

# “Bee” the change: Neighbors receive conservation award

Bikers, hikers and joggers may have noticed a glorious change in the landscape in one particular yard along the Pleasant Lake path. A few years ago, Chad Eslinger and his daughter Emmalee combined households with Michelle Fields and her daughter Brooklyn. They decided to make a difference to the many species of bees in our area by converting most of their yard to bee-friendly habitat, which includes dozens of different kinds of flowering plants, including bee balm, phlox, crown vetch and black-eyed Susans. Many of those plants can be seen from the trail.

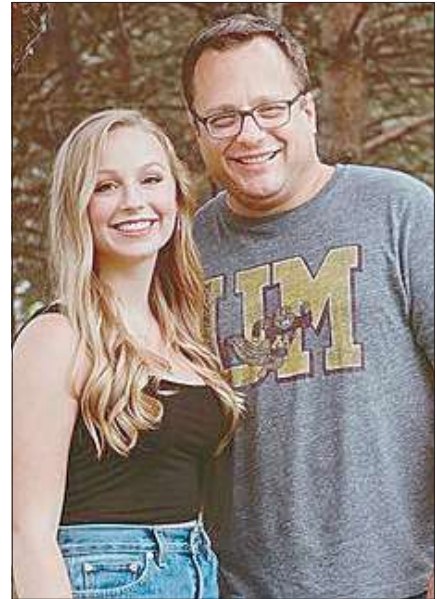
It all began with the realization that pesticides were harmful to pollinators. “My daughter Emmalee educated us about pesticides and their impacts on wildlife and human health. Knowing about the side effects of these chemicals was an eye-opener for us, and was information that we could not ignore,” said Chad.

So they dug in—reading, researching and eventually expanding the bee habitat on their 1.5-acre property to support honey bee, bumblebee and other native bee populations. They achieved this by increasing pollinator habitat coverage by over 1,000 square feet. They also rejuvenated and cleaned 250 square feet of existing bee habitat and started a two-week lawn mowing practice in the spring to allow for expansion of Dutch white clover and creeping thyme, which are bee lawn plants recommended by the University of Minnesota. Every corner of their yard is covered with pollinator-friendly plants.

Seventeen-year-old Emmalee has taken a particular interest in bees. She is using their pollinator habitat adventure as her senior high school project. She also started an Instagram page dedicated to bee education: @save.your.bees. She welcomes new followers to her page. “Pollinators, most often honeybees, are responsible for one in every three bites of food we take,” explained Emmalee. “If bees



Michelle and Brooklyn Fields.



Emmalee and Chad Eslinger.

and other pollinators are at risk, so are we.”

At the Sept. 10 meeting of the City Council, the Eslingers and Fields were approved for a North Oaks Conservation Award in the Pollinator Conservation category. Congratulations to the Eslinger and Fields families! Your efforts are bee-utiful!

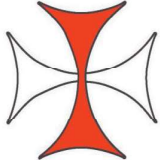
For more information about the North Oaks Conservation Award, please visit the City’s website.



— Kate Winsor, City of North Oaks  
Natural Resources Commission




Pollinator habitat abounds in the Eslinger yard.



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## CITY REMINDERS

### Go slow at West Rec

The crosswalks at West Rec between the facility and the soccer fields/playground are there for a reason: if you are driving on this stretch of West Pleasant Lake Road, please assume children will be present and drive accordingly: slow down, be alert, and check for little ones darting across the road. There have been too many heart-gripping close calls lately, and too many drivers speeding on this section. Please drive responsibility within our community.

### Parking sense

Parking of vehicles and delivery or maintenance trucks should be on one side of the road, not on both. If you’ve hired contractors to work on your house or lawn, please make sure their vehicles are not violating this rule.

### Census takers in the community

North Oaks’ current Census response rate is an impressive at 87%. But that means 13% of our community is not

being counted. If you have not yet completed the census, do so online at [my2020census.gov](http://my2020census.gov).

Census takers also may be in the area. Census takers will wear masks and follow local public health guidelines when they visit your home. All census takers complete a virtual COVID-19 training on social distancing and other health and safety protocols before beginning their work in neighborhoods.

Census takers are hired from your area, and their goal is to help you and everyone in your home be counted in the 2020 Census. If the census taker who visits your home does not speak your language, you may request a return visit from a census taker who does speak your language.

Census takers work between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m., including weekends. If no one is home when the census taker visits, the census taker will leave a notice of their visit with information about how to respond online, by phone, or by mail. If you respond online or by phone today, a census taker is less likely to have to visit your home to collect your response.

