

Grand Oak

BUSINESS PARK

Where work comes to life

Volume 6 – Summer 2011

2011 Twin Cities Kidney Walk

BPG Properties, the property owner, is a National Walk Partner supporting the National Kidney Foundation's 2011 Kidney Walk fundraiser. As a National Walk Partner, BPG is encouraging all of its tenants to participate in their local 2011 Kidney Walk. Please join in supporting the Foundation's mission to educate the public about kidney disease and increase the awareness of organ transplantation.

Following are details on the Twin Cities Kidney Walk:

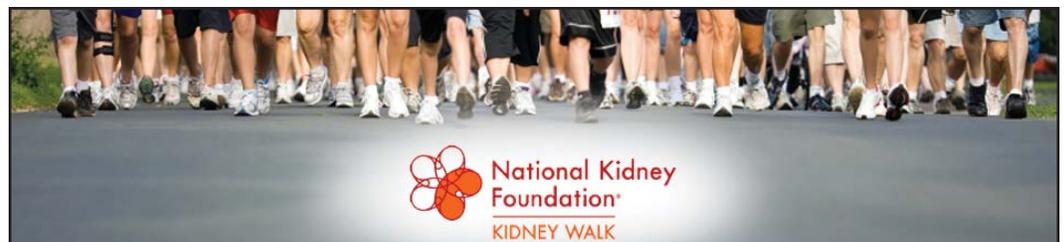
Date:	Saturday, October 15, 2011
Location:	Thomson Reuters Campus, 610 Opperman Drive, Eagan MN
Check-In:	9:00 a.m.
Walk Start:	10:00 a.m.
Ceremony:	11:15 a.m.

Visit www.kidneywalk.org/TwinCities2011 to learn more about the Twin Cities Kidney Walk and register your team. An informational meeting will be held at Grand Oak with Breanne Doroff, Division Community Project Manager, of the local Kidney Foundation chapter in August. Details to follow.

BPG Properties is offering the following prizes to the the three Grand Oak tenant teams that raise the most money for the National Kidney Foundation:

1st Place:	50% of Funds Raised up to \$250.00
2nd Place:	50% of Funds Raised up to \$150.00
3rd Place:	50% of Funds Raised up to \$100.00

The winning teams can choose to receive Jimmy John's or Caribou gift cards totalling their prize amount to be shared among team members *or* they can elect to donate the prize value to the Kidney Foundation on behalf of the team.



TAKE NOTE OF THE UPCOMING DATES:

National Night Out
Tuesday, August 2

Labor Day
Monday, September 5
(Building Closed)

Columbus Day
Monday, October 10

Twin Cities Kidney Walk
Saturday, October 15

Avoid Falling Victim to Home Contractor Scams

Home improvement repairs have become a favorite target for fraudsters. Some of these shady contractors use extremely well-polished scams that are tricky to identify until it's too late.

The vast majority of contractors are honest, hard-working professionals. Protecting yourself against the few bad seeds requires being alert to the following warning signs:

- Beware of a contractor "just passing through the neighborhood" with materials left over from another job. Oftentimes, the materials are substandard and payment is demanded up front. Most legitimate contractors have enough work from recommendations and advertising that they don't need to knock on doors. Sometimes this strategy is just a ploy to distract you while their partner enters your home through another door.
- Exercise caution with contractors that propose a "cash only" deal. This usually means that the contractor is not paying taxes and can cut his or her price accordingly. The catch is that you will have no paper trail – no receipt and no written guarantee. If a problem occurs, you'll have no recourse. Legitimate contractors do not indulge in this kind of practice.
- If the contractor drives a vehicle licensed out-of-state, they could be a transient operator working a particular neighborhood only to disappear when the job is done. Then you've got no means of contacting them should there be a problem with the work. Legitimate contractors present themselves in a professional manner with business cards and an established address. Be cautious of anyone who cannot produce identification.
- Never be rushed into making a quick decision. Pressure tactics are intended to prevent you from obtaining competitive estimates or finding out that a deal is bad before it's too late. Be very cautious about a price that is "so good it is only valid today." Good contractors offer quotes that are typically valid for a specific amount of time.

- Request references, but ask for the names of the contractor's last three customers – not those of his three favorite. Be sure to call each reference and ask lots of questions. Avoid contractors that refuse to provide references. Typically, contractors are happy to name satisfied customers.
- Verify licenses with the local building inspector's office and insurance coverage/bonding with the contractor's carrier. Call your Better Business Bureau to find out if any complaints have been made against the contractor and if the situations were resolved.
- Get everything in writing – do not accept verbal quotes or guarantees. Take time to review your contract and be sure to get a copy of the contract that has been signed by both parties. Sometimes a contractor may offer services at a certain price but after they start the work, they demand more money and refuse to finish the work unless you pay up. A contract will specify the exact cost of the job and should address price increases or overruns as well as the contractor's guarantee.
- Requests for up-front payment before work begins should trigger a warning. Too many people pay up front for work and then never see the contractor again. Many reputable contractors don't require anything down and those who do are often so under-capitalized that they need your money to purchase materials. Never pay more than one-third in advance and don't pay the entire balance until the job is completed to your satisfaction.

Another way to protect yourself is to recognize the bogus contractors' schemes for what they are: ploys designed to separate you from your money. If an offer seems too good to be true, it probably is.

Don't let anyone into your home that you do not know or that you are not expecting based on previous contact. If you are ever in doubt of someone at your door or you do fall victim to a home improvement scam, call 911 to assist in catching the fraudulent contractor and protecting others.

Why and How to Shop a Farmers Market

This summer, take your grocery shopping outdoors. Roaming your local farmers market for fresh fruits and vegetables will deliver the following benefits:

- **Quality.** Buying directly from the farmer allows you to ask questions. Exactly how old is the produce? Did it ripen on a vine or in a truck?
- **Freshness.** Local farmers wait to pick produce at its peak so you get maximum flavor, nutritional value, and freshness. You'll taste the difference.
- **Environmental impact.** Buying at a farmers market reduces food packaging waste and the energy consumed for lengthy refrigerated storage.
- **Support local farmers.** Only a small portion of what you spend on fresh produce at a supermarket goes to the grower. By buying directly from the farmers, you'll put more money in their pockets.

To get the most from your market, follow these tips:

- Don't stick to your shopping list or you might miss out on some of the best flavors. Talk to the farmers to find out what's freshest right now.
- Take a taste of any available samples, including the misshapen tomatoes. Unlike in the supermarket, flavor is key – not physical appearance.
- Bring your own tote bags. They are more sturdy and easier to carry than the plastic bags typically available from farmers.
- For the best selection, shop a farmers market early in the day. However, if you're making a recipe that doesn't require blemish-free produce, such as a pie or sauce, go at the end of the day when damaged produce is typically discounted.

Visit www.localharvest.org to find a farmers market near you. The site also features a directory of CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) farms across the country. CSA farms are a popular way for consumers to buy local, seasonal food directly from a farmer.



Regardless of where you shop, following are some tips on what to look for when selecting produce:

Asparagus: Bright green coloring, firm, straight stems, and tightly closed tips. Avoid spears that are shriveled or wet or have thick stalks.

Green Beans: Bright green beans that are smooth and crisp with a velvety skin. Snap one in half; a bit of moisture at the breaking point indicates freshness.

Eggplant: Smooth, shiny dark purple or creamy white skin and a green stem with leaves on the top. Select smaller eggplants, which tend to be tastier.

Stone Fruits: Richly colored plums with no brown spots and peaches/nectarines with no wrinkly patches. Gently squeeze the fruit; it should yield slightly.

Tomatoes: Deeply colored and firm, with a little give. Sniff tomatoes; if they're missing that sweet, woody smell, pass them by.

Corn: Grassy green, tightly wrapped husks. The silk should be glossy and pale yellow, the stem moist.

Berries: A slight frosty-white hue for blueberries, deep color for blackberries and raspberries. No hulls should be attached; this is a sign of premature picking.

Cucumbers: Firm, dark green with no wrinkles or soft spots. Smaller cucumbers contain fewer seeds.

Summer Squash: Firm with bright skin and less than 8" long; they can become bitter as they grow larger.

Recognizing Grand Oak Tenants

BPG Properties and Cassidy Turley extend special thanks to the following tenant new to Grand Oak Business Park in 2nd Quarter 2011:

Allina Medical Clinic/Parkview OB/GYN
2805 Dodd Road

Donating Blood Saves Lives

On Tuesday, April 26, Grand Oak Business Park hosted a blood drive in partnership with Memorial Blood Centers. Nineteen tenants graciously offered to roll up their sleeves to donate blood.

Jimmy John's generously provided mini-sub sandwiches to all of the blood donors. Thanks to Jimmy John's and all of the tenants that participated in this worthy cause. The lives of friends, neighbors, family members, and others in our community have been saved thanks to your support.



About BPG Properties, Ltd.

BPG Properties, Ltd. is one of the nation's leading private equity real estate fund managers. BPG's portfolio consists of over 20 million square feet of office, retail, student housing, and industrial properties and more than 24,000 apartment units in more than 100 communities located throughout the United States. The firm is headquartered in the Philadelphia area with regional offices in Los Angeles, Chicago, Washington DC, Boston, Atlanta and Raleigh-Durham. For additional information, please visit the company's website at www.bpgltd.com.

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LEASED BY:**

**Cassidy/
Turley/** Commercial
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