



THE MESSENGER

PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY AND FOR CITY OF HIGHLAND PARK EMPLOYEES



December 2025 Edition

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Farewell to...

Sam Hertel	PW	Civil Engineer
Marcia Potthast	PW	Bus Driver (PT)
Chris Brazitis	CD	Plumbing Inspector

W-4 Annual Reminder

All employees, be on the lookout for information regarding annual payroll reminders, including the W-4 annual reminder and the 2026 Payroll Calendar, on the December 12, 2025 paycheck.

The IRS encourages everyone to use the Tax Withholding Estimator to perform a "paycheck checkup" (www.irs.gov/individuals/tax-withholding-estimator). This will help you make sure you have the right amount of tax withheld from your paycheck.

If you have any questions, please contact Justin Eiskamp at ext. 1015 or by email at jeiskamp@cityhpil.com.

Employee Anniversaries

Last Name	First Name	Dept.	Title	Years
Palbitska	Ashley	CMO	Asst. to the City Manager	21
Evangelista	Marianne	PW	Lead Water Plant Operator	18
Richards	Thomas	Fire	Fire Lieutenant EMT II	12
Bobek	Matthew	Police	Police Officer	11
Geneja	Pawel	Police	Police Sergeant	10
Styx	Nathaniel	Police	Police Sergeant	9
Bonev	Brian	Police	Police Officer	8
Badalamenti	Sal	PW	Water Plant Mechanic	7
Emmerson	Jacob	Fire	Firefighter EMT II	6
Levinstein	Adam	Finance	IT Manager	5
Tolmie	Matthew	Police	Police Officer	3
Mathew	Shawn	Finance	Senior Accountant	3
Barcenas	Marcos	PW	Maintenance Worker	2
Juarez	Joshua	PW	Maintenance Worker	2
Hess	Haley	Police	Police Officer	2
Marban	Juan	Police	Police Officer	2
Gonzalez	Lucas	PW	Maintenance Worker	2
Schroeder	Tom	Finance	Accounting Manager	2
Gutierrez	Gerardo	PW	Maintenance Worker	1



City Offices will be closed December 25 & January 1st
in observance of Christmas & New Year's Day.



Happy Retirement
MANNY GOMEZ

Please join us in congratulating Manny Gomez on his retirement
and in thanking him for over 10 years of dedicated service to the
Public Works Department.

We wish him all the best as he begins this exciting next chapter!

WIN Program



Newsletter
December 2025

In partnership with:
 CHC WELLBEING



The new WIN year is upon us! Congrats to those that achieved their Wellness Program goals in 2024-25. Benefit discounts will be applied for calendar year 2026. As a reminder, the new WIN year will run from now thru October 31, 2026. Points, **Biometric and Coaching now thru 2026 will count towards your 2027 benefit discount.** Now is a great time to familiarize yourself with the [WIN at a Glance](#) in prep for the current program year.

- The portal is now open for 2025-26 WIN points. Returning participants will not need a program code. Visit <https://app.chcw.com> to log in.
- The City's Annual **Biometric Screening Event** will take place **February 18 - 21** this year. Please be on the lookout for a scheduling e-mail in early January. A friendly reminder, spouses on the insurance and in the program must also complete an annual HRA and Biometric, no exceptions.

For those that opt to go to their Physician or LabCorp, you can do so anytime between now and February 27, 2026. Results must be received by February 28, 2026. Don't forget to log on and complete your annual HRA survey first. The portal will provide you with a form to take with you upon completion.

For Firefighters, please make sure you complete your HRA survey in addition to your Health Endeavors appointment

- New participants and qualifying spouses can now register using program code **7092Cit189**. Visit <https://app.chcw.com/#newparticipants> and follow the prompts. Please reach out to me via e-mail and I will walk you through the initial registration and requirements. An overview of instructions can be found below. Discounts for brand new participants will take effect at upon the receipt of the February Biometric result.

New Members

1. Enter your program code **XXXXX** under the "New Participants" tab and select "Register".
2. Enter in your last name, date of birth and the last four digits of your social security number.
3. Enter in your mobile number to receive a verification code and enter in that code to proceed.
4. Follow the prompts to verify your personal information, sign up for a screening, and complete the Health & Lifestyle Survey.

Returning Members

1. Enter your username & password under "Individual Login" and select "Log in."
2. Complete the activity cards under "Today's Activities" on your dashboard to successfully register for the screening.



- **North Shore Turkey Trot:** Thank you to all the folks who participated this year! We had a strong showing of over 20 runners. It was cold but you persevered! Those that ran the Turkey Trot will have their 25 points applied to your 2025-26 WIN year by December 7th.
- **January Nutrition Challenge:** Looking ahead, our annual Nutrition Challenge will kick off January 5, 2026. Be on the lookout next month for registration instructions. This challenge is worth 25 points! This is an easy way to kick off your points for the year!
- **Did You Know?:** You can earn points by watching videos in the CHC app? eLearning (5 points each) can be accessed at any time, no limit per month, maximum of 30 points total. To access these point opportunities, log in to the CHC app and click "Improve Your Health" on the left menu. Click the eLearning video of your choice. Points will automatically be applied to your account following completion of the video and accompanying questions.

Important Links: [CHC Wellbeing App](#) | [WIN Forms](#) | [WIN Handbook](#)



2026 STATE OF THE CITY

Several State of the City Meetings are planned in January. The City Manager and Human Resources Manager will provide an overview of the City's FY 2026 budget, highlights of major projects and initiatives, compensation information and more. Employee recommendations, feedback and questions are encouraged. These meetings are voluntary, although employees are encouraged to attend. All in-person meetings are available to all employees. The same information will be provided at all meetings.

Thursday, January 8

- 2 PM, *City Hall, 1707 St. Johns – Pre-Session Conference Room*

Friday, January 9

- 2:30 PM, *Police Department, 1677 Old Deerfield – 1st Floor Training Room*

Monday, January 12

- 8:30 AM, *City Hall, 1707 St. Johns – Pre-Session Conference Room*

Tuesday, January 13

- 2 PM, *Police Department, 1677 Old Deerfield – 1st Floor Training Room*

Thursday, January 15

- 7:30 AM, *CD & Public Works, 1150 Half Day – 1st Floor Conference Room*

Tuesday, January 20

- 1 PM, *CD & Public Works, 1150 Half Day – 1st Floor Conference Room*

Tuesday, January 27

- 3 PM, *Fire Department, 1130 Central Avenue – Training Room*

Wednesday, January 28

- 3 PM, *Fire Department, 1130 Central Avenue – Training Room*

Thursday, January 29

- 3 PM, *Fire Department, 1130 Central Avenue – Training Room*

Please sign up to attend a meeting at [HPSHare/HumanResources/StateoftheCity/2026](https://hps.org/HR/StateoftheCity/2026) or contact the Executive Assistant in your department. Employees are encouraged to attend a meeting; supervisor approval is necessary in order to insure sufficient staff coverage for the department or division.

Messenger Bulletin Board



Our Winter Wonderland Holiday Party is this Friday, December 5, 2025, from 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. at the HP Senior Center!

Correction: Please note that the entrance for our event is the South Entrance of the Senior Center.

Don't forget to wear your holiday outfit—the most creative will get a chance to win a prize, and bring a canned good to donate to Moraine Township to receive a raffle ticket.

We look forward to celebrating the season with you!

Mentor Program Panel – Next Week!

Don't forget to join us for the Mentor Program Panel on Tuesday, December 9, from 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. in the Police Conference Training Room.

Lunch will be provided! Come listen and hear firsthand from current mentors and mentees about how the program has helped them build connections, navigate the organization, and grow professionally.

Please **RSVP by December 5** and take this opportunity to learn more about how the Mentor Program can support your development.

A poster for the Mentor Program Panel. At the top left is a circular logo with "Mentor Program" around the top, "HP" in the center, and "Develop Inspire Motivate" around the bottom. To the right is a blue banner that says "JOIN US! LEARN & HEAR FROM PARTICIPANTS!". Below the banner is a calendar icon and the text "TUESDAY, DEC. 9 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM". A blue button says "POLICE CONFERENCE TRAINING ROOM". On the left, a blue banner says "LUNCH WILL BE SERVED!". In the center, there's a QR code with "RSVP BY 12/5" above it. On the right, there are three testimonials from participants, each with a star rating. The first is from Megan Cherry (Mentee) with 5 stars. The second is from Jim Ferber (Mentor) with 5 stars. The third is from Tracy Vigan (Mentee) with 5 stars. The background of the poster is a light blue wall with a white brick pattern.

Messenger Bulletin Board



Congratulations!

Congratulations to Rob Pluta, Public Works Sewer Foreman, on his recent graduation from the Illinois Public Service Institute (IPSI)!

Rob completed his third and final year of the program this October! A major professional milestone that reflects dedication, growth, and leadership. We're proud of Rob for his commitment to development and for the continued value he brings to the City.

Well done, Rob!



♥ Pass It On:
Thank You Card Initiative

The **Employee Engagement & Wellness Committee (EEWC)** is excited to continue our **Thank You Initiative** throughout the month of December!

We invite you to take a moment to reach out to a coworker and share your appreciation. A simple handwritten note can go a long way in brightening someone's day and reminding them how valued they are.

As a reminder, this initiative is designed to encourage connection among peers who work closely together, both within and across departments. You may not receive a note from a supervisor, as Department Directors are not participating in order to ensure the process remains authentic, collaborative, and free from the appearance of favoritism.

We hope you join us in spreading gratitude and kindness this month — even the smallest gesture can make a meaningful impact!

Employee Spotlight

Each month, this piece highlights an employee from a different department. This month's employee interview is with **Justin Eiskamp, Payroll Specialist (Finance)**.

Messenger Editor: Where did you grow up, and what's something unique about your hometown?

Justin Eiskamp: I was raised in Flower Mound, Texas. Which received the name due to a mound in the City which is known for its wildflowers.

ME: When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?

JE: As a kid I wanted to be everything. A geologist, an astronaut, a dentist, a pro skater, an entrepreneur, and to work at Google.

ME: Which season matches your personality the best, and why?

JE: I really enjoy Spring. It's such a rejuvenating time of the year.

ME: What's the most binge-worthy show or book you're currently hooked on?

JE: I love books that are also movies, my two favorite of this combo are #1 The Hunger Games series and #2 The Revenant.

ME: If you could wake up tomorrow with any skill mastered, what would it be, and how would you use it?

JE: I would master cooking. I would use it to make amazing meals every day and share them with friends and family.

ME: What's the most unforgettable meal you've ever had?

JE: Texas Twinkies, it is basically BBQ flirting with you. Spicy, cheesy, and wrapped in bacon like it knows it's irresistible.

ME: It's karaoke night! What's your go-to song to bring down the house?

JE: All I Wanted by Paramore. I can't hit any of the notes BUT it is so silly to try.

ME: If you could share a meal with any three people—past or present—who would get a seat at the table?

JE: Great question. Theodore Roosevelt, Timothee Chalamet, and Trisha Paytas, the ultimate mukbang.

ME: Hollywood is making a movie about your life – who's playing you, and what's the title?

JE: Paul Mescal – Until it Clicks



Stay Safe this Season!

Stay Strong, Stay Healthy: Cold & Flu Prevention

As temperatures drop, cold and flu viruses become more active. The good news is that a few simple habits can significantly reduce your chances of getting sick and help keep our workplace healthy and productive.

1. Wash Your Hands Frequently

Handwashing is the #1 way to prevent illness. Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and warm water—especially after coughing, sneezing, or touching shared surfaces.

2. Cover Coughs & Sneezes

Use a tissue or your elbow, not your hands. Dispose of tissues immediately and wash your hands afterward.

3. Use Hand Sanitizer

If soap and water aren't available, use hand sanitizer.

4. Keep Your Workspace Clean

Wipe down your desk, keyboard, phone, and other frequently touched surfaces regularly.

5. Stay Home if You're Sick

If you're showing symptoms—fever, sore throat, cough, body aches—please stay home. Resting helps you recover faster and prevents spreading illness to colleagues.

6. Boost Your Immune System

Small lifestyle habits can make a big difference:

Get 7–9 hours of sleep. Stay hydrated. Eat nutrient-rich foods. Manage stress. Stay physically active.

Let's Work Together for a Healthy Season

A few small steps make a big difference.

Thank you for doing your part to keep our workplace safe, healthy, and productive!



PREPARE FOR
COLD AND FLU
SEASON

Winter Fun Around Town

HP Park District—Winter Wonderland

December 5 | 5:30—8:00pm

West Ridge Center

636 Ridge Road

Cookie & Cocoa Crawl

December 6 | 11:30 am—1:30 pm

The Ravinia District

(Starts at 540 Roger Williams Ave. Jen Jensen Park)

East End Holiday Market

December 6-7 | (Sat 10am—4pm, Sun 11am—4pm)

Upside Events

444 Central Avenue

Musical Magic at Ravinia Festival

December 3-7

View more Highland Park events [here](#)!



Love the Outdoors? Don't Forget the Lake County Winter Adventures!

Winter is a beautiful time of the year to explore Lake County, Illinois! With 170 lakes and rivers, our Winter Wonderland is on full display in our parks, hills and Winter activities. Plus, with nearly 31,000 acres of land to explore at the Lake County Forest Preserves, Lake County offers outdoor beauty for those interested in cross country skiing, snowboarding, downhill skiing, ice fishing, hockey, ice skating, tubing, sledding and many other activities. Be sure to take advantage of Lake County's outdoor adventures at Fort Sheridan Forest Preserve, Illinois Beach State Park, Independence Grove Forest Preserve, Lakewood Forest Preserve, Wilmot Mountain, and Volo Bog State Natural Area to name a few. Plan your Winter getaway in Lake County today!

Explore more [here](#)!