

MESSAGE

November 2025



Thank you Hiawatha Homes Team Members, Christy, Darlene, and Keith for helping us recognize our 2025 Good Neighbor award winners! This year we were honored to present **Carol Fitzgerald** with the Good Neighbor Award in recognition of her exceptional dedication to Hiawatha Homes. Through her unwavering service, advocacy, and generous spirit, Carol has touched the lives of many people. Her service has come in countless forms, each one a testament to her selflessness and enduring commitment to our mission. We can always count on Carol when it comes to advocacy efforts and recognizing our team members.



Carol has participated in numerous local legislative forums, visits with our legislators, and has written many letters to members of congress. Carol is quick to volunteer for several staff appreciation events including HH Spirit Week and National DSP week. Her gifts of time, talent, and financial contributions have made a lasting impact on Hiawatha Homes.

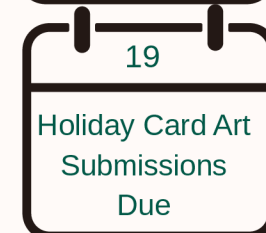
We were also honored to present Our Saviors Lutheran Church **Sing Along Group**: Al Pickett, Bruce Rohde, Ed Heckman, and Pat Basil with the Good Neighbor Award for sharing their time, talents, music, and joy with others in our community and at Hiawatha Homes. We would also like to recognize and thank Doreen Markus who works to keep this popular music group organized and on schedule. The Sing Along Group started visiting Hiawatha Homes in the summer of 2025 and since then, they have been bringing music and smiles to many people we support.

Hiawatha Homes Festival of Trees is coming soon!

Please visit our HH website to learn more about our 40th Festival of Trees, a celebration of giving! Thanks to a generous donor, we have TWO Gala Tickets to give away. We will be drawing the name of one HH TEAM MEMBER's who will then be able to bring one guest to attend our November 25th GALA. Please register here:

<https://forms.office.com/r/u3uUQA4VhY>

Cindy S. Ostrowski
Cindy Ostrowski, CEO



You Don't Need a Title to Be a Leader

HR Corner with Chris Nelson, HR Director



As November brings us a season of gratitude and reflection, I find myself thinking about what leadership truly means at **Hiawatha Homes**. I spoke to a DSP recently at a house and she said that she was trying to work hard at the tasks to get promoted. I shared with her that what we look for is **Leadership**. Leadership isn't defined by hard work, job titles, or hierarchy; it's defined by integrity, being trustworthy, authenticity, taking initiative, and the courage to do what's right. Being on time, respectful, working together and completing tasks are expecting, but there is more. I want to share a parable, a teaching story, that captures this idea.

A retiring President of a company gathered their leadership team together for a special meeting and gave each person a small pot with soil and a seed. "Plant it, care for it, and bring back what grows in a year," the CEO said. Throughout the year one woman was anxious and worried when her plant failed to grow. Her and her husband tried different fertilizers, more and less sunlight and water, but nothing worked; the plant never grew. The day came when she had to bring the plant in for judging.

The room was filled with vibrant plants, beautiful flowers, lush green leaves, all except one, hers. Hers was a pot of empty soil. She was embarrassed but honest, explaining that no matter how hard she tried, her seed never sprouted. The President walked around the room and stopped in front of her pot and stopped, smiled, and announced: "You don't know this, but the seeds I gave you were boiled, they couldn't grow. Every one of you replaced your seeds to make them grow. Looking at the woman he said, "You were the only one with the courage to bring back the truth. Congratulations, you're my successor."

This story reminds us that true leadership isn't measured by position or recognition. It's revealed through the choices we make every day. At Hiawatha Homes, each of you leads in your own way:

- When you show patience in a challenging moment.
- When you bring calm to chaos.
- When you speak up for what's right.
- When you treat the individuals we support with respect, compassion, and dignity.

Those moments, often unseen, are where real leadership grows.

Integrity means doing the right thing, even when it's difficult or unnoticed. It means being honest, transparent, and accountable. Authenticity means showing up as your genuine self; caring, empathetic, and real. Together, these qualities build the foundation of trust that defines Hiawatha Homes, trust between coworkers, families, and the individuals we support. It's not just about providing caring or providing support; it's about building connection, respect, and belonging. Remember, "Integrity is doing the right thing, even when no one is watching." as said by C.S. Lewis.

You don't need a title to be a leader here. Leadership begins with a choice; to act with integrity, to care deeply, and to stay true to what's right. As we enter this month of gratitude, I want to thank you, not only for what you do, but for **who you are**.

Every act of honesty, kindness, and compassion you show plants a seed that helps Hiawatha Homes grow stronger and more connected, for the individuals we support, their families and guardians, your house, and for one another.

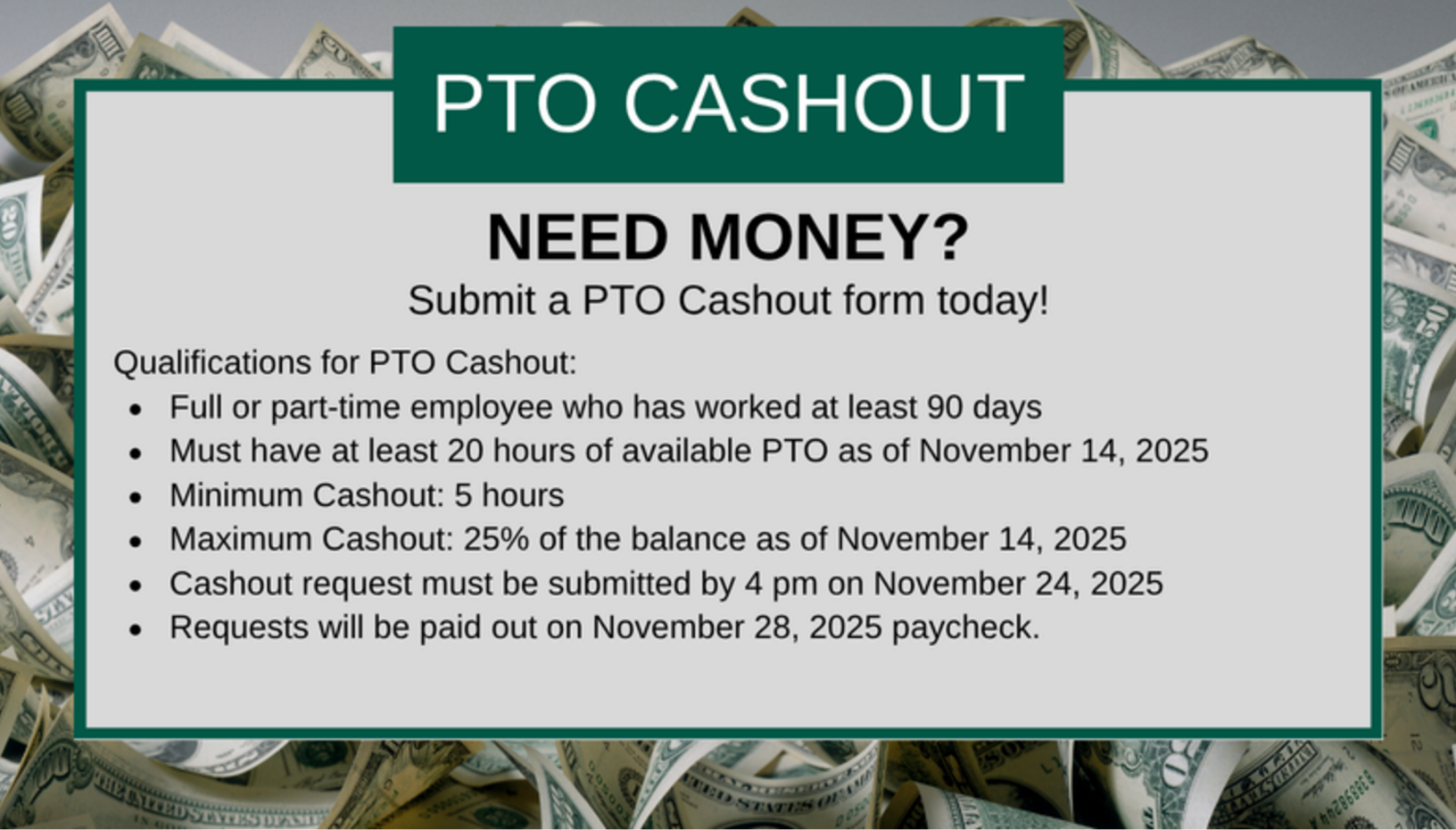


ATTEND FESTIVAL OF TREES GALA

Please visit our HH website to learn more about our 40th Festival of Trees, a celebration of giving! Thanks to a generous donor, we have TWO Gala Tickets to give away. We will be drawing the name of one HH TEAM MEMBER's who will then be able to bring one guest to attend our November 25th GALA!

All entries due by noon on Thursday, Nov. 13!

<https://forms.office.com/r/u3uUQA4VhY>



PTO CASHOUT

NEED MONEY?

Submit a PTO Cashout form today!

Qualifications for PTO Cashout:

- Full or part-time employee who has worked at least 90 days
- Must have at least 20 hours of available PTO as of November 14, 2025
- Minimum Cashout: 5 hours
- Maximum Cashout: 25% of the balance as of November 14, 2025
- Cashout request must be submitted by 4 pm on November 24, 2025
- Requests will be paid out on November 28, 2025 paycheck.

NOVEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

Chad Skaran - 21 years
Chung Meng - 13 years
Nadifo Mohuamed - 7 years
Edward Stites - 5 years
Hibo Abdullahi - 5 years
Abdullahi Abdullahi - 5 years
Michelle Schultz - 3 years

Antoineisha Beck - 2 years
Nyinbell Benjamin - 2 years
Gina Towle - 2 years
Yassin Shoble - 2 years
Curtis Mitchell - 1 year
Josephine Lentz - 1 year
Mason Anderson - 1 year

New Team Members

Welcome to Hiawatha Homes!

Warsame Elmi
Angar Malith
Orion Mayr-Grebe
Kylee Sue
Emilie Herme
Foizia Muhamed
Azia Pomsyda
Christine Helmick
Suheb Maow
Abdul Hilowle



HIAWATHA HEROES

November 2025

Mari Beth Ahart
Payroll Specialist



Mari Beth may work behind the scenes in the business office, but she is always willing to help where she can, even if it falls outside of her regular job duties. She has been such a huge help while HR was short staffed. She stepped up to take on the benefits so others didn't become overwhelmed, and she did it with her usual can do attitude. Mari Beth has always been helpful with consistently getting overdue annual evaluation reminders out, ensuring all staff can be recognized and appreciated for their hard work. She's a great resource to bounce ideas off and is always open to trying new things to make our work more efficient. Her willingness to step up and support others whenever needed makes her a Hiawatha Hero!

Did you know?

NOMINATIONS

Nominate a Hiawatha Hero by visiting
hiawathahomes.org/employee-login

REFER A FRIEND

Refer an Employee by visiting
hiawathahomes.org/employee-login

FESTIVAL OF TREES

Benefiting Hiawatha Homes Foundation



The Kahler Grand Hotel

Opening Night Gala: November 25

General Admission: November 28 - 30

Free Will Donation Encouraged during Open Viewing Times.

November 28

Open Viewing

10 am - 7 pm

November 29

Open Viewing

10 am - 6 pm

November 30

Open Viewing

10 am - 2 pm

November 25 | Opening Night Gala | 5:30 pm - 9 pm

Special Ticket Required (\$150)

November 28 | Friday Night Dance | 7 pm - 9 pm

November 29 | DiverseAbility Day | 10 am - 2 pm

November 29 | Festival After Dark (21+) | 7 pm - 9 pm

Special Ticket Required (\$10)

November 30 | Sensory Friendly Hour | 10 am - 11 am

FESTIVAL OF TREES

Benefiting Hiawatha Homes Foundation



Festival After Dark

Saturday, November 29 | 7 pm - 9 pm

All employees are invited to attend Festival After Dark (21+)

Please note: The Kahler will be checking I.D.s

A generous donor has covered the cost for you to attend.

To register please go here:

<https://forms.office.com/r/0Jg4eZ7Ajk>