



Stewards for the next generation

Foster Klima & Company makes move to Minnetonka

Foster Klima's CEO and General Agent Doug Flink takes great pride in his company's history. And no wonder. Tracing your business' roots back more than 150 years is a testament to the many generations at work writing its story.



Now, Foster Klima is marking the next chapter - in Minnetonka.

The financial services company recently relocated from downtown Minneapolis to the seventh floor of Crescent Ridge II at I-394 and Highway 169. While a significantly smaller footprint, the office accommodates the business' approximate 36 on-site core staff and much larger contingent of remote financial advisors and account executives.

"It's much more open space," Flink said of the modern, collaborative office areas. "It's almost joyous when you walk in [and see people working side by side]."

Foster Klima downsized from its 22,000-square-foot downtown offices, a reflection of the changing downtown Minneapolis landscape. Flink said the new office space is more accessible for the company's 32,000 clients - many of whom live in the western suburbs.

"The thing that changes being in Minnetonka is more availability for clients to come and see us," he said. "With Zoom and the way the world is changing, I think your location is important to provide a good place for culture to develop. Minnetonka is a good place for us to grow."

As an agency of Guardian Life Insurance Co. and Park Avenue Securities, Foster Klima provides financial planning, life insurance and investment planning for individuals and small businesses. The company also works with learning hospitals to help prepare medical students and residents financially in their careers - an area of the business Foster Klima hopes to grow in the coming years.

Flink, who purchased the company in 2001 and became sole owner in 2013, sees himself as a custodian of a company whose long legacy has a new home, here in Minnetonka.

"The ultimate goal is to provide better lives for the people we touch and the people we work with," he said. "I'm anxious to get it to the next generation."

New business council supports local business leaders

The City of Minnetonka is partnering with the Greater Wayzata Chamber of Commerce to help strengthen business and city ties with a new Minnetonka Business Council.

The council will meet four times a year to network and discuss issues relevant to the Minnetonka business community. The council also plans to tour local businesses in the innovation, medical tech and manufacturing sectors.

Watch for more information about the Minnetonka Business Council by signing up for business news and updates at minnetonkamn.gov/business.

BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT:

Rayito de Sol

SPANISH IMMERSION EARLY LEARNING CENTER



In 2022, Rayito de Sol expanded its early childhood Spanish immersion program to Minnetonka. Learn how the 100-percent Spanish immersion experience is focused on raising well-rounded leaders of tomorrow.

Q: Welcome to Minnetonka! Tell us a little about your business.

Rayito de Sol dates back to 2003, when entrepreneur, journalist and educator Luisa Fuentes founded the first early learning center with the goal of providing high-quality care and early education in an authentic cultural and language immersion environment. With three locations in the Twin Cities, including Minnetonka, and three more in Illinois, we serve families from all sorts of different communities for a truly inclusive and diverse learning experience.

Q: Why Spanish immersion?

The leaders of tomorrow will need to be bilingual to thrive in the workforce. When today's preschooler is in the workforce, it is estimated that nearly one in three Americans will speak Spanish as their primary language. Rayito's families are truly giving their little leader of tomorrow a significant head start today.

Q: What are the benefits of starting language immersion early?

More parents in Minnesota are choosing the language immersion option for their children because of its lifelong benefits. Research shows children who are exposed to another language early benefit by stronger attention spans, problem-solving skills, conflict resolution, creativity, empathy, cultural awareness and more. And the natural acquisition of another language occurs during the first years of life which is known as the "critical period."

Q: What makes Rayito de Sol unique?

Rayito de Sol is the oldest Spanish immersion early childhood program serving young children (infants through preschool) in the Midwest. We've had more than 7,000 children graduate from the program.

Our approach is authentic. All our teachers and staff are from one of the 21 countries that speak Spanish as a first language. This ensures authenticity in both language and culture. Aside from communication with parents, you won't hear English at Rayito.

Q: How do you incorporate cultural immersion into your learning?

Our children gain a deep appreciation for the rich culture and traditions of the 21 countries where Spanish is spoken. We do this through immersive experiences, such as celebrating Hispanic traditions, sharing traditional foods with families and engaging children in cultural activities such as reading folktales and participating in traditional games and dances. Culture goes beyond the decorations and wall colors. It's infused into the curriculum.

Q: What do you like about being located in Minnetonka?

We like the great community, lots of pride and spirit. We also like that Minnetonka offers the state's premier language immersion program, including Spanish. This brings cultural sensitivity to the community since we are all more aware of and show positive attitudes toward other cultures, which is a cornerstone of Rayito de Sol's mission.



Q: Where do you see the company in the next five years?

Rayito de Sol is currently positioned as the leader in Spanish immersion in early childhood education and by 2029 will be the largest program in the United States. We envision becoming the only program in the United States exchanging cultural experiences with early childhood programs from different Hispanic countries, as well as giving back to remote communities in Spanish-speaking countries.

Learn more

Rayito de Sol

3520 Williston Road,
Minnetonka

rayitoschools.com

952-314-5133

Accredited by the National
Association for the Education
of Young Children

Minnesota offers workforce training



The state of Minnesota Job Skills Partnership program offers grants to help train or retrain your workforce.

The program works with a broad range of businesses, educational institutions and nonprofit organizations to:

- train or retrain workers
- expand work opportunities
- keep high-quality jobs in the state

Your business may qualify for training grant programs that help offset training-related expenses. Learn more at mn.gov/deed/mjsp or contact the Minnesota Job Skills Partnership Office by email to deed.mjsp@state.mn.us.

Ensure fire hydrants are ready when you need them

Did you know property owners - including businesses - are responsible for annual maintenance and inspections of privately-owned fire hydrants?

It's a common assumption that the fire department maintains all hydrants, but the city is only responsible for those on public property.

We hope we'll never have to use the hydrants near your business. But if we do, they need to be in perfect working condition. Please ensure they're inspected and maintained in 2024; annual inspections must be completed between May 15 and July 15.

Visit minnetonkamn.gov/hydrants to learn more, view our hydrant locator map, download the inspection form and find a list of contractors that perform inspections and repairs.



SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES!

Discover ways you can support the Minnetonka community through the city's recreation programs, including the popular Entertainment in the Park series at:

minnetonkamn.gov/sponsor



PRESORTED
STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
CITY OF MINNETONKA

Winter 2024

A business publication from the City of Minnetonka to help businesses start, grow and thrive.

City Council

- Brad Wiersum
Mayor
- Deb Calvert
At-Large
- Kimberly Wilburn
At-Large
- Patsy Foster-Bolton
Ward 1
- Rebecca Schack
Ward 2
- Paula Ramaley
Ward 3
- Kissy Coakley
Ward 4

Economic Development Advisory Commission

- Melissa Johnston
- Ann Duginske Cibulka
- Irene Connors
- Maram Falk
- David Haeg
- Jay Hromatka
- Lee Jacobsohn
- Alisha Gray
Staff Liaison
- Deb Calvert
Council Liaison
- Kissy Coakley
Alternate Council Liaison

Contact us

- Alisha Gray, EDFP Economic Development and Housing Manager
agray@minnetonkamn.gov
952-939-8285
- Kendyl Larson Housing Coordinator
klarson@minnetonkamn.gov
952-939-8267
- Julie Wischnack, AICP Community Development Director
jwischnack@minnetonkamn.gov
952-939-8282
- Planning 952-939-8290
- Permits and Inspections 952-939-8394
- Environmental Health 952-939-8272
- Assessing 952-939-8220
- Engineering 952-939-8206



14600 Minnetonka Blvd.
Minnetonka, MN 55345
952-939-8200 | minnetonkamn.gov/business
bizsupport@minnetonkamn.gov

Join us for the 2024 State of the City at The Marsh

Program highlights the rich history and growing diversity of Minnetonka's business community

The Marsh wellness and fitness center will host Minnetonka's annual State of the City event on Friday, March 15. The midday event will once again feature food from local restaurants.

"It's been nearly a year since the city acquired The Marsh, and in that time, we have seen membership and services grow along with the addition of a café," said Minnetonka Mayor Brad Wiersum. "We also know many people have never set foot in the building, so this will be a great opportunity to visit our newest community asset."

This year's event will begin at 11:30 a.m. with the return of a popular reception highlighting a variety of food options from local Minnetonka restaurants and vendors. The program will follow at noon and feature leaders from a wide variety of Minnetonka businesses.

"Minnetonka is home to some of the world's largest companies, new technology startups and family-owned businesses that were here long before the city," Wiersum said.

The mayor will also take the audience on a video tour of the city highlighting major accomplishments across the community.

The event will be available via livestream for anyone unable to attend in person. Minnetonka's State of the City is free and open to the public.



2024 State of the City

Friday, March 15

11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

The Marsh

15000 Minnetonka Blvd.

Questions? Contact Sarissa Falk at sfalk@minnetonkamn.gov or 952-939-8211.