

Around The Town

News from My Hometown Northwest

Year End Review 2025

What an eventful year 2025 has been. ESL classes have been well attended. Youth activities have been popular. Special projects have dotted our calendar. Reading and education programs are moving forward. And DOS projects, including a rather spectacular “Junk Jamboree” Day of Service helped make this a most memorable year. Our calendar is starting to fill up for 2026, but 2025 was another banner year, by anyone’s standards.

A few Stats worth noting:

During calendar year 2025, more than 150 My Hometown Northwest volunteers completed over 100 DOS and CRC projects, totaling nearly 25,000 man-hours, held more than 50 events and helped hundreds of families in need.

Beautification projects helped transform neighborhoods, classes taught students a variety of subjects, activities and parties brought youth together. Families came together for family portraits, adults gathered to play pickleball, coaches helped our youth become skilled athletes, and seniors found social events that helped strengthen them, too. In addition, many MHT volunteers helped elementary age students learn to read.



On-Going Events and Activities

MHT provides a vital resource for our students' on-going education, Nov 12.

Over 100 interested high schoolers learned about college courses, grants and scholarships at important local universities and places of higher education. "Tremendous possibilities await our future community leaders," said CRC Committee Chair Marylee Bingham. Paula Christensen, new to MHT, and Julie Olsen, a co-founder of My Hometown Northwest, spear-headed the evening, working tirelessly to create, promote and stage the event. More than 25 presenters were located around the CRC gym, representing colleges, trade schools, and much more. Teton Sports and The US Airforce donated wonderful raffle prizes. Fresh baked cookies made the night fulfilling...in every way.





ESL Graduation Night honors its stellar students, November 19.

This is always a special night for our students, and we love to celebrate it. First, a congratulatory dinner was served to over 50 people (catered by Hacienda Restaurant in Rose Park). Then our graduating class was honored with some prizes, diplomas, and yes, warm embraces. It was a grand night as much as it was a “grad” night. Thanks to Russell and Dianne Nelson and Dave and Lynda Harbertson, and to wonderful teachers, Christy Cunningham, Nancy Day, Luis Tovar, Tania Martinez, TJ and Alex Davis and other volunteers for making “English as a Second Language” a reality. Check out the happy faces below.





Winter Market at Backman fills some much-wanted stockings (Dec 5–6).

MHT is a grateful participant in this annual event, held a few weeks before Christmas to help parents make yuletide special for their children. But it is the international company Lucid (founded and headquartered in Utah) that has been the heart and soul of this rewarding experience for years, providing parents with a wonderful array of gifts, books, and toys. For two days, selected parents (based on needs) gather at Backman Elementary and go on a “shopping” spree. The school gymnasium is transformed into a department store so parents can easily browse for their families. Gifts are expertly wrapped by MHT and other volunteers as grateful, smiling parents look on. Thanks to Lucid, Backman Assistant Principal, Shyla Poirier, and Liz and Gaylen Zentner of MHT for embracing this seasonal opportunity.





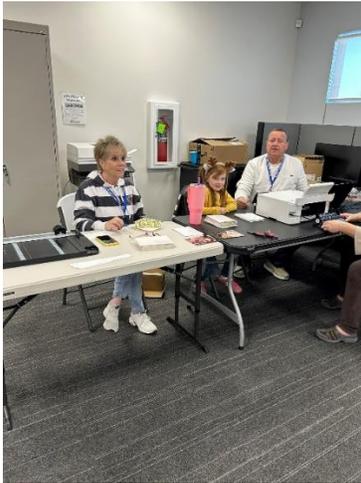
Pickleball puts a wrap on another season (December 13)

Pickleballers from the Rose Park area (and even a little beyond) finished off the year with some very competitive and fun games just before the holiday season really got underway. We'll reconvene in January at the CRC building on 947 West 200 North, where the weather is always perfect. This group really does have fun together, and all adults are welcome to join in. We provide pickleballs and paddles (as needed) and three courts to kick off your weekend every 2nd and 4th Saturday 9-11am. Snacks are also provided. Don't miss out!



Santa comes all the way from the North Pole (via Mexico) to delight Rose Park youngsters (December 13).

This is one of the most satisfying activities of the year. It's a photo session for families with Santa (who just happens to speak fluent Spanish). Held at the Rose Park Community Center, the day not only includes a photo session and "on-the-spot" framed photos, but a wonderful array of gifts and tasty snacks. In addition, a local youth group raised money for 100 "Build-A-Bear" stuffed animals (including outfits). Merry Christmas, indeed! Many thanks to Amy Wylie of the RPCC, and MHT volunteers Kendrick and Kris Bytheway, who coordinate this spirited event. And thanks to photographer Christy Cunningham, who really "framed" the day, you might say.





Elementary school reading programs are experiencing growing pains. But you can help.

Liz and Gaylen Zentner are passionate about helping our kids learn essential reading skills. But it is challenging. According to Gaylen, 200 Sixth Graders will graduate this year from Rose Park schools without the reading skills they need for their next school level. Volunteers are needed, and needed now. “It doesn’t take much,” explains Liz. “Even volunteering for an hour or so a week will help us help these precious kids.” Contact Liz at 801-671-6968 or Gaylen at 801-671-5394 ASAP!

DOS continues to help neighbors who need an extra hand.

Under the capable leadership of Connie and Steve Sturzenegger, our hard-working DOS committee continues to put the finishing touches on what we call NOW projects that need attention sooner than later. Like a doctor on call, they are always ready to pitch in where it is needed, and needed “now.”

- Jamie Rossborough had a new HVAC system and water heater installed through the Salt Lake Housing and Stability Program.
- Kristin Sperry received a new kitchen faucet installed with partial funding from My Hometown.
- Bronwyn Borge received a new roof through My Hometown funds.
- Rachel Edwards had plumbing issues repaired and a new furnace installed through Cities Strong and tree removal funded by our non-profit partner, Asilia.
- Chloe Jimenez had two trees removed with the help of Asilia.
- Paula Christensen and Marylee Bingham spent hours cleaning out debris from underneath the bleachers at the CRC building.

My Hometown bakes up a batch of cookies (December 16).

To brighten the holiday season a little and support teachers and workers at Backman Elementary, My Hometown volunteers create a very inviting “buffet” of delicious cookies each year. And, they make sure there are plenty to go around for more than 80 grateful staffers. Thanks to Liz Zentner, Connie Sturzenegger, Marsha Parker, and our volunteer bakers. See below. You can almost taste them, can't you!



Asilia sponsors “Santa Day” at Rose Park Elementary (December 17)

My Hometown volunteers and our non-profit partner Asilia helped sponsor the purchase of a gift for all 450 students at Rose Park Elementary. Santa came, too, and for three hours, spent time with and posed for pictures with each child, smiling all the way. We’re also very grateful to Asilia for purchasing these very special gifts! Thanks to MHT volunteers Randy and Diann Butler for overseeing everything.





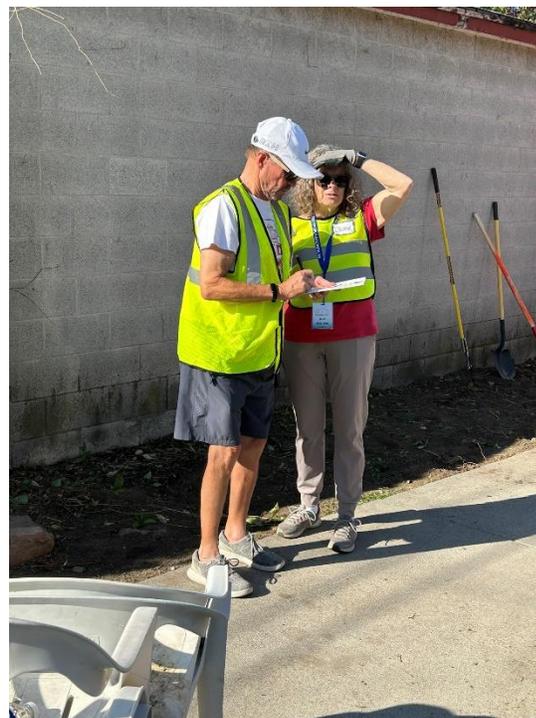
A Note from your “Around The Town” editors...

Thanks to our fellow MHT volunteers who have made these last three years so rewarding. We hoped writing and publishing a newsletter might help us all stay connected. Help us appreciate how much is really happening. And better understand our individual missions -- and, especially, how they are all interconnected.

Watching you has been inspiring. You have all made such significant contributions to our neighbors in Rose Park. We will miss handshakes and hugs and, of course, pot luck dinners, hours of planning meetings, days of hard work and challenging projects (but not the sore backs we all seem to have added to our lives). Many thanks to all of you who have led. We have felt your love, too!!

Sincerely, Mike and Tamie Snarr

PS: We didn't realize the greatest beneficiaries of this newsletter...would be the two of us.



Thanks to fellow volunteers who also left the ranks of My Hometown Northwest during the 2024–25 season. What difference-makers they were:

Craig and Joan Anderson

Jose Loya

Dirk and Lisa Anjewierden

Matt and Pauline Peterson

Carlton and Cathy Christensen

Edwin and Mara Prince

Robin and Mary Egan

Liz and Preston Richards

Doug and Becky Farley

Robert Rich

See the “Year in Review” Photos below











