

Lee's Summit CARES article

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The Definition of Family Extends Beyond Relatives to the Community

The word "family" varies in meaning. According to Webster's dictionary "family" is defined as persons of common ancestry; a group living together; parents and children; and a group of related individuals. This definition, for some of us, is the more recognizable description of a family unit made up of parents, siblings, children and other relatives.

An individual's family may extend beyond ancestral boundaries to places of employment or memberships in organizations. An organizational culture promoting togetherness, feelings of belonging, displays of thoughtfulness and mutual respect and other emotional characteristics help to create a family atmosphere beyond a person's immediate family.

In Lee's Summit, family is important and the definition is broad, including and extending beyond our relatives. Just look around! Examples of families are abundant throughout our community.

- Family is present throughout our neighborhoods, where parents play with children and neighbors help neighbors.
- Family is seen in the individuals strolling together through our historic downtown, shopping in other parts of the City and enjoying laughter-filled conversations in our mom-and-pop eateries and restaurants.
- Family is seen in the faces of youth and adults gathered to listen to the music of the free summer concert series on the City Hall Plaza presented by our Parks and Recreation Department.
- Family is ever present in Lee's Summit, especially when we work together accomplishing great outcomes to benefit our community today and in the future. The hundreds of community stakeholder involved with the creation and implementation of the strategies and goals of Lee's Summit 360°: Charting Tomorrow is an example. The

committee involved with the planning of the City's annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration as well as the countless individuals involved with the various boards, commissions, task forces and special events in our community are even more examples of family units.

Throughout Lee's Summit, there are families - families of relatives, families of friends, families of co-workers and families of organizations. However you define "family," one thing is for certain, a family is an important aspect of a person's life.

Enjoy your families!

Melissa Fears

Lee's Summit CARES Community of Character

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