

# CITY MANAGER'S UPDATE

June 30, 2025

## Message from the Manager:

This month's message is brought to us by none other than our most outstanding Library Director Lisa Youngblood:

### **Perform Acts of Kindness – It Will Do YOU good!**

We are fortunate to be working for the City of Harker Heights, a place where kindness is valued! As a lifelong follower of Mister Rogers, a legendary television visionary who brought simple truths to children and families, I have tried, though not always successfully, to follow him when he says, *"There are three ways to ultimate success: The first way is to be kind. The second way is to be kind. The third way is to be kind."* Kindness is the foundation of true success. When we approach life with kindness, it not only benefits us but those around us. In fact, a random act of kindness has a three-fold advantage. The act benefits the person receiving the positive word or service, but it also benefits the performer of the act. What is even stranger is that studies have shown that an act of kindness just observed by another person provides almost identical aids to the observer.

What is going on? The science behind the positive effects of kindness is pretty amazing.

According to Natalie Angier from the New York Times, witnessing acts of kindness produces oxytocin, the hormone which aids in lowering blood pressure and improving our overall heart-health and increases our self-esteem and optimism. Talya Steinberg, Psy. D. for Psychology Today explains that kindness, like most medical antidepressants, stimulates the production of serotonin in your brain. This chemical decreases anxiety and increases happiness!

Kindness produces endorphins which can help with pain. Believe it or not, perpetually kind people have up to 23% less cortisol which causes stress. They also age slower than the average population! ([Integrative Psychological and Behavioral Science, 1998](#)) So, kindness is a powerful tool in creating a community filled with joy – and it's good for you! By remembering to perform simple acts of kindness daily, we can create a world that is more kind, more safe, and more caring.

- Lisa

Lisa, thank you for such an inspiring message! It certainly pays to be kind! Let's all focus on being kind to others as we travel through our professional and private lives! I am looking forward to celebrating all your hard work at our Employee Recognition Ceremony tomorrow!

- David

*"If you see someone without a smile, give them one of yours."* – **Dolly Parton**

### **General Updates:**

#### **New Hires:**

Mason Heifner – Firefighter/EMT hired on June 2<sup>nd</sup>

Leonardo Solis – Wastewater Maintenance Technician hired on June 4<sup>th</sup>

Grace McKenna – Lifeguard hired on June 5<sup>th</sup>

Joshua Hogue – Lifeguard hired on June 9<sup>th</sup>

Kaydence Palacios – Firefighter/EMT hired on June 9<sup>th</sup>

Joseph Bankhead – Police Officer Trainee hired on June 20<sup>th</sup>

Cadence Winn – Police Officer Trainee hired on June 20<sup>th</sup>

Mario Moncado – Police Officer Trainee hired on June 20<sup>th</sup>

Corbin Gillma – Police Officer Trainee hired on June 20<sup>th</sup>

Jeffery Jordan – Police Officer Trainee hired on June 20<sup>th</sup>

Nestor Marin – Police Officer Trainee hired on June 20<sup>th</sup>

Jayla Tyner – Police Officer Trainee hired on June 20<sup>th</sup>

Orlando Calderon De La Rosa – Collections Operator re-hired on June 24<sup>th</sup>

Angela Egan - Lifeguard hired on June 30<sup>th</sup>

### **Promotions:**

Louis Hill promoted to Police Sergeant on June 7<sup>th</sup>

Ashlyn Brooks promoted to Library Executive Assistant on June 21<sup>st</sup>

### **Accomplishments:**

Deputy PD Chief Sonja Clay was appointed as a member of the Technology Committee with the Texas Police Chiefs Association.

Ethan Quigley graduated from the Police Academy on June 27.

**June Kudos Award Winners:** Congratulations to Massoud Howayeck, Lisa Youngblood, Lorissa Byse, and Lyndsey Amundson our June Kudos Award Winners! Wow, what great work you all do, and we have many, many more kudos winners coming up!

**Stress Less Challenge:** The Stress Less Challenge winners: 1<sup>st</sup> Place – Lorissa Byse, 2<sup>nd</sup> Place -Lisa Youngblood, 3<sup>rd</sup> Place – Andrea Contreras.

**HH-N-GO:** A new HH-N-GO bingo challenge began with the start of 2025! A new letter/number will be 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. Contact HR for your bingo card! I was an early winner last year and I already have **ten** hits on my bingo card so far this year – can you beat me?? No winners as of the end of June! You can't win if you don't play – join me (but you probably won't beat me)!

**Clyde and Gene's Crossword Challenge:** This month's Clyde and Gene's Crossword Challenge was about heat stress safety and awareness. Winners were 1<sup>st</sup> Place – Sherill Carillo, 2<sup>nd</sup> Place – April Edwards, 3<sup>rd</sup> Place – Annette Hamman!

**Harker Heights Farmers Market:** The Harker Heights Farmers Market runs every Saturday from May 3 to July 26 and then again from October 4 to December 6.

**Parks Bash:** July is Parks and Recreation Month and Parks and Rec is hosting Parks Bash on Saturday, July 12 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Kern Park. There will be games, hotdogs, inflatables, sno-cones, and more!

**Popsicles in the Park:** The Parks and Rec Department has partnered with Vision Initiative Achieve (VIA) mentorship program. VIA will be out from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at different locations, handing out free popsicles. The dates and locations are as follows: July 2 – Carl Levin, July 9 – Purser Park, July 16 – Kern Park, and July 23 – the City Pool at Carl Levin Park.

**Back to School Drive:** PD's Healthy Homes division is currently accepting supplies for the Back to School Drive from now through July 31<sup>st</sup>!

### **Spotlight on Service:**

**Officer Patrick Mays III is Amazing:** PD's Officer Mays assisted a resident with moving a tree that had fallen across a road. The resident said, *"He was amazing. He told me not to be picking up branches and moving them that I didn't need to and he would. I told him thank you but I was ok it wasn't his job. He proceeded to help my Son get a big piece of the tree out of the road. He was very polite, professional, and helpful. It's Officers like him and the rest of our Police Dept. that make Harker Heights a great place to live."*

**Sgt Michael O'Hala Thanked:** PD's Sgt O'Hala responded to a car accident and one of those involved in the accident wanted to share their thanks. The citizen stated that Sgt O'Hala guided them through the accident report and he was *"most calming."* The citizen concluded, *"please extend our thanks to Sergeant O'Hala. He is a compliment to the Harker Heights Police Department."*

**Houston Johnson is Helpful:** Admin's Houston Johnson assisted a citizen with a debris issue. The citizen wrote, *"I truly thank you for researching this and assisting me. I have gotten so used to poor customer service in this area so wanted to say how much I appreciate your responsiveness & how helpful you have been."*

**Clyde Hicks and Eugene Cuthbert get a Kudos:** An employee wrote to thank Building Safety Officer's Clyde Hicks and Eugene Cuthbert for the information they provided in their crossword puzzle about heat related illnesses. The employee shared that the information had assisted a family member and wanted Clyde and Eugene to know they were making a difference!

**Calvin Fleming Takes Quick Action:** Code Enforcement's Calvin Fleming recently took quick action on a code issue. A citizen wrote to thank Calvin for his responsiveness to their concern.

**John Fox Takes Initiative:** Public Work's John Fox recently fixed citizen concerns of debris in roadways that I had reported. I wrote to John stating, *"Great work on this and on Shoreline as well! I really appreciate how quickly you have jumped on these issues for our citizens."*

**Rod Palmer Sets the Example:** HR Intern Rod Palmer has just been a joy to work with during his internship. He is assisting the City in setting up and celebrating the Army's PaYS Program which will assist us in finding military members departing from the Army who would be perfect for jobs in our City! In his work on this, Frank McNeil with the Army's PaYS Program stated he had *"never in the years he has worked with the program, seen a seating chart so well done. It was a standout example of how it should be done!"*

**Jonathan Del Toro and Dale Reeves Assist:** Street Sign Supervisor John Fox wrote to thank Jonathan Del Toro and Dale Reeves for their assistance getting work completed.

**Nathaniel Trimble Holds Down the Fort:** Finance Director Ayesha Lealiiee wrote to share her appreciation for Finance's Nathaniel Trimble. The Finance Department recently closed to attend the funeral of our beloved co-worker and friend Susan Crawley. While the department was technically closed, Nate handled phone calls and emails for the

team. Ayesha wrote, *“not an easy feat to handle by yourself or as the newest member of our team. I am truly grateful to have him on our team.”*

**City Departments and Mayor Make Big Truck Day even Bigger:** Library’s Erica Rossmiller wrote thanking all departments and Mayor Blomquist for making Big Truck Day so special for all who attended.