



SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 2021

Prior Lake American

BREAKING NEWS ONLINE AT WWW.PLAMERICAN.COM

COVID IMPACT

Asha Nouwen, head teacher at New Horizon Academy located on Windermere Way in Shakopee, plays with Grace Pearson, left, and Skylar Putnam.

PHOTO BY JACQUELINE DEVINE



Rollercoaster for child care

Local centers take hit from pandemic

BY JACQUELINE DEVINE
jdevine@swpub.com

Over the past year and a half, child care centers around the nation have suffered throughout the COVID-19 global pandemic. Child care providers are now speaking out on how it has negatively impacted their industry.

Since the pandemic began and schools moved to virtual learning, millions of parents have had to work from home. Fearing for the health and safety of their children, many parents have opted out of child care services which in turn has led to labor shortages.

New Horizon Academy CEO and Minnesota Child Care Association

President Chad Dunkley said there are currently 72 New Horizon Academies throughout the state. He said the last year and a half has been a rollercoaster for all child care providers across the country. Minnesota was no exception.

“Back at the last end of March of last year, New Horizon Academy was serving over 10,000 Minnesota children, and in a matter of weeks we went to serving about 2,200. We were really struggling with what do we do now,” said Dunkley. “Pre-pandemic we had over 3,100 teachers here in Minnesota and at one point we had about 1,000. We’ve continued to hire and more families have returned. Today, we sit a little over 2,100 teachers here.”

Dunkley said he understands that child care is a critical piece of infra-

COVID impact

This story is part of an ongoing series by Southwest News Media, reporting how COVID-19 has impacted our community.

structure for those families that don’t have the luxury of staying home and knows the importance of staying open for them.

“Minnesota was one of the first states in the country that did a significant public policy push to ask Minnesota legislators to come up with a grant program because we didn’t

Child care to 11 ➤



PHOTO BY JACQUELINE DEVINE

Prior Lake City Hall.

City council to consider increasing franchise fees for road improvements

BY JACQUELINE DEVINE
jdevine@swpub.com

The City of Prior Lake will be evaluating a proposal during a public hearing at the Sept. 7 city council meeting to adjust current city franchise fees from \$1.50 to \$5 — a \$3.50 increase for both gas and electric bills which comes to \$7 a month — or \$84 a year.

The revenue generated from these fees would be placed in a dedicated fund and used solely for expenditures related to the maintenance of city streets.

If approved, the franchise fee adjustment would be reflected in gas and electric bills beginning in January 2022.

Fees to 3 ➤

INDEX

- OPINION.....6
- OBITUARIES.....8
- SPORTS.....9
- CLASSIFIEDS.....13

HOW TO REACH US

SUBSCRIBE: 952-445-3333
EDITOR: 952-345-6376 OR
EDITOR@PLAMERICAN.COM
ONLINE: PLAMERICAN.COM

SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS

FACEBOOK.COM/
PRIORLAKEAMERICAN

TWITTER.COM/
PLAMERICAN

VOLUME 61, ISSUE 49
 newsmedia

© 2021 MEDIANEWS GROUP



ENHANCED ASSISTED LIVING/MEMORY CARE
“A HOME FOR YOUR LOVED ONES TO THRIVE”

\$2000 OFF FIRST MONTH



RIVERS OF LIFE
MEMORY CARE / ENHANCED ASSISTED LIVING

6700 Egan Drive, Savage, MN 55378
Main Line: 952-855-8665
Sue: 952-380-8698
www.riversoflifemn.com