

Why are you running for office?

I love the City of Crystal Lake. When my husband and I moved to Crystal Lake in 2009, we chose the area because of the schools, the excellent facilities such as the library, Three Oaks and Main Beach. Most importantly, we love the people. The residents are welcoming, helpful, and kind. In 2015, I opened my business, Smith Physical Therapy and Running Academy, and chose Crystal Lake because of the Chamber of Commerce, the support from associations like the Downtown Crystal Lake Association, and the overall support of small businesses by the residents. The other businesses within this area are fun to partner with and supportive of the charity races we coordinate, such as the Santa Run, Patriot Run, Crystal Lake Aquathon, and Crystal Lake Half Marathon - all of which support some of the best charities in McHenry County. Through the hard work of the City staff, City Council, Park District, The Crystal Lake Public Library, school districts and the business community, Crystal Lake residents have come to enjoy a safe and high standard of living. I want to keep that positive momentum moving forward as a way to thank the City of Crystal Lake for all of the opportunities it has provided me. My greatest asset is my husband, Scott, who is supportive and encouraging, while pushing me to achieve my full potential.

What makes you qualified for the office you're seeking?

I live, play, and work in Crystal Lake. I am a small business owner with 15 employees and I am a mother of 2 children. Both offer tests of patience, great moments of joy, and exceptional listening skills. As a physical therapist, we are often "body detectives," having to search for causes of pain versus just managing symptoms. This skill has taught me to take a step back and discover that often the pain point is just the symptom, not the source of the problem. I am challenged to look at how the body is functioning as a whole and fix the system, not just address the symptom. Local government can be the same way: working together to fix the system is the most productive approach. In 2018, I graduated from Leadership of Greater McHenry County and now proudly serve on their board of trustees. LGMC has allowed me to work with different agencies and people, which has offered a front-row view to how things interplay within McHenry County at large and within my direct community of Crystal Lake. It intrigues me to figure out how different people can work together productively based on their unique qualities. I am empathetic and upbeat, adaptable and contemplative. New ideas fascinate me and I try to understand the present by researching its history.

What is your position on the Illinois weapons ban that took effect in January 2023?

I support our constitutional right to keep and bear arms. I think our community is lucky to have many local officials, such as Sheriff Robb Tadelman, who seek to protect the rights of McHenry County Citizens. I do believe in some reasonable gun control measures however this should be

debated and legislated at the federal and state level. As a result, I encourage all citizens to have collaborative dialogue with their federal and state representatives.

Is crime a problem in your community and, if so, what would you do to curb it?

Crime of any sort and in any location is a problem. We are blessed in the City of Crystal Lake to have a low crime rate and our brave police officers at the CLPD and McHenry County Sheriff's office deserve our gratitude and continued support to keep Crystal Lake a safe place to live. You can never eradicate all crime, which is why we need to be good neighbors and encourage programming that supports the expansion of youth and rehabilitative services in our area.

What is your assessment of how the COVID-19 pandemic was handled locally?

Hindsight is always 20/20. I believe our local leaders did the best they could to mitigate the ever-changing and conflicting mandates placed on us by the state and federal level during uncertain times. This was especially true in our schools. I am confident the local leadership had our best interests in mind. As we move forward, one of our top priorities should be to come together as parents and neighbors to help our children recover from the mental and emotional stress that the pandemic placed on them. At the city level, adjustments and opportunities were made to help businesses, especially our local restaurants, survive and the public did a great job in supporting their favorite businesses. We are lucky to have loyal residents who support the small businesses of the area. As a healthcare provider, I was very frustrated by the lack of discussion on prevention and I would have liked to see larger local healthcare organizations lead a discussion on prevention. A healthy body is the best defense we can create against diseases. A way that the City can best help its residents is by providing opportunities and facilities to lead a healthy lifestyle. I support our Park District that aims to create programs that keep our community mentally and physically healthy and at the city council level, we should do the same.

What did you learn from the pandemic?

I learned 3 important lessons:

- 1) I will NEVER take my work family for granted. In the early days of the pandemic, I was forced to furlough my employees but they were all back within 4 months. Those 4 months of working alone were sad, lonely, and grueling. I missed the sound of their laughter, the inside jokes, and the ability to bounce ideas off the smartest in our industry. We came back stronger than ever but I make sure they know how much I appreciate them at every level.
- 2) Our community supports small businesses. The City of Crystal Lake provided opportunities in the form of grants and accommodations to help small businesses like mine. That encouraged collaboration between businesses and increased

communication in ways I have never known before. These combined efforts were noticed by the public and residents were always ready to purchase gift cards, order food to go, dine outdoors, and participate in activities that brought neighbors together in a safe environment.

- 3) Collaboration between organizations always wins. I learned BIG lessons about problem solving through one person in Crystal Lake: Kurt Reckamp at the CL Park District. He modeled the way for how I made decisions during the pandemic and still today. I wanted to create 2 opportunities for runners: one was a middle school running club and the other was the Crystal Lake Half Marathon. Kurt and the team at the Park District would always answer my ideas with "Let's see if we can make this work." Some ideas just do not work out but some do when they are looked at from all angles. That mentality of a collaborative effort, using common sense solutions, and seeking community support allowed me to witness first hand how when organizations come together to solve problems, possibilities are endless.

How would you spur economic development in your community?

I truly believe that the best economic opportunities lie within small business growth. When you support a small business, you are supporting your neighbor who then goes on to support the local races and little league teams. If you spend \$10 at a corporate store, only \$2 comes back into the community. If you spend \$10 at a franchise, only \$4 comes back into the community. But when you spend \$10 at a small business, \$6 comes back into the community because most likely that small business hires members from the community, supports other small businesses in the same community, and gives back to local charities in that community. Some stats to know are: Small businesses donate 250% more than large businesses to community causes and the Huffington Post found that if every US family spent just \$10 a month at a local business, then over \$9.3 billion dollars would directly funnel back into the economy. Small businesses should be given special incentives to open their doors in our city; this can be done through tax incentives, grants, and other general assistance.

Would/can/should local governments do anything to help reduce the tax burden on residents?

This should always be our goal - we pay some of the highest taxes in Illinois. Everything should be done to minimize the tax burden on our community. We enjoy a high quality of life and we certainly pay for it so we have to be good stewards of our tax dollars in order to make sure we do not endure even high taxation in the future. This is especially true in these inflationary times. We can monitor our annual tax burden and make sure we are using our citizen's tax dollars wisely on things that are needed to support and grow our community, without taking in excess.

The goal should be to provide our residents with the quality of life they have come to expect in our great city, while at the same time minimizing the taxes that are needed to pay for it.

Do you support recreational marijuana being sold in your community to help lower residents' tax burden?

I am very conflicted on this issue. On one hand, I am a mother to 2 school-aged children and am concerned about exposure to marijuana being sold in our city. But on the other hand, as a healthcare provider, I understand the medicinal benefits of marijuana in easing pain. As a resident, I am cautious of people coming into the City of Crystal Lake to purchase marijuana but as a resident I am also grateful for the \$400,000 in taxes the sale of recreational marijuana will bring to our city. I am thinking about this on a regular basis and will have to consider individual petitions on a case-by-case basis as opposed to holding a general opinion on the matter. My support of any new dispensary would depend on size, type, location, and whether the benefits of each proposal outweigh the costs.

What projects or infrastructure would you look to address in your community and how would you do it?

We live in a very active community and I think we have done a great job with our existing infrastructure but as a person who likes to spend time running, cycling, and being outdoors, I would like to see some more integration of pedestrian and bicycle-friendly options into our existing infrastructure. I would also like to see some safety enhancements such as increased lighting, emergency phones, and flashing crosswalks to keep the residents safe, especially during dark hours. It is a good problem that parking has become so limited in Downtown Crystal Lake because it means so many people are visiting this area. However, it is time to find creative solutions and maximize on infrastructure improvements that are coming to the downtown including the light curtains, additional four hour parking in the Crystal Lake Train station lot, and a potential redevelopment of Railroad street.

Will you accept the voters' decision in your race on Election Day?

Of course - that is how elections should work.

What is your position on open, transparent government?

Government exists to serve the people. It is obvious that it should be open and transparent and I will abide by the tenants of the Open Meetings Act.

Do you support the Freedom of Information Act and citizens' ability to freely access government records?

Absolutely - it is an important tool in keeping the government honest.

Would you sign a nondisclosure agreement with a prospective company that would limit your ability to communicate with your community?

A business owner may sign a nondisclosure agreement for a variety of reasons and it can be an important tool for growth. But as for my position on this question, it lacks context and needs additional specifics.