

July 2024

Just The Dirt

Custodial & Grounds Newsletter



A Letter from the Director

Hello Team CGS,

Welcome to another edition of the Custodial & Grounds Services newsletter!

I hope you are enjoying the summer and spending time with the people who are important to you. It's hard to believe that we are only one month away from our students returning to campus. I know many of you are busy completing projects and finalizing plans for the return of our students.

I hope you all had a chance to participate in our CGS Picnic and the Business and Finance picnic. For many, it was the first time they had the opportunity to visit Crisler Area and see the court. Thank you to our CGS Connect team members for planning our internal picnic and the staff who supported the Business and Finance picnic. They were both incredible events!

I want to thank you all for your support of this university. You truly make blue go!

Lukeland

Pollinator Protection



As the summer heat ramps up and we start to hit the peak of the season, pollinators like bees, wasps, and butterflies will be out and working actively. Although stinging insects can be scary and pose a risk if stung it is best to operate best practices to not only, most importantly protect yourself but also the pollinators that play a crucial role in the ecosystem today.

The most important role pollinators have is to promote the health of the ecosystem while helping facilitate the reproduction of flowering plants, food, and native plants. This ensures a healthy range of plant species, beneficial to other wildlife that depend on these plants. Pollinators protect our food supply it is estimated that they affect around 75% of the world's flowering plants and about 35% of global food crops. They are responsible for an estimated 15 billion dollars in worth of crops alone in the United States. They enhance crop yields and food production efforts. 1 in 3 bites of food we eat are the result of animal-assisted pollination.

Pollinators also play a crucial role in benefitting soil health, they can feed other animals and can contribute to human health and aesthetics in an area. For instance, many doctors may prescribe using honey from a local hive to help combat seasonal allergies.

The Ann Arbor Campus is now a certified bee campus in the interest of pollinator conservation. This means we should promote behavior on the outside of the buildings to minimize the influence of stinging insects near where people sit, entry doors, and attractive areas. In the interests of promoting a healthy bee environment, we look to reduce the use of pesticides and use scientific methods to deter activity in sensitive areas. We will not use pesticides for flowering plants or for foraging insects. A few ways to help decrease the attractiveness of an area for pollinators is by placing flowering plants away from windows or near the main areas of a building to help minimize stinging insect activity around a given area. Keeping windows closed or screened to minimize entry, sealing open gaps that invite stinging insects to nest, and keeping garbage levels to a minimum in cans near exit doors and dumpsters should always be closed.

The most important thing we can do is to not harass the stinging insects usually if left alone they are likely to leave you alone. Typically defensive behavior starts around defending a nest. If a nest is found or suspected please alert the pest management team by contacting the Facilities Service Center so that we can respond accordingly.



Spotlight



We are CGS Connect

By Donnell Cook and Erin Rayl

CGS Connect: Connecting Frontline Staff and Management is a group designed to bring different departments together throughout Custodial and Grounds Services. It started around two years ago as a way to build stronger communication practices between management and employees, and it inevitably grew to be much more. The

members making up our CGS Connect team include employees from Grounds, Custodial, and Pest Management, all of whom were nominated by their supervisor. While the team is guided by administrative leaders, Denise Krause and Tammy Walter, it is apparent that the meetings take place in a way that makes each person feel equal, heard, and valued.



Spotlight



We conducted a survey among our fellow group members to find out what each person thought about being a part of CGS Connect. We found that most members feel accepted and at ease to be themselves and most have felt that way since their first meeting. As a whole, we all like being able to help make important decisions that affect frontline staff and doing so in a way that feels productive and difference-making. When asked how decisions are made, Lance Fielder (Groundskeeper I) says, “Decisions are made collectively; each team member collaborates their own ideas, experiences and skills to each meeting. We must follow a few guidelines set forth with our finance budget and comply with union standards and rules.”

Confidentiality is also a priority for CGS Connect. When Denise Krause was asked what that meant, she said, “Our meetings are confidential because we want all team members to feel comfortable sharing their concerns, thoughts, and ideas openly. As staff and frontline workers, we operate independently from management. We assure everyone that their identity will never be disclosed to management and that they can trust us to bring their suggestions or issues to management for improvement.” Each person involved makes everyone feel comfortable bringing new topics to the table in a judgment-free zone.

While experience in project planning for individual group members ranges from little-to-none to many-many years, most members of CGS Connect feel this entire experience will give them more opportunities in the future. Kimberly Lange (Custodian I) says, “I hadn't planned on any project planning but with the experience and opportunity that I have been given, it's a big possibility for my future at U of M.” There's no doubt being a part of this group has its benefits. Even when we know it can look great on a resume, I think each of us value the friendships we are creating even more.

CGS Connect



Front row left to right-Aubry McIntyre, Melissa Jordan, Jay Myers, Denise Krause, Donnell Cook, Kimberly Lange, Jamica Williams, middle row- Suzana Picklesimer, Tammy Walter, Erin Rayl, back row-Thomas Nienhaus, Tammy Chapman, Frank Moore, Lance Fielder Not pictured-Ryan Langan & Paul Hastings

Spotlight



The CGS Connect Picnic, an annual event put on by the group, is quickly becoming a staple that everyone loves planning (and partaking in!) There is a sense of pride in seeing your coworkers enjoy some good food, play fun games and win prizes, while knowing you had a hand in making that happen. There is another sense of pride in making it look good with all the decorations! During the set-up for these events, everyone seems to have an assigned project which always turns into a group project as others show up to offer help. If someone needs help hanging banners or designing a centerpiece there is always a person nearby to lend a hand. During and after the events, CGS Connect members listen to what their coworkers and other event-goers are saying and bring feedback to the next meeting so we can make next year's event even better.

As CGS Connect members, we are striving to improve each work day now and in the future for everyone we work with. We push hope, excitement, positivity, and togetherness each time we meet and we hope to bring that to our frontline staff each chance we get.

"I like being a part of this team because I actually have a say in things that we discuss and plan."
-Suzana Picklesimer, Custodian I

"I like working as a team and being able to plan events and do things to make others happy. I have always wanted to plan events and parties for other people as a career and being a part of CGS means a lot because I get to have fun and work with amazing people doing things that I really enjoy."
-Jamica Williams, Custodian I

"CGS Connect means so many things to me. It means staff interested in recognizing the hard work of other staff that takes place in their shops. It means energy, the team has so much energy and willingness to get right in there and take charge. It means a safe place to be 100% yourself. It means no judgment and every idea is considered. It's the sense of belonging that means the most to me. We genuinely care about our team and the staff that we support." -Tammy Walter, Administrative Assistant Sr.

"From day one of being in this group I have felt comfortable enough to give my opinion on any topic we are discussing. Every person in this group including Tammy and Denise, have helped make this group something we can be proud to be a part of. I feel like this group has so much potential to implement change in a positive way; and if these words aren't enough to convince you, maybe the decorations will." -Erin Rayl, Pest Management Specialist

From The Office of Campus Sustainability

Waste Audit

This past February, OCS hired a consultant to sort through compost, recycling, and landfill waste from 24 campus buildings representing various building types (administrative, classroom, research, union/library, and residential). The main goals of the audit were to collect data to help develop a new set of waste goals for the university and to identify opportunities for program growth or modification to reduce waste and increase diversion. We found our recycling and compost contamination was pretty low, which is great!

Here are some of the key takeaways. Improvements to our waste programs can be made by:

Targeting special items recycling of glass and soft plastics (piloting this summer)

Expanding compost opportunities, specifically:

The biggest opportunity is capturing additional food waste.

Compost bins coverage is adequate in staff kitchens, cafes, residential hall waste closets, and OCS is adding roughly 100 more public-facing bins in lounges and atriums.

OCS is continuing to work with facility staff and students through the Adopt-a-Bin program to identify key areas to add bins (likely to find 40-50 new locations by the end of 2024)

Controlling the materials generated on campus through procurement practices

Ongoing Where to Throw education efforts.

We appreciate everyone's support for this waste audit, and in our ongoing waste reduction programs.

Check out this Planet Blue Ambassador blog post for a great behind-the-scenes look at the campus waste audit.

Happy Anniversary

AHEARN, DONALD
AHMED, ANISA
ALANIZ, EMMANUEL
ALEGRE CANIZA, LUCIANA
ALFARO, ESPERANZA
AMAYA-GONZALEZ, YESSICA
ASHE, JERRY
ATWELL, TINA
BAKKILA, STEVEN
BALDUS, JEFFREY
BARRY, HAWA
BAZAN, JOSE
BECK, KELLY
BESTER, JACODI
BEUSCHLEIN, KATHERIN
BOWRING, TAYLOR
BRACEY, JEFFREY
BRAMAN, LORI
BROWN, DOMINIQUE
BURGENS, RICHARD
BURKEEN, JEREMIAH
BUSTAMANTE MENA, HUGO
BUTLER, JAMI
CHAMBERS, KENNETH
CHISOLM, PAUL
CLOUD, JESSICA
COOK, DONNELL
CUMMINGS, LUKE
CUSTER, TIMMOTHY
DANIEL, COREY
DAVIS, WENDELL
DEDNAM, ALEXIS
DEL VALLE, MENARD
DODGE, JOSEPH
DOUTRE, ERIC
ESCOBAR-PONCIANO, MARIA
FAGBEDJI, MATTHIEU
GANN, NICHOLAS
GENTLES, LUKELAND

GOMEZ, JUAN
GOODWIN, YOLANDA
GOUDY JR, NATHANIEL
GRAF II, RICHARD
GRANDERSON, NINA
GUTOWSKI, MICHAEL
HEARING, DANIEL
HIGGS, CORLISS
HORTON, ADAM
HURLEY, LORA J.
IBARRA HERNANDEZ, DORA
JOHNSON, JENNEL
JOHNSON, NAOMI
JUDGE, AMY LOU
KAREEM, MAHA
KIRKLAND, THOMAS
KOCOVSKA, KAROLINA
LAMB, KATHY
MABIALA-NKENGUE, MALENE
MAURER, MORGAN
MCGEE, JALECSA
MCINTYRE, AUBRY
MCLEAN, ELIJAH
METO, BARNABAS
MILLS, TYVAE
MOORE, LIANNA
MORALES, MARIA
MOSLEY, QUANZA
NGANDOSAKA, NADINE
OPSOMMER, ROBERT
PATTILLO-DEWS, RAVON
POE, BRIAN
PRAY, BRENDA
ROSALES, GUILLERMA
RUGAMAS, GUILLERMO
SCHMIDT, ELIZABETH
SCHULZ, DAWN
SEKLECKI, MARIUSZ
SERANILLO, EDGAR

SEYFRIED, STEVEN
SISSON, ALAN
SOLOMON, VIOLET
STOVALL, RAYMOND
TARTT, RODRECUS
TAVAREZ, JOSE
TAYLOR, KIRK
TAYLOR, PERRY
THOMAS, KHALIL
VAN HORN, DEBORAH
VEGA, GUILLERMINA
VENTURA, NUEVEM
WALLACE, ERICA
WALTER, TAMMY
WARD, LESLIE
WHITE, SEDRICK
WILLIAMS, MARCUS
WILLIAMS, JAMIE
ZAVALA, JOSE

If anyone has been missed. Please let me know so the anniversary information can go in the next newsletter.