



# WE RISE TOGETHER

ONE COMMUNITY, ONE TEAM

## RISE TOGETHER - OCT. 29, 2024

### SPOTLIGHT ON DE&I

#### HONORING OUR VETERANS: RESOURCES AND SUPPORT IN COLUMBUS

Did you know that Columbus is home to over 60,000 military veterans? In fact, our City proudly employs more than 900 veterans, representing nearly 10 percent of the City's workforce. This significant presence reflects our commitment to honoring and supporting those who have served.

At the heart of our efforts is our full-time Veteran Services Coordinator, Zane Jones. Zane is dedicated to ensuring that our City not only supports its military veteran employees but also fosters strong, productive relationships with veterans and veteran service organizations throughout the community.

Columbus's exceptional commitment to providing top-tier support for military veterans has earned national recognition from the [Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve](#) and the [U.S. Department of Labor's HIRE Vets program](#). The City houses over 150 Veteran Service Organizations that sponsor nearly 300 programs aimed at assisting our veterans.

[Explore the wide range of resources and services available to veterans in our community.](#)

#### DISCOVER A VETERAN'S STORY: JOIN US FOR A SPECIAL DEI LUNCH & LEARN

Mark your calendars for a special Lunch & Learn hosted by the DEI Committee on Wednesday, Nov. 13, from 12-1 p.m. Gather with us at the Wolfe Park Shelter (105 Park Dr., 43209) for a meaningful discussion featuring our very own Chris Scannell, who will share his experiences as an active member of the military.

Savor delicious cider and donuts while gaining valuable insights into the lives of our veterans. This is a fantastic opportunity to learn and engage with our community.

**Don't miss out!** [RSVP today to secure your spot.](#)

#### CULTURAL CELEBRATIONS AROUND TOWN

- [Veterans Day Brunch](#): Nov. 6, 10:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at Marion Franklin Community Center, 2801 Lockbourne Road, 43207
- [March Through Time](#): Nov. 9, 10, 16 and 17 at Ohio History Center, 800 E. 17th Ave., 43211
- [Veterans Day Ceremony](#): Nov. 11, 11 a.m. at National Veterans Memorial Museum, 300 W. Broad St., 43215
- [Veterans Day Celebration Softball Game](#): Nov. 11, 12-4 p.m. at Lou Berliner Sports Park-Diamond 7, 1300 Deckenbach Road, 43223



# IMPORTANT DATES

- **National Native American Heritage Month (November)**: Held to recognize and celebrate our indigenous people's diverse cultures and contributions. Originally started as Native American Awareness Week in 1976 by President Gerald Ford, the holiday was extended into a month in 1990 under President George H.W. Bush.
- **Diwali (Oct. 31 - Nov. 1)**: Known as the festival of lights, Diwali marks the triumph of light over darkness, of good over evil. Though Diwali traditions vary according to region and religion, the myths and historical stories behind the holiday share themes of justice and liberation.
- **Samhain (Oct. 31 - Nov. 1)**: Marks the end of the harvest season, the beginning of the Pagan and Wiccan New Year and honors ancestors and the dead. This celebration is also known as All Hallows.
- **All Saints Day (Nov. 1)**: A Christian holiday for celebrating all of the church's saints. Nov. 1 is the day Western churches celebrate.
- **Day of the Dead (Nov. 1-2)**: Multi-day holiday where family and friends gather to pay their respects and remember friends and family members who have died. Widely observed in Mexico and in other places by people of Mexican heritage.
- **Veterans Day (Nov. 11)**: First celebrated in 1919 to commemorate Armistice Day, or the end of World War I. In 1938, Armistice Day became a national holiday, and the holiday was changed to Veterans Day in 1954 to honor all American veterans of all wars.
- **International Day for Tolerance (Nov. 16)**: Held to generate public awareness of the dangers of intolerance. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) established the observance in 1995.
- **International Transgender Day of Remembrance (Nov. 20)**: Honors the memory of those murdered as a result of transphobia. Founded in 1999 by transgender advocate Gwendolyn Ann Smith to honor the memory of Rita Hester, a transgender woman killed in 1998, the day helps draw attention to the continued violence directed toward transgender people.
- **Native American Heritage Day (Nov. 29)**: Honors the traditions, languages and contributions of Native Americans, Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians.

## NEWS AND INFORMATION

### PLAY TO WIN PROGRESS UPDATE: ENHANCING OUR WORKPLACE CULTURE

We are excited to share updates on our efforts to redefine and strengthen our workplace culture.

To kick off this important initiative, we engaged in valuable conversations with our extended leadership team, gathering insights and feedback on how to maintain momentum. Here are some key takeaways from those discussions:

- **Leadership Commitment:** All leaders must embody these values to ensure their effectiveness.
- **Inclusive Approach:** Our values should apply to everyone and guide how we interact and make decisions.

11/12/2024

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
27	28	29	30	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

- **Purposeful Values:** We must distinguish between

There are no events on this day.



expectations for interactions with both staff and the community.

Last week, we held staff engagement sessions attended by nearly 400 of you! Thank you for your contributions. Stay tuned for a summary of the insights gathered and watch for an anonymous online survey to provide further feedback.

This feedback gathering is just the first phase of the process, which will help us assess our current values and define the culture we aspire to. In Phase Two, from March to August, we will develop training and resources to help integrate these values into our daily lives.

Thank you for your ongoing participation and commitment to making our workplace a welcoming and thriving environment for all!

## GETTING TO THE CORRECT PERSON: UPDATED HR CONTACTS

Human Resources recently realigned some of the responsibilities within the team. Below are the updated contacts. Please reach out to the appropriate contact for assistance.

- **Nicole Smith:** Labor Relations/Discipline
- **Neisha Collins:** Office Admin
- **Kori DeFelice, Eric Potts:** Payroll/Benefits
- **James Sheridan, Alex Bangudi and Aaron Menapace:** Safety
- **Rob Ricer:** Performance Appraisals/Hiring
- **Ikea Haralson:** Youth Development
- **Melissa Michel-Thomas:** Recreation Services (Aquatics, Sports), Outdoor Education, Administration, Cultural Arts, Therapeutic Recreation, Conservation, Health & Wellness
- **Whitney Washington:** Fiscal, Building Maintenance, Parks, Forestry, Special Events, Rental Services, Community Relations, Golf, Design & Construction, Strategic Planning

If you need to meet with someone in HR, please email or call to set up an appointment.

## GET READY FOR THE CREATE CULTURE SILENT AUCTION – YOUR HOLIDAY SHOPPING STARTS HERE

We're gearing up for our December Silent Auction and need your help. From Nov. 12-27, we're accepting donations of new and gently used items—perfect for the auction! Drop off your contributions to Annie Brown or Ren Kuzmanovich at the Sports Office, 1111 E. Broad St.

## KEY DATES

Mark your calendars for these upcoming events. More details will be shared as they are set; please note that details may change.

### OCTOBER

#### **Fall into Wellness: CREATE Culture Wellness Challenge**

Oct. 20-Nov. 16

#### **Regular Insurance Premiums Not Deducted**

Oct. 31

### NOVEMBER

#### **CREATE Culture Silent Auction Donations**

Nov. 12-27 | Drop off at the Sports Office, 1111 E. Broad St.

#### **DEI Lunch & Learn**

Nov. 13 | Details TBD

### DECEMBER

#### **CREATE Culture Silent Auction**

Dec. 2-13 | 1111 E. Broad St., Fiscal Area

#### **Holiday Luncheon**

Dec. 11 | Details TBD

#### **Service Credit Payout**

Dec. 12

### JANUARY

#### **Sick Leave Reciprocity Payout (Eligible staff only)**

Jan. 17

#### **Paid Time Off Use-it-or-Lose It**

Jan. 18

#### **Quarterly Leadership Staff Meeting**

Jan. 28 | 1-3 p.m. | 1111 East Broad St., Continental Room

### FEBRUARY

#### **2025 Open Enrollment**

Details TBD



[CREATE.COLUMBUS.GOV](https://create.columbus.gov) with questions.

Don't miss out! Bid often and get ahead on your holiday shopping while supporting staff appreciation events planned by the CREATE Culture Committee.

## CELEBRATING YOU

### PARKS STAFF RECOGNIZED

The Parks team recently recognized staff at their annual picnic to celebrate the end of summer.

- **Tyler Mounts-Excellent Leadership and Going Above and Beyond:** Tyler completed great work at Rhodes Park with limited equipment, and shows exceptional leadership; he's maintained a perfect seven-day mow.
- **Derrick Darr-Excellence in Team Partnership:** Derrick saved the team time and the City money by using his welding skills. He is always willing to help his fellow teammates when they are in need.
- **Shawn Stevens-Overall Operational Improvement:** Shawn has shown adaptability in taking on a new zone, and he has made overall improvements to the zone.
- **Brenda Watkins and Teresa Hunt-Humanitarian Efforts:** Brenda and Teresa assisted a young non-verbal child who they found wandering alone. It was very hot outside, and he was wandering in the road so they called the police, secured him in their truck to keep him safe and gave him water. They stayed with him until police arrived to reunite him with his family.

Kudos to the Parks team for all of your hard work this summer – you keep our more than 400 parks looking beautiful year-round!





## REINVESTING IN YOU

This year, one of our areas of focus is reinvesting in our staff. In this section, we highlight some of the ways you can grow, personally and professionally, and celebrate those who have reached a professional milestone.

### ACCESS CAREER DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES: SIGN UP FOR AN OPRA MEMBERSHIP

It's time to renew our group membership with the Ohio Parks and Recreation Association (OPRA). All staff are eligible to renew or sign up for an OPRA membership for an annual fee of just \$20.

As a member, you'll enjoy benefits such as a magazine subscription, access to the membership directory, full website access, discounts to the annual conference and workshops/education sessions, networking opportunities and discounts such as on state park admission. For more information, visit [OPRAonline.org](https://OPRAonline.org).

To sign up, email your name and title to Hawa Diakite at [HADiakite@columbus.gov](mailto:HADiakite@columbus.gov) and drop off your \$20 (cash or check made payable to "City of Columbus") to Hawa in Suite 101 at 1111 E. Broad St.

Join today!

### TRAINING

Check out these upcoming training opportunities.

- **Nov. 12-13:** OPRA Leadership Summit
- **Friday, Dec. 6:** OPRA Regional Training - Customer Service: At the Heart of the Matter - the "Little" Things are the BIG Things

Visit [OPRAOnline.org](https://OPRAOnline.org) for more information and to register.



## SAFETY CORNER

### OCTOBER IS FIRE SAFETY MONTH

Did you know that if a fire starts in your home, you may have as little as two minutes to escape? However, with the early warning from a working smoke alarm, you can significantly increase your chances of survival. Coupled with a regularly practiced fire escape plan, these measures can provide a sense of reassurance and security.

October is fire safety month, and we take the time to assess our workplace and practice our emergency drills. We should also do the same at home. Below are a few tips from the Red Cross that will improve your home's fire safety in case of an emergency:

1. Install smoke alarms on every level of your home, inside bedrooms and outside sleeping areas.
2. Test smoke alarms every month. If they're not working, change the batteries.
3. Discuss and practice a fire escape plan with all family members at least twice a year. This regular practice will instill a sense of preparedness and empower everyone to act swiftly and decisively in the event of a fire. [Read some tips from the Red Cross.](#)
4. If a fire occurs in your home, **get out, stay out and call for help!** Never go back inside for anything or anyone.
5. Keep a fire extinguisher in your kitchen.

## STAFF SPOTLIGHT

### BRUCE BECKMAN, RECREATION AND PARKS AIDE-GOLF

HE/HIM/HIS

**How long have you worked for the department?** 11 years (Bruce just turned 90!)

**What's your favorite aspect of working for the department?** I love the game of golf, and Champions Golf Course management provided me the opportunity to learn how to care for a golf course. The other side is the wildlife that lives on the course!

**What's your favorite project that you've worked on?** I enjoy it all.

**What's your favorite ice cream?** Butter Pecan

**What's your favorite book or movie?** The Godfather and "A Season on the Brink."

**What's one piece of advice you'd share?** Always make sure Champions is known as the best municipal golf course in Ohio!

