



Official Newsletter of the City of Roeland Park



Left: Retired Chief John Morris Right: Chief Cory Honas with Rango. Images from 2024 Public Safety Day.

Retirement of Chief Morris Brings New Leadership to RPPD

After 26 years of distinguished service with the City of Roeland Park, Police Chief John Morris retired on January 1, 2025. Chief Morris's leadership has guided the City through numerous challenges, fostering an environment of trust, integrity, and collaboration between officers and the community.

Edward "John" Morris has a career in law enforcement that spans four decades and includes service in four states: Texas, Georgia, Kansas and Missouri. He joined the Roeland Park Police Department in 1999 as a patrol officer and quickly rose through the ranks, earning promotions to sergeant and deputy chief and ultimately becoming Chief of Police in 2013. Chief Morris demonstrated his commitment to the community and his officers every day, as well as an unwavering commitment to public safety.

Cory Honas was sworn in as Police Chief on January 21, 2025. Chief Honas has been in law enforcement for more than 30 years. With a similar path as his predecessor, Chief Honas rose through the ranks serving 25 years with the RPPD, with K-9 unit, Rango, by his side since 2018. With a wealth of experience and a strong commitment to our community's safety and well-being, Chief Honas brings a fresh perspective and dedication to fostering positive relationships between law enforcement and the people we serve. We look forward to the leadership, vision, and collaboration Chief Honas will bring to the RPPD and beyond. Welcome aboard, Chief!

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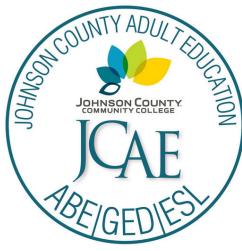
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BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: Johnson County Adult Education



Roeland Park is home to a dynamic community of local businesses that are integral to the fabric of our city. The City proudly features and promotes local businesses through special highlights, upcoming events, and resources to help businesses thrive. The City aims to strengthen the community and support the success of our local entrepreneurs and businesses. Together, we create a thriving, connected place to live and work.

Johnson County Adult Education & GED Prep Classes can be found at the Roeland Park Community Center located at 4850 Rosewood Drive.

What's Your Mission: JCAE transforms lives and strengthens our community through adult basic education classes in GED and English as a Second Language (ESL).

Why do you like doing business in Roeland Park?

Roeland Park is a wonderful community and has been very welcoming to Johnson County Adult Education. Having classes in Northeast Johnson County allows us to serve a diverse group of students. We are grateful for our partnership with the Roeland Park Community Center to offer GED classes in the community.

What do you want people to know about what you do?

JCCC's GED® Test Preparation courses are small, and you will receive individualized attention. Learn at your own pace; you will not be measured against others.

Our FREE instruction includes:

- Basic skills instruction in reading, writing, and math.
- General Educational Development (GED®) high school equivalency test preparation.
- A study plan made to meet your individual learning needs.
- Outreach classes located in community centers close to where you live and work.
- Small classes with friendly people who are also seeking basic skills to improve their lives.
- A transition coach to assist you with future plans.
- Volunteer tutors to give one-on-one attention.
- Instruction in work readiness and computer literacy skills.

Connect with them by visiting
www.jccc.edu/jcae or call
913-469-7621

Project RISE Launches New Incentive Pilot Program for Small Businesses



The City of Roeland Park is excited to announce new incentives through the City's Business Development initiative Project RISE. Designed for businesses with 10 or fewer employees, these small business incentives offer a range of assistance to help foster growth, promote local entrepreneurship, and enhance the vibrancy of business in the City. This pilot program represents an exciting opportunity for Roeland Park's diverse and local business community.

- Incentives available to existing businesses include sponsored chamber memberships for one year for new chamber members and sponsored participation in select chamber leadership development programs.
- Incentives available for incoming small businesses include microgrants of up to \$2,000 for qualified expenses and city licensing/permitting fee waivers.

The City will host information sessions on these opportunities in early 2025 and will announce dates on social media and on the City and Project Rise websites. To learn more about eligibility, deadlines, and how to apply visit www.projectriserp.com.



Meet Matt Swartz

Public Works Equipment Operator



Q: How long have you been an Equipment Operator?

A: I began with Roeland Park in September of 2024 but have previous experience with multiple other city public works departments.

Q: What is your favorite part about working for Roeland Park?

A: I enjoy the comradery and the team environment.

Q: You just went through a major winter storm as a plow driver, what was that experience like?

A: I'm not going to lie, those were some long hours, but I gained a lot of respect for the guys that have been doing this year after year. I also realized that safety is essential while driving a plow!

Q: What were you doing before you came to Roeland Park?

A: I was working for the City of Paola and before that I enjoyed life in Pennsylvania.

Q: What do you like to do for fun?

A: I enjoy spending time with my family, watching dirt track racing, hunting, hanging with my dogs, watching football and spending time with friends. I recently bought a new home and have been enjoying my new place.

ROELAND PARKER

A Giant Thank You to Our Winter Crews!



Roeland Park Public Works crews taking a well-deserved break.

Thank you to Roeland Park Public Works for their outstanding efforts in treating the streets and clearing snow and ice after the January snow storms. Your hard work and dedication did not go unnoticed. Here's a sample of the praise our crews received on social media from our residents:

"Thank you all so much - we were amazed to see how fast our neighborhood was plowed. Y'all are a huge part of why this town is so nice to live in!"

Steve S.

"Thanks to all those hard working people. You do your job beyond your normal hours, and in bitter cold and low visibility. Kudos from a long time resident."

Nancy K.

"Great job with the plowing. Far faster than my expectations. Thanks a ton."

Dan D.

"Thank you, PW, for all of your hard work! Whether it's leaf clean-up, snow removal, or any of the many other tasks you perform for the city, we appreciate you!"

Judy H.

Roeland Park Winter Warrior Program Helps Connect Volunteers with those in Need After Winter Storms

Meet Scott Lane. Scott is one of our Winter Warriors who is volunteering to help neighbors shovel their driveways

and walkways after the snow. When asked why he volunteered, Scott said "it's the right thing to do."



Volunteer Scott Lane sporting a thank you gift from Roeland Park staff

To help our residents who need mobility assistance, the City of Roeland Park launched the Winter Warrior Program. Staff is matching volunteers with those in need to help shovel driveways and sidewalks after a snow or ice event. If you are interested in joining our wonderful crew of volunteers like Scott, please contact Khal Miller at kmiller@roelandpark.org. If you need assistance with your driveway or sidewalk, you can also email Khal who will help to connect you as volunteers are available.



ROELAND PARK COMMUNITY CENTER

50 Plus Program Highlights

Comedy Improv Class

Feb. 24, 10 am, 9 - 1.5 hr. sessions

\$65 / \$67 nonresidents

Join us for a fun and engaging comedy improv class where you will learn to think on your feet, unleash your creativity, and build confidence in a supportive environment.

Not ready to commit? Sign up for our free intro course on Feb. 10 at 10am to try it out!

Eating Across the Lifespan

Mar. 4, 1 pm, 1 - 1.5 hr. class

\$5 / \$6 nonresidents

Each phase of life has different nutritional needs. Learn about what foods are important to health and how to make better food choices based on what is needed for your age. Program presented by K-State Extension.

Program Registration and Front Desk:
(913) 826-3160

Sports Dome: (913) 362-8700

Please call for open gym and court rental availability.

Community Center Office Hours

Monday - Friday: 7am - 5pm

Sat - Sun: Closed

Newly renovated spaces are now available to rent! Call (913) 826-3160 for more information.

Small Group Computer or Cell Phone Tutoring

Two dates available:

Feb. 11, 10am, 1 - 2hr. class

Mar. 11, 10am, 1 - 2hr. class

\$25 / \$27 nonresidents

Join our technology instructor in a small group setting to help you learn, work, create, navigate, and thrive in today's digital world! Please bring device along with all usernames and passwords.

Please note: Our Fitness Center will be closed for the next 8 - 10 weeks as we remodel the facility.

Family and Youth Program Highlights

Tutti Fruity Candy Bingo

Feb. 28, 5:30 pm, 1 - 2 hr. event

\$12 / \$13 nonresidents

Get ready for a sweet and entertaining adventure! Enjoy a fun-filled family night featuring 6 games of bingo, dinner, drinks, and some sweet treats! All ages welcome.

Colors of the Rainbow

Feb. 21, 10 am, 1 - 45 min event

\$6 per child / \$7 nonresidents

Little ones will explore colors through fun hands-on activities like color mixing, a color scavenger hunt, and rainbow crafts. Program includes snack. Ages 2-5 with adult.

Visit us at JCPRD.COM/ACTIVITIES to register.

WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/ROELANDPARKCOMMUNITYCENTER

50 Plus Program Weekly Schedule

Programs held at 4850 Rosewood Dr. Roeland Park KS

50 Plus programs with an * must register in advance

Monday

HATHA YOGA* 4pm

Tuesday

KNITTING GROUP
1pm

Wednesday

DROP IN PAINT GROUP
12:30pm

Thursday

MAH JONGG 1pm
HATHA YOGA* 4pm
TAI CHI* 5pm

Friday

HOBBY GROUP
1pm

ARTS COMMITTEE

2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

2024 was a busy year for the Roeland Park Arts Advisory Committee! For a City of its size, Roeland Park supports a robust art program. From the George R. Schlegel Gallery in City Hall, to the purchase and installation of new permanent artwork, the Arts Advisory Committee has been working hard to help make RP the vibrant and colorful place that it is. The City budgets \$25,000 annually for public art installation and maintenance. In addition, the City has a 1% for Art policy that requires new commercial buildings constructed in Roeland Park to commit 1% of the development cost to public art. The Art Committee is also very involved in the approval and sometimes the selection of art resulting from this policy.

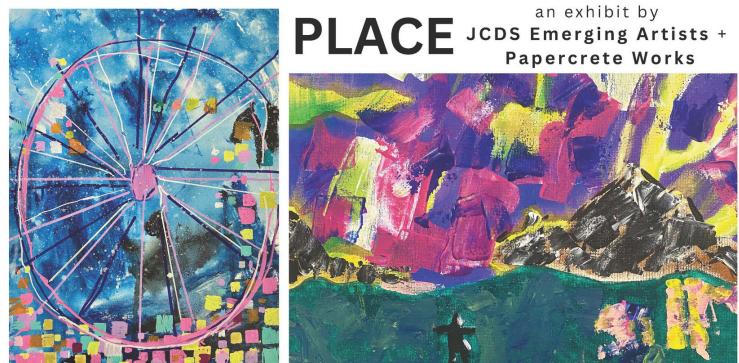
Below are some highlights of the Arts Advisory Committee in 2024:

- **Installation:** Installed Nathan Pierce's "Origin" as a gateway sculpture and highlighted it at the Arts for Johnson County Breakfast.
- **Sponsorship:** Sponsored the Arts for Johnson County Breakfast, supporting the local arts community.
- **Collaboration:** Worked with the Parks Committee to develop and implement citywide signage for trees and public artworks.
- **Planning:** Engaged in discussions about the goals and direction for the 2025 Arts Master Plan.
- **Maintenance:** Reinstalled "Eucalyptus" sculpture on Roe Blvd and decommissioned "Torso," "Industrialized Tree," and "Mother's Passing."



- **Tour:** Led a tour of public art for the RP Citizen's Academy to raise awareness of local artistic initiatives.
- **Advisory:** Provided expertise and guidance to an organization planning a mural project.
- **Exhibitions:** Hosted multiple exhibitions at the George R. Schlegel Gallery, showcasing works by regional and Roeland Park artists, along with artist receptions.
- **Engagement:** Attended the national cultural arts seminar online and participated in the state arts meeting in Salina to stay connected to industry trends.
- **Looking Ahead:** The Art Committee will be branching out into other areas of the arts in the coming year, expanding its impact and initiatives across different artistic disciplines.

In 2025, the City will embark on a public arts master planning process that will develop a pathway for future public art in Roeland Park. **If you are interested in joining the Arts Advisory Committee on this exciting process, consider volunteering!** The committee meets the first Wednesday of the month at 6 p.m. at City Hall. For more information, please contact Kelley Nielsen at knielsen@roelandpark.org.



Reception: Friday February 7th 5pm-6:30pm



Roeland Park 1.6.24
City Hall 2.28.24

JOHNSON COUNTY
KANSAS
Developmental Supports

The George R Schlegel Gallery is hosting the Johnson County Developmental Supports Emerging Artists exhibit now at City Hall. Come see this amazing artwork for yourself!

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Plant This, Not That By Melissa Castillo, Sustainability Committee

In Roeland Park and surrounding communities, you can see a lot of hydrangea trees being planted. Visits to local nurseries confirm that there is a large supply of *Hydrangea paniculata 'Limelight'* in stock to meet the demand. Whenever you see those single quotation marks around the name of a plant, that indicates that it is a cultivar, or cultivated variety. That means every plant with that name is a clone of the same plant that was chosen for its specific characteristics, whether that be color, form, winter hardiness, or resistance to certain pests, etc. The Limelight Hydrangea is a beautiful small tree with large cream to lime-colored blooms often planted in the front of homes near porches and walkways. However, the species *Hydrangea paniculata* is native to China and Japan, which means it is foreign to our ecosystems in Kansas. Our native birds, insects, soil microbes, and other wildlife by and large do not recognize it. When we have too many non-native plants, we create a food desert for wildlife, and when we have too many clones of the same plant, we risk losing them all to the same pest or disease. To avoid these problems, we are better off choosing plants and trees that are native to northeast Kansas.



Redbud tree



American Fringe tree



Serviceberry tree

Some good alternatives to the Hydrangea tree are Eastern Redbud trees (*Cercis canadensis*), Serviceberry trees (*Amelanchier arborea*), American Fringe trees (*Chionanthus virginicus*), and the Oakleaf Hydrangea shrub (*Hydrangea quercifolia*). Eastern Redbuds and Serviceberries are native to our area. American Fringe trees are native to the northeastern United States. Their native range doesn't quite make it as far west as Kansas, but there are enough insects and animals with overlapping habitat that this would still be a superior choice to the Hydrangea tree. Likewise, the Oakleaf Hydrangea is native to the southeastern United States, but is widely naturalized further north and west. The Oakleaf Hydrangea's blooms will be most similar to the Hydrangea tree, but its form will be smaller, multi-stemmed, and shrublike. Serviceberry trees also tend to be multi-stemmed and shrublike, but they can be trained to a single stem like a tree through pruning of suckers. Serviceberry trees produce fruit that many bird species rely on, and they have beautiful fall foliage.

DEI Spotlight

(Diversity, Equity & Inclusion)

February is Black History Month!

Black History Month is a time to celebrate and honor the rich cultural heritage, achievements, and contributions of Black Americans throughout history. Observed each February, it recognizes the central role of Black individuals and communities in shaping our nation's history, arts, and culture. It is also a time for reflection and learning, encouraging all of us to engage in conversations about equity and justice while celebrating the resilience and accomplishments of Black leaders, past and present. Join us this month in recognizing and celebrating the stories that continue to inspire progress in our community.

Continued on pg. 7.

EARTH DAY CLEANUP EVENT

WITH THE ROELAND PARK
SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE



SATURDAY, APRIL 19TH, 2025 AT 9AM



MEET AT CITY HALL: 4600 W 51ST ST, ROELAND PARK, KS



WEAR WEATHER-APPROPRIATE CLOTHING AND
CLOSED TOED SHOES



GLOVES AND TRASH BAGS WILL BE PROVIDED

DEI Spotlight

Cont. from pg. 6

(Diversity, Equity & Inclusion)

Check out these Black-Owned KC Restaurants:

Blue Nile Cafe
Chixen Kansas City
Fannie's West African Cuisine
Gates BBQ
Gigi's Vegan + Wellness Cafe & Eskobar
Mesob Restaurant & Rum Bar
Niecie's Restaurant
Ruby Jean's Juicery
Yogurtini

Things You Can Do This Month:

- Support Black-owned restaurants.
- Learn about African American history and present in Kansas City.
- Highlight health disparities such as Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia. Black Americans are twice as likely to develop Alzheimer's compared to their white counterparts. Reach out to the Alzheimer's Association for information and free resources alz.org/kansascity

KC Places to Visit & Resources to Explore During BHM:

- American Jazz Museum - Located in the Historic 18th & Vine Jazz District in Kansas City, MO, the American Jazz Museum showcases the sights and sounds of jazz through interactive

exhibits and films, the Changing Gallery exhibit space, Horace M. Peterson III Visitors Center, The Blue Room, and Gem Theater. <https://www.americanjazzmuseum.org/>

- Negro Leagues Baseball Museum - The Negro Leagues Baseball Museum (NLBM) is the world's only museum dedicated to preserving and celebrating the rich history of African-American baseball and its impact on the social advancement of America. <https://www.nlbm.com/>
- African American Heritage Trail of Kansas City - Created in collaboration with a variety of partners and historical institutions throughout the community, the African American Heritage Trail of Kansas City, MO offers a self-guided opportunity to visit relevant historical sites across the city. aathkc.org
- Black Archives: Hundreds of historic images as well as notable collections of civil rights activists, the Buffalo soldiers and more are available online through the Black Archives digital gallery. blackarchives.org
- Quindaro: Located on the Missouri River, Quindaro began as a boomtown and evolved into a stop on the Underground Railroad. Artifacts are on display at the Wyandotte County Museum. wycokck.org
- KC Defender: Black nonprofit community media platform that reports important local stories. <https://kansascitydefender.com/>



City Contacts



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WINTER WEATHER

Reminders

Ways YOU can assist road crews!



Parking vehicles off the street if possible. This helps remove as much snow as possible from the roadway and minimizes the number of passes.



If off-street parking is not possible, please do not park vehicles across from one another. This limits the space available for trucks to get through. In addition, park as close to the curb as possible and fold in exterior mirrors.



Keep a safe following distance, a minimum of 200 feet behind snow plow trucks. If motorists can't see the truck mirrors, they can't see you!



When clearing snow from residential driveways, shovel snow to the downward side (right side) and not into the street. This will minimize the amount of snow pushed back in front of driveways. Please do not block driveways with vehicles so crews can remove all snow from the street.



Place trash bins at the end of the driveway and not in the street.



If you must travel, please use caution and have an emergency kit in your vehicle.



Property owners must clear all snow and ice from sidewalks adjacent to their property within 48 hours after the end of a snow or ice event.

