



INTUCKER

APRIL 2020 | VOLUME 4 | ISSUE 4

RIDING THE STORM OUT

TUCKER COMMUNITY DOING ITS PART
TO OVERCOME CORONAVIRUS

EDITOR'S NOTE



It's been quite a month, hasn't it?

As we were going through our planning meetings for

this issue of *InTucker*, the idea was mentioned that maybe we don't do an April issue. I mean, with the Tucker Chili Cook-off being postponed, things have been pretty quiet in terms of community events. On top of that, part of our mission is to bring you news from our Tucker Cluster schools and they've been closed for the past three weeks.

Ultimately, we decided to do this issue because we needed something to keep our minds off the bad stuff in the world and so do you. We dug deep and found that there are stories we were excited to tell. Those are the stories you'll read in this issue.

Mayor Auman has a great behind-the-scenes look (page 3) at how the City continued to operate in most functions throughout a tumultuous month of March. We introduce you to Mr. Roscoe Jackson, one of Tucker High School's most passionate teachers, and tell you how his expertise in the arts led to a long-term relationship with the City. Plus, we look at a question that I, as the parent of young children, had: what are students and teachers supposed to do during such a long break from learning?

We're proud of this issue. It might not be our best, but if it provides you some sort of escape, perhaps puts a smile on your face, then it might be our most important.

Stay strong.

MATT HOLMES
INTUCKER EDITOR

IN THIS ISSUE



BUSINESS BOOM

It's a sweet deal for the City of Tucker and DeKalb County. On page 10, John McHenry looks at all the moving parts that helped bring Sugar Bowl bakery to town.

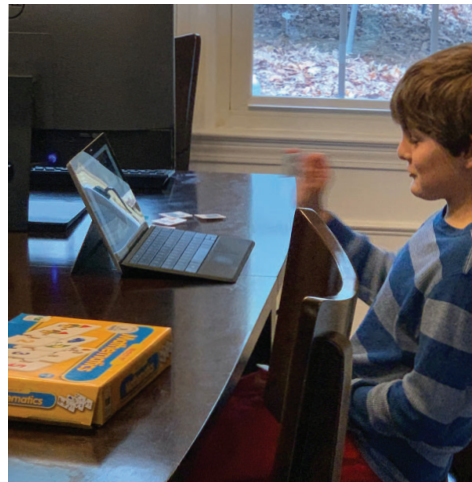
ON THE COVER

How has the City of Tucker continued to operate with all of the challenges of the coronavirus? On page 3, Mayor Auman explains and gives a nod to some pretty stellar volunteers in the City.



PARK PRIDE

It's time to recognize one of Tucker's super volunteers! On page 14, find out how this longtime Tucker resident has made an indelible mark on our parks.



DIGITAL LEARNING

There's no such thing as a snow day anymore. On page 8, discover how DeKalb County schools are educating students of all ages throughout the crisis.

ASK RIP

So what exactly does a parks department do in the middle of a pandemic crisis? As you'll find out on page 15, if you're the Tucker Parks and Recreation Department, you get creative!



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From the Mayor:

TACKLING THE CRISIS



When I first heard about the coronavirus a few months ago, I'm sure I had the same reaction many of you did: It seemed to be a far-off problem. I watched video from China and immediately was filled with empathy for the people who were suffering there. The direct impact on me was in my private sector job, where our factories were unable to fulfill orders for weeks, and I could see the day-to-day impact on their people and their economy. I began to see how it could have an impact here in the States without the virus actually being here. But I didn't see it coming to our shores, at least not with such voracity. By the second week of March, it was becoming quite real, and once schools started closing and major league sports

started cancelling, there was no denying it. But what would we do, other than cower in our homes?

We each had to answer that question for ourselves, our families near and far, and suddenly, for our community. I have a Dad in Alabama, in-laws in Gwinnett County, daughters with husbands and children (my GRAND children!) in Charlotte and Dunwoody, a college junior suddenly back home, and a business in Tucker. And as your Mayor, I had a city's health and welfare to protect.

I remember clearly the first time I saw and understood the chart about "flattening the curve". It dawned on me all at once that this was not about each of us protecting ourselves from the virus: it was

about each of us protecting EACH OTHER from the virus. And as we've navigated our way through this time, it's undeniable that, if not for every single one of you pitching in, even if it's as simple as that decision you made to stay home for a couple weeks, things could be much worse than they are. As of this writing, I am not yet aware of a single case of COVID-19 in Tucker, though the experts are telling us to brace for it.

I want to use the space in this month's magazine to look at how the City kept running and how the citizens of the City stepped up and did their part to love their neighbors as themselves.

(continued on page 6)

City Council Update



Tucker's Mayor and City Council met three times in March, taking action on one very significant land use case. That case, which was voted on at the March 9 Council meeting, asked for a rezoning and two concurrent variances for a 99,000 square foot commercial center at the intersection of Hugh Howell Road and Mountain Industrial Boulevard. The petition was approved on a 7-0 vote. The development, which was brought before Council by Branch Acquisition Company, LLC, will take the parcel from a light industrial zoning designation to a general commercial designation. It calls for a public art component, as well as a grocery store and restaurants.

Also, on March 9 Council voted to approve a resolution of need for the establishment of an Urban Redevelopment Authority. This

body would serve as an economic development tool for rejuvenation of blighted or run-down properties in the City. They then approved a contract for a Lawrenceville Highway corridor study. The study will look at traffic and pedestrian improvements, both short-term and long-term, from Cofer Crossing to the intersection of Lawrenceville and Hugh Howell. Council voted to give the contract to consultant VHB for \$57,250.

On March 18, Council held a special called meeting for the purpose of discussing emergency powers in light of the coronavirus outbreak. Council voted unanimously to adopt an Emergency Management and Services Ordinance granting the Mayor certain powers in times of emergency, detailing coordination with the DeKalb Emergency Management Agency

(DEMA) and the Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA), allowing leeway to waive procedures and fees, and outlining procedures for instituting curfews.

At the meeting on March 23, Council voted unanimously to approve a text amendment to the City zoning ordinance. The amendment brings about reform to a number of issues, including use regulations for CBD, vape shops, and car washes. It also replaces the City's Community Council with a new community input process and expands the City's Planning Commission from five members to seven members.

The next City Council meeting is scheduled for April 13 at 7 p.m. at the City Hall Annex.

DATES TO KNOW

April 13
City Council

April 15
Municipal Court

April 22
Municipal Court

April 27
City Council



On March 9, Mayor Auman recognized the 2020 graduating class of the University of Government Affairs at Tucker. These community members went through a six-month hands-on learning process to get to know the inner workings of their city government. (Credit: tuckerga.gov)

TUCKER SOCIAL



 **Nextdoor**

ON THE BEAT *with Lt. Schoeppner*



Lt. D.G. Schoeppner is Tucker's liaison to the DeKalb County Police Department and can be followed at [facebook.com/dgschoeppner](https://www.facebook.com/dgschoeppner) or emailed at dgschoeppner@dekalbcountyga.gov



"The only thing we have to fear is...fear itself." These words were delivered by President Franklin Roosevelt to the American people in his first inaugural speech on March 4, 1933. At that time, the United States and the rest of the world were suffering through the peak of the Great Depression. Right now, I invoke those powerful words to remind you all that we have overcome crisis before and will do so again. Having spent a majority of my adult life responding to emergencies, I can tell you that it is only natural to be afraid. It only becomes a problem when you allow that fear to take control of your actions and override what you know to be rational and correct.

Almost no one is around from the last time we faced a worldwide pandemic of this sort. This is uncharted territory for many of us and it is definitely very scary. But if we all calm down and take a deep breath, the way through this is pretty clear.

As I sit here writing this there has already been a curfew declared for Tucker. The purpose of this curfew isn't to trample your rights or give the police an excuse to hassle you. It is encouragement to do your part to overcome this

crisis. I can assure you that just about everyone here at the police department would love to have the option to stay safe at home with their families, but that is not what we signed up for. Despite the personal danger, everyone here shows up for work everyday and puts themselves in harm's way in order to keep you safe. Help us do that by complying with the curfew.

Panic buying and hoarding of essentials contributes to making a bad situation worse. Because there was an initial run on items like toilet paper, it is very difficult for some to buy these items now. I know that many stores are placing limits on the number of items they will sell to individuals, but please keep in mind that buying a crate of toilet paper or hand sanitizer likely means that someone else will have to go without it. I implore you all to only buy what you need in order for the supply chains to restock themselves.

Obviously, this is a topic that can be discussed in far greater length than will fit in this small article. However, if we keep calm, look out for ourselves, and then look out for our neighbors, we will emerge from this scary time just fine.

TACKLING THE CRISIS (continued from page 3)



SKELETON CREW

If you've been by City Hall these past few weeks, you haven't seen much activity. We've had essential personnel in place to keep things moving, but in an effort to practice and promote social distancing, most of our staff has been teleworking. And, if the feedback I've gotten is any indication, you haven't seen any drop-off in our level of service.

A lot of credit goes to our leadership. City Manager Tami Hanlin instituted daily conference calls so that we could all be on the same page through the outbreak, while maintaining our distance from one another. She urged department heads to come up with emergency plans, looking at which employees could and could not work from home in this type of situation. She had to weigh people's medical concerns, childcare concerns, and all the other factors that weigh on your mind when balancing priorities between work, home, and health. I'm proud that she, and we, were able to come up with a system that worked.

So, what have we been doing? We're prioritizing the safety of our staff, for one. We locked the doors to our City Hall and City Hall Annex, giving visitors a phone number to call.

That number goes to a staff member who is inside the building and gives them the chance to ask if the visitor is experiencing any symptoms of illness. This saves our staff from countless coughs, sneezes and other opportunities for germ transmission. It also gives them peace of mind, while enabling them to continue to serve.

We also found ourselves uniquely prepared because our staff all had laptop computers. It sounds trivial, but the decision a few years ago when we started up city operations to give standard issue laptops to all employees allowed, in this case, anyone who needed to telework to do so easily. This was a great bit of foresight, as many other cities' IT departments were scrambling to find laptops for employees who work primarily on desktop. Our thanks to InterDev and Jacobs for their help and foresight since our earliest days as a city.

There were also our parks folks. The staff at Tucker Recreation Center were disappointed that we had to shut down the building, but they also realized that there was a lot we could do to rally the community and keep them entertained through this difficult time. From online yoga sessions to story times for children, their creativity is helping Tucker residents to stay engaged, while also maintaining some social distance. And their efforts to keep the parks open and the playground equipment sanitized as best we can, has been a godsend to many parents and kids.

Our police and code enforcement officers have carried a heavy load, as they worked for all of us while they worried about their families. Our planners and permitting people kept the lights on so builders and developers could keep working. Everyone took it upon themselves to take care of their public responsibilities.

SURVIVING ON SELFLESSNESS

But if you think I'm going to give all the credit to government, then you don't know me that well. Government is useful and necessary, but it can't love your neighbor, run an errand for a friend in need, or carry the responsibilities moms and dads are being called to carry right now. It can't innovate ways to keep a restaurant or small or large business operating at 20 percent of revenues, it can't sew masks for our medical professionals, and it can't replace the personal contact we all need right now. It takes every individual in our hometown doing their part to get us through this.

You may not realize it, but the first group to take the step of cancelling or postponing something here in Tucker was not the government. It was the volunteer-led Old Town Tucker

Merchants Association (OTTMA). OTTMA is a group of small businesspeople who put on many of Tucker's beloved Main Street events. Each year, they run the popular Tucker Chili Cook-off. This year, right as all the major sporting events were being cancelled two days before the event, Jamey Wilson and the OTTMA team made a really difficult call to postpone the Chili Cook-off. I don't think they were happy about it, and I know that anyone with a love of seasoned meats and beans was disappointed, but it was the right call. Though it seems like a no-brainer in retrospect, it took real leadership in the moment.

From that point on, I've seen so many people stepping up to do the right thing. Doug Reynics, a neighbor of mine in the Smoke Rise community, runs his own rideshare operation. With rideshares taking a hit from the outbreak, Doug went on Facebook offering to pick up food, medicine or anything else his neighbors may need...free of charge. David Fisher and the team at NETWORKS Cooperative Ministries continued their good work providing pantry items and practical help to our neighbors in need. The countless doctors, nurses and public health workers who call Tucker home have worked around the clock and put their own personal safety on the line to help those who needed it. Of course, there are far too many acts of selfless kindness to list. No action has been too small to make a difference during this really difficult time. It has been Tucker at its best, and this is no time to quit.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Simply put, I don't know what's next. The City is going to resume normal business at some point in the near future. It's too soon to know when. Our community's health care system will get back on its feet. It's too soon to know how. We'll all get back to work one day soon, but there will be lots of dislocation and change. I hope we will all continue to heed the advice to wash our hands, keep our social distance and do whatever it takes to put this virus in the rearview mirror, but we don't know how long that will take.

With our neighbors showing "The Tucker Way", our community will be stronger and closer-knit once this time has passed. And maybe one day soon we'll gather on Main Street for one giant community hug.



FRANK AUMAN
MAYOR



Chip Cofer (left) and Jamey Wilson (right) are two of the leaders of the Old Town Tucker Merchants Association. Last month they made the difficult choice to postpone their popular Tucker Chili Cook-off. (Credit: tuckerga.gov)

SOCIAL DISTANCING GUIDELINES

- Keep six feet of distance between yourself and others
- Avoid being in crowds of ten or more people
- Especially important for vulnerable populations like older adults and those with serious heart conditions or lung disease

Source: CDC

VIRTUAL CLASSROOM

STUDENTS TURN TO TECH TO KEEP SCHOOL YEAR GOING



One of the groups whose routine has been most disrupted by the outbreak of the coronavirus is young people. Just as they were beginning to count down the days until Spring Break, their semester was abruptly cut short, leaving them with a lot of questions and uncertainty.

Fortunately, this generation of students is the first to be equipped to get through a period like this and still earn class credit. Virtual learning is a concept that has been embraced by local school districts over the past several years. Traditionally, it has been used as a one-off on snow or inclement weather days, but with the prolonged closure of schools due to the ongoing pandemic, virtual learning has become a way of life for every student from elementary school all the way through college.

The school day begins with teachers uploading a lesson plan for their students. Students log on through any number of web-based programs (dependent on the school district and grade level) and can get reading assignments, writing assignments or watch an actual lesson that their teacher has

recorded. For older students, this may include writing and emailing a term paper or other major project for their teacher to grade.

The technology has been a big boost to both students and teachers.

“The technology and different platforms have allowed me to communicate directly with the students and much faster,” said Tucker Middle School math teacher Michael Ikuesan. “The kids are already tuned into technology and are prone to using it and I find the interactive lessons are super important for their learning. I have added an interactive curriculum called Flexbook and will

be hosting two Zoom meetings a day. Some students need extra support and this way I can address questions live.

“At the end of the day, we all need human interaction to get us through this time. We still desire and yearn for human connection and if we can find ways to incorporate it in virtual learning then we are all better off.”

While virtual learning often doesn't keep students engaged for the equivalent of a full school day,

parents who are suddenly having to work from home see it as a gift.

“At the end of the day, we all need human interaction to get us through this time. We still desire and yearn for human connection and if we can find ways to incorporate it in virtual learning then we are all better off.”

***~Michael Ikuesan~
Tucker Middle School teacher***

Tucker Cluster

BRAG SHEET

"I know virtual learning wasn't a choice for any of us, but I am so very thankful for our Midvale Elementary team. They are absolutely knocking it out of the park on virtual learning!" said Midvale mom Jennifer Lenac. "We have received daily videos with assignment explanations from our fourth-grade team and virtual interactions with our teachers and classmates. In addition, our principal posts a daily "Connections" video lesson (Art, Spanish, Technology or Music) and Mystery Reader story time from one of our amazing staff members."

DeKalb County School District had a webpage dedicated to virtual learning even before the coronavirus outbreak. That page explains to parents how students can access their assignments, how grades will be assigned and how parents can contact teachers to schedule virtual conferences.

"While the school district may be closed for an undefined time, our students will continue to receive quality instruction by completing assignments that teachers will provide virtually," the DeKalb County School District said in a release. "Our goal is to provide rigorous and meaningful instruction during the Digital Learning Days."

Last month, the State of Georgia suspended Georgia Milestones and End-of-Course assessments, as well as certain requirements for teachers and student attendance. Testing dates for the SAT and ACT have also been postponed.

But thanks to technology and some forward-thinking, learning will continue for students of all ages as America waits out the outbreak.



Tucker Cluster Schools on the Web

Want to keep up with all the good stuff happening in our Tucker Cluster schools? Get to know the students, teachers and outstanding faculty at tuckerga.gov/schools

BROCKETT ELEMENTARY

- Brockett joined other schools in doing a Virtual Spirit Week the last week of March through Class Dojo. Activities like "Pajama Day" and "What'cha Reading Wednesday!" served the purpose of keeping students and teachers connected, as a school family, during the shutdown.

LIVSEY ELEMENTARY

- Livsey's third graders made it all the way to the Sweet Sixteen in the Read to the Final Four competition! The program is a digital literacy platform, powered by Renaissance myON®, to provide access to books and track time spent reading. Livsey was one of two DeKalb County Schools that made it to the Sweet Sixteen.

- On March 5, Livsey had its first Family MATH Night with over 100 participants. Families enjoyed playing math games together and making guesses in the estimation station. This event was a huge success and aims to be an annual event.

MIDVALE ELEMENTARY

- The Midvale PTA's annual silent auction fundraiser, to be held on March 21 at Tucker Brewing Company, was postponed due to the coronavirus outbreak. A make-up date will be announced in the near future.

SMOKE RISE ELEMENTARY

- Special kudos to Smoke Rise Elementary School's volunteer, Mr. Victor Economy! As students are forced to stay home, a familiar face is always welcomed as students complete virtual learning assignments. Mr. Economy, whose children attended Smoke Rise Elementary School many years ago, has been reading to Smoke Rise Elementary School students for at least the last six years!

BUSINESS BOOM

by John McHenry, Community and Economic Development Director



Right now, in these very challenging economic times for our local companies, it's great to have some good news to share with the public and the business community. Through a collaborative economic development strategy, we have a premier national bakery opening its East Coast operations in the City of Tucker.

"Sugar Bowl Bakery will be a wonderful addition to DeKalb County and the City of Tucker," said Randi Mason, Decide DeKalb's Vice President of Economic Development. "Attracting Sugar Bowl is a great example of the collaboration between Decide DeKalb, Tucker, the Georgia Department of Economic Development and our other economic development partners."

Sugar Bowl Bakery, headquartered in northern California, will be filling a 170,000 SF industrial building at 3301 Montreal Industrial Way that was vacated by CSM Bakery last fall. An exhaustive and comprehensive search was completed by a site selection consultant for the bakery that examined many locations in the southeast. Ultimately, Tucker sold itself with its incredible transportation access, extensive skilled labor market and its business-friendly approach. This translates into 400 new jobs and a \$37 million capital investment. The company will be hiring for roles in

production, sanitation, quality assurance, maintenance, warehousing and management.

Mayor Frank Auman could not be more pleased.

"We're thrilled that Sugar Bowl Bakery has made the decision to invest in Tucker. They've seen in Tucker the same things that thousands of other business owners have embraced: a friendly, welcoming community, a location that can't be beat and a strong work force that's ready to go. We're going to bring all our resources to bear to help them be successful."

Sugar Bowl Bakery was founded in San Francisco as a neighborhood coffee shop in 1984 when the five recently immigrated Ly brothers pooled their savings together. Sugar Bowl Bakery has grown to become a leader in developing quality baked goods and is now available across the U.S. and internationally. Today, the company is a minority-certified bakery whose products include palmiers, madeines, brownie bites, fritters and other baked goods.

"Sugar Bowl Bakery is excited to be expanding to Georgia in order to better serve our customers and to bring jobs to the City of Tucker and DeKalb County," said Andrew Ly, co-founder and CEO of Sugar Bowl Bakery.

And we're very excited for this sweet addition.

Keep tabs on the Tucker business scene at tuckerga.gov/biz



John McHenry speaks with CW 69 reporter Valencia Jones on March 6 about the impending move of Sugar Bowl bakery to the City of Tucker. (Credit: tuckerga.gov)

BUSINESS OF THE MONTH

VILLAGE SHOE SERVICE



If you go through your wardrobe looking at the big dollar items, it's tough to find something as expensive as a good pair of dress shoes. "You have to invest in a well-made pair, so that can be pretty expensive," says Tucker shoe repair professional Larry Schupbach, "but, in the long run, it's so much better."

Schupbach is the proprietor of Village Shoe Service, the shop on Railroad Avenue where he has resoled Tucker's shoes for more than a decade. An award-winning cobbler, Schupbach started working with shoes in the late 1980s.

"I can save you money," he declares. "I can use better materials than what the factory uses, a lot better materials. I could modify a shoe to fit better...make them more comfortable. If you buy a really nice pair of shoes and resole them every couple years, they can last 20 to 30 years."

While a new pair of dress shoes can cost in excess of a few hundred dollars, Schupbach is able to give his customers' footwear extra life for just a fraction of the price. And cost savings isn't the only benefit.

"The SSIA (Shoe Service Institute of America) have a slogan, 'if the shoe fits, repair it,'" Schupbach explains. "Comfort is the most important thing, especially if you have foot problems. When the leather molds to your feet, you definitely don't want to get rid of them."

Schupbach, who has long lived in the Tucker area, says one of the best parts of owning his own business is getting to choose the community in which he works.

"I have always liked downtown Tucker and the community," he explains. "I like the people and it's just a charming little nice small town, still in the city, but a nice little hometown area."

"I pride myself on my craftsmanship. Most everyone loves the service that I give them. They say I'm the best. I try to be the best."

You can visit Schupbach in person at his shop at 4286 Railroad Avenue or online at www.villageshoeservice.com.

BOLD STROKES

CITY OF TUCKER GETS ART STUDENTS INVOLVED IN CENSUS EFFORT

In 2017, Tucker moved City Council meetings into a new Council Chamber at the City Hall Annex. Staff quickly realized that the drab gray walls were not in keeping with good feng shui. So, they picked up the phone and called on the City's youngest, and perhaps most talented, group of artists. Thus, began a relationship that has kept the walls of the Council Chamber bright and interesting ever since.

"It's great to have an avenue where the students can exhibit their works," said Tucker High art teacher Roscoe Jackson. "Each exhibit is based upon a theme that has either a wholesome or a universal significance."

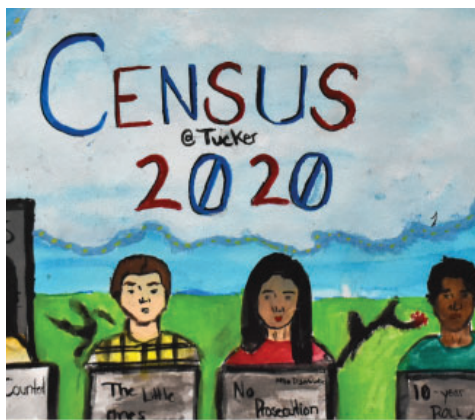
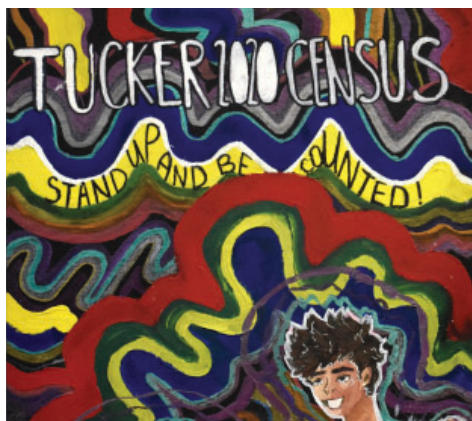
Jackson's students have been responsible for a half-dozen art exhibits with a variety of themes, but their most recent exhibit, unveiled last month, is likely their most impressive. It ties in with the City's push to get a complete count in the ongoing United States Census. The artwork is in a variety of media and showcases the diversity and uniqueness of all different people who need to be counted.

"The City asked for and received the creativity and artistry of the art class at Tucker High School to emphasize the importance of Tucker's first-ever Census," said City Councilman Matt Robbins, who is serving as Chair of Tucker's Complete Count Committee. "I hope all will be able to see their works when what we are dealing with (coronavirus) is over."

For Jackson and his students, the meaning of this Census exhibit is personal.

"Representing a school with over 30 different nationalities, we wanted to make sure our students understood the importance of everyone being counted and no one being ostracized," Jackson explained, adding, "and that them being counted would benefit the City of Tucker as a whole."

The exhibit will be up through October to encourage everyone in the Tucker community to complete their Census forms. For more information on the U.S. Census process and why you should take part, visit www.tuckerga.gov/census.



TEAM TUCKER *Spotlight*

EVE PRICE, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ADMIN.

How did you come to work for the City of Tucker?

In November of 2019, I decided to make a career change that was more community driven and more spiritually fulfilling. I prayed that the perfect job opportunity would present itself before the year ended. Behold, in December 2019 I began my new job with the City of Tucker as the Community Development Administrative Assistant.

Tell us about your day-to-day job responsibilities...

As the Community Development Admin my day-to-day job responsibilities consist of assisting the Director of Community Development and planners with preparing and processing legal ads, notifications letters and signs, agendas, and minutes for Zoning Boards of Appeals and Planning Commission meetings. I ensure responses are made to daily Community Development calls and emails. In addition, I support the Permitting department with walk-in customers, processing permit applications and payments.

What do you like best about working in the Community Development department?

What I like best about working in the Community Development department is that I have the opportunity to serve my community each day and work with awesome staff members who are hard-working and committed to keeping the City of Tucker great.

What's it like living and working in the same city?

Living and working in the same city is awesome! Tucker is a peaceful place where no one is a stranger. Working for the city has allowed me to meet so many wonderful residents of Tucker, who love the city and care deeply about what's going on in the community. Obviously, one of my biggest perks is my ten-minute commute to and from work each day. On my way home from work my favorite stores and restaurants are conveniently on my route, including several churches I can attend that are a block or two apart.



Off the Wall

What are some of your hobbies?

I like collecting coins, enjoy making fragrance oils and traveling.

If your friends had three words to describe you, what would they say?

Loyal, fair and wise.

What is the movie you could watch over and over?

I love the comedy movie *Daddy's Home* with Will Ferrell. I am a die-hard fan of Will Ferrell and I love to laugh.

What is your fondest childhood memory?

I have many fond childhood memories, but one of my favorite childhood memories was the day that my father came home from the Army with my first pair of white skates. I felt so lucky to have two great gifts in one day.

Who has had the biggest influence on your life?

The biggest influence in my life has been my father. Though he has positively impacted my life in numerous ways, his wisdom on how he lives life has been the foundation to how I live mine. He taught me at the tender age of eight to always put God first in everything, honor your father and mother, respect your elders, take pride in what you do and treat people like you want to be treated. These are words that I live by to this day and forever. We can give our kids many things, but there is nothing like wisdom and knowledge.

CARA SCHROEDER

CITIZEN OF THE MONTH



"Cara has been a Tucker Citizen of the Month for about a decade! She helped found the Henderson Park Community Garden 10 years ago. She worked for cityhood and picked up many bags of trash from Tucker waterways with TCA and Rivers Alive.

One of Cara's passions is Tucker's wonderful parks. She and her husband Mike spend hours hiking at Henderson Park, but she loves them all. Cara has pulled privet, spread gravel, planted daffodils, cleared new trails and blocked off old ones. She has chaired the Friends of Henderson Park as well as the Friends of Tucker Parks Leadership Council.

Cara's business 'Schroeder Resources' offers hands-on expertise to a roster of non-profits to assist them in achieving their fundraising goals. She lends that expertise to the City of Tucker in a variety of ways, notably securing a Park Pride grant to design a complete trail system at Henderson Park and renovate its White Trail. The grant required a match which Cara secured from DeKalb Commissioner Nancy Jester. Cara's strong connections with governmental, nonprofit and business leaders continue to bring benefits to our city.

In August 2016, Cara was appointed to the first Tucker Community Council representing the Tucker Parks & Greenspace Leadership Council. She chaired the group from 2016 to 2018. The Community Council bridged Tucker residents and city departments like Planning and Zoning, helping create the communication patterns that make the City healthy. At the inception of the Council, Mayor Auman said, "The Community Council members were hand chosen for their knowledge and dedication to Tucker." Cara epitomized those qualities.

Members of the Community Council, having completed their mission, now have time on their hands. We wonder where Cara will use her new "free" time to make Tucker better. Wherever it might be, the City is lucky to have her."

Nomination by Claire Hayes



“ASK RIP”

Rip Robertson is the Parks and Recreation Director for the City of Tucker. He brings to the job years of experience in Parks and Rec, as well as Public Works.



Springtime is usually the busiest time of the year for a Parks and Recreation Department. The weather turns warmer, many of our native plants and flowers begin to bloom; it's just a great time to be outside!

With the outbreak of the coronavirus, we are going through a situation that I have never experienced before in my decades of Parks management. Many of my colleagues are being told to shut down playgrounds and organized activities; they're basically being told to suspend operations altogether. This is why I'm especially grateful for our two groups of people here in Tucker: our city leadership and my awesome staff.

Our elected leaders and city management have understood from the start just how important Parks and Recreation can be during a crisis like this. Getting outside and playing in a park is a great distraction from the hours everyone is having to spend isolated inside. That's why it was important for them to allow us the resources to sanitize playgrounds throughout the City daily, rather than simply shut them down. They empowered our staff to continue working in the parks, ensuring they are pristine for you as you get outdoors during this difficult time.

Speaking of the staff, they have been amazing. I don't know if you follow us on social media – Facebook is the best way, look for us @TuckerParksRec – but our Recreation Leaders have come up with some great virtual activities that you, your kids, and your neighbors can join in to stay engaged and entertained throughout this outbreak. They're doing things like virtual scavenger hunts, yoga classes, story times, trivia games and so much more. The best part is no one's telling them to do this; they're taking the initiative to keep recreation going in Tucker. It makes me proud to be a part of that effort.

One last note before I wrap this month's column: I want to extend a heartfelt congratulations to the volunteers and gardeners at the Henderson Park Community Garden. This is the 10th anniversary of that great Tucker destination. I know the Friends group is planning a celebration toward the end of this month. While we don't know whether that event will be able to happen as scheduled or have to be postponed, these volunteers are to be commended for nurturing such a great amenity in our city parks system.

To close, I hope you'll stay safe out there this month. It will take a lot of patience for us to get through the isolation and social distancing. If there is anything I or our Parks staff can do to help you during this time, don't hesitate to reach out to us.



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TUCKER *Community Corner*



4/6 – Spring Break Scavenger Hunt

10 a.m.-6 p.m., 4440 Lawrenceville Highway

Join the Tucker Parks and Recreation team for some socially distant fun as they lead a scavenger hunt through Tucker Nature Preserve. Prizes will be available for those who complete the scavenger hunt first!

4/11 – Drive-Thru Egg Hunt

10 a.m.-12 p.m., 4259 N. Park Drive

The Parks and Recreation Department had to get creative to not cancel this great event amid the coronavirus outbreak. So come to Kelley Cofer Park grab some pre-packaged eggs for your kids and host your own egg hunt at home!