

## CITY MANAGER'S UPDATE

May 31, 2024

### Message from the Manager:

In the shadow of The Great Place, Fort Cavazos, Memorial Day has special meaning. Harker Heights' population, after all, is almost 50% military or military affiliated. Memorial Day brings deeply personal memories to so many who live among us. Memories of the great sacrifice given in defense of our Nation. To those that served with them, those lost were friends and brothers/sisters. One of my own heroes is a veteran named Jim Day. Papa Day, as I affectionately call him, personally saw the horrors of war in Vietnam. His example taught me that every day is a day of remembrance for those that served. Papa Day shares the following about his friends and brothers each year on Memorial Day:

#### **James (Midge) Abston**, Cottondale, Alabama

My college roommate and one of the best friends I will ever have.

A Co, 2/12 Calvary, First Calvary Division

Binh Dinh Province February 17, 1967

Panel 15E, Line 102

#### **E. Neil Wilkes**, Yuma, Arizona

My roommate at Fort Benning and the guy who introduced me to my wife of 50 years.

C Co, 3/12 Infantry, 4th Infantry Division

Kon Tun Province, January 24, 1968

Panel 35E, Line 1

#### **Theodore Bernard**, Mexico, Maine

My radio operator and one of the finest people I have ever known. He made everyone around him a better person.

C Co, 3/60th Infantry, 9th Infantry Division

Dinh Tuong Province, March 15, 1968

Panel 44E, Line 58

Papa Jim carries with him the memory of these fine men. Not only does he carry it, but he makes sure that they are known and remembered by others. To all those who gave the ultimate sacrifice for our Country, we remember. We remember your bravery. We remember your lives ended too young. We remember you had lives, family and dreams waiting for you in the States. We remember that those waiting grieved your loss greatly. We remember that others who served with you carry your loss close to their heart. We remember the world is a lesser place without you. Midge, Neil, and Theodore, and so many more, we remember, and we thank you.

How do we say "thank you" to those that served and gave all? I'm not sure there is "thank you" enough, but one way we show that gratitude is through serving others. The men and women in uniform were doing just that up to the point their lives ended. Their examples energize us all to

serve with more zeal. I'm always amazed by those that served, and carry such scars, physically and mentally, yet they are often some of the biggest servants among us. We are blessed in Harker Heights because we get to serve so many associated with our military. In a small way, we get to be a part of their story of service to our Country. Given the great sacrifices given by so many, let us all serve with renewed purpose! Papa Day, we remember with you, and we will do all in our power to be better for it.

David

*"The brave die never, though they sleep in dust: Their courage nerves a thousand living men."* –Minot J. Savage

*"Some people live an entire lifetime and wonder if they have ever made a difference in the world. A veteran does not have that problem."* –Ronald Reagan

*"And I'm proud to be an American, where at least I know I'm free. And I won't forget the men who died, who gave that right to me."* –Lee Greenwood

## **General Updates:**

### **New Hires:**

Welcome to all our new hires:

Vincent Palmisano hired for the position of Lifeguard on May 7<sup>th</sup>

Diego Plata hired for the position of Lifeguard on May 7<sup>th</sup>

Melissa Pope hired for the position of Part Time Recreation Aide on May 8<sup>th</sup>

Madelyn Dixon hired for the position of Lifeguard on May 10<sup>th</sup>

Trevor Jorgensen hired for the position of Inventory/Line Locator on May 12<sup>th</sup>

Jessica Plant hired for the position of Wastewater Maintenance Technician on May 13<sup>th</sup>

Amy Pafford hired for the position of Lifeguard on May 13<sup>th</sup>

Eugene Cuthbert hired for the position of Part Time Bailiff on May 14<sup>th</sup>

A'honesty Lawrence hired for the position of Aquatics Cashier on May 15<sup>th</sup>

Isabel Ramon hired for the position of Summer Library Page on May 16<sup>th</sup>

Gabrielle Batts hired for the position of Lifeguard on May 16<sup>th</sup>

Kasi Yonkey hired for the position of Lifeguard on May 23<sup>rd</sup>

Rachel Yancey hired for the position of Summer Library Page on May 28<sup>th</sup>

### **Promotions:**

Victoria Ellis was promoted to the position of Animal Services Officer on May 11<sup>th</sup>

Anthony Combs was promoted to the position of Battalion Chief on May 11<sup>th</sup>

Miranda Jones was promoted to the position of Kennel Technician on May 25<sup>th</sup>

### **Awards:**

The City was one of eleven cities in populations over 25,000 to be nominated for the Human Resources Impact Award at the Annual Texas Human Resources Association Conference.

Leona Clay and Catharina Hoffman were awarded the 2024 Leadership Fellow Award at the TML Leadership Academy on May 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Employee Recognition Ceremony:** Our Employee Recognition Ceremony for quarters one and two will be June 18<sup>th</sup> at 3 p.m. We will close City buildings at 2:30 p.m. for all to attend and the event will be at the St. Paul Chong Hasang Catholic Church Parish Center. Those that the dress code allows to do so are invited to wear jeans on that day. I look forward to visiting with you all there and to celebrating your good work!

**May's Kudos Award Winners:** Congratulations to Parks' Billy Stevens and HR's Lyndsey Amundson, Melonie Matthewson, and Wilson Riley for being our May Kudos Award Winners! Wow, what great work you all do and we have many, many more kudos winners coming up!

**May's Let's Thrive Challenge:** May's challenge is titled "Let's Thrive" and it is a 31-day journey towards wellbeing. The challenge ends on May 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Wind in Your Sails:** The June Challenge is called Wind in Your Sails and it's a burnout prevention challenge. It will be 6 weeks of doing at least 30 minutes "me time." Simply doing things you enjoy doing! What a fun challenge! If challenges scare you this is a great one to jump on board and participate in! Let's all make sure we are recharging to prevent burnout.

**HH-N-GO:** The HH-N-GO bingo style challenge began on January 2. A new letter/number is pulled each week and there are specific things to do for that letter/number if you have it on your card. There is a game card for employees and one for citizens. The game helps us to get to know our organization better and for our citizens it helps them get to know the City better. You can still get a card and play so contact HR if you want to play! **No one has gotten bingo YET!**

**Read, Renew, Repeat:** The Library's summer reading program is open! Lots of special events at the Library related to the program. Visit the Library for more information.

**Big Truck Day:** Big Truck Day will kick off the Library's summer programs. It will be on Wednesday, June 5 from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at the Library. A sensory friendly with less loud noises will be from 9 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.

**Fire and Ice:** The Fire Department will host a Fire and Ice Cream Social on June 21 at Sprinkles on Top at 5 p.m. Come meet your members of the Fire Department! Sprinkles on Top is located at 302 Millers Crossing, Suite 1.

**Summer Youth Police Academy:** The PD will host the first Summer Youth Police Academy on June 20 to 21. For more information contact the PD's Community Services Division.

**Learn Guitar Basics:** June 4, June 18, July 2, July 16 and August 6 from 2 to 3 p.m. bring your guitar to the Library and learn fundamental skills. The class is offered through instructors from Music and Arts of Harker Heights. Space is limited so call 254-953-5491 to register.

**Family Camp-Out:** The Family Camp-Out is scheduled for June 15 to 16 at McKinney Falls State Park. For more information visit Parks and Rec.

**Farmers Market:** The Harker Heights' Farmers Market is back! The Market will be held at City Hall parking lot from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**Carl Levin Pool:** The Carl Levin Pool is now open for the summer!

**Athletics Update:** Youth Soccer registration opens June 3 to July 17 for the Fall Season. Ability bowling registration is open and will be on Mondays at 6 p.m. June 3 to July 8 at Hallmark Lanes. Ability Pickleball registration began May 15 and will be on Mondays at 6 p.m. from July 15 to August 19 at Heights Athletic Club.

### **Spotlight on Service:**

**Lyndsey Amundson Goes Above and Beyond:** HR Director Leona Clay wrote to thank Lyndsey Amundson. Leona wrote, "Thank you Lyndsey for going above and beyond your duties this morning to make the new employee orientation a success. You took it upon yourself to order and pick up the bagels for the new employees to enjoy. Congratulations on a job well done and keep up the great work."

**Ursula Paddie Appreciated:** HR Director Leona Clay wrote to express her appreciation for Ursula Paddie. Leona wrote, "I wanted to pass on my appreciation for your assistance this morning with setting up the new employee orientation. After I advised you I would be moving the coffee to the conference room for the orientation, you immediately offered to assist me in getting everything together for the new employees. You went above and beyond your duties by ensuring that everything we needed to make the orientation a success was available."

**Aaron Dunnam, Ray Gandara, Betty DeLong and Eunice Myers Get Kudos:** Fire Chief Stephens wrote to give a kudos to Aaron Dunnam, Ray Gandara, Betty DeLong, and Eunice Myers. Chief Stephens wrote, "All four have made special contributions to cook and prepare lunches for each of our shifts in appreciation for EMS week."

**Adam Trujillo is Flexible:** Planning Director Kristina Ramirez wrote to express her thanks to Adam Trujillo. Kristina wrote, "Thank you for keeping us updated on the changes. Your ability to be flexible during adverse conditions while still creating a welcoming event for all is definitely appreciated."

**Adam Trujillo and Sara Gibbs Make us Proud:** Police Chief Hawkins wrote to express his appreciation for Adam Trujillo and Sarah Gibbs. Chief Hawkins wrote, "on behalf of the Police Department I wanted to send a thank you to Adam and Sara for all of their assistance that they offered on 04-27-2024. They both were available the entire day for the Healthy Homes pop up clinic and the celebration of life for Lauren Curtin. They assisted in the coordination of both events and went above and beyond what was asked of them. Adam changed into a Harry potter themed shirt to participate in the honoring of Lauren for her celebration of life. Adam also jumped into action very quickly to help set up an outdoor speaker and microphone for the tree dedication we did for Lauren outside of the Police Department. Adam took another extra step and went back to the tree following the event and put a "tree diaper" on the tree to ensure it gets the proper nutrients it needs to keep

growing. Myself and PD staff greatly appreciate all of the hard work Adam and Sara both put in last Saturday and we are all proud to work alongside them in the City.”

**Jazmyne Lee Brings Enthusiasm:** A citizen wrote to show their appreciation for Library’s Jazmyne Lee. The citizen wrote “Jazmyne is such a bubbly and sweet person; I truly enjoyed her enthusiasm and excitement for the library.”

**Kiarrah Carlisle Shows Initiative:** David Mitchell wrote to show his appreciation for the creative efforts of Parks’ Kiarrah Carlisle. David wrote, “Your updates are always so informative. Way to take the initiative on keeping us all up to date. Great job!”

**HR Thanks Mayor Blomquist:** Mayor Blomquist recently participated in a special event to honor HR Staff for International HR Appreciation Day. HR staff wrote a personal card to the Mayor thanking him for making the day so special.

**Jerry Bark and David Mitchell Complimented:** HR wrote a note to Jerry Bark and David Mitchell thanking them for cooking breakfast for them for International HR Appreciation Day.

**Sara Gibbs is a Terrific Ambassador:** The Texas Recreation and Park Society (TRAPS) recently held a leadership conference at our Activity Center. The leader of the conference wrote to praise Sara Gibbs saying, “Please know that your center staff were very welcoming and helpful. A special thank you to Sara Gibbs, who made things happen for us ... she was a great hostess and a terrific ambassador for the city.”

**Parks and Streets gets it Done:** PD’s John Howell wrote to express his thanks for Parks and Streets cleaning up under FM 2410 at I-14. Officer Howell wrote, “the team assembled showed great dedication and teamwork and managed to complete the task in approximately 40 minutes. I could not be more impressed or happy with the effort these guys put forth. Thank you for letting me borrow them to complete this task.”