

Kent COUNTY *Detail*

**September/
October
2014**

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Health Department

South Clinic Opens, Offers Dental Options

On August 28, 2014, a ribbon cutting was held at the new Health Department South Clinic at 4700 Kalamazoo SE in Kentwood. The site is that of the former Kentwood Library and will now house all Health Department services formerly provided at the Wyoming and Kentwood Clinic sites.

At the ribbon cutting, Adam London, Health Officer, shared that our community has found a way to help provide dental health service for all. London went on to say that in the 2011 Community Health Needs Assessment with over 500 participants from various ethnic, racial, and economic backgrounds, 'Ensuring access to dental care' was ranked the fifth highest concern out of 44 priorities in the assessment. The South Clinic is one way of moving forward to meet the need for dental care.

The 2013 Michigan Oral Health Coalition's 'Check Up on Oral Health' estimated that in 2010 there were 10,167 visits to local emergency departments due to dental-related issues. The Kent County Oral Health Coalition's '2013 Kent County Oral Health Exam' says 26 percent of adults had not seen a dentist in the past year, and 65 percent of Kent County children with Medicaid insurance do not have a dental provider (a total of 22,300 children ages 10 and younger). That report also found the current number of dentists that serve low-income patients in Kent County is only 29 percent of what is needed for the community.

Through the efforts of the Kent County Health Department (KCHD), the Kent County Oral Health Coalition, the philanthropic community, and others, Kent County was able to purchase the former Kentwood Library on Kalamazoo. Michigan Community Dental Clinics (MCDC), a not-for-profit organization that operates public dental clinics on behalf of local health departments, provided the needed dental services. MCDC focuses on serving those enrolled in Medicaid and/or those individuals below 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

The South Clinic merges the services provided at the former Wyoming and Kentwood clinics. This site is a larger property and is on the Rapid bus Route Two with drop-off service at the door.

The South Clinic is a true partnership of many like-minded, caring individuals coming together to support this cause. Those interested in KCHD services can call 616-632-7200; those interested in services offered by Michigan Community Dental Clinics can call toll-free 877-313-6232.

Breastfeeding Law Signed this Summer

Michigan Governor Rick Snyder signed the Breastfeeding Anti-Discrimination Act into law this summer. This act, supported by the Kent County Health Department and championed by Kent County Commissioners Carol Hennessey, Candace Chivis, and Shana Shroll, will ensure women's right to breastfeed their babies in public. The Kent County Health Department has numerous programs to educate and support families who breastfeed.

Earlier this year, the Kent County Health Advisory Committee (CHAC) voted to support the law. It prohibits businesses from telling mothers who are breastfeeding to stop or leave. Women asked to leave because they are breastfeeding can file a civil action against the business. A letter of support was written by CHAC Chairperson Shana Shroll, and Kent County's Health Officer Adam London. Kent County Commissioner Carol Hennessey also testified before committee in the Senate in support of the Bill. Forty five other states have enacted laws similar to the Breastfeeding Anti-Discrimination Act (Michigan Senate Bill 674).



KENT COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT & KENT COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Emergency Management & Preparedness Coordinators Division Reminds Residents to Be Prepared! September is National Preparedness Month

As autumn approaches, many people are wondering what this winter will bring. Freezing temperatures and extended, heavy snowfall last winter was dangerous. What if the power goes out? What if your car gets stranded at the side of a road? The Kent County Emergency Management Division and Kent County Health Department Emergency Preparedness team are observing National Preparedness Month this September.

“There are incidents where people literally get a few seconds to make life-or-death decisions,” said Jack Stewart, Emergency Management Coordinator for Kent County. “If you have a plan on how you will respond to the conditions of disasters, whether it’s an act of terror or an act of nature, it can make the difference in the outcomes for you and your family.”

Build a basic emergency kit, which should include three to fourteen days of water and non-perishable food, a first aid kit, an all-weather radio, a flashlight, extra batteries, a one week supply of medications and personal hygiene items. A good way to prepare is to consider camping at a rustic campground where there is no electricity. “Perhaps you built an emergency kit complete a few years ago,” said Adam London, Health Officer of the Kent County Health Department. “But batteries lose power, food expires, and even personal hygiene items could go bad over time. September is a good time to make sure those items are still usable.” Keep a road emergency kit in your car, including a warm blanket that is within reach of the driver.

Before a disaster, family and friends should arrange a meeting place, in case you're not together during an emergency. Discuss how you'll contact each other as well as what to do in a variety of situations. Also remember to check on our special needs populations (elderly, non-ambulatory) during times of emergencies. The Kent County Emergency Management Office offers training free of charge through the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). This training prepares individuals to help themselves, their families, and the community in general.

Websites for more information on preparedness:

www.getReadyKent.com

www.AccessKent.com/GETREADY

www.AccessKent.com/emergencymanagement

www.BeMittenReady.com

www.ready.gov



Parks Department

Sandy Hansen Shoreline Trails

When Sandy Hansen of Grandville passed away earlier this year her husband, Dick Hansen, reached out to the Kent County Parks Foundation to assist in identifying a memorial for his wife, who loved nature and had been a long-time supporter of the parks and other environmental causes. The Hansens' earlier philanthropy included funding for the Hansen Nature Trail at Millennium Park. This memorial gift to the Foundation will be used to construct a boardwalk through a wetlands area at Millennium Park to connect the Millennium Park Trails to the existing Hansen Nature Trail. Four miles of trails in Millennium Park will be recognized as the Sandy Hansen Shoreline Trails. Part of the Fred Meijer Millennium Trail Network, the Sandy Hansen Shoreline Trails include a one-mile nature trail and three miles of paved, multi-purpose trails. A public ceremony/dedication for the Boardwalk and Trail will be held in 2015.

Millennium Park is a unique, ambitious project to reclaim 1,500 acres of heavily-used land for public recreation. The park encompasses rolling terrain and extensive wetlands and lakes southwest of Grand Rapids, between Johnson Park and John Ball Park. Its land is rich in natural resources, featuring woods, wildlife, fish and waterfowl. Facilities within the park now include a six-acre beach and splash pad, nearly 20 miles of trails, and other diverse opportunities for recreation. Adjoining Grand Rapids, Walker, Grandville and Wyoming, Millennium Park is one of our nation's largest urban parks.

Lepard Nature Preserve

Kent County Parks recently announced the dedication and opening of the new, 52 acre Lepard Nature Preserve in Caledonia Township. With pristine natural areas and educational opportunities, this park exemplifies a primary role of County parks in our community. It's also a great example of the collaborations our Parks Department has formed for decades. The Lepard Family, Caledonia Township and neighboring Spirit of Life Church have come together to provide this Preserve for use by the public.



The Lepard family generously donated the land for the park back in 2003. The Michigan DNR has a rating system for the diversity and quality of plant species for natural sites and while most natural sites have a score of around 20, the Lepard Nature Preserve scored 59.87! Caledonia Township partnered with Kent County Parks (as it has several times) on this project. The township helped fund the trail system, signage and the boardwalk.

"The contributions of the Lepard Family and Caledonia Township were critical to keeping this greenspace open to the public," said Dan Koorndyk, Chair of the Kent County Board of Commissioners. "This site will be a place to get away from the hectic pace of the city and be close to nature for generations to come."

One more obstacle was overcome when Spirit of Life Church became such a generous partner in this park project by agreeing to allow use of their driveway and parking lot to access the County-owned parking lot on the preserve site. "This is truly a public-private partnership, and proves the success of collaboration we have come to know in Kent County," Chair Koorndyk added.



Kent County Quality Service Employee of the Quarter

At Kent County, providing quality service to our customers is our number one priority. **Our mission** is to be an effective and efficient steward in delivering quality services for our diverse community. Our priority is to provide mandated services, which may be enhanced and supplemented by additional services to improve the quality of life for all of our citizens within the constraints of sound fiscal policy.

Dolores Howe, with the Office of the Friend of the Court, is recognized as the Kent County Quality Service Employee of the 3rd Quarter for helping to fulfill Kent County’s mission by providing quality service to citizens of Kent County.

The individual who nominated Dolores wrote:

“Dolores has exceeded my expectations by assisting me along the road. I believe that if it were not for Dolores (Dotty), I would not have been able to have gotten myself straight and been able to do what I have had to do to fulfill my obligations. She just saved my life and I owe her lots of thanks for what she has done to help me. She knows my case from front to back and has gone above and beyond by helping to keep me out of jail.”

It is worth noting that this is the seventh nomination that Ms. Howe has received since she was hired in 2011. Thank you to Dotty for consistently providing quality services to the clients of the Friend of the Court.



Number of Years Employed by Kent County: 3 years and 7 months.

The hardest thing I’ve ever done: My youngest son was hospitalized from the time that he was 3 months old until he was 6 months old. The hardest thing for me to do was to leave the hospital every day to go to work so that I could keep the insurance that he needed. When he was awake, he would look at me with the saddest eyes and it would tear me to pieces.

Three people (living or dead) I’d invite to dinner: My grandmother (passed). She has always inspired me with her strength, her wisdom, and her strong sense of faith and family.

My paternal grandmother (passed). She passed a few months before I was born, so I never knew her. I’ve heard she was also a strong lady and would be very interested in speaking with her. (My grandfather was full-blooded Indian and I bet there are some stories). Monty Roberts (living). He’s known as “The Horse Whisperer.” I’m very into horses and I would love to have conversations with him.

You’d be surprised to learn that: I rode with a motorcycle club for many years, beginning in 1994. This club is the one that runs the original Blessing of the Bikes in Baldwin. I was secretary of it for most of those years. I had a motorcycle accident in 2000 that almost took my life, but I still ride today. I hung up my “colors” two years ago this month.

The thing that I like most about working for Kent County is: On one level, I love working for Kent County in general because they have amazing programs for their employees. Sitting through orientation was an eye-opener. The continual training and support that we’re given as County employees has far surpassed anything I’ve experienced before. I’m the kind of person that loves to learn and improve myself whenever possible and the County endorses this. On another level, it has been a challenge to find job satisfaction in the office that I work in, due to the nature of what we do. However, I have been able to find it in how I am able to assist my coworkers, other agencies that we deal with, and the clients that contact us for assistance. The legal system can be very confusing for the average person, so I am happy whenever I can make a positive difference whenever, wherever I can.

Please join us in congratulating **Dolores Howe** for earning Kent County’s Employee Recognition for Quality Service Award.



If you know a Kent County employee who is deserving of this recognition, please complete a nomination form at www.accesskent.com/qualityservice.

The **County Detail** is a compilation of news and information that helps fulfill our commitment to the residents of Kent County, and is distributed bi-monthly to local government officials. Editorial questions or submissions should be directed to Melanie Grooters, *County Detail* Editor.
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