible: 1.) Paintings, drawings, or graphic designs by Columbia Heights residents or of Columbia Heights landmarks, 2.) Photos of art, architecture, performances, artists, and other artistic things in Columbia Heights, 3.) Photos taken within Columbia Heights that are particularly artistic by themselves or edited in artistic ways (think collage, creative filtering, or mixed media). We only have space for a select number of photos, so we'll enlist the help of communications staff from other cities to offer an outside, non-biased eye in the selection process. Photographers and other artists whose work is chosen to be featured for any one of the 12 months of the year will receive recognition in the City Newsletter and a free copy of the calendar to keep. The submission deadline is Nov 1, 2022. Limit of three images per person. Submit one image at a time to [photos@columbiaheightsmn.gov](mailto:photos@columbiaheightsmn.gov). Full submission guidelines can be found at [columbiaheightsmn.gov/photos](http://columbiaheightsmn.gov/photos). Images from any year are accepted. The City Calendar will be available for purchase beginning Dec 1 at City Hall.

**Email images to [photos@columbiaheightsmn.gov](mailto:photos@columbiaheightsmn.gov) by Nov 1, 2022**

**Visit [www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/photos](http://www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/photos) for details. Call 763-706-3615 with questions.**

# Want to Run for Office? Filing Window Opens May 17

- Positions residents can file for: Mayor (two-year term) and councilmember (four-year term)
- Two council seats open, one mayoral seat open
- Filing dates are May 17 to May 31. Must fill out Affidavit of Candidacy (forms available online or at City Hall) and pay a \$15 filing fee (cash or check) and bring in form to City Hall during office hours.
- There will be a primary Aug 9 if five or more people file for City Council and if three or more people file for mayor. The primary narrows down the field of candidates to four for council and two for mayor.
- To run, candidates must be qualified to vote in Minnesota, be at least 21 years old by the date of assuming office (Jan 1, 2023), and residents of the City for at least 30 days before the election.
- The general election will be Nov 8.

## Election Judges Needed

The City of Columbia Heights needs election judges. Training and pay is provided for this important role, and Minnesota needs a new generation of poll workers to step in for those who are retiring. There is also a need for judges who are fluent in languages other than

English to assist a more diverse population of voters. Poll workers receive training and have a right to get time off from their job to serve.

High school students can serve as election judge trainees, and are paid for their work (to qualify, students must be 16 years old or older on or before Election Day, be a U.S. citizen, be in good academic standing at a Minnesota high school (or home-schooled), and have permission from their parents and their school).

Applications are available at:

[columbiaheightsmn.gov/elections](http://columbiaheightsmn.gov/elections)



# Columbia Heights Library Goes Fine Free Starting This March

Starting March 1, 2022, the Columbia Heights Library will be fine free. Eliminating fines helps make sure everyone in the community has access to materials and resources, a primary part of the Library's mission. Patrons still need to return items so that friends and neighbors can check them out, but they won't get an overdue fine if they are a day or two late. Patrons can get a reminder when books and materials are due via text message or email. (Overdue items that are 30 days late will be considered lost and you will be billed for them.)

## Library Partners With NE Bank to Host Financial Literacy Courses

This year, the library has put together a three-part educational program with NE Bank's outreach official to empower attendees with strategies to strengthen their personal finances, with plenty of opportunity for questions.

"The library's mission is about literacy, and financial literacy is an important skill for all adults, from college or a first job all the way through retirement," said Renee Dougherty, library director. "Consider this class 'Personal Finance 101,' or 'How to become smarter about money,' which many of us could use to improve the financial security of our families."

Registrants are welcome to attend one or all of the sessions.

### Financial Fitness with Northeast Bank:

- **April 4, 5:30 pm: Finance Basics** (Overview of setting financial goals, budgeting, cutting expenses and paying off debt)
- **April 11, 5:30 pm: Financial Planning and Saving** (Saving for retirement, 401k and IRA accounts, and emergency savings strategy)
- **April 25, 5:30 pm: Managing Credit and Debt** (Managing credit cards and debt, understanding interest rates, APR, annual fees, credit scores, payment history, and disclosures)



Classes will be taught by Dave Larson, relationship banking officer with NE Bank. Also, NE Bank will provide door prizes for attendees, including gift cards and financial advice books.

Registration required. Call 763-706-3690 to register.

## Update on Columbia Heights/Lomianki Sister Cities, Year in Review

The Sisters City Committee is still going strong despite having to reduce activity for the last two years due to the pandemic. Last year, they participated in the Jamboree parade and many other 100th anniversary celebrations. They celebrated their 30th anniversary with a lunch at Sarna's and a tree planting ceremony in Lomianki Park. The

group welcomes new members and anyone is encouraged to join. They meet monthly in the City Hall Council Chambers. Email [gbergs1325@hotmail.com](mailto:gbergs1325@hotmail.com) for more info or to ask about membership. Find out more about the Sister Cities at [www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/sistercities](http://www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/sistercities).

Get daily updates on Columbia Heights happenings by following us on Facebook @columbiaheightsmn, Instagram @columbiaheightsmn or Twitter @heightsmn

Find our daily newsfeed at [columbiaheightsmn.gov](http://columbiaheightsmn.gov)  
For questions about this newsletter, call Communications Coordinator Ben Sandell at 763-706-3615



# Library Program Highlights

Below is a sampling of upcoming activities at the library. For a full list or more details, visit [www.anokacounty.us/](http://www.anokacounty.us/) events or call 763-706-3690. Programs that require registration are indicated by \*. Register by calling 763-706-3690. For at-home service, call 763-706-3681. For renewal, call 763-324-1590. Online programs require an internet enabled device. All programs are back in-person unless otherwise noted.

## Adult Programs

### Library Book Club

10 am: March 16, April 20, May 18

### Meditation to Reduce Stress\*

Tue, March 22, 6 pm, online

Meditation has numerous benefits for our physical and mental well-being. Once we learn how to meditate, we carry with us a ready remedy we can use at any time. This program will be taught by Nirav Sheth and offered online via Zoom.

### Adopt-a-Drain Presentation\*

Sat, April 9, 11 am

Join Lauren Letsche from the City of Columbia Heights Public Works depart-

ment to learn more about the Adopt-a-Drain Challenge and what you can do to keep our drains and waters healthy, and help celebrate the City's 2021 Adopt-a-Drain Challenge victory.

### Birdscaping Basics\*

Mon, April 18, 5:30 pm

Landscaping tips for layouts that attract birds.

### Author Talk: Joe Kimball\*

Sat, May 21, 11 am

Joe Kimball, author of "Secrets of the Congdon Mansion," will discuss the infamous Congdon murder case of the historic Glensheen Mansion in Duluth.

### Bike Fix-It Clinic

Sat, May 21, 2-4 pm

Drop in anytime between 2 and 4 for help with tune-ups, tire repair, changing tires, adjusting brakes and derailleurs, and any bike-related questions you might have. The fix-it station is near the library's back parking lot entrance.

### Conversation Circle

Mondays, 5:30-6:30 pm

The Conversation Circle is back! This is a casual gathering of English-language adult learners who meet at the library to practice their speaking skills with help from an English volunteer.

## Kids and Teen Programs

### Storytime @ the Library

March 7-April 14

### Family Storytime\*

Mondays, 10:30 am

Share books, songs, and rhymes with your children at this storytime designed to promote school readiness in 2-to-5 year olds. Siblings are also welcome!

### Baby Read, Baby Grow\*

Thursdays, 10:30-11 am

For infants ages birth to 24 months and their caregivers.

### The Land Before Time\* \*\*

Tue, March 22, 2-3:30 pm

In this adventurous class kids travel back in time to visit extinct creatures: they'll create dinosaur fossils with model magic, sketch out and name their own dinosaur discoveries, and make a travel journal to document their findings and what they see as they wander the Jurassic. Grades 1-5.

### Let's Clay: Mini Snacks\* \*\*\*

Fri, April 8, 2-3:30 pm

Using oven-safe polymer clay, learn how to prep materials and shape and form different types of snacks to create a miniature pretend picnic! Grades 1-5.

### Story Strolls

April 20-21: Huset; May 18-19: LaBelle

Large story pages will be placed throughout featured parks.

### String Art for Teens\* \*\*

Wed, March 23, 2-4 pm

Using small nails, colorful yarn, and embroidery thread, participants will create images and shapes by "stringing."

### Coding Club\* \*\*\*

Tue, April 5 to May 24, 4-5:30 pm

Coding Club is a place for youth to learn code while doing projects and challenges like making games, creating apps, robotics, building websites and more. For grades 5 and up.

### Volunteering

Learn more about the library, help your community, meet new people and earn community service hours for school. For teens ages 13 and older who are self-motivated, reliable, and want to have fun. Applications at the library.

\* Registration required.

\*\* This program is funded by the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.

\*\*\* This program is partially funded with a grant from the Minnesota Department of Education using federal funding, CFDA 84.287, Every Student Succeeds Act, Title IV B-21 Century Community Learning Centers. The content of this program does not necessarily represent the policy of the federal Department of Education or the Minnesota Department of Education.

### Library Hours

Mon-Thu, 10 am to 7 pm

Fri, 10 am to 4 pm

Sat, 10 am to 3 pm

Sun, closed

### Library Closures

April 15 • May 19 • May 28-30

**3939 Central Ave NE • (763) 706-3690**

**At-home Service • (763) 706-3681**

[www.columbiaheightsmn.gov](http://www.columbiaheightsmn.gov), [www.anoka countylibrary.org](http://www.anoka countylibrary.org), Cable Channel 19

Facebook: @chplibrary

# Facade Improvement Grant Program Enters Fifth Year

Eligible businesses and commercial property owners will again have a chance to receive up to \$5,000 in matching grant aid for exterior storefront improvements in the fifth year of the Facade Improvement Grant Program, a collaborative effort between the Economic Development Authority, the Community Development Department, and the Columbia Heights Police Department.

Any commercial properties located along 37th Ave NE, 37th Place NE, 40th Ave NE, University Ave NE, or Central

Ave NE between 37th and 47th Ave NE, are eligible. In an effort to reduce crime and enhance safety in the City's business districts, the Columbia Heights Police Department also uses the grant program to provide surveillance camera systems to participating businesses.

The City will start taking applications for the 2022 Facade Improvement Grant Program in the spring. Check [columbiaheightsmn.gov](http://columbiaheightsmn.gov) for updates.

## City Hall, Apartment Complex Mixed-Use Development On Schedule

Doran Construction is well under way with construction of the mixed-use development project at the corner of 3989 Central Ave NE, with construction on schedule to be completed in October or November of 2022.



The development will include 266 apartments, a café space, and a new City Hall. Construction began in November 2020 shortly after the former office building on the lot was demolished.

The City Hall will open along with the rest of the building. Staff will

transfer to the new facility over the course of a few weeks in the fall of 2022. The City Hall space will be owned by the City, like a condo, and it will take up nearly the entire first floor of the building. The City will likely sell the property where the existing City Hall stands. It's too early to know what might replace the existing City Hall.

### Background and More Details

The Columbia Heights City Council voted 5-0 in September, 2019, to authorize the establishment of a new, 20,000 square-foot City Hall as part of a vertical mixed-use development at 3989 Central Ave NE.

Though it will be part of a larger private development, City Hall will be owned by the City, not leased. The City has partnered with the Leo A Daly LLC architecture firm to help design the facility.

## \$1.2 Million Grant to Help Fund Redevelopment On Vacant Property Near Public Safety Campus

The City has been awarded a \$1,232,000 grant from the Metropolitan Council as part of their Livable Communities Demonstration Account Development program (LCDA). The grant will be used to support the redevelopment of the City's vacant parcel located behind the Public Safety campus. The project includes the relocation and expansion of the SACA Food Shelf and Thrift

Store, and 62 affordable apartments. The LCDA grant program supports projects that create livable communities through expanding housing choice and connecting housing with jobs. The grant will be used to fund a variety of development activities including; storm water infrastructure, landscaping, site grading, soil corrections, community engagement, and public art.



## SPRING PROJECTS PLANNED?

### Get All the Info at [Columbiaheightsmn.gov/permits](http://columbiaheightsmn.gov/permits)

Decks, driveways, fences, sheds, windows, porches, pools, garages—whatever your project is, get the information you need on acquiring the proper permits and plans to get rolling at [www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/permits](http://columbiaheightsmn.gov/permits). Getting the proper permits and site plan approvals can take time, so consider starting the process ASAP if you'd like to start building this spring. You can also call Community Development with questions at 763-706-3670.



## Take a Seat

Citizen commissions contribute to the quality of life in the community by assisting the City Council in an advisory capacity regarding a wide range of activities. Residents who serve their community in this way gain valuable insight relative to City operations. Commissioners have the capacity to help shape the community through decisions and input. Members volunteer their time to attend meetings throughout the year to address pertinent matters.

### Multiple Seats Open on Four Boards and Commissions: Apply by March 4

- Number of open seats: 3 Planning Commission, 2 Library Board, 3 Park and Recreation Commission, 1 Charter Commission
- Descriptions of board and commission duties at [columbiaheightsmn.gov/boardsandcommissions](http://columbiaheightsmn.gov/boardsandcommissions)
- Find an application online at [columbiaheightsmn.gov/boardsandcommissions](http://columbiaheightsmn.gov/boardsandcommissions), or pick one up at City Hall or at the Columbia Heights Public Library
- Application deadline of March 4: bring to City Hall,

- mail, or email [sion@columbiaheightsmn.gov](mailto:sion@columbiaheightsmn.gov)
- Interviews in mid-March
- All positions require an interview except those only applying for Charter Commission (appointed by Chief Judge of Anoka County)
- Appointments made March 31 for those appointed by Council. Terms for those appointed start April 1
- For more info, contact the City Clerk at 763-706-3611, or email [sion@columbiaheightsmn.gov](mailto:sion@columbiaheightsmn.gov)

### Another Way to Get Involved: Volunteer Opportunities

Our City has numerous service and civic organizations that provide opportunities for community involvement and volunteering. Find a list of those organizations and their contact info at [www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/volunteer](http://www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/volunteer) to help get you started. If you have an organization that you want to be listed on our site, please contact Ben Sandell at [bsandell@columbiaheightsmn.gov](mailto:bsandell@columbiaheightsmn.gov) or call 763-706-3615.

### IMPORTANT CITY CONTACTS

CITY OFFICES.....(763) 706-3600  
Administration.....(763) 706-3610  
  
Public Works Dept.....(763) 706-3700  
Garbage/Refuse Pick-up/  
Recycling (Waste  
Management).....(888) 960-0008  
Utility Billing.....(763) 706-3640  
  
Fire Dept. Administration & Information/  
Emergency  
Management.....(763) 706-8150  
Fire Chief.....(763) 706-8152

Police .....(763) 706-8100  
Library .....(763) 706-3690  
Community  
Development .....(763) 706-3670  
Bldg. Permits/  
Licenses .....(763) 706-3678  
24-Hour Info. Line-Murzyn Hall info., Weather  
Cancellations, Directions .....(763) 706-3737  
Murzyn Hall Rental .....(763) 706-3734

Mayor Márquez Simula.....(763) 706-3607  
Councilmember Buesgens .....(763) 788-5072  
Councilmember Jacobs .....(612) 810-0512  
Councilmember Novitsky .....(612) 760-4463  
Councilmember Murzyn .....(763) 781-4983  
  
City Newsletter editor .....(763) 706-3615  
  
Emergency .....911

**MORE INFO AT:**  
[www.columbiaheightsmn.gov](http://www.columbiaheightsmn.gov)

# MENTAL HEALTH EXPERT JOINS CHPD STAFF FULL-TIME

Eileen Sowry, LICSW, is the Columbia Heights Police Department's new embedded social worker. In this role, Sowry will be a part of a co-responding program with our officers where she will respond in real-time to 911 crisis calls. On those calls, she will offer support, crisis stabilization, and de-escalation, as well as link individuals who have a mental health or substance use need to relevant resources.

Last October, the US Department of Justice awarded the Columbia Heights Police Department with an incredibly rare grant to fund a full-time social worker stationed at the police department for the next two years. Columbia Heights is one of only 34 cities nationwide to receive the grant.

"I am honored and excited to lend my crisis stabilization and trauma response skills to assist our community's police officers



in becoming an even better resource when it comes to keeping our communities safe," Sowry said. "Together, I am confident that we will change the way we deliver services to those in need for the better."

Sowry is detailed from the Canvas Health's Anoka County Mobile Response Team, which provides crisis response to Anoka County residents when residents call (763) 755-3801. She most recently served at an Adult Detention Center in Fairfax, VA. In that role, she assessed and provided mental health services to county inmates, stabilized suicidal, homicidal, and acutely psychotic individuals, and provided crisis and mental health interventions. She also has served as a crisis counselor and has provided mental health services in a variety of settings including clinics, a domestic violence shelter, and a nursing home.

## Columbia Heights Police Department Podcast Online and On Spotify



Roll Call, the CHPD's bi-monthly podcast, features discussions with officers and special guests about law enforcement and public safety topics relevant to the community. Each podcast features a different topic and special guest. The latest

episode features an interview with CHPD embedded mental health expert Eileen Sowry.

To listen, visit [www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/podcast](http://www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/podcast) or search Columbia Heights Podcast on Spotify.

## CHPD Use-of-Force Statistics for 2021

The Columbia Heights Police Department has compiled its annual Use-of-Force statistics for 2021 and the results are in line with 2020 numbers. Police agencies are required to report any use of-force resulting in death or serious body injury, as well as the discharge of a firearm toward a subject. The Columbia Heights Police Department did not have any incidents that met this criteria in 2021. The police department responded to 23,418 calls for service, and used force in 80 incidents. Open hand techniques (escort holds or joint locks) were the most common type of force used. A copy of our summary report is available on the police department website at [www.chpolice.com](http://www.chpolice.com).

## Youth Curfew Reminder

Columbia Heights City Ordinance sets curfew limits for youth 17 and younger.

Curfew for children 15 and under is 10 pm on weekdays and 11 pm Friday and Saturday. Curfew for 16- and 17-year-olds is 11 pm on weekdays and midnight Friday and Saturday. All curfews are enforced through 5 am.

## POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Columbia Heights Police Department office is open Mon-Fri, 8 am to 4:30 pm. The telephone number is (763) 706-8100. Call 911 in an emergency. The office is located in the Public Safety building, 825 41st Avenue NE. The police department offices are closed on weekends and holidays.

A telephone is located inside the entry doors that can be used after hours to request assistance.

For general info, ordinances, and services, visit [www.chpolice.com](http://www.chpolice.com), find us on [Facebook.com/chpolice](https://Facebook.com/chpolice), and follow us at [twitter.com/colhgtspolice](https://Twitter.com/colhgtspolice).





# FIREFIGHTERS WANTED

The Columbia Heights Fire Department is looking for on-call firefighters to join the team. On April 27, 6 pm, the department will hold a recruitment open house for those who wish to learn more about the job responsibilities. The following are some common questions the department receives about the duties of being a firefighter:

## How Much Training Is Required?

On-call firefighters must complete the same amount of training as full-time firefighters. They do receive hourly pay for training, and will learn valuable skills that they can use in other areas of their lives. Recruit firefighters complete 125 hours of EMT training, 98 hours of Firefighter level 1 training, 50 hours for Firefighter level 2 training, and 48 hours of hazmat training. Completing all training takes about 18 months.

## What If I'm Not Confident I'm the Right Fit?

"Through fellowship and training, you will obtain the skills necessary to build your confidence," said Fire Chief Charlie Thompson. "If you are ready to serve but still have doubts, we are happy to discuss the role further and assist you in determining if this opportunity is right for you."

## Who's Eligible?

If you're 18 or older, live within or near the City borders, and have a valid driver's license, you're eligible to apply. It's as simple as that.

## What Are the Time Requirements?

On-call firefighters have day jobs and other responsibilities to consider, so they are not expected to answer every call. To ensure flexibility, the department requires on-call firefighters to answer roughly 30% of calls. The number of calls that occur on any given day can vary widely.

## What Will I Get Out of It?

"You get to be there to help someone when they're having the worst day of their life," Thompson said. "You will walk away feeling like you've made a difference, all while being a part of a team and gaining valuable experience." On-call firefighters also get paid. They receive pension benefits if they commit for five years.

## How Do I Apply?

Applications can be submitted online by visiting [www.heightsfire.com](http://www.heightsfire.com) and clicking the Firefighter Employment Opportunities link in the navigation menu. Call 763-706-8150 for more information. The department is eager to recruit new firefighters, so please spread the word if you know of anyone who might be interested.

## FIRE DEPARTMENT

825 41st Ave NE, Columbia Heights, MN 55421

[fire@columbiaheightsmn.gov](mailto:fire@columbiaheightsmn.gov)

Be up to date on activities and regular safety reminders of the Columbia Heights Fire Department by following us on Facebook @columbiaheightsfire.



Non-Emergency: ..... (763) 706-8150

Emergency: ..... Call 9-1-1

Housing Maintenance Inspections: (763) 706-8156

[fireinspections@columbiaheightsmn.gov](mailto:fireinspections@columbiaheightsmn.gov)

# Adopt-a-Drain Challenge

The Anoka County Community Adopt-a-Drain Challenge returns this year. Claim storm drains and report drain cleanings through [www.Adopt-a-Drain.org](http://www.Adopt-a-Drain.org) from March to October. The City's winning title is on the line! Columbia Heights will compete again against Blaine, Andover, and Fridley to see who has the most storm drain adoptions and reported cleanings. There will also be individual prizes each month based on different aspects of Adopt-a-Drain. Join the challenge now by adopting and naming your drain through [www.Adopt-a-Drain.org](http://www.Adopt-a-Drain.org). After snow melt, clean your drain and report what you've cleaned. Send any fun cleaning photos to [lletsche@columbiaheightsmn.gov](mailto:lletsche@columbiaheightsmn.gov).

## Mother/Daughter Duo Are Storm Drain Superstars



Samara Bilyeu-Anderson and her daughter Liviana are storm-drain superstars! They reported 90 cleanings in 2021, removing 176 pounds of debris from their 13 adopted drains. All the storm drain adoptions and cleaning reports these two logged in 2021 helped lead Columbia Heights to victory in last year's Anoka County Adopt-a-Drain Challenge.

# Emerald Ash Borer Alert!

The City Forester would like the public to know that the emerald ash borer problem in Columbia Heights is now critical. Ash trees are dying in all areas of the City and management decisions need to be made ASAP.

Property owners are responsible for the management of trees on their property and should be aware that all untreated ash trees will die and need to be removed.

But a bulk discount on EAB treatment for residents is available through Rainbow Treecare (call 952-922-3810 or visit [www.rainbowtreecare.com](http://www.rainbowtreecare.com)). Treatment is highly effective and less expensive than removal, but it must begin before too much damage occurs in order to be effective.

EAB was confirmed in Columbia Heights in 2019. The beetle will infect all untreated ash trees. Infested trees quickly become brittle and dangerous as the infection progresses, becoming more difficult and expensive to remove, and a safety liability.

The City continues to actively manage EAB in the public forest (street and park trees), and encourages residents to act now for trees on private land.



Ash trees on your property? For more information and a list of helpful resources, please visit [Columbiaheightsmn.gov/EAB](http://Columbiaheightsmn.gov/EAB). For specific questions or for free consultation, call the City Forester at 763 706-3722.

## PUBLIC WORKS SPRING REMINDERS

### Fire Hydrant Flushing April & May

Fire hydrant flushing takes place in April and early May. Hydrants will be flushed from 7 am to 3:30 pm. It's necessary to flush all City hydrants to ensure they're in good working condition and to clear sediment. As a result of the flushing you may notice some temporary discoloration of the water. Flush your residential system by running cold water for 10 to 20 minutes. Avoid washing clothes while hydrants are being flushed in your area, as discolored water may stain. Some localized flushing may be necessary throughout the year.

### Spring Street Sweeping Begins Soon

The street department will begin street sweeping as soon as weather permits, usually in early April. Areas around lakes and ponds will be swept first to minimize the amount of sediment entering these bodies of water. Sweeping operations will continue until all streets have been swept twice.

### Prevent Sewer Backups

Over time, homeowners may experience problems such as collapsed pipes or tree roots growing into service lines that can cause stoppages with their sewer service lines. If your sewer backs up, it may be time to clean or repair the line. Before hiring a contractor, call Public Works at 763-706-3700. They will check the City's mainline condition in the street for a possible blockage. **This service is free.**

### Water Service Leak? Sewer Clog?

Call Public Works before calling a contractor:

- Weekdays: 7 am-3:30 pm (763) 706-3700
- After-hours: (763) 427-1212 or 911

Property owners are responsible for the water service and sewer service from the house or structure to the main in the street, including the connection to the City main.

### Street Parking Restrictions In Effect Until March 31, 2–6 am daily

# WHEN BUSINESSES RECYCLE, WE ALL WIN!

Anoka County offers resources to encourage business recycling.



## Grants

The county provides up to \$10,000 for equipment and supplies to help a business recycle more.

## FREE Technical Assistance

An expert will visit a site to help find ways to reduce waste, design a new or improved recycling program, or get started with organics recycling.

## FREE Labels

Labels are an essential part of an effective recycling program. The county offers a variety of label types to fit a business's need.

Call **763-324-3481** or visit [AnokaBizRecycle.com](http://AnokaBizRecycle.com) for more details



## Tips for Recycling Items Not Picked Up With Curbside Recycling

### Plastic Bags and Styrofoam

The Recycling Center accepts clean plastic bags, plastic films and Styrofoam. Bags must be brought directly to the Recycling Center at 3801 Madison St NE, Saturdays, 9 am to 1 pm.

### Compostable Products

Delivery style pizza boxes, paper egg cartons, paper towels, and any other wet or food contaminated paper can be composted. Email [publicworks@columbiaheightsmn.gov](mailto:publicworks@columbiaheightsmn.gov) to order carts.

### Donating Items

There are a number of outlets for donating used items. For a full list, and addresses, visit [columbiaheightsmn.gov/refuseandrecycling](http://columbiaheightsmn.gov/refuseandrecycling). Also consider hosting a garage sale to sell old items.

## Yard Waste Collection

Yard Waste collection begins in April after the snow cover melts. Woody tree waste can be brought to the Anoka County site for a fee. Use paper bags. Personal containers will not be emptied by the hauler. Be sure to bundle the brush, or order a City compost cart. Carts can be ordered anytime by calling 763-706-3727.

## Refuse Holiday Schedule

- Good Friday, April 15, no delay
- Memorial Day, May 30, service delayed one day all week

## Arm Truck Collection Information

Haulers are using trucks with mechanical arms to collect trash and recycling. Please place your cart out where the arm can reach it. Allow space between the carts. Refuse pads are a convenient way to accomplish this and the City will add these, by request, to the annual concrete work schedule. Contact [publicworks@columbiaheightsmn.gov](mailto:publicworks@columbiaheightsmn.gov) for specs and pricing.

### Waste Management

Customer Service Phone: 1-888-960-0008  
[www.wm.com/us/customer-support](http://www.wm.com/us/customer-support) or email [wmeservice@wm.com](mailto:wmeservice@wm.com)

### City Refuse/Recycling Website

[www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/refuseandrecycling](http://www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/refuseandrecycling) or 763-706-3727  
online request form: [www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/refusesupport](http://www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/refusesupport)

### Anoka County Recycling & Resource Solutions

(763) 324-3400  
[www.anokacounty.us/recycle](http://www.anokacounty.us/recycle)

### Refuse Service Levels and Rates

[www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/refuserates](http://www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/refuserates)



## MUSIC IN THE PARK

Columbia Heights presents its second year of Music in the Park this summer! The event takes place behind the Jefferson Building in Huset Park East, with food trucks nearby and beer sales from the Lions Club. Visit [www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/events](http://www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/events) for more information.

**WHERE:** Huset Park East

**WHO & WHEN:** June 1 (Bluedog), July 6 (The Jolly Ramblers), Aug 3 (Pickle)  
6:30–8 pm



## MOVIES IN THE PARK

Movies in the Park return this summer! Bring a blanket or a lawn chair and enjoy a free movie on a warm summer night in the park.

**WHEN & WHAT:** Aug 11 (Jaws) and Aug 25 (Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire) in Huset Park West, and Sept 16 (Encanto) in McKenna Park. Sunset.

## Community Art & Info Fair and Citywide Garage Sales This June

**The Community Art & Info Fair**, formerly known as the Community Picnic and Art & Craft Fair, will be held at Huset Park West on Thu, June 23, from 5 to 7:30 pm. The info fair will be held along the walking path in between the Huset Park Splash Pad and Zurek Pond. Community organizations looking to have an informational booth can register by contacting Will Rottler at 763-706-3614. The deadline to register

for an info booth is Thu, June 16. Art and Craft vendors can register for a booth by contacting Deanna Saefke at 763-706-3730. Register by Thu, June 16.

**The Citywide Garage Sales** event will take place June 10-12. Visit [www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/garagesale](http://www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/garagesale) to register your garage sale to be on the locator map. Register by June 1.

## Adopt a Boulevard Tree!

Would you like a boulevard tree planted by the City in front of your home? The City is looking for volunteers to adopt boulevard trees planted in 2022!

Residents are asked to provide water for the first two years after the tree is planted. A watering bag and instructions will be provided at planting time. All other care and maintenance for the tree will be provided by and paid for by the City of Columbia Heights. Find a registration form at [www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/trees](http://www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/trees). For any questions, please call Liam Genter at 763-706-3722 or email [lgenter@columbiaweightsmn.gov](mailto:lgenter@columbiaweightsmn.gov).



## Arbor Day Tree Sale!

The City will have 70-80 trees for sale at discounted rates this April for its Arbor Day tree sale. And this year delivery is free! A variety of trees will be available for purchase. Columbia Heights residents will be limited to two trees per household. Please visit [www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/trees](http://www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/trees) this March for online order forms. The trees will be delivered to households in May.

