

MAY/JUNE 2022



mission *Kansas*



**Jubilee Balloon Co. creates luxury,
custom balloon creations**

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winners announced**

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WELCOME SPRING!

As I wander around Mission and see leaves on the trees, the grass greening up, and gardens beginning to bloom, I am hopeful that spring has finally arrived! Like spring, this issue of the Mission Magazine brings in a "breath of fresh air" with its stories and features highlighting several inspirational contributors to our Mission community.

The featured cover story introduces us to the enterprising women behind Jubilee Balloon Co., entrepreneurs who never imagined their business would grow as quickly as it has – especially launching during a pandemic! These friends sought to bring joy and a sense of normalcy to the world around them in a time of uncertainty and trauma, and their ability to adapt has brought them ongoing success. As you'll see in the photos of their work, the displays range from elegant to whimsical and put a smile on your face.

We are also pleased to highlight the 2022 winners of Mission's second annual "If I Were Mayor" poster contest. Mission students in grades K-6 were asked to imagine what they would like to accomplish if elected mayor. As you'll see in the article, our Mission kids are full of great ideas, and I think you'll see our Mission values and priorities of inclusivity, sustainability, economic growth, and a vibrant community all reflected in their entries. There is no doubt our future is in good hands with these kids!

One of my very favorite things to do in Mission is to go to the Mission Market – and I'm pleased to share that market season is almost here! In June,



On the cover:
Liz Beedle,
Rachel Condon
and Emily
Penke, owners of
Jubilee Balloon
Co. in Mission.

Photo by
Denise Elam.



the market will kick off its eighth season on Johnson Drive.

There have been a number of changes as the Market has adapted over time, many highlighted

in this issue's "Look Back" story. It's fun to remember the evolution of the Market from its early days to the social, eclectic, and energetic experience it now provides on Thursday evenings June through August. I love how our market brings people together with not only traditional market vendors but also food trucks and a beer garden. It's a place to meet friends new and old!

In addition to reminiscing about the Market's history, we also dish some "inside scoop" on three of our Market vendors. Bowlin Farms provides top-notch produce and other specialty items, Madd House Hill brings us natural products made of goat's milk, and Taste of Malaysia contributes home-style Malaysian cuisine. Each of the vendors are returning again this season, drawn to the welcoming and supportive environment as well as the fun vibe of the Mission Market. Come meet these vendors, along with many others, at the June 2nd kick-off!

I trust you will find all sorts of other interesting and informative articles in the magazine. We also take the opportunity in this issue to share a letter from former City Councilmember Suzie Gibbs who wanted to thank the Mission community for their support through the years.

I hope to see you around town in the coming months, whether at the Market, shopping on Johnson Drive, or cooling off at the Mission Family Aquatic Center!

-Sollee Flora, Mayor

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A photograph of three women standing in front of a wall of colorful balloons. The balloons are in shades of teal, pink, and white with red and pink marbled patterns. The woman on the left is wearing a black V-neck sweater and blue jeans. The woman in the middle is wearing a purple tiered dress with a ruffled collar and sleeves. The woman on the right is wearing a beige dress with a black leopard print pattern. All three women are smiling and looking at the camera. The woman on the right has her arm around the shoulder of the woman in the middle.

Liz Beedle, Rachel Condon
and Emily Penke, owners
of Jubilee Balloon Co.

"I don't think we thought
it'd go in this direction a
year ago. I don't know where
we're going to go ... just up."

— Rachel Condon

Nowhere to go but up

Jubilee Balloon Co. creates luxury, custom balloon creations

By Denise Elam

They say in life, nothing is permanent except change. And boy, was life really changing in early 2020 for entrepreneurs Rachel Condon, Emily Penke and Liz Beedle.

For starters, the COVID-19 pandemic hit in February, sending many scrambling to reconsider their careers. The job market was dropping, with staff shortages and layoffs. Parties, events, and concerts were canceled, or moved outdoors. And their kids were getting older, some now attending high school or graduating. They had a lot of time to kill.

Change was in the air all around them, floating up like balloons.

So, one warm afternoon in the summer of 2020, the three friends met for cocktails out on a front porch and found themselves on the precipice of a new adventure — one that they hoped would bring joy to many during such a strange time in the world. It was there, amidst the bubbly drinks, that Jubilee Balloon Co. was created.

The trio, bonded together by their children, who attended the same elementary school, were no strangers to working together on creative projects. The balloon company seemed a natural fit.

"We've planned a lot of parties together," Condon said. "We've done balloons before at our parties; we had LED light-up balloons floating all over our yard one time. I just recently found a picture where I made my daughter's costume with balloons — she was a hot air balloon. We found that we gravitated toward this type of fun-ness."

Penke had some experience in balloon installations, having helped decorate an elementary school's variety show and creating fun crafts for friends.

"When the pandemic hit and no one was having birthday parties, families were doing drive-by birthday parties, so I was making little garlands and shipping them out the window for kids," she explained.

So the three got to work, attending online training courses and watching

plenty of instructional YouTube videos. They got their feet wet by decorating a few events for friends, and even donated their services to the Homestead Country Club in Prairie Village for its Fourth of July celebration in 2020.

"We were just playing with it, not actually thinking it would go anywhere," Condon said.

They took on their first paid gig July 3, 2020 in Blue Springs, Missouri. Soon after, they moved the business from their homes into a downstairs classroom in St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church in Mission, where Beedle had a part-time job.

"We realized we couldn't do it at home because we had pets ... St. Michael's church was shut down, so we borrowed a room downstairs from them for a while until we could find our own space," Beedle said. "While the Sunday school rooms weren't being used, we did that ... they were very kind to let us borrow the space."

Many would consider opening an events-focused business during a worldwide pandemic a risky move, but the trio were able to shift their strategies to accommodate

the changing environment, building balloon garlands for outdoor birthday parties, decorating the exterior of houses and bringing back a sense of normalcy to their clients. Business was ballooning.

"It gave us something to do when everything shut down," Condon said. "That's kind of how it started."

Beedle said even though there weren't a lot of events, "front door swag," was popular during the summer of 2020.

"Parents would surprise their kid when they woke up," she said, noting that drive-by baby showers were also popular.

"We would create (balloon) hoops at the end of driveways, and moms-to-be would sit there while people dropped gifts off," Condon said.

In April of 2021, Jubilee Balloon Co. moved into their current location at 5815 Johnson Dr. in Mission, which provided them a larger space to create and build balloon installations.

"We love the vibe on Johnson Drive," Penke said. "It's eclectic, it's got so many fun shops and unique vendors ... great

Continued on page 8



Jubilee Balloon Co. creates custom garlands, balloon arches and balloon bouquets. Photos courtesy of Jubilee Balloon Co.'s instagram, @jubileeballoonco.



Balloon backdrops, as pictured here, are popular decor choices for events and parties.

Continued from page 7

highway access."

Beedle loved Johnson Drive's friendly neighborhood atmosphere.

"When I'm here in the morning, there's people walking their dogs, pushing their strollers and getting their donuts," she said.

Penke noticed the growth of businesses in Mission and the positive impact of recent construction.

"It seems it's evolving a bit too, which is fun to be a part of," she said.

The storefront was originally designed to house a balloon bar and party space, but by the time the weekend rolled around each week, the space would already be filled, floor-to-ceiling, in balloon orders.

"We do have pick-up hours (here) but primarily the space is for building," Penke said. "Initially we wanted to have hours every day where people could come in and pick things up, but it just hasn't worked out that way yet ... maybe down the road."

As the world continues to open up and restrictions decrease, the trio has seen an even larger need for their services, thanks in part due to word-of-mouth marketing and social media.

"It has parlayed well into events," Beedle said. "Now that weddings are happening and father-daughter dances and big birthday parties ... we don't do balloons for friends and houses very often anymore. That used to be all we did, but now so much of it is big events."

Responding to the growing demand for their products, Condon, Penke and Beedle hired a team to answer emails and

help with deliveries and installations.

"We started growing faster than what we could keep up with for a while, so getting our own space and hiring people to help us has been a huge game changer," Beedle said. "Replying to every email ourselves, building everything ourselves, installing it ourselves, going back and picking up and taking down ourselves; it was a lot. And being able to outsource some of that allows us to have some of our life back and focus on growing the business in the direction we want it to go."

Now, Jubilee Balloon Co.'s services include custom-made balloon garlands, sold by the foot, bouquets, structures and photo backdrops. The company is known for its one-of-a-kind balloon bouquets, featuring balloons inside of balloons and confetti-filled balloons, among the many options. Clients have more than 100 latex balloon colors to choose from, but custom-made balloons to match an event's theme or color scheme are also available.

"If you're having this crazy-themed birthday party with some character we've never heard of, if that balloon exists we can track it down," Beedle said. "And if not, we can get creative on how to play in those (thematic) elements."

For instance, one client requested Ghostbusters-themed party decor, but balloons with elements from the movie were not available for special order. The team at Jubilee worked to create their own take on the movie, with caution-tape-wrapped balloons and others filled with neon colors to resemble slime.

"It's really fun to take somebody's theme and come up with a creation for it," Beedle said. "That's something we really love and get excited about. It also means we're always working on different colors and sizes so it never gets boring."

Jubilee Balloon Co. offers delivery and installation. They also provide self-install kits and give customers tips on how to successfully install their products. They learned along the way that installing each and every order for clients was virtually impossible due to the nature of the business.

"Early on, we were driving all over the place and installing at crazy times," Beedle said. "We'd be up at 5:30 a.m. on a ladder ... we don't do that anymore. We just realized time-wise, to drive there and back, it wasn't ever going to be profitable for us."

Not expecting this much success in the slightest, Condon, Beedle and Penke are still trying to wrap their heads around what the next step in their business will be. Last year, their goal was to create a two-story balloon installation, and they accomplished that with a balloon tunnel at Mission Hills featuring more than 5,000 balloons. They also have been bringing in some notable clients, like American Royal and Kansas City Chiefs player Travis Kelce - helping him ring in the 2022 New Year in style.

"I don't think we thought it'd go in this direction a year ago," Condon said. "I don't know where we're going to go ... just up."

For more information, or to inquire about services, contact Jubilee Balloon Co. at jubileeballoonco.com.

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"If I were Mayor"

Poster Contest Winners Announced

John F. Kennedy once said, "Children are the living messages we send to a time we will not see." That message was underscored recently as Mission Mayor Sollie Flora had the opportunity to review the 2022 submissions for the "If I Were Mayor" poster contest.

The contest, which originated as part of Mission's 70th Anniversary celebrations in 2021, provides students in kindergarten through sixth grade a chance to share what they would do if elected to serve as mayor of Mission. The wisdom, compassion and insight displayed in all of the contest entries was remarkable and offers an important reminder that, in the hands of these future leaders, things look pretty bright.

"I was impressed with the thoughtfulness and the big ideas presented in the posters," Mayor Flora said. "Our young residents are engaged and paying attention to the world around them. It's truly encouraging to imagine them becoming the leaders of tomorrow."

We were pleased to have two sets of siblings submit entries and be selected as winners. Our kindergarten and second-grade winners are sisters, and the first and third-grade winners are brothers!

Check out what our 2022 Contest winners would do from the mayor's seat ...

Lana, Kindergarten

As the youngest entrant in the contest, Lana's poster recognizes both the damaging effects of climate change and the impacts humans have on our wildlife. She wants to ensure we have safe and sustainable places for all — including our animal friends.



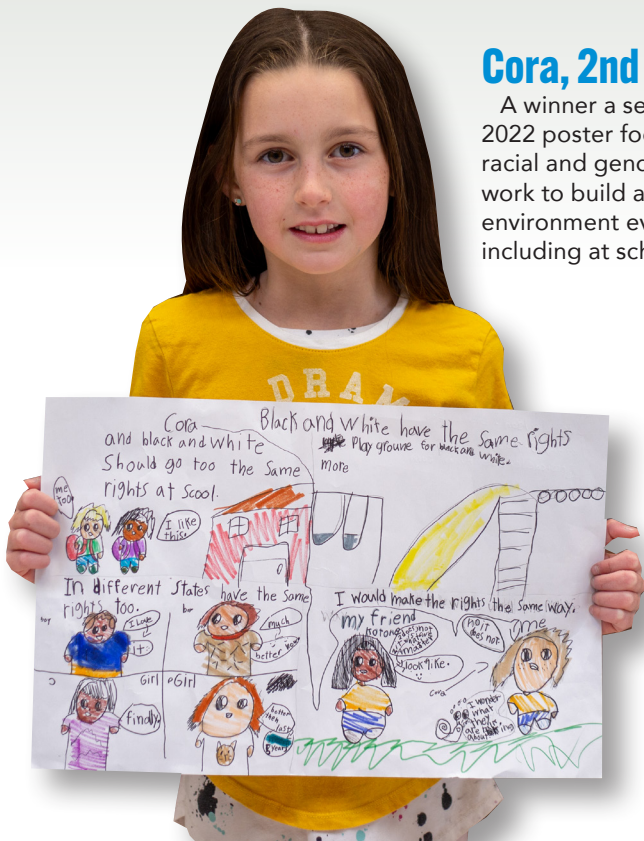
George, 1st Grade

As Mission's mayor, George would work to make Mission a safe place where the "bad people ran away," but along with his public safety focus, he has a deep compassion for animals, and would "give (a) cat a crown."



Cora, 2nd Grade

A winner a second year in a row, Cora's 2022 poster focuses on equity — both racial and gender. As mayor, she would work to build a safe and welcoming environment everywhere, for everyone, including at school and at play.



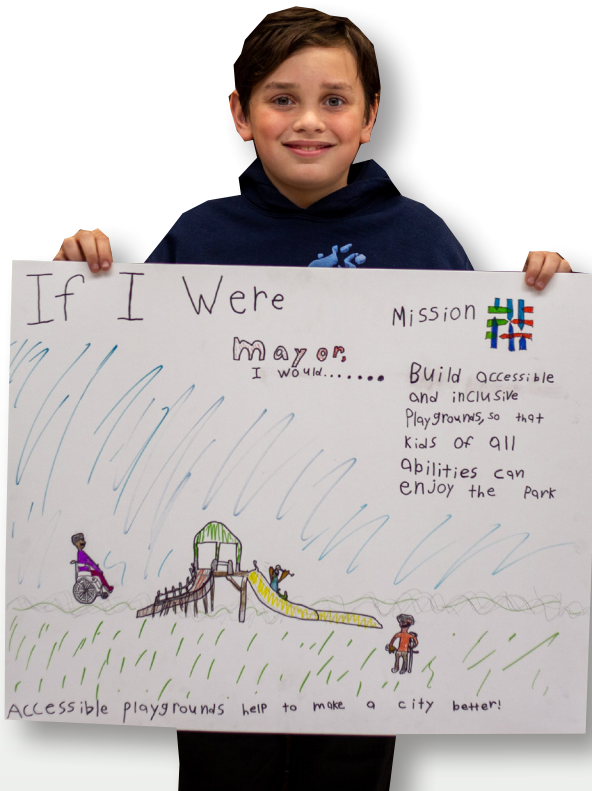
“Picking the winners was one of the toughest things I've had to do since becoming Mayor.”

—Mayor Sollie Flora



Henry, 3rd Grade

Henry has lots of ideas and a big vision for developing our City, including: adding a trolley line, a mall, a bowling alley, a five-star hotel, an office/residential tower, a hospital and a cat shop. And, he'd be sure to bring back the Runza restaurant — it's his favorite!



Henry, 5th Grade

As mayor, Henry would focus on building accessible playgrounds throughout Mission so that “kids of all abilities can enjoy the park.” He sees this inclusivity as a way to make our City better, and we couldn't agree more!

Emery, 6th Grade

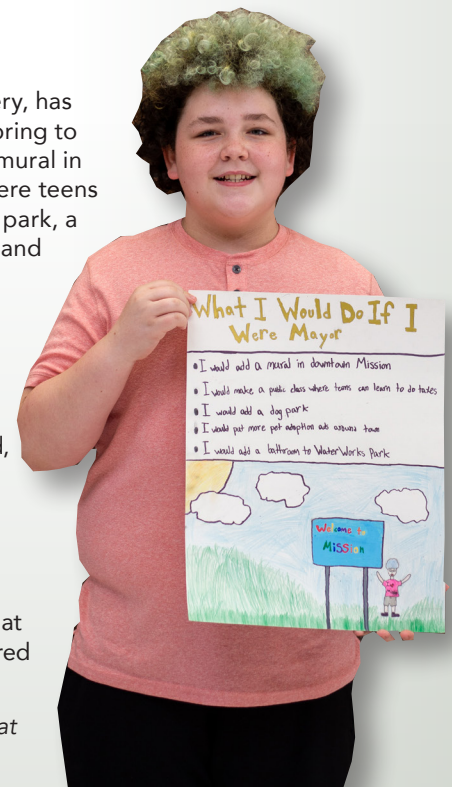
Our sixth-grade winner, Emery, has a long list of things he would bring to Mission as mayor including: a mural in downtown Mission, a class where teens could learn to do taxes, a dog park, a bathroom in Waterworks Park and a way to get pet adoption ads spread all over town. It's an aggressive agenda, but full of great ideas!

The 2022 winners should be congratulated, but Mayor Flora wants to thank everyone who took the time to submit an entry.

“Picking the winners was one of the toughest things I've had to do since becoming Mayor,” she commented.

Poster contest winners were recognized at the April 20 City Council meeting and shared on the City's website and social media.

**There were no submissions received at the 4th Grade level*





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Trent Boultinghouse 620.238.0394

WARD II COUNCIL MEMBERS

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Debbie Kring 913.722.6901
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WARD IV COUNCIL MEMBERS

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Mission leaders attend Climate Action KC Conference to address climate change

As part of a focus on a regional climate action plan to lower greenhouse gas emissions across the Kansas City metropolitan area, Mission city leaders participated in a regional Climate Action Summit in March.

Mayor Sollie Flora joined Councilmembers Hillary Parker Thomas, Trent Boultinghouse, Ben Chociey and Mary Ryherd, along with city staff and members of the Sustainability Commission, Planning Commission and Parks, Recreation and Tree Commission.

The summit, held at Johnson County Community College, gathered leaders to discuss progress, challenges and strategies around the issue of climate change.

As part of the overall effort, Mission will convene a Climate Action Task Force to develop short-term and long-term strategies to improve government's greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 in support of a broader regional goal to achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

Mission leaders will work with the Mid-America Regional Council and other partners in support of the goal and help mitigate climate change in our area. Learn more at missionks.org/climate.



Memorial Flag Fund

The American flags will soon be waving once again along Johnson Drive as part of the City's Memorial Flag Fund. If you would like to honor a current service member or veteran, please contact Mission City Hall at 913.676.8368 or erandel@missionks.org.



Ward I – Hillary Parker Thomas

Hometown: Overland Park

Occupation: Development Director

Years in Mission: 6

On Council since: January 2018



What is your favorite thing about your current job?

Outside of my Council work, I am the Development Director for the Jewish Community Relations Bureau/American Jewish Committee (JCRB/AJC) which works to combat antisemitism in our region. In the nonprofit world, “development” is just a fancy name for fundraising. As a fundraiser, I love telling stories that help donors connect with the important work we do.

What causes are you passionate about?

I am passionate about organizations focused on social justice, children, and the environment. In my free time, I serve as Policy Chair of Climate Action KC and as a Board Director for Shawnee Mission North Patron’s Art Gallery.

What are you looking forward to accomplishing as a Councilmember?

In my first term, I helped secure funding for a new dog park and now, I am hyper-focused on funding significant street (looking at you, 55th and 51st Streets) and park improvements. I also want to see the City invest in a permanent structure at the Market site.

What are you currently reading (or a recommended read)?

My most recent read was “The Fire Next Time” by James Baldwin, but a recommended read from me will always be “The Old Man and the Sea” by Ernest Hemingway.

What are you most likely to be caught listening to on repeat?

Other than Cocomelon? I enjoy bluegrass, folk, funk, and jam bands.

What’s your favorite way to spend a day off from work?

With my family, enjoying the outdoors. Gardening, live music, traveling and yoga are other favorites.

What’s your favorite food?

Indian and Thai food.

Who or what inspires you in your career?

My daughters, Harper and Penelope. I want to make the world a better place, for them.

Favorite thing to do in Mission?

Council meetings, of course! I also love the Mission Market and our Mission breweries.

Ward II – Lea Loudon

Hometown: I moved a lot growing up in Wyoming, but consider Mission my hometown since I've lived here the longest.

Occupation: Program Manager for ShowMe Healthy Relationships

Years in Mission: 20 years

On Council since: December 2021



What is your favorite thing about your current job?

In my work, I promote and facilitate relationship education classes teaching people how to assess the health of their romantic relationships, effective communication skills, and how to manage conflict. My favorite part of this job is promoting our program through community engagement and through our community partners. Learning healthy relationship skills can be life-changing.

What causes are you passionate about?

I want my time and efforts on the Council to be an extension of the work I do in my professional life which has taught me that safe communities with good schools, affordable housing and thriving businesses are ideal for children to become healthy and prosperous adults.

What are you looking forward to accomplishing as a Councilmember?

Helping Mission reach its potential as a flourishing small town with a strong sense of community, a prosperous business district, and a beautiful place to live. I aspire to make it the "go-to" destination for new businesses, and hope to highlight the creative side of our city with an emphasis on the arts.

What are you currently reading (or a recommended read)?

"Tidewater: A Novel of Pocahontas and the Jamestown Colony" by Libbie Hawker. I have always been fascinated by the culture of Native Americans and growing up in Wyoming I enjoyed visiting historical land sites on field trips.

What are you most likely to be caught listening to on repeat?

I tend to listen to TEDx Talks or podcasts as opposed to music these days.

What's your favorite way to spend a day off from work?

Being outside digging in the dirt! This is my third year gardening in the raised beds my son and daughter built for me, and I'm excited to see this year's harvest.

What's your favorite food?

I love all types of food, but my favorite is lasagna. My love of good food motivated me to learn to cook!

Who or what inspires you in your career?

People I love. Talking to them, helping them, and seeing them grow. I am inspired when I can support people as they overcome the obstacles in their lives.

Favorite thing to do in Mission?

Getting out and interacting with my neighbors and others. Having a new dog to walk helps for sure!

Ward III – Debbie Kring

Hometown: Overland Park

Occupation: Retired from 30+ year career with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Years in Mission: 36

On Council since: June 1999

What is your favorite thing about your current job?

I am retired, so everything I do becomes a "favorite," but it's probably a tie between picking up my grandson each day from school and bargain shopping!

What causes are you passionate about?

After a 35-year career with the EPA, sustainability is a big passion for me! I also support educational opportunities in the SM School District (including teaching resume writing and interviewing courses), and programs that support women seeking employment opportunities.

What are you looking forward to accomplishing as a Councilmember?

I am truly looking forward to the redevelopment of the Gateway project, and proud to support the efforts of Mission's Sustainability Commission to move the City in a positive and sustainable direction.

What are you currently reading (or a recommended read)?

Just starting "*Life is Messy*" by Matthew Kelly.

What are you most likely to be caught listening to on repeat?

While sewing for 10 grandkids, it's oldies (best of Frank Sinatra, best of Kingston Trio) on Alexa for me!

What's your favorite way to spend a day off from work?

Making time to go to Broadmoor Park or a Mission small business (Brian's Bakery or Mission Fresh Fashion) are favorites!

What's your favorite food?

Probably pizza (Old Chicago Pizza is my favorite) or Mexican food (love Salsa Grill)!

Who or what inspires you in your career?

In my City role, it would be two Laura's - Laura McConwell (former Mayor) and Laura Smith (City Administrator). Both are smart, strong, and highly principled women who lead very "balanced" lives with integrity and honor at the forefront. Each has a unique sense of humor, and the ability to provide rational answers to difficult questions, while always maintaining an "I CARE" attitude! I am fortunate to know them!

Favorite thing to do in Mission?

I love to shop (A Fabulous Find and Tuesday Morning) and walk/drive around looking at the housing diversity in each neighborhood. My family and I have made Mission our home for 36+ years, and I wouldn't want to be anywhere else!



Ward IV – Ken Davis

Hometown: DeKalb, IL, however I spent 14 years of my youth in Brazil

Occupation: Retired KU Faculty and Physical Therapist

Years in Mission: 31 (1991-2002, it was the City of Countryside)

On Council since: January 2018



What is your favorite thing about your current job?

I retired in 2015 as faculty at the KU Medical Center. Retirement allows me to travel and do more community service as a volunteer. Having spent 14 years of my youth in Brazil, I enjoy traveling throughout Latin America and other parts of the world. My community service includes City Council activities and community clean-up projects in Mission and Kaw Point Park.

What causes are you passionate about?

I am a passionate about nature, bird watching and love live jazz and blues events plus Brazilian music.

What are you looking forward to accomplishing as a Councilmember?

I am looking forward to improving the residential streets in Mission. The aging infrastructure of our first ring suburb required focused attention and repairs.

What are you currently reading (or a recommended read)?

"*The Premonition*" by Michael Lewis focuses on the public health signs that were ignored and contributed to the COVID-19 pandemic.

What are you most likely to be caught listening to on repeat?

Bossa nova, samba, and jazz.

What's your favorite way to spend a day off from work?

Since I'm retired everyday is "off from work." I do enjoy spending time in the garden with my wife and our three cats.

What's your favorite food?

Feijoada (the Brazilian national dish).

Who or what inspires you in your career?

The celestial wonder, marvels of nature and pioneer scientists that guided my career in healing arts and the teaching profession.

Favorite thing to do in Mission?

To witness the community's evolution and the development of neighborhood families.

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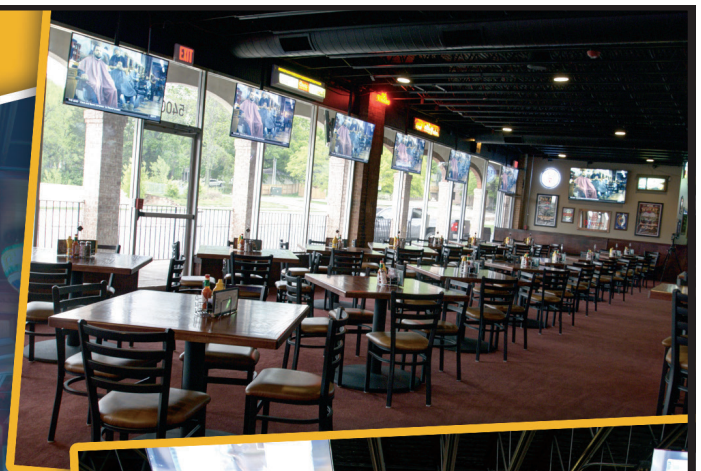
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Building Community

Mission's Grant Programs Provide Support to Residents and Businesses

Building and maintaining a strong, healthy community is an important priority for the City of Mission. For many years, Mission has helped to support this goal by returning dollars to residents through a franchise and property tax rebate program, and by investing in both residential neighborhoods and commercial areas through a number of different community grant and outreach programs.



Mission's Mayor and City Council budget nearly \$100,000 annually to fund these programs, and with only a few exceptions, these funds are available on a first-come, first-served basis. The various rebate and community grant programs are highlighted below.

Community Rebate Program (Franchise Fee/Property Tax/Solid Waste Utility Rebates)

Income-eligible residents may apply to receive: a full rebate of city telephone, electricity, or gas franchise fees for the year, a partial rebate of city property taxes, and a partial rebate of solid waste utility fees. Residents must meet income guidelines to qualify.

Mission Possible

The Mission Possible program assists homeowners with the removal of physical barriers, dilapidated structures, qualifying minor home repairs, house painting and tree trimming. Funds are awarded based on the applicant's income, eligibility to receive Medicare/Social Security disability benefits, involvement in code case resolution and other factors. The program strives to partner with all Mission residents who are interested in making improvements to their homes.

Neighborhood Grant Program

The Neighborhood Grant Program provides up to \$500 to help resident-based groups build and preserve community through various programs and activities. Examples include starting neighborhood newsletters or email lists, sponsoring block parties, preparing informational workshops or other community-building activities.

Mission Business Improvement Grant (BIG)

This grant is designed to local businesses through funding for exterior building repairs or improvements and qualified energy-efficiency upgrades. Applicants will be reimbursed at one-half (50%) of their approved costs, with the City's share not to exceed \$10,000 per project annually or \$2,000 per sign. Since its inception in 2004, the BIG grant program has provided \$476,000 in grant funds that have helped to leverage more than \$1.4 million in total improvements to businesses throughout the community.

For more information on these and other assistance and grant programs available through the City, please contact Nilo Fanska, Community Development Coordinator at 913.676.8360 or nfanska@missionks.org or visit the City's website at: www.missionks.org and search "Grants."

Helpful Property Maintenance Tips

Spring and summer are good times to think about property maintenance. The City has adopted several property maintenance codes that help ensure our neighborhoods remain vibrant and attractive in order to help maintain property values. Here is a quick list of some of the top complaints the City receives each year. Please use it to look around at your own property and see if any adjustments need to be made so that you remain in compliance with City Code. If you do happen to find an issue needing to be addressed, the Mission Possible assistance program may be able to help with eligible repairs. Please contact Neighborhood Services at 913.676.8360 for more information on the Mission Possible program or with any questions about property maintenance or code enforcement requirements.

**M**

Maintain all grass and weeds below 8 inches

**I**

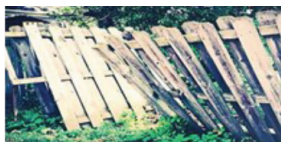
Inoperable vehicles are not permitted to be stored on the property

**S**

Storage of tools, equipment and household items must be in an enclosed area such as in a garage or accessory building

**S**

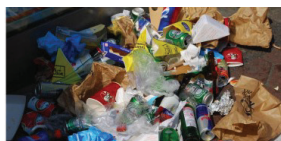
Surfaces of all buildings on the property must be free of chipping paint

**I**

Ill-maintained fences and accessory structures should be repaired or replaced

**O**

Other vehicles, such as boats, RVs and trailers, must be stored behind the front line of the building

**N**

Nuisances such as brush piles, piles of trash, and stagnant water are not permitted on the property



Photo by Denise Elam

"Water is life, and for life I'm grateful. Running through my hands, I take what I need, and the rest pours on by. I believe a heart full of gratitude is one that falls into accord with the universe. If my painting reminds any person to reaffirm their gratitude for anything, I believe it's lived its purpose."



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A "Grateful" Heart

Mission was proud to receive one of the 154 "Parade of Hearts" sculptures placed throughout the KC Metro region this spring. The public art project promotes unification and making our communities stronger. Each of the 5-foot by 5-foot hearts is a unique design with the artists' inspiration and story behind it.

Mission's heart, entitled "Grateful" was painted by Daniel Bartle. Bartle, an artist who has participated in the arts and business communities for two decades has cultivated a uniquely robust visual arts skillset. Employed professionally as an architectural illustrator, a mural painter, an environmental designer and a conceptual artist, Bartle makes art in hopes of connecting with people. Public work is his favorite form of art, though because, as he would tell you, "It's for everyone."

The Parade of Hearts provided local artists with a way to illustrate their sense of community in a time when COVID-19 and other events have worked to keep us apart. The hearts are displayed throughout the KC region through the end of May. They will then be auctioned with proceeds benefitting four different entities impacted significantly by the pandemic. For a full listing of the hearts, their locations, or more information visit www.theparadeofhearts.com.



"Community Bookshelf"
14 W. 10th Street, KCMO



"A Summer Sundae Kinda Love"
419 W. 47th Street, KCMO

Local Leaders Travel to Washington, D.C. to Share Ideas and Learn About Federal Resources

In March, Mayor Sollie Flora, Councilmembers Debbie Kring, Trent Boultinghouse and Lea Loudon, and Assistant City Administrator Emily Randel had the opportunity to represent Mission at the National League of Cities Congressional City Conference in Washington, D.C. The conference provides an important opportunity for local leaders to connect with other cities, both large and small, about how to bring program ideas and more resources back to our communities.

Councilmember Boultinghouse shared these thoughts about the 2022 Conference: "This year at NLC, it was invigorating to meet so many public servants across the country and share ideas that I could bring back to Mission. A highlight was getting to meet directly with Sen. Moran on Capitol Hill and hearing from President Biden. I also enjoyed getting to know staff and fellow councilmembers better, and on our last night we had a special moment leaving a memorial together at the Ukrainian Embassy on behalf of the City of Mission."



Despite rain, snow and cold temperatures, the Andersen Park tennis court's concrete was finally poured in mid-April! The refurbished courts are anticipated to reopen in early June.

PAVING THE WAY 2022 Street Preservation Program Underway

The 2022 Street Preservation Project for Mission's residential streets is about to begin. The work will continue throughout the summer construction season. The projects include street and stormwater improvements in the following areas:

62nd Street, Woodson to Lamar Avenue
Reeds Road, 49th St. to 50th Street
Outlook Street, 49th Street to 51st Street

The project includes stormwater improvements or repairs; curb and gutter and driveway approach removal and replacement; and full-depth pavement reconstruction. These improvements are funded in part by the dedicated revenue raised by the 3/8-cent street sales tax renewed in 2021. You can view the latest information about the projects online at missionks.org/streets.

Plant a Tree For Future Generations

Life is full of occasions to celebrate – the lives of loved ones, weddings, anniversaries, retirements, or to help keep our air clean and grow our urban tree canopy. In 2021, in response to a challenge for Mission's 70th anniversary, we challenged the community to plant 70 trees. We exceeded that goal and added more than 85 trees in both public and private spaces throughout the City. But we shouldn't stop there! The City of Mission Parks, Recreation + Tree Commission invites you to consider participating in the Celebration Tree Program. This program offers opportunities to plant a tree in one of the City's parks or on other public property to recognize special moments, events or people.

A donation to the City of Mission covers the cost of the tree, installation, and maintenance of the tree for the duration of its life. Donations are accepted in the following amounts based on the size of tree requested:

\$550 – 2" caliper tree • \$750 – 3" caliper tree • \$2,000 – 5" caliper tree

An additional donation of \$300 will purchase a 9 x 5 cast bronze plaque allowing you to personalize the tree and the person or event you are commemorating. Space is limited to 150 characters. Donors receive a certificate and a map of the tree's location within the City. A list of available species and planting locations are available from the Parks + Recreation Department.

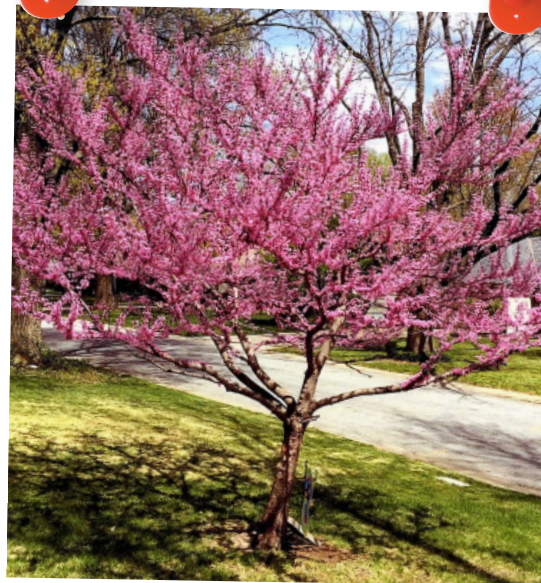
If the Celebration Tree program isn't a good fit, you might consider planting a native tree in your own yard with 50% of the cost covered through Mission's Stormwater Best Management Practices Program (see www.missionks.org for more information). For more information, please contact Parks + Recreation Director Penn Almoney at palmoney@missionks.org or 913.722.8210.



Mission Business District Sidewalk Sale

Save the Date:
Saturday, June 18
10 a.m.- 4 p.m.

Artists, makers and musicians interested in participating should contact the Mission Business District through Facebook @MissionBusinessDistrict



Championship Tree

Congratulations to Milhaven residents Ben and Mary Funk for having their beautiful redbud tree selected as the 2021 Championship Tree! Planted by their children many years ago when they first moved in, the tree is a cherished and treasured gift. If you know a tree worthy of recognition, please submit a nomination.



Mission Family Aquatic Center opens Memorial Day Weekend!

Hours:
Monday-Saturday, 12-8 p.m. and
Sunday, 12-6 p.m. (subject to change)

Season Passes are available now - sold only at the Powell Community Center, 6200 Martway St. For daily fees and more membership details, visit www.missionks.org. Stay updated throughout the swim season by following @missionksparksrec on Instagram.



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MISSION COMMUNITY FOOD PANTRY

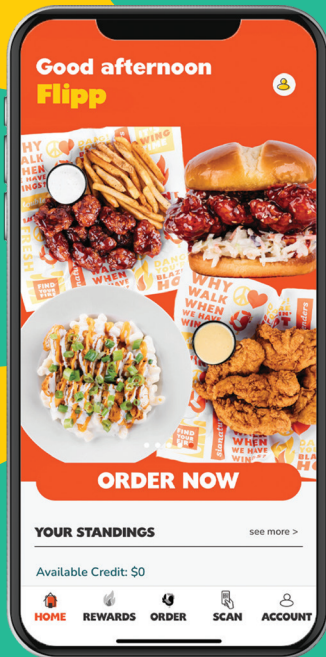
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Experience the Best of Summer at the Mission Market

by Denise Elam

If you like fresh, local produce, meats, jams, homemade soaps, lotions and handmade crafts, the Mission Market might just be the place to be this summer.

Open Thursdays from 4:30- 8 p.m. June through August, the Market features locally grown produce, honey, wildflowers and unique specialty foods and baked goods.

Aside from a large array of vendors, the Market also features a rotating array of live music, activities, food trucks

and community-oriented fun.

Applications are now open for 2022 vendors and will be accepted throughout the season and reviewed as availability allows.

For more information, check out the Market's social media at [facebook.com/missionksmarket](https://www.facebook.com/missionksmarket).

In the meantime, we hope the next few vendor highlights will get you just as excited for the 2022 Market season as we are!

Bowlin Farms

For Steve Bowlin, farming is more than cultivating vegetables and produce; it's continuing a family legacy that runs deep.

"It's in my blood," Bowlin said. His Grandpa Siscoe had a long history of growing watermelons and cantaloupes in the local area.

"My grandad used to sell to all A&P stores when they were in KC," he explained.

Bowlin Farms began around 15 years ago with home-grown vegetables; the business blossomed at the Olathe Farmers Market for several years. The family eventually got away from the market scene but returned after a plentiful harvest season in 2015.

"That's when we found Mission Market and that was in their early days; they were just getting started," he said. "We stayed with it. We started growing Bowlin Farms. Every year we add something new or do something different."

Bowlin Farms is known best for their sweet corn, watermelon and cantaloupes. They sell a variety of both seedless and seeded watermelon to accommodate the ever-changing desires of their customers.

The farm also sells a yellow seedless watermelon, 28 varieties of jam, homegrown salsas, pasta sauces and chili bases.

"We've got local honey that we sell," he said. "We've always had a few flowers ranging from sunflowers to zinnias; this year we've added hanging baskets."

The farm recently hosted the 7th Annual Spring Fling Market and Pedal



Steve Bowlin at the Mission Market.

Tractor Pull in April, with vendors, crafts, woodworking, painting and produce. Bowlin added five goats to the farm and plans to provide educational opportunities for kids to come learn about farming.

"We'd like to get some field trips set up to bring kids out to the farm to see how

the stuff is grown," he said.

The farm also recently became involved in selling produce to local schools. The partnership came after Bowlin attended a forum on the farm to table concept. A representative from Gardner, Kansas schools spoke at the forum, explaining how local schools were receiving

Continued from page 33

produce from Northwest Missouri. That caught Bowlin's attention.

"The session ended, she left the stage and I followed her," Bowlin recalled. "She turned around and said, 'Yes, Steve, we need to talk.'"

Shortly after, they met and worked together on a plan for Bowlin Farms to begin providing their own local produce to area schools.

"We got through COVID-19 with it and expanded it; it's a very, very good working relationship," he said.

Thirty-seven schools in Kansas now enjoy produce from Bowlin Farms. With the extra work, the farm had to cut back its market efforts in a few cities, but will remain in Mission — which Bowlin calls "the best market" out of all his farm is involved in.

"The market coordinators have done an outstanding job with that Market. I mean, from getting through COVID-19 to now and getting it back to where it was with the energy, the music — they really need a pat on the back in my opinion," he said.

Bowlin also praised the Market's promotion of his business through their



Bowlin Farms sells farm-fresh produce including tomatoes, watermelon and blackberries.

e-blasts. He sees a large number of repeat customers who are familiar with his products and come prepared each week with a shopping list.

"It's just a very, very friendly market," he said. "I'm looking forward to the market season starting in Mission; they're doing a kick-off in early May and I should have hanging baskets for that ...

We'll have lettuce, spinach, beets, some radishes... and we might get lucky and have a few tomatoes, too."

Bowlin is looking forward to an increased excitement at the Market this year, as the world continues to recover from the pandemic.

"I've got a sneaking feeling this year is really going to be a good one," he said. "They're getting serious this year and they're really going to make it go ... it's just a very fun market for Thursday night."

Mostly, he's looking forward to continuing his family's tradition.

"At some point, everyone (in the family) is involved," he said, noting that his 85-year-old mother, 76-year-old uncle and 80-year-old aunt all pitch in on the farm. His wife, Sherry, also works by his side. "I lost my dad two and a half years ago. We're still at the place that Grandpa Bowlin purchased in 1940 for their house — the same 80 acres that he bought, and as long as I'm alive, it's not going to be sold. Hopefully it will stay in the farming community until that point."

"Come see us at the market. It's a new year, with new and better things."

For more information, visit bowlinfarms.net.

Continued on page 35



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Milk from Nigerian Dwarf goats contains the highest bufferfat content of any other breed; it's prime material for cheese and soap-making.

Continued from page 34

Madd House Hill

More than 10 years ago, Cynthia Maddock and her husband, John, were faced with an interesting request from their children: they wanted to raise livestock as part of a 4-H project.

"The kids were small, space was limited, and we were not prepared to jump head-first into a dairy cow or a beef cattle project — but goats?" Cynthia said. "We can do that."

After months of research, they chose Nigerian Dwarf goats because they were small, compact and easy for the kids to handle. It was a good fit.

"We quickly fell head over heels in love with our little goats, and their personalities made chore time a highlight of the day," she said.

As the herd grew, they found themselves overwhelmed with the milk production and had plenty extra to go around.

"Our Nigerian Dwarves, though small, are mighty and their milk contains the highest butterfat content of any

other breed," Cynthia explained. "This made it prime material for drinking, cheesemaking and soap making."

Cynthia began experimenting with the milk to see what she could create from it. First, it was food products like cheese, but they were quickly devoured by her four children.

"Cheese went too fast with four kids at home and I was (at that time) buying goat milk soap from someone else; I liked it so well I wanted to start creating our own," she said.

Using all-natural ingredients, including essential oils, Cynthia soon began crafting her own line of soaps, lotions and other skin-care products.

"I had always been a 'shower gel' person until I used my first bar of homemade soap — and I couldn't get enough of it," she said. "My skin was soft, smooth, and I found myself no longer reaching for the lotion after a hot shower or bath. The aromatherapy was an added benefit, and because I have family members with sensitive skin and eczema, I wanted the soap to be free of anything artificial, so it was gentle on

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ingredients.**



even the most sensitive skin."

With their skin feeling better than ever, Cynthia and John knew they had to share the newfound products they had created. They came up with the business

Continued on page 36

Continued from page 35

name "Madd House Hill" and soon began offering homemade soaps and lotions at a handful of local farmers markets, with a motto of: "if you make it, they will come." "They came," she said. "We started

hearing story after story about how the soap was helping with dry skin, eczema and other skin issues. We heard how soft their skin had become. We were delighted, and the goats smiled."

Cynthia and John came to the Mission Market in 2019 and have returned every

year since, selling popular items such as their All Natural Foot Stick, All Natural Bug Repellent Lotion Stick and Lavender Mint Soap Bar.

"I love the vibe of the Market," Cynthia said. "Everyone is so happy, kind and just relaxing with good food, a drink and music. Everyone is excited to support local farms and really see the value in it. We just feel so much love when we are there."

Now grown, the couple's children still assist with the goat care, maintenance and milk production along with managing the business's social media platforms.

"Our human kids — now adults — are valued 'as-soap-iates,'" Cynthia joked.

She looks forward to "seeing and visiting with the fun people each week" during the 2022 Market season and is thankful for the support of the Mission community.

"Many have been out to our farm for a visit," she said. "We are so happy to be a part of this community and we love seeing familiar faces each week."

For more information, visit maddhousehill.com.



Madd House Hill's line of all-natural insect repellent.

Taste of Malaysia

Sometimes your life's calling comes when you least expect it. Sometimes it comes when you're simply helping someone else achieve their own dreams.

That's what happened to Siew Lau, owner of Taste of Malaysia. She began her career in the culinary industry while helping her daughter operate a gluten-free bakery in 2014 in a garage that had been converted to a full commercial kitchen.

"She was working a full-time job, baking and delivering and asked me to help," Lau recalled. "I always enjoyed cooking, and food is my passion, so I agreed to help bake."

A few years later, Lau's daughter moved to Oregon to attend graduate school and Lau agreed to keep things going while she was away. Having grown up in Malaysia and experiencing hundreds of food varieties, she was eager to share her culture and knowledge of the cuisine with others.

"Through my years of eating different spices and ingredients, I became very good at using these spices in my cooking," she explained. "I love eating good food with complex flavors, but couldn't find the type of homestyle Malaysian cooking I so missed in Kansas City, so I had to figure it out and make it myself. Now, it's such a joy to cook for



Lau's infamous pork dumplings.

Continued on page 37



Lau plans to return to the Mission Market this summer, bringing homemade Malaysian food with her.

others and see them appreciating new flavors I brought from my home."

Lau was curious to see if others would enjoy her Malaysian cooking as much as she did.

"I didn't want to keep up with coffee shops and deliveries, so I looked for farmers markets to join," she said. "At the time, Mission Market was looking for vendors and that's how I got started in Mission."

She was proudly one of the Market's first vendors to sign up during its inaugural season and has returned each summer for the last six years.

Specializing in Malaysian food, which is similar to Indonesian or Thai food (but with unique spices), Lau brought notable meals like pan-seared pork dumplings and Malaysian noodles with her. They quickly became her best sellers.

"I am so delighted to see the community enjoy my Malaysian food because it really is a part of me from home," she said. "Every week, people look forward to seeing what I will bring to the Market,

and it's a very satisfying feeling to know the community likes my food."

Since 2021, Lau has been working on migrating her business toward Malaysian ethnic food. She recently launched a new website which will give customers another route to place orders and experience her cooking.

"I can't wait for the season to start so I can introduce my customers to this new website," she said. "All the vendors and customers are so friendly and supportive. I am truly looking forward to getting back to the Market to see everyone again. The people and community are what I look forward to most."

Lau is excited to experience another great year at the Market.

"Mission Market has a very dynamic team of people," she emphasized. "They are innovative, full of energy, fun, friendly and so supportive. When the pandemic started, we still had the Market open with masks. Knowing that business would be affected because less people were attending, the staff and volunteers



A kale roll prepared by Lau.

bought lots of products from every vendor to support us. Their positive attitude and care are why I think most vendors come back. Mission Market is a special place and we are like a big family."

For more information on Lau's products, or to order food to be picked up at the Market, visit www.yumchack.com or find her cuisine on Facebook at [facebook.com/gfplusone](https://www.facebook.com/gfplusone).



Mission Market's 2015 opening day lineup.

FROM SATURDAY MORNING MARKETS TO THURSDAY EVENING SUNSETS

LOOKING BACK ON THE MISSION MARKET

by Kate Deacon

June 2015: It's 6 a.m. on a Saturday as Mission Market Coordinator Carrie Dickerson revs up the engine and rolls a golf cart out of the old Harleywood's off of Outlook Street. Before most of Mission is out of bed, Dickerson will have the new Mission Market up and running, transporting tents, tables and more in the golf cart to set up at the Market site, helping vendors from across the metro line up in their spaces, and greeting the morning sun with a cup of Twisted Sisters coffee from the info booth.

As residents might recall, the first iteration of the Mission Market was a Saturday morning affair before moving to Thursday evenings in 2018.

Assistant City Administrator Emily Randel noted that the Market site was only possible due to the rewriting of the floodplain. In earlier City visioning exercises, there were plans made for a farmers market using the general area, but when the floodplain was rewritten and new greenspace was integrated into the heart of Johnson Drive,



Mission Market season one vendor Bob Birdwell - aka The Jelly Man - speaks with a potential customer.

former Mayor Steve Schowengerdt felt that the time was right to launch the Market.

"We had many friends of the Market helping us get everything lined up," Randel recalled, noting a tight time-crunch to get the first Market up and running in only four months.

A dedicated advisory panel guided the Market from the beginning; Kevin Fullerton of Springboard Creative made sure the Market came on the scene with a signature logo and professional graphics; Sandi Russell

Continued on page 40

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Continued from page 38

of Twisted Sisters Coffee contributed a complimentary fresh brew every morning; the list goes on and on. The most essential component, finding vendors, became a heavy task for Randel and Mary Schowengerdt, who spent hours cold-calling to get the lineup in place for opening day.

Flash forward to 2018, and those early morning sunrise markets gave way to Thursday evening sunsets. Randel remembers the transition well, as the Saturday morning markets struggled to take hold.

"The more vendors we met, and the more conversations we had, we learned they loved the idea and visibility of our downtown Market, but had other market commitments on Saturdays," she said. "Also, Mission has a high daytime population we were hoping to draw from, and we thought we could tap into that on Thursday evenings."

The move to Thursday nights exchanged the morning coffee for an evening cold beverage.

"We added the weekly beer garden to the mix and changed the name from 'Mission Farm & Flower' to simply 'Mission Market,' to signify that we were more than just vegetables!" Randel explained.

Now, customers tend to linger on summer evenings as a social event, connecting with friends and neighbors on the Market lawn while getting some weekend shopping done.

Randel noted that the City has supported the Market from day one with robust funding and staffing.

"A lot of markets struggle without the support and time to grow that we've



Mission Market season one vendors: Dang's Gardening, The Jelly Man, Nowachek Honey, 2L Farms, Tasty Nuggets Granola, The Beachery and many others.

enjoyed," she said.

City support and time for growth has paid off, as the Market has enjoyed increased success in the past years.

"It's a far cry from when Mary Schowengerdt and I were sitting in City Hall just cold-calling vendors," Randel said. "We've come from that hard work of telling everybody that we were starting a market, to the point now where we have vendors calling us."

From the beginning, Randel said Market

staff have wanted to "create, maintain, and manage a space where everyone recognizes how special it is, and that drives every decision we make."

The Market kicks off its eighth season on June 2, from 4:30-8 p.m., with summer markets taking place each Thursday through August.

For more information, visit missionks.org/parks-recreation/mission-market.



Market coordinators check in with Bob Birdwell on opening day in 2015.



Emily Randel promotes Mission Market in the news on opening day in 2015.



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- Barbecues
- Cattle Drives
- Art Show
- Ferris Wheel
- Rain Barrels
- Painted Chairs
- Parades
- Family Adoption Program
- Mission Magazine
- Mission Community Food Pantry

My heartfelt thanks goes out to each and every one of you for your support and making Mission a special place for people to call home.



A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Suzie".

*As this issue of the magazine was going to press, we learned that former Councilmember and long-time community activist Suzie Gibbs was in failing health. Suzie wanted to send a "thank you" to her supporters over the years, and we thought there was no better place than the Mission Magazine which she helped launch more than 12 years ago. It is with heavy hearts that we share Suzie passed peacefully at home before we could get her letter to you, but please know these words were shared from her "smiling heart" with all who loved and supported her through the years.

Suzie is one of those people who has her priorities in order: devout in her faith, loyal to her family and steadfast in her service to others. She finds her current physical limitations a nuisance. Suzie is, and always has been, Mission's faithful champion and cheerleader. As we finalized our Community Vision and Master Plan in 2002, Suzie took on our small business grants, acted as a voice for those along Johnson Drive, chaired our parades and festivals, and supported our Mission area families at Thanksgiving and Christmas. The rest is history. Her devotion to and enthusiasm for Mission has been felt by many over the years. While she is grateful for our support, we all should be eternally grateful for the gift Suzie gave us, herself.

Laura McConwell
Mission Mayor 2002-2014



I had the honor of serving with Suzie on the City Council for a number of years. She has been a strong, influential member and leader of this community. Suzie was involved in many community events, but the one closest to her heart was the Family Adoption Program. This was a huge undertaking that only someone with Suzie's energy and persistence could accomplish. Her tireless efforts not only helped countless families at Thanksgiving and Christmas, but throughout the year. Suzie's dedication to this outreach brought the whole City together. She was relentless and unashamed in her zeal for helping these families, and her passion challenged us all to be better – something I will always love her for. Suzie's influence on the City of Mission will forever remain as she has made a lasting impact on us all.

Steve Schowengerdt
Mission Mayor 2014-2018

When I think of Suzie, I think of a one-of-a-kind person not afraid to get involved and make things happen. She has been a force in Mission for many decades and I will always admire all that she was able to create and accomplish. She worked tirelessly to make things better for our residents and for those who needed a helping hand while she was on the City Council, and that work has continued as she's successfully built the Mission Community Food Pantry, reaching more people than ever before.

Ron Appletoft
Mission Mayor 2018-2021



Suzie Gibbs is a Mission institution. For decades, she has been giving it her all to make an impact in our City. I respect the work that Suzie has put in, and I know she loves Mission with all of her heart. Suzie's impact on our City is indisputable. Whether it's her service on the City Council, her founding of Smiling Hearts, or her just being there for members of our community who need a little extra help, Suzie always steps up, makes a plan, and gets things done. Her drive and dedication are an inspiration to us all.

Sollie Flora
Mission Mayor 2021– present



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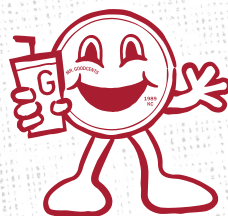
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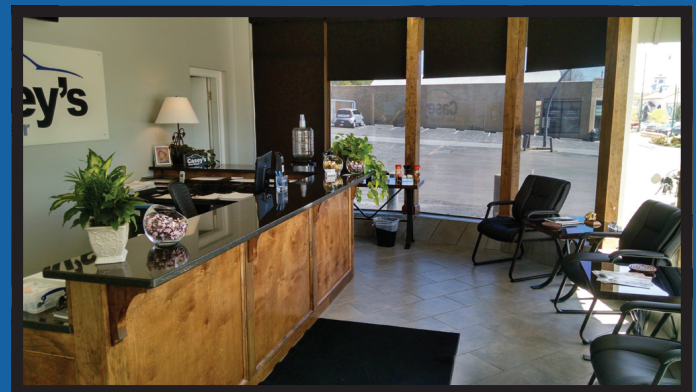
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