



P.O. Box 457
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News Release: Storm Lake's Coined Caretaker Named Spectacular Parade Grand Marshal for 2022

Storm Lake, Iowa (June 10, 2022) – Buena Vista County's Upper Des Moines Opportunity (UDMO) outreach specialist and interpreter, Maggie Reyes, has been named Grand Marshal for the 2022 Big Parade.

Reyes works all hours of the week in order to provide food, clothing, emotional support, and other assistance to Storm Lake community members. In her seven years at UDMO, the number of volunteers has increased exponentially.

"Every day is busy and different, and I am so thankful for the beautiful volunteers who help organize and donate," she says.

Reyes was born in Chicago, and in 1986 her parents—who had come from Mexico—were granted citizenship thanks to an amnesty program instituted by former President Ronald Reagan. Her family returned to Mexico when she was nine as her dad started his own construction business.

As a young adult, Reyes returned to the U.S.—a country her family taught her to love and respect as it allowed her the opportunity to follow her own dreams.

Reyes now assists the community's most vulnerable as they make ends meet through UDMO resources. The organization helps build stronger communities by addressing the effects of poverty on individuals and families. Reyes coordinates programs which assist families by providing school supplies, paying their energy bills, offering a food pantry, Adopt a Family during the holidays, and more.

An anonymous Grand Marshal nominator is quoted as saying Reyes' example is her greatest asset. "She is always positive, kind, generous, and grateful. Storm Lake needs citizens who process our food, work for our businesses, and expand business ownership. Maggie is instrumental in helping these folks acclimate to Storm Lake and help them transition into contributing members of our community."

She says that words cannot express how honored and grateful she is to be named the event's Grand Marshal for 2022.

"To be honest, I did not know what the role meant when Brandon (Frank) first asked if I would accept," she says. "Now that I know, I could not be more excited. It's my mission to serve my community, but I couldn't do my important work at UDMO without my amazing BFFs, the volunteers, and organizations



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who bring donations.” Reyes goes on to list area schools, grocery stores, downtown shops, banks, and nonprofits which regularly provide to the local UDMO. “I love, cherish, and respect each one of you,” she says.

Brandon Frank and Jeff Bowles, Star Spangled Spectacular 2022 commodores, are excited to name Reyes its 2022 Grand Marshal. Bowles says, “Storm Lake, like most communities across the country, saw some challenging times these past couple years. It’s people like Maggie who continue to bring us together to remind us what being a friend and neighbor is all about.”

Frank added that the decision was unanimous. “We had quite a few nomination forms to go through, and there were many qualified candidates. However, when we read more about Maggie and all she does to care for our community, we knew she deserved this honor.”

In addition to her time spent at UDMO, Reyes also serves as vice president of the St. Mary’s SOS Thrift Store and works as a board member for the school’s Fine Arts Boosters. She was awarded the Tyson Hero Award for her commitment and service to her community in April.

Family is central to Reyes’ life, and she credits her parents, Victor and the late Juanita Reyes to her success. Reyes has two children: Alondra, an involved senior Education for Service scholar at Buena Vista University, and her son Jesus, an active freshman at St. Mary’s High School. Both will be cheering her on in the parade, as well as Reyes’ own brothers and friends.

“I teach my children what my parents taught me: to be a good person, work hard, and always give their best in anything they do. I am so proud of them.”

Commodores encourage local organizations to join Reyes in The Big Parade by filling out the entry form at www.starspangledspectacular.net. The Big Parade will resume its annual route along Lakeshore Drive.

- **Photo 1_Reyes:** *Maggie Reyes, the Star Spangled Spectacular Grand Marshal at her Upper Des Moines Opportunity office in Storm Lake.*
- **Photo 2_Reyes:** *Reyes with her children, Alondra and Jesus.*

About the Star Spangled Spectacular

A favorite Northwest Iowa tradition, Storm Lake’s annual Star Spangled Spectacular celebrates Independence Day along the City’s beautiful shores. The family-friendly event is held July 3-4 and welcomes fresh entertainment and returning favorites such as The Big Parade, food and shopping vendors, a classic Car Cruise, the Ride-Run, fireworks, a Patriotic Ceremony, a Kiddie Parade, and more. Visit www.starspangledspectacular.net.