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## Aitkin County Habitat for Humanity making dreams come true for a family



Kara Anderson, center, with children Adriana, left, and Damon, right. Photo submitted by Kara Anderson

Kara Anderson, 30, started over from scratch with her two children when she moved to Aitkin in 2016. Leaving behind her children's father and her military career, Kara made the move from Texas to Aitkin. She was just selected as the homeowner for the Aitkin County Habitat for Humanity 2020 home build.

Her daughter, Adriana, 6, is a student at Rippleside and son Damon, 3, attends day-care. They are a close family unit. Kathy Robb, Kara's mom and a graphic designer for the Aitkin Independent Age, will be her mentor in this process.

If all goes as planned (the COVID-19 virus notwith-

standing) the new home will be built at 218 Minnesota Avenue South in Aitkin this year, with the family moving in sometime around Thanksgiving 2020. Anderson was thrilled when she heard that she was selected from four finalists based on her housing need, willingness to partner and ability to pay the mortgage and other housing costs.

"Getting my own house is a dream come true," enthused Anderson. "When I knew I was moving back to Minnesota and starting over, I knew I wanted a safe, stable home for my children for their growing up years. I set a goal to own a home in five years, and thanks to Habitat

for Humanity, my dream is coming true a year early."

Born in Olmsted County in Rochester MN, Anderson was raised by her mom. She graduated from Zumbrota-Mazeppa high school with honors. Her favorite subjects were art and English.

After high school, she joined the military to pay for college and served in the Army National Guard in the 35F military intelligence unit. She served in Minnesota and Texas, but was not deployed overseas.

After that, she was a correctional officer, then a 911 dispatcher. When her children's father returned from Afghanistan, he had trouble adjusting and so she left Texas and moved to Minnesota. Her mom, Kathy, by then lived in Aitkin and her Grandpa Patrick Condon is from Crosby.

She came back with her daughter in tow and pregnant with her son, got a job at Cuyuna Regional Medical Center, and after, living with her mom for a few months, she moved into her own apartment. Her glowing recommendation from her landlord was one of the reasons the Family Se-

lection Committee was sure that Anderson will make an outstanding homeowner and neighbor in Aitkin.

Now a three-year employee at CRMC, she is an admitting department team lead. They are the first impression for patients who come in and they verify demographics, insurance coverage and appointments. "I really like my current job. It's a really good place to work and a really great department - we have a really good manager," observed Anderson. She also got an outstanding recommendation from her

manager.

Robb, her mom, has been a graphic artist since she was in high school and worked for a family business. "She is a single mom of three children and the strongest women I know," said Anderson.

Anderson's younger brother Mark lives in Aitkin and is a cook at Heartwood. Her younger sister, Katelyn Steffes, is a certified nursing assistant who works at Aicota and hopes to attend nursing school. Having family in the local area is a plus for single parents, as they work on building a home.

Anderson and her children love to read, go to the library, garden, mow the lawn, fish and hike. They love arts and crafts and painting.

Anderson knows the struggle of starting over and that, with perseverance and hard work, she will have a great future for her family.

Aitkin County Habitat for Humanity needs donations of money, materials and labor for the home. If you can help in any way, please call 218-927-5656 Monday-Thursday from 8-1 or email [annschwartz@habitat-forhumanityaitkincounty.org](mailto:annschwartz@habitat-forhumanityaitkincounty.org).

## Governor Walz announces 50% forgivable loans for small business

Governor Tim Walz has announced a 50% forgivable loan program for small businesses.

Following Executive Order 20-15, DEED has established a loan program to assist small businesses directly and adversely affected and whose industry is named in Executive Orders 20-04 and 20-08 following the COVID-19 pandemic. Small businesses are a vital part of Minnesota's

economy and this program will provide a source of working capital to help businesses sustain operations during this challenging time.

If you are a small business owner more information is at [tinyurl.com/ulaadqg](http://tinyurl.com/ulaadqg).

Businesses should apply directly through a certified lender. A list of lenders and application materials are available in the tabs on the site.

For businesses in Cass,

Crow Wing and Wadena contact North Central Economic Development Association, [sbarney@regionfive.org](mailto:sbarney@regionfive.org), 218-894-3233.

For businesses in Aitkin, Carlton and Itasca contact Northland Foundation, [alex@northlandfdn.org](mailto:alex@northlandfdn.org), 218-723-4040.

The program is still being developed and loans will be available soon. Nonprofits are not eligible for this program.

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# READER RIBBETS

## Extended the chaos

Crosby has been served the second of many potential lawsuits. The two wrongful termination lawsuits, eight failed attempts to criminally prosecute two former Mayors were about protecting jobs, not residents, they used taxpayer's dollars to do so. The city administrator and former police chief are not able to control, suppress, or stop the information from reaching the public, so they threaten First Amendment rights as a personal issue of defamation. There is proof they colluded to willingly, maliciously, break data privacy laws and libel the city. The letters have never been personal; they're about accountability of actions, exposing why the city failed, ending negligence

and incompetency. There's an agreement in values with the former police chief, cities with bad cops, who lie, distort the truth, violate the public trust, are threatening or damaging to the resident's safety and resources should be terminated. They should be pursued and held accountable, another purpose of letters to the editor. Interestingly, the city invokes gag orders with the threat of immediate termination to keep employees from speaking. Multiple city employees have disclosed a hostile workplace environment, multiple city departments have filed grievances, sewer district members were forced to spend \$120,000 in reserve funds, the city lost thousands of dollars by

placing an officer on paid administrative leave and the levy was raised a whopping 2.9% when the city had a surplus. The current council and mayor have shown they don't care about the victimization of resident's, employees, sewer district members or anyone else. As another letter writer pointed out, they extended the chaos three years, making the solution someone else's problem. **Kelly Avelsgard, Deerwood Concerned Observer**

## Disclaimer

The views expressed in this publication's Reader Ribbets and/or guest column by the "concerned observer" who has the same last name as we do, are in no way a reflection of our opinions.. **Jeff and Cheryl Avelsgard Deerwood Township**

## Loyalty and separation of duties

Crosby, we reward loyalty. For example, our mayor and his cohort council members rewarded our city administrator with a generous three year contract extension. This, even after she actively sought employment elsewhere. She applied for positions in at least two different towns, the most recent a few short months ago. We are then left to wonder, if she is continuing to explore options elsewhere, what's her loyalty to us? Her loyalty has been displayed towards our mayor, select city employees and even to a few newer hand-picked business owners, but there hasn't been much shown to anyone else. This new contract, once again, was simply protection against the possible retaliatory actions of a new mayor and a unified council being elected. Her credentials are that of a tremendous city clerk/treasurer.

That has been proven. But this mayor and followers rewarding her a position that she wasn't qualified for and carried just way too many additional responsibilities for one person has proven to be ineffective. Her friendships with city personnel have caused conflicts of interest and are continuing to be a distraction. Her over-seeing of city personnel has led to poor hiring choices. Her neglect of annual city responsibilities, including removing snow off our library's roof, caused untold hardships for both city employees and residents. The list of the city's mishaps, cover ups, abuses and embarrassments could go on and on, but what it really comes down to is that one person should not and realistically cannot hold multiple city titles or responsibilities. The taxpayers of Crosby are going to pay dearly for this experiment. But to put all the

blame on her isn't fair, as she takes orders from a biased dictator and his cohort council who constantly push his tourism based agendas over our resident's wishes. Along with voting out this opportunistic mayor and electing some free thinking council members, our towns residents need to consider that we once again hire a true city administrator and then restore [her] position as our cities clerk/treasurer. The council would need to oversee the separation of these duties. That would be a start towards some accountability and transparency, so that we could move Crosby forward and focus on solving the many other issues our city will be facing. **Chris Ryan, Crosby**

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**HELP WANTED CONT.**

Kimberly Township is looking for lawn maintenance to be performed at the Kimberly Township Garage and Cemetery by either an individual 18 or older with valid MN Drivers License or a landscaping contractor. Individuals have work history; contractors have costs to Kimberly Township 38227 Nature Ave., Aitkin, MN 56431 by 5:00 p.m. April 3, 2020. w11 -13

Kimberly Township is accepting quotes for a three year contract to provide class 5, road maintenance work, hourly equipment rates and snowplowing, must do all. Please have quotes to Kimberly Township 38227 Nature Ave., Aitkin, MN 56431 by 5:00 p.m. April 3, 2020. w11 -13

**HELP WANTED CONT.**

Glen-Kimberly Town hall is looking for quotes to mow the town hall lawn for the 2020 season. Please submit quotes to Anita Anderson, 33079 360th ST, Aitkin, MN 56431 by April 8, 2020. If a lawn service please include your insurance information. w12

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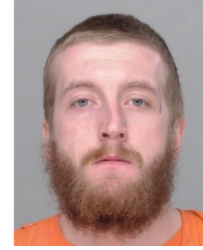
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## Level 3 predatory offender moves

Joshua Matthew McMillen will be moving into a residence located in the 30000 block of State Hwy. 6 in Perry Lake Township in rural Crosby on March 28. He has resided in the City of Brainerd since his release on Nov. 5, 2019 and is on supervised probation.

McMillen engaged in sexual contact with a known teenage



female. Crow Wing County Scott Sheriff Goddard wants to keep the public informed as to the known locations of predatory offenders, but also reminds the public that he cannot control where they choose to reside. There will not be a public hearing held due to current guidelines regarding social distancing and

attendance in groups.

"My highest priority is public safety and I want you to know that all predatory offenders in Crow Wing County are closely monitored by my office for compliance," Goddard stated in the release. "As always, we ask that the public report any suspicious activity immediately so we can investigate."

McMillen is white, 6'2" tall and weighs 173 pounds with blue eyes and sandy hair.

*askdrsmith.com featuring Dr. Murray Smith*

### Building the essentials

We are open. We are. Unfortunately, this has become a rare commodity with the increasing restrictions being asked of us as the coronavirus crisis continues. To help with making this uninterrupted care a possibility in our office, we have implemented a series of procedures to help in maximizing the cleanliness for each of our patient areas.

You can do this at home, as well. This week let's begin with a basic recommended line of defense: wash your hands and the surfaces around you.

The vast majority of experts recommend that a primary line of defense is to wash your

hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds. We are doing this after every patient encounter. We are also encouraging our patients do this on the way in, though many are already doing this on their own before we see them. During this time of frequent washing, using a soap that is less harsh can help in minimizing the discomfort.

We have had an increasing number of calls to help patients in their care via phone or Zoom from their home. In response, we now have unveiled a platform that allows you to schedule your appointment time. Go to [askdrsmith.com](http://askdrsmith.com) and click the "Book Ap-

pointment" tab. You'll see the calendar and available times. Follow the easy instructions and get started.

As a reminder, we also have made available our best nutrients through our online patient hub. Just text your name, email, and cell phone number and we will set you up and give you top recommendation to help you during this time and beyond. Your order is directly shipped to your home or desired location.



*Dr. Murray Smith DC, cAcu, CSCS, CCSP is a Board Certified Doctor of Chiropractic, Board Certified Acupuncturist, Clinical Nutritionist with a passion for helping people reclaim their health naturally and empowering them to keep it! He is the co-founder of SHIFT Integrative Medicine serving the Cuyuna Lakes and Brainerd Lakes areas of central Minnesota for over 25 years.*

*For more information, log on to [www.askdrsmith.com](http://www.askdrsmith.com), call or text 218-851-9626.*

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#### Ingredients for the hand soap

- 1/2 cup castile soap liquid
- 1/2 cup distilled water
- 15 drops tea tree essential oil
- 5-10 drops lavender essential oil (If desired)
- 1 Tbsp vitamin E oil
- 1 Tbsp sweet almond oil or olive oil or jojoba oil

#### Ingredients for the surface spray

- In an 8 ounces spray bottle combine
- 3/4 cup distilled water
- 1/4 cup white vinegar
- 7-8 drops tea tree essential oil
- 7-8 drops lavender essential oil

# We're all in this together.

These are unsettling times.

Like you, we're thankful for the professionals who work to keep communities safe and healthy during this COVID-19 crisis.

Our people live and work in communities like yours. We've taken steps to keep our employees healthy and safe—including alternative work arrangements to support social distancing.

Through these uncertain times, we know it's important we continue to deliver the affordable and reliable energy we all need to fuel our lives—with safety remaining our first priority.

Stay healthy. Stay safe. We're all in this together.

