



---

MEMORANDUM

TO: Chuck Stifter, Director of Parks and Recreation

FROM: Lisa Jost, Community Center Manager

DATE: January 13, 2022

SUBJECT: Community Center Newsworthy

- **Community Center Events**

December is a time for customers to conduct new and traditional holiday festivities. A family favorite is MGCO's Breakfast and Lunch with Santa. The sold-out event on December 4 had 324 registered for breakfast and 319 for lunch. The day's highlight is watching children share their wish list with Santa. Games are set up in the Maze lobby to keep the youth occupied while waiting for a meal or visit with Santa.

Another well-attended event is the Carousel Craft Shows Holiday Craft Show. Fifty-nine vendors experienced a steady flow of last-minute shoppers looking for unique and seasonal gifts. A new rental spurred by COVID-19 was a local church hosting their Christmas Eve service at the Town Green bandshell. A huge "thank you" to the staff involved for making this unique request a reality. It was a memorable evening for the seventy attendees.

This year, the traditional New Year's Eve Family Party was not conducted due to staff shortages. In place of the party, a special discount was offered on December 31 and January 1 to entice families to keep the tradition of ringing in the new year at the Community Center. 37 families and 755 single customers were here to kick off 2022, having fun and spending quality time together.

Patrons in the holiday spirit donated new toys to support the Toys for CROSS collection drive from November 13-December 7 at the Community Center's main entrance. The Maple Grove Police manages the yearly collection. They were pleased to fill four pallets of toys to support local families in need. The Maple Grove Lions also sponsored a Toys for Tots drive in the parking lot on December 5.

The ice arena is in its peak season. The month included OMGHA hosting the annual Lucas Decker Ultimate Showdown for PeeWee B2 & C teams December 3-5 and the Squirt Extravaganza on January 1-2. The Maple Grove High School Girls and Boys Hockey hosted six home games during December. A note of appreciation goes to the OMGHA coordinators who staff the arena concessions with parent volunteers. Like other areas, getting people to work is challenging. Their continuous recruitment efforts and dedication to cover shifts enabled the concession stands to be open more consistently this month.

- **New hockey tournaments on the horizon**

Staff was informed that the Maple Grove Ice Arena would be a host site for the 2022 Tradition in the Park Hockey Holiday Classic Tournament. The tournament hosts top-ranked high school teams state-wide. This opportunity was made possible by the cooperation of OMGHA, high school coaches, and staff to coordinate ice schedules. The weekday tournament brings added exposure state-wide and new revenue of concession sales.

Congratulations to OMGHA for being awarded the 2023 Girls Youth Tier II U18 National Tournament! A team of volunteers worked hard to submit an application for OMGHA and its partner rinks to host a National tournament the week of March 30-April 3, 2023. It will be a fantastic opportunity to showcase OMGHA, Maple Grove, and area cities that invest time and effort in providing quality hockey opportunities to youth in the region. Thanks to the OMGHA members who worked on this project to bring Maple Grove a new level of competition and awareness to the nation of what our city offers.

- **Gym schedule and access changes January 19**

The Community Center staff have taken measures over the past three months to address behaviors impacting the overall customer experience in the gym and throughout the building. One of these challenges continues to be the high volume of open basketball use with behavioral issues. After evaluation by staff, it has been decided to implement a modified gym schedule starting January 19, 2022. The team intends to follow the modified schedule throughout the school year. Following are highlights of the schedule changes. The full schedule is attached.

- Open basketball for Community Center Members only.
- Friday Family open gym time for Community Center Members.
- Open Pickleball on Thursday evenings and Saturday afternoons for all users.
- Open volleyball on Sunday mornings for all users.
- Additional private gym rental times.

The gym will be shut down from January 15-18 and reopen on January 19. The shut down offers a transition period to communicate, prepare staff, and complete maintenance work. Communications were distributed with flyers, signs, website, and emails to members and customers using the SignUp Genius.

Customers who have frequented the gym may find the economies and convenience of purchasing an All Building Membership in the future. A person will cover the monthly cost of the membership if they use the gym four times a month.

Staff recognizes the modified gym schedule with the reduction of open basketball for all users is a significant change for customers. It is felt this measure was necessary to ensure that a safe and positive experience could be maintained consistently. We will revisit the gym schedule and drop in access after a few months.

- **Daily fee adjustments scheduled for February 1**

The daily admission and coupon book fee adjustments approved for 2022 will be implemented on February 1. The extended start date allows staff to complete necessary changes in the point of sale, update signs, marketing material, and other required preparations.

- **Staffing recruitment and training**

Aquatic Supervisors conducted a quarterly in-service for lifeguards this month. Smaller groups were scheduled for safety precautions. Staffing levels are stretched with the surge of COVID in all areas of the operation. The Aquatic Supervisors should be recognized and commended for managing the daily staffing challenges to meet the expected service levels. A priority was made to keep the waterslide open and, secondly, to have the rope swing or climbing wall available. Keeping the pool open during the scheduled hours has meant that some water features may not be open/available. The Aquatic Supervisors work closely with Life Time Fitness management and other building staff to ensure changes in the expected pool features are communicated to patrons.

- **A note of appreciation and farewell**

I want to share my sincere appreciation to the Maple Grove Parks and Recreation Board for the opportunity to serve as the Community Center Manager. The journey has been incredible. I was fortunate to be involved since the building was under construction and had the privilege to develop an operation that has brought millions of people of all ages, races, and reasons together to learn, work and play. Their memories are many and ones that will last a lifetime.

It has indeed been a privilege to be part of a team that has positively impacted the City of Maple Grove and customers using the facility. A sincere appreciation is extended to all employees who have worked hard to keep the Community Center operation successful. I could not have done my job without my staff's commitment to providing a high level of customer service and continued dedication to their work.

Lastly, thank you to the City Council, Park Board and city leadership for the years of support and guidance. I am honored to have worked with you, and past members, to establish the foundation and philosophy of a facility operation that thrives to enrich lives at the Maple Grove Community Center, the "Heart of the Community."