




# WE RISE TOGETHER

ONE COMMUNITY, ONE TEAM

## RISE TOGETHER - JAN. 9, 2024

### SPOTLIGHT ON DE&I

#### FIGHTING POVERTY IN OUR COMMUNITY

Poverty comes in many forms, including hunger and malnutrition, limited access to essential services, social discrimination and more. Many of the residents our department serves fall under this category\*, which is why the work we do and the services we provide are so important to the Columbus community.

January is Poverty in America Awareness Month and a good time to reconnect with how our department aims to provide equitable and accessible services to all our community members. How do we go about doing this? Below are some examples of the services we provide.

Throughout the year, community members can:

- Enjoy free art exhibits at the Priscilla R. Tyson Cultural Arts Center
- Spend time outdoors by visiting any of our over 400 parks
- Participate in sports leagues at an affordable cost
- Join the APPS Job Readiness Program to gain valuable career skills and paid work experience

Our Food Office provides:

- Free after-school meals
- Free mobile produce markets
- Food boxes for the senior population
- Meals for youth during the summer

Our community centers offer:

- Free after-school programming
- Wellness and recreation classes at affordable costs
- Playgrounds and sports courts

English  the senior population

During the summer community members can:

- Enjoy free concerts at our parks
- Visit our pools for just \$1 per person
- Visit our free splash pads throughout the City
- Take advantage of our low- and no-cost summer camps

\* [View U.S. Census Bureau information on median household income in the Central Ohio area](#)

## IMPORTANT DATES

- **World Braille Day (Jan. 4):** This day aims to increase awareness of the importance of braille as a means of communication in fully realizing the human rights of blind and visually impaired people. The date for the event was chosen by the United Nations General Assembly and marks the birthday of Louis Braille, creator of this writing system.
- **Martin Luther King Jr. Day (Jan. 15):** Observed on the third Monday of January each year, this federal holiday celebrates the birthday of Martin Luther King Jr. King was the chief spokesperson for nonviolent activism in the Civil Rights Movement, which protested racial discrimination in federal and state law. King was assassinated in 1968. The holiday was signed into law in 1983 and was first observed on Jan. 20, 1986.
- **International Holocaust Remembrance Day (Jan. 27):** This day commemorates the victims of the Holocaust, which resulted in the genocide of one-third of the Jewish people by Nazi Germany between 1933 and 1945. In 2005, the United Nations General Assembly designated Jan. 27 as a day of commemoration because it was the date when the Auschwitz concentration camp was liberated in 1945.
- **Black History Month (February):** This annual observance celebrates Black history and culture. Black educators and Black United Students (BUS) at Kent State University first proposed Black History Month in February 1969, before holding the first celebration at Kent State Jan. 2-Feb. 28, 1970. President Gerald Ford officially recognized Black History Month in 1976 during the celebration of the U.S. Bicentennial. Black History Month is observed in Canada during February, and in Ireland and the United Kingdom in October.

## CULTURAL CELEBRATIONS AROUND TOWN

- [MLK Day March and Program](#): Jan. 15, 4-4:45 p.m. at the Lincoln Theater (769 E. Long St., 43202)

Share your opinion with the DEI Committee by filling out this quick [online survey](#). Your input is valuable and it will help shape the committee's work. Do you want to see the DEI Committee organize events? Let them know!

# NEWS AND INFORMATION

## GET READY FOR THE 2024 ALL STAFF MEETING

Save the date—Wednesday, April 24, from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.—for an exciting All Staff Meeting filled with collaboration, excitement and fun! Our committee is gearing up to turn your feedback about last year's meeting into an event you're sure to enjoy!

Expect a break from the routine—there will be no regular programming during the meeting, and all staff members scheduled to work are expected to report to the meeting.

Stay tuned for more updates in the weeks and months ahead!

## IMPORTANT REMINDERS REGARDING PAID TIME OFF (PTO)

Don't forget these important reminders regarding your time off benefits:

- **Personal Business Days Deadline:** All existing personal business days for 2023 must be used by Jan. 20, 2024. Any unused personal business days after this date will be forfeited.
- **Use-it-or-Lose-it Vacation Time:** If you find yourself at the “use-it-or-lose-it” stage with vacation accruals, use that accrued vacation time by Jan. 20, 2024, to avoid any loss of earned benefits.
- **Changes for CWA and MCP Members:** Starting Jan. 21, 2024, vacation days, personal days and birthday holidays for CWA and MCP members will be combined into one bank of time known as Paid Time Off (PTO). This consolidation eliminates separate allocations for personal days and birthday holidays. The accrual of PTO will be calculated per pay period based on the number of your full-time years. The rate you accrue each pay period will be very similar to the current accrual rates for vacation days, personal days and birthday holidays.

Please ensure that your remaining birthday holiday and any outstanding personal days are used by Jan. 20, 2024, as any unused time will be forfeited.

If you have any questions or need clarification, please contact Deanna Kies at [DLKies@columbus.gov](mailto:DLKies@columbus.gov) or Kori DeFelice at [KMDeFelice@columbus.gov](mailto:KMDeFelice@columbus.gov) for more information.

## A FEW SPOTS REMAIN FOR THE CREATE-ING CULTURE COMMITTEE PIZZA LUNCH

There are a few spots for the CREATEing Culture Committee’s pizza fundraiser on Friday, Jan. 12 in the Continental Room at 1111 East Broad St. For only \$7, you’ll enjoy pizza and salad. Drinks are available for \$1 each. All proceeds will go to support staff appreciation events hosted by the CREATEing Culture Committee.

If you would like to attend, please reach out to Annie Brown at [AMBrown@columbus.gov](mailto:AMBrown@columbus.gov) to see if there’s room.

If you can’t make it or if the event is full, the committee will hold pizza fundraisers throughout 2024. Watch for more information about these events, as well as other committee events.

## COLD TEMPERATURES ARE GREAT FOR WATCHING OUR FEATHERED FRIENDS

Winter is an exciting time for birding–northern cardinals and blue jays are quite striking against a snowy backdrop! Just like in the spring and summer, many bird species are only visible in Ohio during the winter, such as white-throated sparrows, brown creepers, golden-crowned kinglets and even bald eagles. Whether you take a walk in your local park or simply observe birds at a feeder, you will find a wide variety of birds actively searching for food to help keep them warm this winter.

It’s not too late to participate in the 124th [Christmas Bird Count](#), which began as a result of scientists and bird enthusiasts becoming concerned about the declining bird populations due to Christmas hunting. The Christmas Bird Count is used to protect bird species and their habitats. The department recently held a Christmas Bird Count at the Griggs Reservoir area, where 11 birder participants counted 881 total individual birds, spanning 51 total species!

### 1/22/2024

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
31	1 ●	2 ●	3	4 ●	5	6

7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31	1	2	3



There are no events on this day.

## STAFF SPOTLIGHT

### SHAUN BALLARD

He/Him/His

**Section**

Center Manager – Scioto Southland Community Center

**Length of Employment**

I've been with the department for 23 years part-time/full time

**What's your favorite aspect of Columbus Recreation and Parks?**

Working in the community and offering resources for people of all ages.

**What's your favorite project that you have worked on?**

It's difficult to choose just one because there are so many things we do in the city. Every event, party, class and outing I've participated in has been amazing and fulfilling.

**What is your favorite ice cream flavor?**

Cookies & Cream

**What is your favorite book or movie?**

My favorite movie is Harlem Nights.

**What is one piece of advice you have?**

Working in this department is always unpredictable. Each day brings new challenges and requires you to adapt to various individuals. While some days may be enjoyable, others can be tough. However, it is during these difficult days that you experience personal growth and gain valuable knowledge.