



NOV. 25, 2025

SPOTLIGHT ON RISE

DID YOU KNOW COLUMBUS RECREATION AND PARKS DEPARTMENT HAS A KWANZAA PLAYGROUND?

Kwanzaa Playground, located at our own [English Park](#) in Olde Towne East, is Ohio's first Afrocentric, arts-inspired playground. Dedicated in 1995, this award-winning playground features a walkway shaped like a human, symbolizing the First Ancestor. Also known as the Children's Afrocentric Playground, the playground's collection of art is based on the Seven Principles of Kwanzaa: unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity and faith. If you haven't had the chance to visit, take some time to check it out!

RISE COMMITTEE ELECTS NEW OFFICIALS

The RISE Committee held elections during its November meeting and selected its newest officials. Geoff Martin (Arts) and Julia Hatton (Conservation) will serve as co-chairs of the committee, with Jamie Schlichting serving as secretary, effective December. If you have any questions or are interested in learning more about the RISE Committee, please email RISECommittee@columbus.gov.

THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING COLLECTIVE CONVERSATIONS!

The Collective Conversations event on November 18 was well-attended and fostered healthy conversations that will help shape the future endeavors of the RISE Committee. If you were among those who participated in the conversation, we would like to thank you for joining us and sharing your opinion. We look forward to taking your feedback and implementing it as best as possible.

EVENTS

- [Huntington Holiday Train](#): Nov. 28 – Jan 8, during open hours at Columbus Metropolitan Library, Main Library (96 S. Grant Ave. | 43215)
- [Holiday Open House](#): Dec. 3, 6-8 p.m. at Columbus Metropolitan Library, Main Library (96 S. Grant Ave. | 43215)
- [Holiday Festival and Tree Lighting](#): Dec. 4, 5:30-7:30 p.m. at Ohio Statehouse (1 Capitol Sq. | 43215)
- [Holiday Histories](#): Dec. 13, 6-9 p.m. at Ohio History Center (1800 E. 17th Ave., 43211)
- [Menorah Lighting](#): Dec. 15, 6-8 p.m. at Easton Town Square (160 Easton Town Center | 43219)
- [Menorah Lighting](#): Dec. 16, 7 p.m. at Ohio Statehouse (1 Capitol Sq. | 43215)
- [Kwanzaa 614](#): Dec. 27-28, 12-4 p.m. at the Ohio History Center (800 E. 17th Ave. | 43211)

OBSERVANCES

- **Chalica (Dec. 1-7)**: A week-long celebration of the principles of Unitarian Universalism.



- **Bodhi Day (Dec. 8):** A Buddhist celebration of the day Buddha (Siddhartha Gautama) experienced enlightenment.
- **Hanukkah (Dec. 14-22):** A Jewish commemoration of the recovery of Jerusalem; also known as the Festival of Lights.
- **Pancha Ganapati (Dec. 21-25):** A Hindu five-day festival honoring Ganesha, Patron of Arts and Guardian of Culture.
- **Yule (Dec. 21-Jan. 1):** A celebration marking the first day of the winter season at the winter solstice.
- **HumanLight (Dec. 23):** A celebration of the human values of reason, compassion, humanity and hope.
- **Christmas (Dec. 25):** A Christian celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ.
- **Newtonmas (Dec. 25):** A celebration of Isaac Newton's birthday as an alternative to Christmas.
- **Kwanzaa (Dec. 26-Jan. 1):** A festival celebrating African harvest festival traditions.
- **New Year's Eve (Dec. 31):** A global observance marking the last day of the Gregorian year.

NEWS AND INFORMATION

OPEN ENROLLMENT CLOSSES SUNDAY

Don't forget to make your open enrollment elections by this Sunday, Nov. 30! To make your elections:

1. [Review the 2026 plan information.](#)
2. [Make your elections in Dayforce.](#)
3. [Review your beneficiary designations in Dayforce.](#)

For more information about the 2026 open enrollment and all benefits, please visit the [Employee Benefits website](#).

Call the Employee Benefits and Wellness Office at 614-645-8624 (Monday through Friday) with questions. You can also reach out to your Benefits contact, Kori Hetrick (KMDeFelice@columbus.gov, 614-645-7570) or Eric Potts (EEPotts@columbus.gov, 614-724-5549).

ENSURE YOU RECEIVE WEATHER CLOSURE INFORMATION

Did you love snow days when you were in school? We sometimes get snow days as adults, too!

When winter weather strikes, we may delay opening or close for the day to ensure the safety of staff and participants. When that happens, we notify staff via emails, texts and phone calls. Those messages are sent to the contact information you have listed in Dayforce.

Make sure you receive those notifications! [Review and update your contact information in Dayforce](#) before the winter season.



ARTS AND CULTURE

Get ready for our next C.R.E.A.T.E. fundraiser! We're gearing up for the December Silent Auction and need your help. Now through Nov. 28, we're accepting donations of new or gently used items that would shine in the auction. Drop off contributions with Annie Brown or Ren Kuzmanovich in the Sports Office at 1111 E. Broad St. The Silent Auction will take place during the Staff Holiday Hop on Dec. 11, with all proceeds supporting future staff appreciation events. Have questions? Email CREATE@columbus.gov.

Join the Fight Against Hunger. The Empty Bowls program returns to support the Mid-Ohio Food Collective. For a minimum \$10 donation, you'll receive a handcrafted bowl made by a local artist and a bowl of soup prepared by a fellow team member. Join us on Dec. 19, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at 1111 E. Broad St., Hungry Soldier Room, and on Jan. 9, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at 1533 Alum Industrial Dr. For more information, contact Annie Brown at 614-645-2753.

SICK LEAVE RECIPROCITY: ELECTION WINDOW NOW OPEN

Sick Leave Reciprocity forms are now available in Dayforce for eligible AFSCME and MCP employees. This election allows you to convert unused sick leave into a payment, as outlined in the [current plan](#).

Be sure to select the correct form for your bargaining unit, and use the step-by-step instructions if you need help navigating the process.

The election deadline is Nov. 30. Sick Leave Reciprocity will be paid on Friday, Jan.16, 2026.

12/8/2025

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
30	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



There are no events on this day.

KEY DATES

NOVEMBER

C.R.E.A.T.E. Silent Auction Items Due

Nov. 28 | 1111 E. Broad St., Sports Office (See Annie or Ren)

Open Enrollment Deadline for ALL 2026 Medical Coverage

Nov. 30

DECEMBER

[Staff Holiday Hop](#)

Dec. 11 | 10 a.m.-1 p.m. | Dodge Community Center

Empty Bowls

Dec. 19 | 11 a.m.-1 p.m. | 1111 E. Broad St., Hungry Soldier Room

JANUARY

Empty Bowls

Jan. 9 | 11 a.m.-1 p.m. | 1533 Alum Industrial Dr.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

MAKING GOLF ACCESSIBLE

Al Salleee

Golf Recreation Administrative Manager-Parks, Forestry and Building Maintenance



Building Strong Connections: Al made golf accessible to Columbus City Schools (CCS) middle and high schools.

Al leads the Golf section's CCS outreach program. He developed a presentation for middle and high school gym teachers that included a 2-hour, hands-on experience that taught participants S.N.A.G. and basic golf. He also provided lesson plans and free access to the equipment. Thanks to his efforts, CCS schools can now incorporate golf into their curriculum, and CCS students have the opportunity to be introduced to golf.



NOMINATE A COWORKER FOR THE STAFF SPOTLIGHT

[Fill out this form to nominate a coworker.](#) The employee and their assistant director will be notified that they were nominated.

LIVING OUR VALUES

NATIONAL SPOTLIGHT: LOVE TAKES THE FIELD AT BERLINER



Building Strong Connections: Our facilities connect people, sometimes on the deepest levels.

[The Today Show recently aired a story about how love blossomed at Berliner Sports Park.](#) A softball player walked past her own proposal during a game.

Our ability to connect people was featured on the national news!

ARCHIVE

2025



2024

