

Just The Dirt

Custodial & Grounds Newsletter

AFSCME EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION AWARD OBJECTIVE

This monetary award is to acknowledge outstanding members of Custodial and Grounds Services, who are dedicated to delivering exceptional service to our valued customers. This person consistently goes above and beyond, ensuring every task is completed with meticulous attention to detail and a positive attitude. Equally important, this person will demonstrate commitment to enhancing the quality of our work environment and also promote a culture of excellence and professionalism.

CRITERIA

Consistently provide high level of service. While presenting oneself in uniform, being positive, respectful, and collaborative.

Consistently meeting or exceeding the department's quality standards.

Duration of Employment: Full-time AFSCME union member in CGS for a minimum of one year from hire date to meet eligibility requirements.

No documented discipline - verbal or written within the past 12 months from the date of nomination.

Scan this QR Code

Deadline to nominate is 2/15/25



NOMINATION PROCESS

The Award launch will take place at The CGS Year-End Celebration in mid-December.

Nomination information will be shared with staff via university email, digital boards-broadcast, and time clock portal messages.

Nominations are electronic-via QR code on the digital board broadcast or through the the link sent to staff in their university email.

Nomination submissions will be accepted from mid -January to mid -February.

Peers are allowed to make nominations, but self-nominations are not permitted.

Supervisors are required to provide a minimum of 2 staff nominations within their shop.

Manager nominations accepted.

APPROVAL PROCESS

Using Google Forms, all nominations will be populated into a spreadsheet.

The nomination form will close February 15, 2025.

The vetting process will be managed by CGS Administrative staff.

The vetting process will take approximately two weeks to complete.

Nominations eligible for consideration in early March are presented to The CGS Lead Team.

The award recipients to be announced at our CGS Summer Picnic.



Arranged by
The CGS Connect Team

Details
109 East Madison
Ann Arbor, MI 48103



A Letter from the Director

Happy New Year! I hope you all had the chance to spend time with your loved ones and enjoy some well-deserved relaxation. Congrats to our football team on defeating Alabama's team for the second time this year. Our team's dominance during that game reminded us how much we can accomplish when we are united in support of shared goals.

Like our football team, the CGS team has come together around several key initiatives. Your hard work and dedication have made our success possible. I am truly thankful to work with such an incredible team.

In recapping our calendar year 2024, I would like to highlight our efforts to develop our team members. We remain committed to investing in our people and have partnered with F&O Training and F&O HR to support our team. Our leadership development programs, designed to help employees advance into supervisory or management roles, have resulted in two custodial and one supervisory promotion, with several other staff members currently participating.

The Employees Working Out of Classification Program continues to have a substantial impact by creating pathways for frontline employees. Recently, Grounds Services posted five Groundskeeper II positions, and I am pleased to share that all five successful candidates were promoted from the custodial ranks. This achievement reflects the quality of our staff involved in the program.

Additionally, I hope many of you could attend one of the CGS year-end celebrations. We showed appreciation for your tremendous contributions over the past twelve months and introduced the AFSCME award. As you know, this award was developed by our CGS Connect Team, a group of frontline employees and administrative staff aimed at enhancing employee engagement. The program is aligned with our current collective bargaining agreement and represents one of the many meaningful initiatives this team has implemented.

These efforts not only underscore the commitment of CGS but also reflect F&O's dedication to professional development, employee recognition, and career advancement for staff members throughout the organization.

I want to express my appreciation and gratitude for your continued commitment to this great institution and look forward to your continued support and commitment this calendar year.

Lukeland

Spotlight

Meet Roosevelt:

Roosevelt was born and raised in Detroit, Michigan. He attended Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti, where he studied psychology. Roosevelt has a wonderful wife and two sons, aged 3 and 16. He has been employed at the University of Michigan since May 2024.

Roosevelt distinguished himself not only on the first day of training but also during the initial hours of orientation. His ability to quickly grasp the program was exceptional. He exhibited patience, understanding, and a genuine desire to assist those around him. Whenever he noticed someone struggling with the computer portion of their onboarding process, he would stop what he was doing to help them. Later, he extended his support to the technical aspects of the training program as well.

He consistently shows up every day and adjusts his schedule to accommodate various shifts. Roosevelt plays a key role in the cleaning and setup phases of the rollout process. He has learned to help the teams sort, organize, and maintain their storage areas during the implementation of the MBC program. Additionally, he has proven to be a calming influence, helping others adapt to the numerous changes.

Roosevelt demonstrates exceptional character and integrity, and his kind demeanor is both refreshing and exemplary for all of us.



**Roosevelt
Gwinner**

WINTER WEATHER PRECAUTIONS

Preparing for inclement weather is critical in any month, however, especially in the colder months.

Colder weather will affect all of us who work in colder climates. Especially if working outdoors. There are many hazards to look out for like, signs of hypothermia and signs of frostbite. They can be especially tricky when working in a cold environment.

Cold stress is another important factor to consider for individuals who work outdoors.

Factors include but are not limited to:

- Cold body temperatures
- Being wet or cold for extended amounts of time
- Lack of PPE
- Lack of fitness and health conditions

Please take regular breaks in warmer areas away from the cold.

Clothing Tips:

- 1. Dress in layers to help regulate your body temperature.**
- 2. Choose loose-fitting clothes for comfort and mobility.**
- 3. Opt for water-repellent outer garments to stay dry in wet conditions.**
- 4. Don't forget to wear a hat and gloves to keep warm.**

Footwear is essential. Avoid wearing worn-out shoes or footwear that doesn't fit well, as this can increase the risk of slips, trips, and falls. Remember, getting your feet wet can lead to frostbite, so choose appropriately!

January and February pose additional risks for winter driving, which can lead to accidents. Being prepared is essential. Ensure you have the right training tools and resources for safe winter driving.

Driving Tips:

- Always clear snow from your vehicle before driving.
- Drive slowly in bad weather conditions.
- Check your antifreeze levels and battery.
- Keep your gas tank at least half full.

Always keep the following items in your vehicle: blankets, gloves, and a winter hat; food and water; an ice scraper and a shovel; a flashlight with extra batteries; a tow strap and jumper cables; flares; and a charged cell phone or radio.

Article written by Denise Krause



Did you know January is Alzheimer's Awareness Month?

Alzheimer's disease is a brain disorder. It progressively affects one's memory, thinking skills, and their ability to carry out simple everyday tasks.

Many individuals wonder if Alzheimer's runs in their family. Genes are passed from biological parents to their child. There are genetic variants that can increase or decrease the risk for this disease but there is not an individual gene that causes Alzheimer's.

Of the genetic variants researched so far, three rare single-gene variants have been known to cause the disease:

- Amyloid precursor protein (APP) on chromosome 21
- Presenilin 1 (PSEN1) on chromosome 14
- Presenilin 2 (PSEN2) on chromosome 1

In rare cases, there is a single gene variant risk that causes Alzheimer's. One's lifestyle habits will have positive or negative effects on one's risk by changing the activity of the genes that cause this disease.

There are risk factors like age that cannot be avoided but changing to a healthy lifestyle may promote better brain health in addition to overall health.

Addressing lifestyle habits like:

- Unmanaged chronic health issues, such as high blood pressure or hearing loss
- Physical inactivity
- Unhealthy diet
- Alcohol misuse
- Smoking
- Not getting enough sleep or not sleeping well
- Social isolation
- Lack of mental stimulation

will not guarantee the prevention of dementia or Alzheimer's but regular health screenings, managing medical conditions, and addressing lifestyle habits will certainly benefit one's overall health.

Many are impacted by the effects of Alzheimer's. You or someone you know may experience this disease. Take note there is no cure for it now. The hope is there will be a cure for this cruel, unforgiving disease in the near future.

Article written by Denise Krause

Did you know January is Poverty Awareness Month?

January is Poverty Awareness Month. It is a month-long initiative to increase awareness and call attention to the steady growth of poverty in the United States.

So many people are victims of circumstances that have brought them to the reality of little to no income and limited access to resources. All of us want a better quality of life but sometimes life simply gets in the way. Family breakups, loss of jobs, natural disasters, illnesses, and addiction are just a few of the circumstances that will render anyone to hopelessly spiraling into poverty.

Many form preconceived notions of the poor as being lazy, mentally ill, disheveled, drug-addicted; however, a day in the shoes of someone living in the clutches of poverty would provide a better understanding of their reality. There are millions of working poor who may not be homeless but fall at or below the poverty line and are a crisis away from being without a home and basic necessities.

So, this month take some time out to get a better understanding of the plight of those who are confronted with poverty each day.

U.S. Census Bureau Facts

The official poverty rate in 2020 was 11.4 percent, up 1.0 percentage point from 10.5 percent in 2019. This is the first increase in poverty after five consecutive annual declines.

In 2020, there were 37.2 million people in poverty, approximately 3.3 million more than in 2019.

Article Contributed by Tammy Walter

January is also Glaucoma Awareness Month

Understanding the Importance of Eye Health

January is Glaucoma Awareness Month. This month is a time to shine a light on an often-silent yet potentially devastating group of eye diseases. The green ribbon serves as a symbol to promote awareness and understanding of glaucoma, which affects millions around the world and can lead to irreversible vision loss if not detected and treated early.

Glaucoma primarily occurs when the optic nerve, which connects the eye to the brain, becomes damaged-typically due to increased pressure within the eye. One of the most common forms, open-angle glaucoma, often progresses without noticeable symptoms until significant vision loss has occurred. This makes regular eye check-ups crucial, as early detection is key to managing the condition effectively.

Angle-closure glaucoma, though less common, is a medical emergency. It can present with severe eye pain, nausea, and sudden visual disturbances, making immediate medical intervention essential.

Treatment options for glaucoma vary and may include prescribed eye drops, oral medications, or surgical procedures aimed at lowering eye pressure and protecting the optic nerve.

Raising awareness during Glaucoma Awareness Month reminds us all of the importance of regular eye examinations and staying informed about our eye health.

Article written by Denise Krause

Congratulations

Recognition for Jason Kinzinger's Outstanding Performance at Mary Sue Coleman Hall

Dear Mr. Blaszczyk,

I wanted to take a moment to recognize Jason for his truly exceptional performance. Writing this recommendation comes with mixed emotions—I'm thrilled to share how incredible he is but hesitant because he's so good, I worry and hope we might lose him:)

Our building has always been maintained to an impressive standard, setting a high bar for anyone new. Jason, however, has taken it several steps further. He doesn't just keep our space clean; he makes it shine—literally. The level of care and attention he brings has transformed our building to the point that it puts my own home to shame! He embodies the “above and beyond” mentality in every sense. Jason's name comes up frequently in our staff meetings because of the remarkable condition of our floor. When he first joined us, it happened to be during preparations for our 20th-anniversary celebration—a major event with all our key stakeholders. At the time, we thought the improvement in our floor was part of a special refresh for the occasion. To our delight, that's just Jason's everyday standard.

Beyond his work ethic, Jason is exceptionally kind, professional, and proactive. He doesn't just wait for tasks to come his way—he anticipates them. For example, today during a holiday snow globe-building event in our lobby, there was snow and glitter everywhere (and we all know glitter is a force to be reckoned with). I passed Jason in the hallway, apologized for the mess, and went to get a vacuum silently crying inside because I know how hard glitter is to remove. By the time I returned—less than a minute later—he had stopped what he was doing and was cleaning, leaving the space spotless as if the glitter explosion had never happened. How is that possible? I have glitter in my house from over a decade ago that professional cleaners couldn't remove, yet Jason somehow managed it effortlessly and quickly.

All humor aside, Jason is an extraordinary employee. His hard work, attention to detail, and proactive nature set him apart. Some people simply operate at a higher level, and Jason is one of them. I truly hope there are opportunities for him to shine even brighter than the glass in our building because he's a rare employee and a valuable asset.

Thank you for taking the time to read this, and I'm happy to discuss further if needed.

Warm regards,

Mindy Mackey

Congratulations

Recognition for Grounds Crews Working on Elbel Field

Hey Matt,

Wanted to let you know you all saved the MMB yesterday. They had Oosterban booked for months for their rehearsal and it got pulled from them last minute so having Elbel Field ready was a life saver.

Josh Chenier

Recognition for Grounds Crews Working at The Medical School

As a small token of our gratitude for your hard work and dedication throughout 2024, we invite you to enjoy lunch on us.

It is service partners like you who ensure everything runs smoothly, and we are deeply thankful for your team's efforts.

Sincerely,

The Medical School Facilities Team



The lunch the Medical School Facilities Team provided.

Happy Anniversary

ADAMS, BRIAN
ALI, AMAN
AUSTIN, JASON
BENTLEY, RYAN
BOWERMAN, ROBIN
BOYD, MARA
BROWN, CHRISTOPHER
BROWN, KYLE
CAMPBELL, SUSAN
CHAI, HONG
CHRISTENSEN, CHRIS
CLARK, CARMELITA
COLLINS-JONES, JAMES
CONNORS, SUMER
CORDOVA, ERIC
DEVENTER, MICHAEL
DYSON, DONALD
FIELDER, LANCE
FUQUA, KATHLEEN
GACHONJO, IRENE
GEORGE, MARCUS
GIRBACH, RICHARD
GRANT, KAMFONG
GRAY, DORION
GREEN, AUSTIN
GRIFFIN, MARSHA
GRIFFIS, DONALD
GUY, MARK
HAGEN, LONNY
HANKAMP, JOHN
HARBOR, MONISHA
HARBOUR, REGINA
HARRIS, YVETTE
HARTMAN, JORDAN
HASTINGS, PAUL

HAYES, KOURTNEY
HERRERA, TATIANA
HODDER, BESSIE
HUA, TUONG
HUGAN, REGGIE
IBARRA HERNANDEZ, JUAN
JACKSON, WILLIAM
JEDELE, ABBIGAIL
JONES JR, RICHARD
JORDAN, MELISSA
KEENA, TES
KIRKENDALL, KATELYN
KORTE, ROY
LANGE, KIMBERLY
LOGAN, SHAWN
LONG, SANDRA
LOVE, ERIC
LUCSKA, KETERAE
MAIGA, ALASSANE
MARTIN, LEONARD
MCKINNEY, BRANDON
MCQUEEN, ARRANIS
MURPHY, TYRELL
MYERS, JAY
O'NEILL, JUSTIN
PARKS, JEOFFREY
PERKINS, ZENNAN
PICKLESIMER, SUZANA
POLLARD, BRIAN
RATCLIFF, ALLYSON
ROBERTS, BLAKE
ROBINSON, BRYAN
ROBINSON, DONITA
ROBINSON, STERLING
ROGGELIN, ELLIOT

ROMERO, SALVADOR
ROSE, ALLEN
RUMPLE, THOMAS
RUPERT, EDWIN
RURKA, STEPHEN
SCOTT, THOMAS
SHUKAIT, CHRISTOPHER
SIPPLE, BROCK
SMITH, DAVID
SMITH, RUDY
SOUMAH, AICHA
STEFFE, MICHAEL
STEVENSON, JOQUAN
SZENDERSKI, DAVID
TAYLOR, PAUL
THOMAS II, WILLIE
VAILLANCOURT, KRISTEN
VALENTINOVA, KAROLINA
VANFLEET, EARL
VILLALOBOS, CINDY
WALLACE, THOMAS
WARD, JAMAARH
WILLIAMS, ILONA
ZUNIGA, KEILOR

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