AUGUST 2022

MRD EMPLOYEE NEWSLETTER

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Letter from the Executive Director

Welcome to August, TEAM!

When you read this I'll likely already be off and away to my Midwest trek to race the annual triathlon nationals. This year – just as many prior years – takes me to Milwaukee, WI, a beautiful old city on the shores of Lake Michigan. It's gritty yet remarkably gorgeous along the lakefront, with many parks and trails to explore. I always take away so much knowledge and appreciation for the world of parks and recreation and local government on these trips…it helps keep me energized for the work we do.

We are ready to move forward on implementing the Comprehensive Master & Strategic Plan, now that the Board has approved it. It is a highly-detailed snapshot of what our residents, staff, and Board asked for, and provides us LOTS of info to mull over and to incorporate into annual work plans to slowly and strategically move forward. This is a 5-10 year working plan that will guide us toward improving and enhancing our services, parks, facilities, and programs by supporting our people – the employees – and increasing our collective capacities. Next steps: 1) building the annual strategic operating plan; 2) accounting for our actions and supporting them through the annual budget; and 3) Board committees of Growth and Finance will meet jointly to help select capital priorities for 2023 and beyond.

Flex Rec is building momentum, as we are poised to reach construction agreements and begin the fit-up work. I am proud of the employee team working toward this endeavor – everyone has rolled up their sleeves and put a lot of energy, thoughtfulness, strategy, and creativity and more into this project. In a word, they're ROCKING it, and I am grateful.

Budget. Budget. Budget. Think of the opportunities before us, and work to increase our reach and impact! Jeremy and Wade are preparing the schedule and process – it absolutely is one of the most challenging projects each year yet it is thrilling because we set the biggest policy and direction for the year ahead!

Enjoy these last full breaths of summer! Grab on and do things that both delight you and stretch you!

Mari

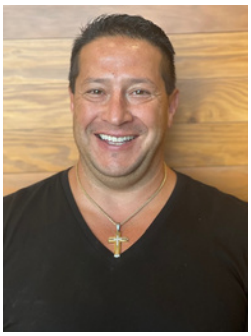
Did you know?

- *The outdoor pool at the FH is averaging 113% of its annual attendance despite the unusually rainy weather.*
- *Last week the CRC had its 6th best week of any summer ever with 6,716 visits.*
- *There were 170 employees on payroll last pay period.*
- *313 games are scheduled to be played in adult softball this summer*
- *126 games were played in youth baseball and softball this summer.*

MRD NEWS

- **The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) turns 32 this year. An ADA training was held last month here at the CRC, taught by our ADA Transition Consultant, Jennifer Skulski. All Core Staff attended at least one training. The trainings were very insightful, helping us not only understand how important ADA regulations are to our community as a whole, but helping us understand what our role is in ensuring our programs and facilities and parks are accessible to EVERYONE! The admin. team will make reports available to Core staff as they are completed and our work on making necessary adjustments will begin.**
- **We have two new Board members! Welcome to Barbara Sharrow and Ken Otto!! Please say hi if you see them around.**

- **Upcoming events: FUNC Fest on August 13 and Youth Appreciation Day (YAD) on August 20. We need volunteers to work these events! Please contact Debby if you can work FUNC Fest, and Justin if you can work YAD.**
- **Please also welcome our new FT Maintenance Tech David Vigil.**



Curiosity in Leadership

I am a HUGE proponent of showing up with genuine curiosity at work. Need to have a performance feedback conversation with an under-performing employee? There's no better place to start than with curiosity. Need a solution to a seemingly no-win scenario with a customer? Again, a bit of curiosity goes a long way. And yet, I know I'm guilty of this. I'm curious if you are too? The more experienced I am with something or someone, the harder it is to show up curious. I think "oh, I've seen this movie before, I know why he's acting that way…AGAIN." And I lose the natural curiosity which could lead to deeper trust and connection. Not to mention actually learning what's REALLY going on. Or I hear about a team in distress and their concerns sound so familiar. My mind rushes to the dozens (or more) times I've worked with teams facing similar challenges. But of course, their issues might smell familiar, but they are each unique in their own way. And sometimes, I'm working so hard that I forget one of the most important things to be curious about. How I'm feeling about the work I'm doing and the contribution I'm making. Experience without curiosity can be dangerous.

Five Opportunities to Show Up with a Bit More Curiosity at Work

So I've put together this starter list of opportunities for deeper curiosity at work.

1. How you are REALLY feeling…ask yourself this question. Not how you should be feeling not how other people are feeling, but how you are feeling and why.
2. How they (your team, your peers, your boss) are ACTUALLY feeling…

You and I both know that "how are you?" is not even remotely the best way to know how someone is actually feeling. Asking deeper questions can make all the difference.

3. What's working and why?

Another, often overlooked opportunity for curiosity at work is looking at the good stuff. It's human nature to take what's working for granted and to concentrate your time and energy on fixing what's broken.

4. What's really causing that performance issue (or bad decision)?

One of the most tempting times to skip past curious is when you're furious. It's tempting to start with all the "why" questions that immediately put the person on the defensive. And yet, this is one of the most vital opportunities for curiosity at work.

5. What's the most important thing you can accomplish this month?

With all the uncertainty and change in the world, it's easy for your team to get overwhelmed with all there is to do, and whether it's still the right thing. Ask your staff to report one thing they will do in the coming month to support your organization and then follow up and ask how its going. By asking the question, you are encouraging your team to get really curios about one most important action that will have the biggest impact, and you are creating shared accountability and conversation so the team can support one another. Of course, there are opportunities to show up a bit more curious at work all day long. It can be a helpful exercise as you're interacting with people and projects to stop and reflect on what you are most curious about in this situation, and to invite others on your team to do the same.

Written by: Karin Hurt

Karin Hurt helps human-centered leaders find clarity in uncertainty, drive innovation, and achieve breakthrough results. She's the founder and CEO of Let's Grow Leaders, an international leadership development and training firm known for practical tools and leadership development programs that stick.

STAFF NEWS

Staff Birthdays:
None

August Work Anniversaries:
Melissa, August 4

Awards:
May Core Staff of the Month - Gene Stollsteimer

Hiring:
We are hiring several positions, including: Maintenance Assistant PT, Parkour Instructor/Coach PT, Personal Trainer PT, Lifeguard, Group Fitness Instructor PT, Flex Rec Group Fitness Coach, Recreation Coordinator Youth, FT.

Have you seen someone doing something outstanding?
Please send nominations to;
jeremy@montroserec.com

Focus On:
May Employee of the Month, Gene Stollsteimer

Gene has worked with the Rec District for one year this month! He states that he loves working here, mostly because of the staff, who make it great. He said he also enjoys interacting with the patrons. The community needs the Rec Center, he grew up without access to a gym in Montrose and loves that the kids in town have access to this great facility. Gene has a varied career background but has spent most of his time in the heating and air conditioning field. He has a degree from Western State in Kinesiology with an emphasis in coaching. He was excited to return to the field that he was trained in when he came to the MRD. Gene says that sports and recreation have long been a big part of his life. He plays softball and basketball and has coached basketball, lacrosse, baseball, football and volleyball. Some of the challenges he faces in this position include spending a large amount of time at a desk. One of his goals is to be larger participant in community outreach, and working to bring all cultures to the lifestyle that the MRD promotes to encourage good physical and mental health. He states that there are many different cultures in the Montrose area and he would like to see more participation in our sports and programs. He would love to teach all local groups and cultures about the recreation lifestyle and working on that would be fulfilling. When asked if there is anything he would like to add, he said that the MRD works like a well-oiled machine. He has never worked in another organization where staff help each other to be successful, he is blown away by the team effort he has witnessed. He has worked in places that had no continuity and this created a difficult environment to work in. Gene finished by saying "I don't want to work anywhere else!".

Gene received two nominations for employee of the month:

"I am nominating Gene for a number of reasons: Gene is always pleasant to work with and is always willing to help, even with things that don't fall within his responsibility. He goes above and beyond to help his fellow employees as well as patrons. His manner of communicating with the youth in the facility is amazing, he explains the situation to them in an easy-to-understand manner and gives them options to eliminate future issues, making them responsible for their actions. Has anyone ever seen Gene in a bad mood? I have not, and look forward to working with him each day. Gene is a model MRD employee. (He also now owes me $20 for nominating him. KIDDING!)"

"Gene is a true pleasure to work with! His positive attitude is contagious and he never says no to a request for help. The kids in Child Watch love Mr. Gene, it is obvious that they enjoy it when he works with them. He also makes it a point to reach out to the adolescents who frequent the Rec Center. He believes that positive adult role models can make a significant difference in kid's lives, and where better to interact with those role models that at the CRC. Every day when I greet him and ask him how is doing, his answer is "excellent", I appreciate his great outlook, even when days are rough. Gene has been an excellent addition to the MRD team!"

The next time you see Gene, AKA "spider wrangler", tell him "great job"!

5 Year Anniversary Celebration for CRC

Almost 500 community members attended our celebration of 5 years of fun at the CRC! We also celebrated National Park and Recreation Month, acknowledging the important role Park and Rec Districts have in our community. Some of our partners that had booths at the event included: The Montrose Library, Rockin' W Ranch Ice Cream, Mountain View Physical Therapy Clinic, and Valley Food. Donors included Horsefly, Alpine Bank and Pespi. Thanks to everyone who helped make this happen! Check out some of the event photos below:

NRPA NATIONAL RECREATION AND PARK ASSOCIATION

An urban Mexican American finds a sense of belonging in nature

Nicole Roque, 32, is an interpretive guide at Hueco Tanks, a world-renowned destination for rock climbing and prehistoric pictographs 36 miles outside El Paso. Her journey to the job required a series of adaptations that now inform how she welcomes guests to the park — particularly those who are the least likely to visit. "I really make an effort to help people feel more comfortable in coming to experience a place like this," she said.

Racial inequalities limit access to the outdoors

A history of racial oppression in the U.S. has disconnected many minorities and people of color from nature. Minorities are more likely to live in cities and low-income neighborhoods that lack public green spaces. Minorities are also more likely to work in jobs that don't allow them enough free time or disposable income for outdoor recreation.
Roque has visited with school children in El Paso who don't know the name of the mountain range, the Franklins, that cuts through the center of their hometown. "People don't realize ... there are trails out there. You can climb there, you can hike there," she said.

Another barrier she confronts is fear, which may be passed down subconsciously from a legacy of racial violence and discrimination. A century ago, Blacks and people of Mexican descent in the South and Southwest were lynched in the outdoors. During segregation, they were denied full access to public lands, including national forests and parks. This century, thousands of immigrants from Mexico and Central America have died traversing the American desert. Examples of racial tension and violence in the outdoors continue. In 2020, a white woman made national headlines when she called the cops with a false accusation against a Black man who was birdwatching in New York's Central Park. This year, three white men were sentenced to life in prison for killing Ahmaud Arbery, a Black man who was jogging in a suburban Georgia neighborhood.

Roque said her relatives worry that her job means she's sometimes outside by herself. Fear manifests itself in a unique way in a southern border city such as El Paso. When doing community outreach, Roque is keenly aware that some locals might confuse her park ranger attire with a Border Patrol uniform. "I get asked a lot, 'Is (Hueco Tanks) past the Border Patrol checkpoint?'" she said. She tells them it is not. "I make an effort to be a welcoming presence for people and hopefully quiet some of those apprehensions."

Finding a welcoming presence in nature

Roque found a welcoming presence while crawling between the stone crevices at Hueco Tanks: evidence of her ancestors embedded within the rocks. She identifies as Chicana, an American of Mexican descent who takes pride in her indigenous heritage. Indigenous groups, including the Kiowa, Mescalero Apache and Tigua, consider Hueco Tanks a sacred place. An ancient people known as the Jornada Mogollon settled in Hueco Tanks around 1150 CE and grew squash, corn and beans. In Mexican culture, that trio of crops is known as milpa. Scattered throughout the park are deep holes carved into smooth stone. "Archeologists call them bedrock mortars. We've always called them molcajetes," Roque said. These remnants revealed to Roque that she was not a stranger in these lands. "It's helped me feel this sense of belonging that I didn't know I needed so deeply," she said. "We don't often see ourselves as Chicanos or as Mexicans, especially we who live in the city, as being connected to the environment, but we've been here and always have been."

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How can we, as recreation professionals, ensure that we are encouraging ALL communities to participate in the programs that we offer? Discussions about how to make everyone in the community feel welcome are important. What ideas do you have?