

# PARK PAGES

The People, Places and Events of Brooklyn Park

January/February 2009

## Tommy Watson A Face of Courage

"Hi Mr. Watson," calls out a little girl at Palmer Lake Elementary School. "Hello," says Tommy Watson, the principal at the school. Watson makes it a point to greet every child at the school every day because he wants them to remember him as the elementary school principal who cared.

That's important to the 34-year-old principal. He believes he has a lot in common with his students, many of whom are Brooklyn Park children who come from financially challenged, single parent families. He still remembers his days as an elementary school student. "As a third grader in Denver, I was down and out on life. I lived in three foster homes, dozens of motel rooms and on the streets. I had a sense of hopelessness running through me and it was awful." He knows some of his students feel that same way, and he's determined to be there for them.



Watson says it was a long road from despair to prosperity, but he made it and so can others. Growing up, Watson says both of his parents were often in prison or strung out on drugs, so he was moved between relatives for much of his life. He never had a place to call home for very long, but Watson says the one thing that remained consistent in his life was his neighborhood recreation center. "This was the place I could go for peace. It was safe. I went there for ten years just about every day. I played basketball and learned about sports and teamwork. Going there gave me a chance."

Tommy Watson continued on page 3...

## Buy a Home Support a Charity Help People Worldwide



Butch Amstutz is one busy realtor. He's always on-the-go, showing and selling homes all over the Northwest suburbs. But there are several houses in Brooklyn Park that have special meaning to him. They're unique homes built by World Encounters, a ministry based out of St. Paul.

World Encounters has served the underprivileged not only here in Minnesota but in places like India, Africa and Mexico. The charitable organization focuses on providing microloans in third world countries, so folks there can start businesses to support themselves.

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# PARK PAGES

PARK PAGES is produced by Brooklyn Park city staff, published every other month and distributed to residences and businesses.  
Editor: Mary Tan, Communications Coordinator

Mayor Steve Lampi: Email: [steve.lampi@brooklynpark.org](mailto:steve.lampi@brooklynpark.org) Voicemail: 763-493-8010  
City Manager Jamie Verbrugge: Email: [jamie.verbrugge@brooklynpark.org](mailto:jamie.verbrugge@brooklynpark.org) Voicemail: 763-493-8001

### EAST DISTRICT

Jeff Lunde: Email: [jeff.lunde@brooklynpark.org](mailto:jeff.lunde@brooklynpark.org) Voicemail: 763-493-8097  
Peter Crema: Email: [peter.crema@brooklynpark.org](mailto:peter.crema@brooklynpark.org) Voicemail: 763-493-8146

### CENTRAL DISTRICT

Rich Gates: Email: [rich.gates@brooklynpark.org](mailto:rich.gates@brooklynpark.org) Voicemail: 763-493-8372  
Mike Trepanier: Email: [mike.trepanier@brooklynpark.org](mailto:mike.trepanier@brooklynpark.org) Voicemail: 763-493-8040

### WEST DISTRICT

Dean Heng: Email: [dean.heng@brooklynpark.org](mailto:dean.heng@brooklynpark.org) Voicemail: 763-315-8496  
Jeanette Meyer: Email: [jeanette.meyer@brooklynpark.org](mailto:jeanette.meyer@brooklynpark.org) Voicemail: 763-315-8442

North Hennepin Area Chamber of Commerce  
229 1st Avenue NE Osseo, Minnesota 55369  
Phone: 763-424-6744 Fax: 763-424-6927  
Email: [info@nhachamber.com](mailto:info@nhachamber.com) Website: [www.nhachamber.com](http://www.nhachamber.com)

TwinWest Chamber of Commerce  
10700 Old County Rd 15 Suite 170 Plymouth, Minnesota 55441  
Phone: 763-450-2220 Fax: 763-450-2221  
Email: [bruce@twinwest.com](mailto:bruce@twinwest.com) Website: [www.twinwest.com](http://www.twinwest.com)

### Proudly Serving the North Hennepin Area!

#### City Services: 763-493-8166

- Vehicle title transfers
- License plate tab renewals
- Registration for out-of-state vehicles

- Fishing and hunting licenses
- Registration for snowmobiles, boats, ATVs
- Pet licenses

#### Hennepin County Services: 612-348-8240

- Driver's license renewals

#### State of Minnesota Services: 952-476-3042

- Driver's license testing

### CITY SERVICES

#### City Hall Office Hours

Monday - Friday ..... 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

#### Licensing Division Hours

Monday - Friday ..... 9:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Saturdays ..... 9 a.m. - Noon

#### Information Contacts

Emergency Assistance ..... 911  
 City Hall ..... 763-424-8000  
 Community Activity Center ..... 763-493-8333  
 Recreation & Parks ..... 763-493-8333  
 Operations & Maintenance ..... 763-493-8007

Fire Administration ..... 763-493-8020  
 Police Administration ..... 763-493-8222  
 Recycling ..... 763-493-8006  
 Utility Billing ..... 763-493-8185  
 Yard Waste Site ..... 763-420-4886

Official website: [www.brooklynpark.org](http://www.brooklynpark.org)

### REGULAR MEETINGS

**City Council:** The 1st, 3rd and 4th Mondays of each month, 7 p.m. Each meeting will begin with an Open Forum of up to 15 minutes.

**Budget Advisory Commission:** 4th Tuesday, 7 p.m.

**Economic Development Authority:**  
2nd Monday of each month, 7 p.m.

**Planning Commission:** 2nd & 4th Wednesday, 7 p.m.

**Charter Commission:** 2nd Wednesday, 7:30 p.m.

**Citizen Long-range Improvement Committee:**  
2nd Thursday, 7 p.m.

**Human Rights Commission:** 3rd Thursday, 7 p.m.

**Recreation and Parks Advisory Commission:**  
3rd Wednesday, 7 p.m.

**Brooklyn Park Firefighters Relief Association Board of Trustees:** 3rd Wednesday, 7 p.m.

### ON AIR

#### Channel 16

7 p.m. - 1st thru 4th Monday: Council & EDA, Live

7 p.m. - 2nd Wednesday: Planning Commission, Live

6:30 p.m. - Thursday: Brooklyn Park Now!

7 p.m. - 2nd Monday: Economic Development Authority, Live

7 p.m. - 2nd thru 5th Thursday: City Council, Replay

2:30 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. - Friday: Brooklyn Park Now!

3 a.m. & 11 a.m. - Friday: City Council, Replay

#### Channel 19

8:30 p.m. - Monday: Brooklyn Park Now!

4:30 a.m. & 12:30 p.m. - Tuesday:

Brooklyn Park Now!

Times and dates subject to change.  
Contact 763-424-8000 or  
[custserv@brooklynpark.org](mailto:custserv@brooklynpark.org)  
to confirm.

### NEWSPAPER OF RECORD

Residents interested in receiving the Brooklyn Park SUN-POST or those who are having delivery problems should contact the paper's circulation department directly at 952-392-6860. Messages should include a delivery address and return phone number. Please note the paper cannot be delivered north of 101st Avenue and distribution is limited in apartments, townhomes and condos.



Tommy Watson continued from cover...

One day while at the recreation center, the football coach from a posh suburban private Catholic high school watched him play football. Soon he offered Watson a full scholarship to attend his school and play on his team. Watson turned out to be a star athlete, on and off the field.

He was repeatedly told by his football coach and nuns that his race and background could not be used as an excuse. "They told me they had high expectations for me, the same expectations they would expect from a kid who had the best parents in the world." They stressed discipline. "When the other kids pulled into school in their Mercedes Benzes and BMWs, I was expected to get off the city bus at the same time."

His hard work paid off when he was recruited to play football for the University of Minnesota by former head coach Jim Wacker. Watson got a full scholarship. "I came to Minnesota on a Greyhound bus, with a small trunk. For me, it was a do or die situation. I had no money. I had to get an education and succeed, or I would return to poverty."

Watson never made it to the NFL, but that's okay with him. He's doing a job far more important where he can support kids who need it most. In fact, he recently moved to Brooklyn Park from Cottage Grove to be nearer to his students.

The principal recently published a memoir of his life. "Face of Courage" tells the story of Watson's ups and downs. He'll unveil it at a special book-signing at Park Center High School, but it's already available at area bookstores and Amazon.com. Watson says his main goal is to change the lives of Brooklyn Park's at-risk children. He knows he can do that, since he already did it himself.

**Editor's Note:**

The City of Brooklyn Park works very hard to portray our community and its people in a positive light. It is not often that you see blunt references to drug use or other negative behaviors in our pages. The story of Tommy Watson contains such material. Rather than shy from difficult issues in the lives of our residents, we choose to emphasize true success stories.

Also, Watson will hold his official book signing on February 7 at Park Center High School at 5-7 p.m. It's free and everyone is invited.

Buy a Home Support a Charity continued from cover...

The ministry raises funds by building homes all over the Twin Cities. The group buys land from area churches, then builds homes with volunteer labor and donated materials. That's when realtors, like Amstutz, sell the home for virtually no commission. "Sometimes we have to pay for advertising or the commission for another real estate agent, but very little goes into our own pockets," said the Brooklyn Park realtor. Once the home sells, every penny of the profit goes to support the work of World Encounters.

The homes, which are not starter homes, are built with the highest quality materials and are made by volunteer craftsman who do the job for personal fulfillment. Haakon Oksnevad was the project manager for both of the Brooklyn Park homes that are up for sale. "I do this for me. I'm so motivated and encouraged by the whole project because I know the proceeds of my hard work are going straight to the people who need help most," said Oksnevad proudly.

The group currently has two homes for sale in Brooklyn Park on the east side of town. They're right behind Brooklyn Park Discover Church off Highway 252 at 81st Avenue North. The houses have three and four bedrooms and vary in square footage. They feature beautiful woodwork, granite countertops, and hardie board siding. The starting prices are in the low \$300s. If you're interested in looking at these beautiful homes, you can check them out at 1205 and 1222 81st Court North. Or, you can call Butch Amstutz at 651-484-8800.



## City Facilities for Rent

Beginning January 1, residents may call and reserve their favorite picnic pavilion for summer group events. Large group sites are available at River Park, Oak Grove Park and the new Central Park.

Looking for an affordable group meeting space or a wedding/banquet facility? The Recreation and Parks Department can help you find a perfect room for your needs at the Community Activity Center.

Call 763-493-8333 for information or reservations.



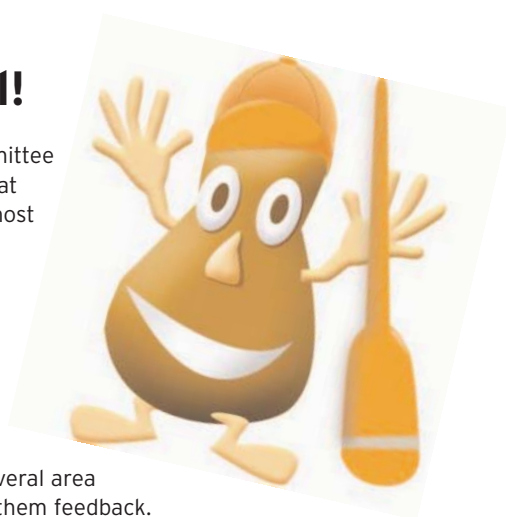
## Help Support the City's Festival!

Tater Daze 2009 may seem like a long way off (June 17-20), but committee members who organize Brooklyn Park's city festival are already hard at work raising money. Two restaurants have graciously volunteered to host fundraisers. Please patronize them and mention you are there to support Tater Daze! Ten percent of sales that day will go towards supporting Tater Daze and Ambassador Program activities.

**Monday, February 9**  
**Vicky's Place Liberian Restaurant**  
7648 Humboldt Avenue North

**Friday, February 13**  
**Victory Grill**  
9690 Colorado Lane North

Also, the volunteers who plan city events need you to chow down! Several area companies are looking to pay volunteers to taste their food and give them feedback. In return, you will be paid and the businesses will give a donation to support special events in Brooklyn Park. If you're interested, please download an application at [www.brooklynpark.org](http://www.brooklynpark.org) or call 763-493-8154.



## Brooklyn Park Shines New Graduates, a National Honor, and a TV News Feature

Last month 15 high school students from all over Brooklyn Park completed a 12-week **Teen Academy** sponsored by the **Brooklyn Park Police Department**. The kids discussed topics such as avoiding gangs and violence to understanding juvenile law. Police Chief Michael Davis honored the teens in a special graduation ceremony.



**KARE-TV Channel 11 reporter Rena Sargianoupolous recently switched jobs with city employee Wayne Roehrich.** Roehrich is a maintenance supervisor at the Community Activity Center (CAC) who invited Sargianoupolous to do his job after hearing about her weekly feature, called Job Swap. For one day, the KARE-TV reporter drove the zamboni on the CAC ice rink and sharpened ice skates, all things Roehrich does on a daily basis. Then, a few weeks later Roehrich got to be a reporter on KARE-TV's morning news show. Roehrich says he wanted to do it to "promote more positive news coverage" in Brooklyn Park.



**BusinessWeek**

Brooklyn Park was recently named a runner-up city in **Business Week Magazine's 2009 Best Places to Raise Your Kids list.** The City received the honor based on criteria such as affordability, schools and parks.

## Arbor Day 2009

**Get ready to order your trees**

The City of Brooklyn Park will once again be offering bare root trees at wholesale prices. Information on the variety of trees and applications will be available on the website beginning February 15 at [www.brooklynpark.org/arborday](http://www.brooklynpark.org/arborday).





## Winter Season Reminders

### C'mon, Get to It!

#### Sidewalk Shoveling

Sidewalks must be plowed by the adjacent property owner to allow clear passage and safe conditions. Only certain designated sidewalks along major roadways are plowed by the City.

#### Snow Plowing

Plowing snow from a driveway or sidewalk onto the public street can become a traffic or pedestrian hazard and is not allowed. It's not very polite, either.

#### Vehicle parking

All vehicles must be parked on the hard surfaced driveway area only. Parking off the driveway on grass, dirt, rock, or other landscaping is not allowed.

To register a concern, please visit the city website at [www.brooklynpark.org](http://www.brooklynpark.org) and click on Departments, then Code Enforcement & Public Health, Public Service Request Form. You can also call 763-493-8070.



## Community Gardens at Eidem Homestead Historical Farm

### Grow your own vegetables and cultivate a sense of community

Compare green thumbs with your neighbors! New for 2009 will be the opportunity to rent a garden plot at Eidem Farm, Noble Parkway and 101st Avenue North. 20'x 20' plots will be available for rent for \$50 per season. Applicants are required to submit a copy of a photo ID with corresponding address, full payment, signed rules contract, and signed application form. A limited number of plots are available. Registration begins February 3 for residents and March 3 for non-residents. Call 763-493-8333 for more information.

## Be a Leader in Brooklyn Park! We need more resident involvement

Want to help support the Brooklyn Park business community? There's currently an opening on the Brooklyn Park Development Corporation (BPDC) Board of Directors for a resident representative for a two-year term. The BPDC is a not-for-profit corporation that works to promote and support the growth of small businesses in Brooklyn Park.

Members of the BPDC are volunteers and are appointed by the Brooklyn Park City Council. The BPDC meets at City Hall on an "as needed" basis throughout the year. The meetings are held at 7:30 a.m. and last approximately one hour.

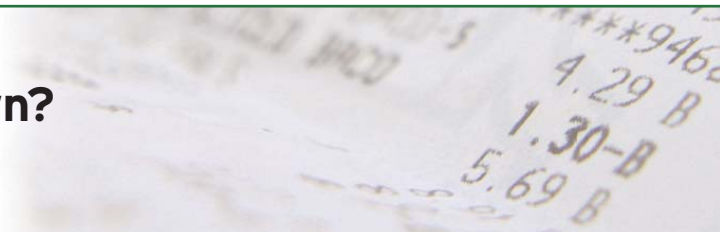
If business development doesn't interest you, the City is also looking for residents to serve on city commissions. The City is recruiting for commissioners to fill upcoming vacancies on the Citizen Long-range Improvement Committee, Human Rights Commission, Planning Commission, Recreation and Parks Advisory Commission, and Northwest Suburbs Cable Communications Commission. Applications to both the BPDC and city commissions are available on the City's website at [www.brooklynpark.org](http://www.brooklynpark.org) or at the City Hall customer service desk. For more information on city commissions call Marlene Kryder at 763-493-8001. For more information on the BPDC, contact Amy Baldwin at 763-493-8058. Applications for commissions and BPDC both must be received by January 31.

## Grocery Prices Getting You Down?

Living Word Christian Center has recently become a host site for Angel Food, a non-profit, non-denominational food program dedicated to providing monthly food assistance to 500,000 families in 35 states across America.

Every month Angel Food provides boxes of high quality, value priced food items at over half off grocery store prices. Each unit contains enough food to help feed a family of four for about one week, or a single senior for almost a month.

Angel Food distributes a menu of high quality food items worth more than \$60 for the low price of \$30. Angel Food is open to



everyone. There are no applications or pre-qualifiers to participate and no limit to the number of food boxes an individual or family can purchase.

Angel Food is "not a hand out but a hand up" - a way to extend your grocery dollars. Order forms are available in the Living Word Christian Center main lobby or online [www.lwcc.org/angelfood](http://www.lwcc.org/angelfood). More information is available by calling the Outreach Hotline 763-315-7111.



# PARK PAGES

## It's Winter, Get Active!

### Fun and Affordable Activities for the Whole Family

#### Special Events

##### The Many Faces of Brooklyn Park and Community Health Fair

What makes Brooklyn Park a unique place to live? It's you and your neighbors! Come join us at our fun-filled family event to educate, recognize and celebrate the rich and diverse cultures living in our great city. There will be games, food, fun and entertainment from around the world.

Saturday, January 24

11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Community Activity Center Armory Gym

5600 85th Avenue North

Free

Please go to the city's website at [www.brooklynpark.org](http://www.brooklynpark.org) or call 763-493-8154 for more information.

#### Recreation and Parks Activities

The following is a partial list of just some of the opportunities Brooklyn Park residents can take advantage of. For a complete list of events and classes, check out the latest Recreation and Parks guide, available on the city's website, or at City Hall or the Community Activity Center.

#### Adult Open Hockey

The Brooklyn Park Ice Arena offers open hockey sessions on Fridays and Saturdays for adults 18 years and older. Participation is limited to the first 20 skaters plus four goalies. Admission is \$7 for skaters and goalies skate free. Protective safety equipment is required (i.e. helmets, gloves, shin pads). Players pay the office attendant one hour and thirty minutes before scheduled ice time. Adult open hockey passes are available for \$65 for 10 passes. Call 763-493-8181 ext. 7 for dates and times.

#### Brooklyn Park Athletic Association (BPAA)

Visit [www.bpaasports.org](http://www.bpaasports.org) for last minute updates and locations. Sports include baseball, softball, soccer, football and basketball. Online registration offered. Fee assistance scholarships available when registering. Baseball and Softball registration dates at the Community Activity Center:

February 7 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

February 12 7-9 p.m.

February 17 7-9 p.m.

February 21 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

#### Cross Country Skiing

The City grooms three trails for cross country skiers. Brookland Golf Course (84th Avenue North and Regent Avenue) has a .75 mile loop, and Edinburgh USA Golf Course (8700 Edinbrook Crossing) has two loops - one 2.15 miles and a one mile loop. The Rush Creek Regional Trail (formerly the Elm Creek Regional Trail) runs from 101st Avenue North to Zane Avenue and is a 4.1 mile trail maintained by the City as well.



#### Fitness Classes

One Week Free: March 2-5

Take one class or take them all! No registration required.

Some of the free classes include:

Energetics	Monday 6-7 p.m.
Hatha Yoga	Tuesday 6-7 p.m.
Energetics	Wednesday 12-12:45 p.m.
Fusion	Thursday 6-7 p.m.
Tai Chi	Thursday 4:30-5:30 p.m.

#### New Fitness Room

Come check out the new fitness room at the Community Activity Center. This room includes treadmills, elliptical machines, exercise bikes and exercise balls. The CAC also has a weight room with a variety of free weights. The cost to use these rooms is \$3 per person per day or \$15 for a 30 day pass. All children under the age of 15 must be accompanied by an adult.

#### Indoor Walking Track

The indoor walking track at the Community Activity Center is 630 feet in length and circles above the ice arena; 8.4 laps is equal to one mile. The walking track is open from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. with occasional closings due to hockey games or special events.

#### School Vacation Day Fun

This is your out of school time headquarters! Kids ages 6-12 can spend the day from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. at the Zanewood Recreation Center on winter school vacation days, February 6 and April 6-9. \$28 per day.

#### Silver Sneakers

The Silver Sneakers Fitness Program is designed especially for older adults who want to improve their strength, flexibility and endurance. Involvement in the program encourages members to make healthy choices and commit to making physical activity a part of their lives.

#### Muscular Strength and Range of Movement

Have fun and move to the music through a variety of exercises designed to increase muscular strength, range of movement, and activity for daily living skills. Mondays and Thursdays 9-9:45 a.m.

#### Yoga Stretch

Yoga Stretch will move your whole body through a complete series of seated and standing yoga poses. Chair supports offered to safely perform a variety of postures designed to increase flexibility, balance and range of movement.

Tuesdays 10-10:45 a.m.

### Cardio Circuit

Combine fun with fitness to increase your endurance power with cardiovascular and muscular a standing circuit workout.  
Tuesdays 9:45 a.m.  
Wednesdays 11-11:45 a.m.



### Sledding Hills

Central Park (84th and Regent Avenue) and Brookdale Park (76th and June Avenue) has sledding hills that will fulfill your need for a snow sledding adventure. Come out and enjoy the Minnesota winter on these sledding hills!

### Teen Zone

All teens in grades 7-12 are welcome to participate in Teen Zone this school year. Teen Zone has expanded hours at the Zanewood Recreation Center. Kids are welcome to participate with friends in a relaxed atmosphere. All participants will have the opportunity to plan weekly activities.

### Valentine's Day Celebration Ice Skate Event

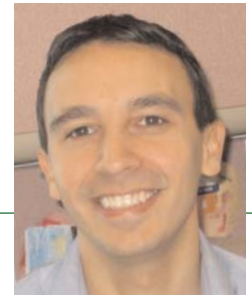
Come and skate indoors with your loved ones on this special day. Skaters wearing something red will receive \$1 off admission. \$4

adults and \$3 seniors and students. Saturday February 14, 2:15-3:45 p.m.

### Winter Walking Trails

Enjoy the plowed winter walking trails at Palmer Lake, along the Edinbrook Channel Trail, and along the Elm Creek Regional Trail.

For more information on any of these activities or to register, please call 763-493-8333 or logon to the city's website at [www.brooklynpark.org](http://www.brooklynpark.org).



## Talkin' Trash with Dan the Recycling Man

Hi Everybody!

It's me, Dan the Recycling Man. I'm always looking for better ways to communicate with the residents of Brooklyn Park and I've got a new thing I'm trying out. **I started my own blog!** Approximately once a week I'm writing and posting information about what I'm doing as recycling manager for the City. I also offer recycling tips to help you do your part to preserve the environment. I would like my blog to be a place where you can ask me all your recycling or garbage questions. I'm also an administrator in the Operations and Maintenance Department, so you can ask me public works questions too.

Here are some things I recently wrote about:

### Newly Designed Recycling Calendar

The 2009 Recycling Collection Calendar has a new look. Each recycling day is color coded to match the recycling collection zones in the city. For example, if you live in the southwest part of the city your recycling day is every other Monday, and it's highlighted in orange to match the orange recycling zone on the map. 2009 Recycling Guides are also available at City Hall or by request. If you didn't receive a recycling calendar or if you want a 2009 Recycling Guide, please call me at 763-493-8007 and I'll send one to you.

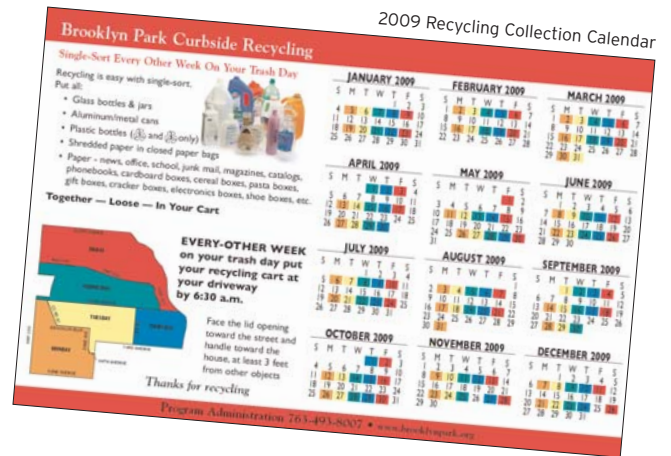
### Telephone Book Recycling

With the New Year you probably received a new telephone book, or two or three or maybe even more! Last time I checked nobody needs that many. Rest assured you can recycle them, just put them in your green recycling cart. One way to go a step further is to opt out of getting some telephone books. Not all companies are set up for this yet, but here is one at [www.yellowpagesgoesgreen.org](http://www.yellowpagesgoesgreen.org). After you log in, go under the "Join Us" picture, click on the "opt out" link, fill in your name, address and e-mail and you're done!

You can find my blog on the front page of the City's website, [www.brooklynpark.org](http://www.brooklynpark.org). I hope you'll check it out, and even sign up to be a "follower." If you're a follower, every time I publish something new you'll get an email letting you know I just posted something new.

Don't forget you can also catch me on TV! I do a regular recycling segment on the city's cable news show, **Brooklyn Park Now!** It airs on channel 16 every Thursday at 6:30 p.m. and on channel 19 every Monday at 8:30 p.m.

Until next issue, stay green!



# New Website for Youth

## For teens, by teens

A new website has been created by and for teenagers to make it attractive and useful to young people. The website, [www.brooklynparkyouth.com](http://www.brooklynparkyouth.com), is dedicated to providing information to teens in Brooklyn Park about what opportunities are available to them.

Over the past few months, the Brooklyn Park Community Youth Action Crew, consisting of 15 teens, conducted more than 1,000 youth-to-youth interviews. The results were startling. They found that 75 percent of teens in Brooklyn Park are not currently involved in any kind of youth program, and 35 percent have never participated in anything! The top reason they cited for lack of participation was that they don't know what opportunities and programs are available in the community. However, nearly four out of five teens indicated they would use a website to learn about what is going on in their community.

As a result, Brooklyn Park Champions for Youth, in partnership with Brooklyn Park Recreation & Parks, embarked on an effort to provide a website specifically for teens that would provide the type of information they are looking for. The site includes a calendar of events for teens in both Brooklyn Park and Brooklyn Center. There is also an electronic version of the paper map of youth-frequented places that the Community Youth Action Crew created through a grant from Hennepin County. The map allows teens to find opportunities near where they live.

Teens also said they need help finding jobs, so there is a page with contact information for businesses that have indicated they want to be listed as teen employers on the website. If you have services for youth or parents and have information you would like included on the site, please email [info@brooklynparkyouth.com](mailto:info@brooklynparkyouth.com).

Eat out and help support the City's festival! See page 4 for all the details!



## Did You Know?

### 2007 Traffic Stats That Might Surprise You!

- The total societal cost of crashes exceeds \$230 billion annually
- In 2007, 41,059 people died in car crashes
- 30 percent of the people killed in traffic accidents are under age 25
- Most pedestrian fatalities occur in urban areas (73%) at non-intersection locations (77%) in normal weather conditions (90%) and at night (67%).



Statistics courtesy of the Federal Highway Administration and the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration.



City of Brooklyn Park  
5200 - 85th Avenue North  
Brooklyn Park, MN 55443-4300

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