



**Vicki Gerdes / Tribune**  
The Detroit Lakes Middle School commons was packed with students and parents — some masked, many not — for a back-to-school open house on Wednesday. For more on information presented at the open house, including staggered schools starts, see Page 2.

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# No masks, no social distancing

**By Marie Johnson**  
Detroit Lakes Tribune

Public schools in Detroit Lakes are taking a sharp turn back toward normalcy this school year, pulling away from many of the precautionary measures put in place over the past 18 months of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Unlike last school year, facemasks will not be required for students or staff inside school buildings, there'll be no mandated quarantining for COVID-19

Detroit Lakes schools pivot on pandemic restrictions

close contacts, and social distancing will not be required during the school day or at school activities, including sports.

As laid out in the school district's recently-released Return to School Plan, families are expected to screen for symptoms of the illness at home, stay home from school when feeling sick, and report any symptoms to the district nurse.

There will also be no district-provided distance learning option for elementary or middle school students who are sick with the virus or close contacts who choose to self-quarantine at home; those days will now be treated as any other sick days. For high school students, some flexible remote learning options are available through the school's new Laker Online virtual high school.

Masks will still be required on school busses, as per federal mandate, and schools will continue to be cleaned and sanitized at a level that supports the mitigation of COVID-19. School HVAC systems will continue to operate at maximum capacity to ensure high air quality.

The Return to School

Plan forgoes many of the recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Minnesota Department of Health, which continue to endorse indoor masking, close contact quarantining and social distancing in schools.

Superintendent Mark Jensen said the plan reflects the cessation of state requirements on local schools, along with a strong

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# Roosevelt Elementary achieves Minnesota School of Excellence status

**Tribune Staff Report**

Roosevelt Elementary School in Detroit Lakes has been named a 2021-2022 Minnesota School of Excellence.

The recognition was announced by the Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association in a Sept. 1 press

release. Roosevelt is one of only three schools in the state to receive the honor.

The release states that schools are recognized for their "commitment to modern teaching and learning," and notes Roosevelt's recent work to establish a trauma-informed approach to education — one designed to provide a safe, caring, healthy and compassionate environment for the school community.

"The staff at Roosevelt work diligently every year to build relationships and a true sense of belonging with our students — they know how powerful a supportive and understanding school environment can be," says Roosevelt Principal Trisha Mariotti in the press release.

"As part of the School of Excellence process, we began conversations around how we could identify bias and adjust accordingly to

provide better support for our student population. Training and discussions around equity, diversity and cultural competency will be a priority (into the future)."

To be endorsed as a Minnesota School of

**ROOSEVELT:** Page A6



**Nathan Bowe / Tribune**  
Rick and Char Brekken live in the Long Lake area, where they captured several bald-headed hornets.

# Couple sounds alarm on bald-headed hornets

**By Nathan Bowe**  
Detroit Lakes Tribune

A Detroit Lakes couple is concerned about bald-faced hornets in their Brainerd Boulevard neighborhood near Long Lake.

Rick and Char Brekken are worried about the hornets because they have a reputation for fiercely protecting their hives.

"People should know we've had several of them flying around. We

captured two of them, but we have no idea where the nest is," Rick said. "They can sting you multiple times. There's no barb on their stinger — they can sting you again and again."

One of the captured hornets chewed its way out through a large plastic freezer bag, he noted.

They notified the city, but were told the city doesn't take action on wasps and hornets.

"We thought we should

make people aware that they're in there and they're very aggressive," Char said.

The bald-faced hornet is a large, black and white, social wasp found throughout the United States and southern Canada, but is most common in the Southeastern United States.

These wasps chew wood and mix it with starches in their saliva to make the nest — usually in trees and shrubs at

least three or four feet off the ground. Often the hives are quite a bit higher, to the point they pose little problem for people, according to the Missouri Department of Conservation website.

Late-summer nests may house several hundred wasps, and aggressive nest defense makes them a stinging threat.

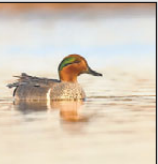
They like nectar and tree sap, but feed mostly

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# 'I feel like I'm expendable'

**Vet wants home health workers vaccinated**

**By Nathan Bowe**  
Detroit Lakes Tribune

Should home health care workers be vaccinated against COVID-19? Vietnam veteran Glenn Zettervall thinks so.

In fact, he feels so strongly about it that he parted ways with two home health care workers from two different organizations in the space of a few months — one that he had known and liked for

over a decade.

Zettervall, who lives about a mile east of Toad Lake in Becker County, said the most painful loss was the Essentia Health worker who had been working with him at his home for some 13 years, since 2007.

"I give Essentia high marks, especially the supervisors, I've worked with them for years now. The people running Essentia do a good job," he said in an interview. "But I lost a nurse I'd had for a long time."

He assumed that as a health care worker, she'd be vaccinated, but

found out in casual conversation that she was not, and did not plan to get, vaccinated against COVID-19, he said.

Zettervall grew up in New Hope and quit high school to join the Marine Corps in 1967. He spent 13 months fighting in Vietnam. "All the services spent a year there, but the Marines spent 13 months, because the Marines always go one step further," he said with a wry smile.

He had heart attacks at age 39 and 57, has had pneumonia three

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HAPPENINGS

The Detroit Lakes Tribune accepts community calendar items, for publication online and in our Wednesday and Sunday print editions, space permitting.

Submissions must be made at least a week in advance of the event date, in writing, to either [dltribune@dlnewspapers.com](mailto:dltribune@dlnewspapers.com) or [vgordes@dlnewspapers.com](mailto:vgordes@dlnewspapers.com).

Each submission must include the following: Date, time and location of event, whether it is recurring or a one-time happening, and where to go for more information (phone, email and/or website). Also include whether the event is free or paid admission, and how much it costs when applicable.

Saturday, Sept. 4

**Snellman Days:** The tiny community of Snellman will hold its annual Labor Day weekend festival from 7:30 a.m. to approximately 4 p.m. Events include

breakfast at Gethsemane Lutheran Church from 7:30 to 11 a.m.; yard games throughout the day, including a bean bag toss, lawn bowling, Jenga and yard Yahtzee; Bingo (100% payback) at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.; DJ music and karaoke, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.; hot dog eating contest, 12:30 p.m.; and the Mayoral "Election" Drawing, 2 p.m., followed by raffle prize drawings. There will also be a flea market, rummage sale and bake sale throughout the day, the St. John's Lutheran Church Lunch Wagon (turkey, brats, mashed potatoes and gravy, baked beans) as well as root beer floats and popcorn for sale. Door prize drawings will also be held throughout the day; must be present to win. Snellman is located 20 miles east of Detroit Lakes on Highway 34.

Sunday, Sept. 5

**Pancake breakfast:** The Holy Rosary Knights of Columbus will be sponsoring a pancake, French toast and sausage

breakfast from 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the Holy Rosary Parish Center, 1043 Lake Ave., Detroit Lakes.

Wednesday, Sept. 8

**Expert Application Class:** Your first step to an interview and job offer is successfully completing a job application. Learn how to fill out paper or online applications and answer tough questions and get an overview of what can be asked or not asked on an application in this 11 a.m. class at the Detroit Lakes Public Library. Call 218-847-2168 for more information.

**Cruise DL Night:** Come down to West Lake Drive along the Detroit Lakes City Beach between 4 and 8:30 p.m. to see a wide array of vintage vehicles, which will be parked along both sides of the street for viewing. No registration fee; all classic cars are welcome. Visit [facebook.com/cruisedlnight](https://facebook.com/cruisedlnight) for more information. This is the last Cruise DL Night of the summer.

**Library Knitting Group:** Knitters of all experience levels are invited to join this group at the Detroit Lakes Public Library from 4 to 5:30 p.m. Bring new and ongoing projects and share experience and inspiration with fellow knitters. We will be meeting in the main meeting room of the library. Call 218-847-2168 for more information.

Friday, Sept. 10

**Square Dancing:** The Park Rapids Friendly Squares will host a dance at the Century School in Park Rapids from 7:30 pm to 9:30 p.m. The caller will be Phil Miller. Spectators are welcome. For more information contact Karen at 218-732-3853.

**Dick Beardsley Race Pasta Feed:** Brygge Taps & Tastes of Detroit Lakes will host a pasta feed for participants, families and community members in honor of the 25th Annual Dick Beardsley Races starting at 6 p.m. in Kent Freeman Arena. Dick Beardsley will be giving a special presentation during

the event as well. Saturday's race participants can register (if the event isn't sold out) and pick up their packets at the arena between 4-8 p.m. Visit [dickbeardsleyraces.com](https://dickbeardsleyraces.com) for more information.

**Toast to Tamarac:** The Friends of Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge will be hosting their 10th annual Toast to Tamarac benefit from 4 to 8 p.m. at Richwood Winery. Tickets are \$35 in advance, \$40 at the door; for each ticket you will receive a commemorative glass, complimentary beverage of wine, beer or mixed drink and enjoy food, live music, games, and an amazing silent auction. Proceeds will be used by the Friends of Tamarac NWR to provide environmental education programs to over 750 local school children each year. This includes backpacks, journals, and many different types of outdoor tools needed to teach children about nature and the value of taking care of our environment. Tickets can

be purchased online at [tamaracfriends.org/toast-to-tamarac](https://tamaracfriends.org/toast-to-tamarac), in person at Central Market, Lakeside Tavern or Richwood Winery, or by calling 218-846-9815 or 847-7192.

**Vixen in Concert:** Mahnomen's Shooting Star Casino will host an 8 p.m. concert by Vixen, America's only all-female hard rock band. Tickets start at \$14; visit [starcasino.com](https://starcasino.com) or call 800-453-7827 for more information.

Saturday, Sept. 11

**Dick Beardsley Races:** The 25th Annual Dick Beardsley Races will take place from 6 a.m. to 12 p.m., with the half marathon and 2.5K races to start at 7:30 a.m., the 5K at 8 a.m., the 10K at 8:30 a.m. and the youth run at 11 a.m. All races begin and end at Kent Freeman Arena in Detroit Lakes. Visit [dickbeardsleyraces.com](https://dickbeardsleyraces.com) for registration information, course maps and more.

VACCINATED

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times, and his breathing is compromised, along with other combat-related medical issues. That's why he was getting home health services contracted through the Department of Veterans Affairs.

After he parted ways with the Essentia home health care worker, he decided to switch providers to Knute Nelson Home Care in Park Rapids. After receiving services for two or three months earlier this year, he found out that his new home health care worker was also not vaccinated against COVID-19.

"That was not a real amicable split," he said. But he figured that wouldn't be a big problem. "I complimented the service and asked for a vaccinated person," he said. "I was told 'we're not allowed to ask — we don't know who is vaccinated and who isn't. (Medical privacy laws) won't let us.'"

He said he was concerned and pushed for a home health care worker who was vaccinated. "They just discharged me," he said.

Zettervall, who said he does not currently have a home health care provider, was especially upset because his home health care services were contracted and paid for by Veterans Affairs, and all VA medical staff are now required to be vaccinated.

"The home health provider told me that may be the VA policy, but it's not mine," he said. "No one wants to talk about it, because it's infringing



Nathan Bowe / Tribune

Glenn Zettervall served in the Marine Corps for four years, including 13 months fighting in Vietnam. The Becker County resident has had trouble finding a home health care worker vaccinated against COVID-19.

on nurses' rights. Who's minding the store? I feel like I'm expendable."

Neither the VA or Optum (VA's community care third-party administrator) require network providers or vendors to be vaccinated, according to Ross Tweten, public affairs officer for the Fargo VA Health Care System.

With regard to VA's vaccine policies, he said that VA Secretary Denis McDonough made COVID-19 vaccines mandatory for Title 38 employees (which include physicians, dentists, podiatrists, optometrists, registered nurses, physician assistants, expanded-function dental auxiliaries and chiropractors), Title 38 hybrid employees, Title 5 employees, (which include program analysts, police officers, human resources specialists, and program support assistants) as well as volunteers, trainees, and contractors that serve as health care professionals in VA.

"Generally speaking, these groups include all

VA health care personnel who work in or visit Veterans Health Administration facilities and have the potential for direct or indirect exposure to patients or infectious materials," Tweten said in an email. "Only medical and religious exemptions are permitted. All VA employees are eligible to be vaccinated at no personal expense at any of our facilities."

Essentia Health now requires all its employees, including those in its home health department, to be vaccinated against COVID-19 as a condition of employment, according to Tara Ekren, media relations specialist at Essentia.

"The requirement also extends to non-employees who provide services within Essentia facilities, such as vendors, students, and others," she added.

Knute Nelson Home Care in Park Rapids doesn't require its employees to be vaccinated against COVID-19, said Samantha Beckman, vice president of mar-

keting at Knute Nelson, which serves a large area of western Minnesota.

"Currently, CMS (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services) does not mandate vaccines for home health providers, so we do not require vaccines with our home health providers," she said.

"It's really hard right now for everyone," she said. "We certainly don't want to put anyone at risk."

If the CMS changes its policy, "we would evaluate it at that time," she added.

On the other hand, Ethos Home Care and Hospice, which was established in part by the Knute Nelson organization, does now mandate

vaccines for its home care and hospice employees who serve patients and clients in Detroit Lakes, Fargo-Moorhead and Grand Forks.

"As COVID-19 cases spread throughout the United States and the communities we serve, we want to remain diligent in our efforts to protect our team and those served by Ethos," says Cassie Zielke, Administrator at Ethos Home Care and Hospice. "The vaccine, among an array of other safety precautions, gives us the best opportunity to do that."

Ethos staff members and volunteers will be required to receive their second dose of the vaccine by Oct. 1. All employees and volunteers are

eligible to be vaccinated at no personal expense.

Currently, 87% percent of Ethos employees have received the COVID-19 vaccine. Ethos says it is "proud of these employees for choosing to protect themselves and those around them."

Ethos was established in 2014 by Bethany Retirement Living of Fargo, Eventide Senior Living Communities of Moorhead, and Knute Nelson of Alexandria.

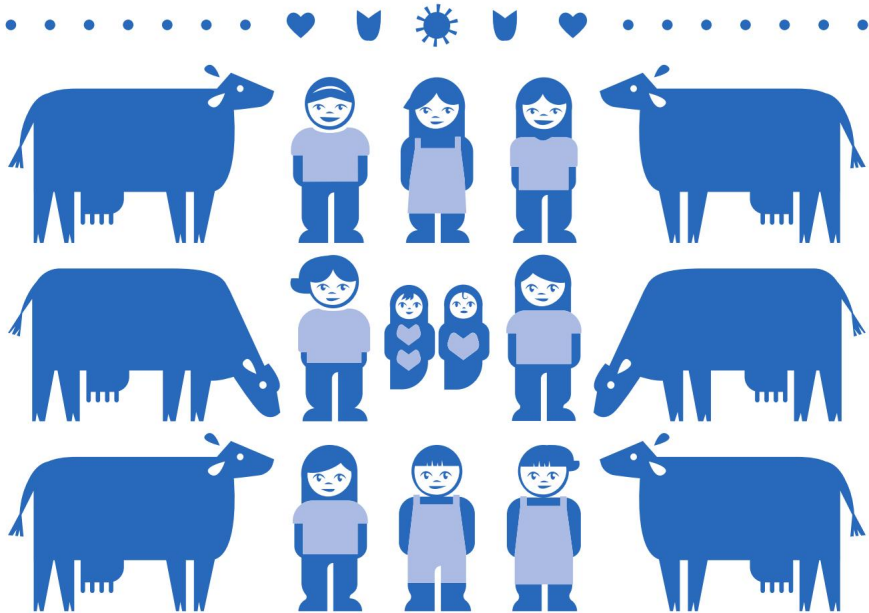
The American Medical Association, American Health Care Association, LeadingAge and many other groups have joined together to urge all health care employers to require employees to be vaccinated against COVID-19.



OPEN HOUSE!

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