

WEST DES MOINES  
JORDAN CREEK

SEPTEMBER 2024

# Living

MAGAZINE

# New AGAIN

Residents share their home  
renovation experiences

**Meet Katie Hoover**  
EDUCATION

**Blackened spatchcock chicken**  
RECIPE

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WELCOME

## ERASING the disco era

Jolene and I bought our first home in the mid-1990s, and we stretched ourselves financially to do so. It was a split foyer home that was built in the 1970s — and it looked like it.

The appliances and countertops were green, typical of the era. We hired a company to paint the appliances white, and they looked like 1970s appliances that were painted white. This was a great example of the expression about putting lipstick on a pig. My dad and I installed the new countertops, and we did a good job for a couple of amateurs.

The kitchen had a fake, red, brick veneer over the drywall, which was, again, typical of the era. We primed and painted it, and it looked much better.

The bathroom had a dark brown toilet. Seriously. Dad and I installed a new one and moved that one to the basement. It worked, and it was good for a few laughs.

The ceiling had what I thought were wooden beams. Upon closer inspection, I learned they were made of Styrofoam. I called Jolene into the room and asked her to watch while I knocked them down with one hand. She was impressed, for a few seconds.

We sanded the dark interior woodwork and doors and painted them lighter colors, and we gave the exterior a makeover from the dark brown and white barn look to more neutral and earthtone colors. New landscaping and stonework gave the home a much-improved street appearance as well.

We did our best — on a very limited budget and a lot of sweat equity — to update this house and erase those disco-era features. Looking back, it was fun, and we learned a lot.

Over time, we were able to hire professionals to do other improvements as well. All this remodel work helped to make this little house into a home — our home. It looked much different from the time we bought it to the time we sold it.

Five homes later, and we still smile as we look back with fond memories of our first home and the work we did to it. I am sure many of you can relate.

Meanwhile, if you are looking to update your home and need ideas, you will enjoy the examples in this month's cover story, as local residents share experiences of their home improvement efforts. And if you want a brown toilet, I know where you might be able to find one.

Thanks for reading. ■

**SHANE GOODMAN**  
President and Publisher  
Big Green Umbrella Media  
shane@dmccityview.com  
515-953-4822, ext. 305



**Tammy Pearson**  
Editor  
515-953-4822 ext. 302  
tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com

**Martha Munro**  
Advertising Account Executive  
515-953-4822 ext. 314  
martha@iowalivingmagazines.com



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# New AGAIN

Residents share their home renovation experiences

By Jackie Wilson

For many homeowners, the day comes, sooner or later, when they look around their abode and wonder when the carpet was ever stylish, the wall color ever stunning and the layout ever functional. They realize new curtains, throw pillows and artwork won't be enough to freshen things up, and the only solution to the weary look of their home is to bite the bullet and invest in some major improvements. And, when the work is done, their home — and enthusiasm for it — feels new.

When Andy Maurer finished his basement, he created a rec room with a bar.  
Photo by Jackie Wilson



## FEATURE

### Binzebo, rocks transform backyard

When Kent and Jody Eubank built their home in West Des Moines on 2-plus acres of land, it offered room for gardens and a shed surrounded by a large lawn. However, when Kent retired, the pair began rethinking their lawn.

Both Kent and Jody like rocks and decided on transforming their yard with boulders in the front yard and river rock in the back.

"The boulder project was my first retirement gift," Kent explains.

A semi-truck delivered 15 tons of rock. A 6-ton boulder was placed by a crane. The boulder was originally planned for the backyard, but, due to its size, it only made it to the front yard.

"That's as far as he could get it," Kent recalls.

Other 3-ton rocks and a huge granite boulder, sliced from a 10-ton rock, were placed in the front yard.

The landscaping didn't stop at the rocks. They installed an outdoor pizza oven on the back patio but didn't enclose it in a wood deck due to fire hazards. Then, the couple attended a pond tour, sponsored by Just Add Water, where



Jody and Kent Eubank of West Des Moines literally have tons of rocks and boulders in their backyard. Photo by Jackie Wilson

they were inspired by unique water features and rocks they saw. They inquired about back patio ideas and discussed replacing an existing water feature.

The staff of Just Add Water, a landscape contractor specializing in water garden designs, listened to the Eubanks' vision of transforming their backyard and putting in a large waterfall.

Within three weeks, the backyard water feature was established.

"I can sit on the porch swing and hear the waterfall," Jody says.

As many homeowners find, once one thing in their home is changed, more changes are inevitable. As the Eubanks were viewing their waterfall, they discussed how they wanted to

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## FEATURE

enjoy the waterfall year-round.

“Some days were rainy, too sunny or too cold,” Jody says. “I wanted to view it in all seasons.”

So, they researched options and considered adding a gazebo, which would provide shelter from many weather elements. However, a traditional gazebo with open sides might not block the wind. Instead, they found a binzebo — a modified grain bin. Panels block the wind from the north, and they cut out portions of the binzebo to provide a view of the waterfall.

Jody decorated the silver bin inside with casual seating, while the outside of the bin includes flower boxes and vintage metal decorations. Now the couple can enjoy the waterfall in all seasons and entertain friends while enjoying it and seeing deer, coyote, birds and other wildlife.

The final phase of work was to address a portion of the backyard where grass was not growing. Their solution? Add more rocks.

“Why not rockscape it,” Kent says. “The hill never grew grass.”

This year, they added 28 tons of river rock and more boulders. During vacations, they



A binzebo provides a place for the Eubanks and guests to enjoy the waterfall and scenic backyard year-round. Photo by Jackie Wilson

collect unique rocks and add them to their backyard landscape.

“I like rocks,” Jody says. “I like to walk among our river rocks and look for interesting rocks. The tranquility of the water feature is wonderful.”

The waterfall also includes color-changing lights. A 400-gallon storage tank underneath the water feature pumps 800 gallons an hour.

In the winter, snow forms over the waterfall, creating a beautiful scene.

Rounding out their home is a windmill, metal artifacts and vintage farm equipment, as both grew up on farms. They like how the water features, rocks and metal pieces tie into their home.

“It’s a sanctuary out here. I love to enjoy the space, whether alone or with friends,” Jody says.

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**BEFORE**



## FEATURE



Andy Maurer wanted his finished basement to provide a space for entertaining and watching television. Photo by Jackie Wilson

### Basement remodel

When Andy Maurer moved into his home in West Des Moines, the 22-year-old house didn't have a finished basement. The floor was a concrete slab, and there wasn't any drywall.

"It had a cold, grungy feel to it," he recalls.

He called on Hansen Home Renovations and sought advice on refinishing the basement. He taped areas off to indicate where he wanted walls and various features, including an L-shaped bar. "He (Aaron Hansen) convinced

me to change the bar set up for better flow."

A finished bar with a rec room was completed. The bar is made of butcher block sections.

"I was going to have a poured concrete bar, but it was too expensive," he recalls. "I got two butcher block sections, which saved money. We put a laminate coat over it, which looks great."

Under the bar are electrical outlets with USB ports. Next to the bar is a rec room, with a big-screen TV and a comfy sectional. He and

his girlfriend enjoy hosting parties.

"We have a good time down here. It's a nice cozy nook for movies," he says.

Another feature he wanted was a sauna. Since he used his health club's sauna frequently, he thought having one at home would be ideal. He ordered the sauna online and, when it arrived, it barely fit in the newly finished bathroom.

"I really enjoy the sauna," he says. "There's lots of health benefits. It's a great way to

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Andy Maurer included a sauna in his finished basement space. Photo by Jackie Wilson

decompress in the winter.”

He added a storage closet and enclosed the utility room. Since moving in, he’s added a walk-out patio, completed landscaping and done other projects.

He says, by hiring Hansen Home Remodeling, the renovation was a smooth process.

“He has a great vision for things unfinished. He put in a bath and basement in my previous townhome,” Andy says.

Andy chose to live in West Des Moines since he graduated from Valley High School. After graduating from the University of Iowa, he lived in Chicago before returning to West Des Moines, where his parents and family still live.

Next on his to-do list is putting a deck on the back of his home.

“There’s always something to do,” he says.

### Bathroom expanded

Lisa and Marc Shalkowski’s West Des Moines home is located in a prime spot. The outdoor pool is a great addition for their kids and, now, their grandchildren.

However, the master bathroom had been cramped since moving in. Marc stands 6 foot 6 inches, and his head nearly hit the top of the shower. The couple wanted to open up the space.

They hired Cody Bailey Construction from Waukee to redo the bathroom.

The first thing they did was remove the wall next to the toilet.

“It was always tight. We originally were only going to take down half



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**FEATURE**

*AFTER*



Lisa and Marc Shalkowski of West Des Moines were tired of their cramped master bathroom, so they tore out a wall and redesigned the area to open up the space. Photo by Jackie Wilson



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## FEATURE

the wall, but they suggested taking down the whole wall,” Lisa says.

The new showerhead was raised a few inches, giving more space for Marc.

As the bathroom door to the bedroom took up extra room, they replaced it with a sliding barn door. Originally, they were going to replace the jacuzzi tub, but the remodel was more costly, so they changed up the hardware pieces instead.

They took off the linen closet door next to the toilet and painted the shelving green. The open area allows for décor and bathroom items.

“I like how it’s more open, and I like how the new vanity is off the floor,” she says.

The family has lived in the West Des Moines home since 2000. Since moving in, they’ve completed small projects, such as painting.

“Paint can make a huge difference,” she says. “I’ve learned a lot over the years. There’s so many things to do,” she says. “We try to do just one thing at a time. It never ends.” ■



A barn door was installed to the master bathroom to help create an open feeling. Photo by Jackie Wilson

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## RECIPE

# CRISPY grilled chicken with a kick

### (Family Features)

Those first school bells may be ringing, but they don't have to signal the end of grilling season. This blackened spatchcock chicken keeps the meat moist, tender and tasty with crispy skin and a spicy seasoning to keep your summer spirit alive. Visit Culinary.net to find more recipes that keep your grill lit all year long. ■

## Blackened spatchcock chicken

- 1 whole chicken
- 1 cup melted butter or ghee
- 2 tablespoons heat-and-sweet seasoning
- 1/2 tablespoon garlic powder
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste

### DIRECTIONS

- Heat grill to 375-400 F.
- Use kitchen shears or knife to remove backbone from chicken to lay flat. Remove rib cage, if desired, or push flat with hands.
- Mix butter, heat-and-sweet seasoning and garlic powder. Using meat injector, inject mixture into chicken. Rub remaining buttered seasoning over chicken and season with salt and pepper, to taste.
- Place spatchcock chicken breast-side up over indirect heat and cook 35-40 minutes.
- When internal temperature reaches 145 F, flip chicken breast-side down over direct heat 5 minutes, or until internal temperature reaches 165 F.
- Let rest 10 minutes before serving.



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## BENEFITS of microdosing THC

Microdosing THC, the practice of consuming very small amounts of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), is gaining attention for its potential therapeutic benefits without the intoxicating effects commonly associated with cannabis use. Unlike traditional cannabis consumption, microdosing involves taking doses as low as 1-2 mg of THC, offering subtle yet significant effects.

One key benefit of microdosing THC is its ability to reduce anxiety. Research suggests that low doses of THC can produce calming effects, helping individuals manage stress and anxiety without the risk of overwhelming psychoactivity.

Microdosing THC is also being explored for its potential to enhance creativity and focus. Some users report increased mental clarity and heightened creativity, making it popular among professionals and artists. This effect is believed to stem from the way THC interacts with the brain's endocannabinoid system, subtly influencing mood and cognitive processes.

Additionally, microdosing THC may offer pain relief. Studies show that low doses of THC can reduce pain and inflammation without the side effects often associated with higher doses or traditional pain medications, making it an attractive option for alternative pain management.

Microdosing THC offers a way to harness the therapeutic benefits of cannabis without the psychoactive effects. For those interested in exploring this option, stop by your local CBD store and talk to a certified hemp consultant who can guide you in choosing the best product for your needs, ensuring you achieve the desired effects safely and effectively. ■

Information provided by Ashley Powell, CBD American Shaman, 800 S. 50th St., No. 106, West Des Moines, 515-380-5251, and 3418 Eighth St. S.W., No. 3, Altoona, 515-967-4036. Reference: University of Illinois Chicago. (2017, June 2). Low-dose THC can relieve stress; more does just the opposite. <https://today.uic.edu/low-dose-thc-can-relieve-stress-more-does-just-the-opposite/>



## MEET Katie Hoover

### Honored with Education of Character Award

Katie Hoover, a West Des Moines teacher, was recently honored with an Education of Character Award for 2024. The Robert D and Billie Ray Center established Character Counts as a way to practice good character skills and promote a positive culture.

Hoover, who is a "fierce advocate for special needs students," was one of 12 Character Award winners and was nominated by families and educators.

Hoover has been a "lifer" in the West Des Moines Community School District since she first attended kindergarten. Her mother and grandmother both taught school.

While attending Valley High School, she was a peer helper paired with special needs kids. The teacher asked her if she had considered being a special needs teacher.

"She said to me, I see something in you," Hoover recalls.

One summer, she was a nanny for a child on the autism spectrum. Then she attended UNI, where she earned an elementary education degree, with a special education specialty.

Throughout her 20-year teaching career, she has taught in several roles, all in West Des Moines. She worked as a behavioral interventionist, assisting teachers and students in the classroom at Hillside for seven years.

When Hoover began teaching, she realized there weren't many programs or summer camps for special needs kids.

"Let's create one," she recalls.

The district then created a summer program called Camp Champs, which meets over four weeks in the summer. Hoover brings in selected peer helpers from high school.

"They come in and love our kids and interact. Adults help out, too, but the kids love it when school-age students come and help."

Hoover began working with the Blank Park Zoo eight years ago. Organizers wanted to learn how to expand their special needs camps and hired her as an inclusion specialist. She filters out students who might need extra support during camps due to all types of issues, including medical or special needs.

She also noticed a need for kids in middle school. She started Club 515 — The Hope Foundation, which offers four events a year for kids with special needs.

At Jordan Creek Elementary school, she began a Circle of Friends program, similar to best buddies, where students support kids. Friends ask others if they want to be a part of a circle, which assists with inclusivity.

In January, an unexpected opening arose at Hillside for a teacher in a special education classroom. Hoover stepped up and is back in the classroom.

"I'm so content with my choice. I'm back with my little family," she says.

She says working with special needs kids is both her and her family's passion.

"I love seeing the progress. They smile and hug and feel loved," Hoover says. "Building a close relationship with the families is important to keep everyone involved." ■




Katie Hoover is an Education of Character Award recipient for 2024.



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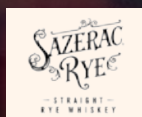
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## WELLNESS

By Ashli Schultz

# WHAT IS functional medicine?

Functional medicine and health optimization is becoming a popular choice for those seeking a proactive and personalized approach to wellness. Unlike conventional medicine, which often treats symptoms in isolation, functional medicine delves deep into the root cause of health concerns, with the goal of not only healing but optimizing your overall wellbeing.



Functional medicine looks at your health care concerns through a different lens than traditional medicine. As functional medicine practitioners, we understand that each person is biochemically unique and influenced by genetics, environment and lifestyle. All of those areas must be considered when treating the human body. This all-encompassing approach allows us to custom tailor plans that address specific needs for each individual, promoting long-term solutions for health and vitality.

You wouldn't expect your car to continue to perform at an optimal level if you never changed the oil, rotated the tires or put bad gasoline in it. We cannot expect our bodies to continue to thrive if we don't focus on prevention and health optimization. An arborist would never examine the leaves of a dying tree first; they would examine the soil. What micronutrients are missing? How much sun and water is it getting? We need to think of our amazing bodies as a tree and start looking at how we are nourishing our roots. By nurturing the roots of our health and addressing imbalances at their source, we can cultivate a stronger, more resilient "tree" of health — one that flourishes with vitality and stands the test of time.

Another hallmark of functional medicine is its integration of multiple therapeutic modalities. Beyond conventional treatments, practitioners may incorporate evidence-based complementary therapies such as nutritional supplements, herbal medicine, acupuncture, hot and cold therapy, hyperbaric chambers, ozone IV therapy, IV nutrition and mind-body techniques. This integrative approach not only enhances treatment outcomes but also supports the body's natural healing processes, promoting optimal health from within.

Whether you are managing a chronic condition, seeking preventive care, striving to achieve peak health, or perhaps have seen multiple providers and still don't feel like yourself, functional medicine provides a comprehensive framework for optimizing your health. It encourages you to embrace the interconnectedness of your body, mind and spirit and to cultivate a lifestyle that supports long-lasting wellness. ■

Information provided by Ashli Schultz, MSN, ARNP, FNP-C, CFMP, Vivid Wellness Lounge, 1980 N.W. 94th St., Suite E/F, Clive, Livin-Vivid.com. 515-415-1550



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# WEST Des Moines Public Library news

## Iowa Files Series returns for sixth year

For the past six years, the library has been proud to present the Iowa Files History Program with the West Des Moines Historical Society. We're excited to have them back again for a series running monthly from September 2024 through May 2025. This joint library-Historical Society event is free and open to the public thanks to the support of West Des Moines Historical Society members, the West Des Moines Library Friends Foundation and Diana and Scott Hatfield.

All Iowa Files programs will be live streamed on the West Des Moines Historical Society's Facebook Page, and all videos will be closed captioned. They will also be uploaded to their YouTube channel after the event takes place.

**Next up: Legacy Woods, Sunday, Sept. 8, 2:30-3:30 p.m.** There's an exciting new project on the corner of Grand and Fuller — Legacy Woods Nature Sanctuary. When completed, the nearly 30-acre site will include restored prairie and oak savannah, an arboretum and historical campus with the Jordan House, Bennett School and a new heritage center for the public. See the site plan and hear from Ryan Penning, director of Parks and Recreation; Marco Alvarez, superintendent of parks; Allison Ullestad, Arts, Culture and Enrichment supervisor; and Gale Brubaker, executive director of the West Des Moines Historical Society.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

• **Rosie the Riveters of Iowa**, Saturday, Sept. 14, 2-3 p.m. (adults). Author Linda Betsinger McCann will share about her research and newest book, "Rosie the Riveters of Iowa." She'll share how she started writing books about Iowa history, as well as the research that went into this newest book. No registration required.

• **WDM Library Kiosk Grand Reopening Ice Cream Party**, Wednesday, Sept. 25, 4:30-6:30 p.m. (all ages). Visit us at the WDM Library 24-Hour Kiosk at 217 Fifth St. in Valley Junction to celebrate its new look. Each attendee will get free ice cream and an opportunity to learn more about the kiosk. No registration required.

## • An Evening with

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Thursday, Sept. 26, 6:30-8 p.m. (Adults).

The WDM Public Library is thrilled to host Ruth Harkin to discuss her recently published book. Beaverdale Books will be onsite selling copies. No registration required. ■

## West Des Moines Public Library

www.wdmlibrary.org  
515-222-3400  
4000 Mills Civic Parkway,  
West Des Moines  
Mon.-Thu. 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.  
Fri. 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
Sat. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Sun. 2-5 p.m.

# GRIEF 101: Writing as a tool

Even though grief is the natural and normal reaction to loss, it can feel everything but that. Grief is not only experienced emotionally, but also physically, psychologically, behaviorally and spiritually. It's important to find ways to process what you are going through.

One way to help process is to write it down. It can help to provide clarity to what you have been experiencing and can help to release a little from your overworking brain.

Not sure where to start? Try some of these prompts...

What has been the most difficult part of this grief for you?

What is it that no one else understands?

What do you miss the most about the person who died?

What is helping you to settle into this new life after the death?

Journaling can also help as time passes for you to be able to look back and see how your grief has changed. Whether it is in small or big ways, change in grief shows us that we are integrating the loss into our lives and adjusting to life after the death of our person. The gauge in grief isn't necessarily about "feeling better" or forgetting our person or "moving on," but rather adjusting to life without your person's physical presence and carrying the love you have for them forward with you. ■



Information provided by Buffy Peters, Director of Hamilton's Academy of Grief & Loss, 3601 Westown Parkway, West Des Moines, IA 50266, 515-697-3666.

Plan Ahead for

# PEACE OF MIND

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6 Area Locations

# HAMILTON'S

FUNERAL & AFTER LIFE SERVICES

An Evening with Ruth Harkin

When My Husband Ran for President... and Other Short Stories

Thursday, September 26  
6:30 - 8:00 PM  
West Des Moines Public Library - Community Room



# STAY home — planfully — with peace of mind

For Carolyn, senior living communities have always sounded like a wonderful idea — for other people. Although many of her friends have moved to communities and are happy with that decision, Carolyn loves her house and wants to stay there. Her concern, though, is that she has had some health issues, and she is afraid of losing her independence and “having” to move.

“I don’t want to just stay in my home; I want to be independent in it,” Carolyn, 70, says. “But I worry that, as I get older, I’m going to need too much help to stay here by myself.”

Carolyn’s situation is far from unusual. “Aging in place” — at home — is not always within the grasp of every person. If you end up needing assistance to remain in the place you love, chronic health challenges can make living independently ill-advised, and full-time care at home can cost as much as community living.

You may be asking yourself, then: “If I



don’t want to move into a community but I’m concerned about health issues later on, what can I do?”

The answer: You have more options than ever before. Some organizations that serve older adults have introduced Continuing Care at Home (CC@H) membership programs designed to help people proactively focus on their health at home while enabling them to financially plan for potential services and care down the road.

If you’re interested in looking into CC@H programs, the questions below can help you make sure the program’s premises, amenities and outcomes will be the best ones for you.

• **What does the program include?** A good CC@H program not only will offer services and amenities to enhance your wellbeing so you can remain independent longer, it will also help fund future long-term care needs.

• **Does it include personal support, such as wellness coaching?** Studies show people who embark on any kind of life-altering program or activity, such as a nutrition or exercise regimen, will be more likely to succeed

with encouragement from a trusted adviser or advocate.

• **Does it include care costs and options?** A solid program will help fund your care, if it’s needed, whether through home healthcare or services in a senior living community later on. If the program you’re considering does offer both, make sure you’re comfortable with the services and care provided by the organization’s home healthcare team as well as in its communities. A reputable provider will have longevity and solid outcomes behind it.

If you’re considering membership in a CC@H program, make sure it meets your needs, now and in the future — and provides you with peace of mind. Your wellbeing and your checkbook will thank you for it. ■

Aaron Wheeler is Vice President of Home and Community-Based Services for WesleyLife, which provides health and well-being services, including WellAhead — A WesleyLife Well-Being Experience, a CC@H offering designed for people who never want to move to a senior living community. To learn more, visit [wesleylife.org/wellahead](https://wesleylife.org/wellahead).



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## Are you one of the **93% of people** who want to remain in your home as you age?

Over the years, you've put immeasurable thought and care into your home, and understandably, you've grown rather attached to it. But have you thought about a plan to keep you there as long as you wish?

**Introducing WellAhead** — a unique membership program designed for people who planfully intend to live at home as they age, enhancing independence and well-being while ensuring any necessary future long-term care costs are 100% covered from Day One. As a member, you'll benefit from a personal well-being coach, care coordination, and a variety of services to empower and enthusiastically enable your choice to live safely, healthfully, and independently in your own home.

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## HELPING those in need

Volunteering gives Monson purpose.

It only takes a minute or two of conversation to realize just how much Ginger Monson enjoys volunteering.

Four years ago, Monson connected with West Des Moines Human Services to learn how she could get involved. She learned of the organization's English Language Learners classes, which are offered for free and in-person. The classes are designed to teach adults of limited English proficiency how to read, write and speak the English language.

As a former high school English teacher, Monson thought she could be helpful, so she signed on as an assistant teacher. She enjoyed connecting with students of all ages who came from a variety of countries and backgrounds. She could tell how hard they worked and how much they desired to learn.

"I was amazed at what tax dollars would do to help these people," Monson says.

The ELL classes were canceled during the pandemic (they're being offered again for fall 2024), so Monson sought other ways to assist West



Ryan Mehalovich of Edward Jones presents the Neighbor Spotlight certificate to Ginger Monson.

Des Moines Human Services. That's when she started volunteering at its food pantry.

"I'm humbled by watching these dear people come in and be able to get food to feed their families," she says. "I love helping them."

So much so that Monson was inspired to learn Spanish. She had noticed many people coming into the food pantry had limited English speaking skills and used a translation app on their phone to communicate with her. She decided it was a good time to learn a new language herself.

For three-and-a-half years now, Monson has slowly learned Spanish through an online program, taking at least one lesson a day.

"I think, when you meet someone from a different country who's here, and you can learn even a little of their language, they're so grateful," she says.

Monson likes the community feel of the food pantry and believes it's well run by both staff and volunteers.

"Everyone is so committed," she says. "It's a joyful, joyful experience. Each time I have a shift and leave, it's the highlight of my day, oftentimes my week."

Monson has even inspired her husband to get involved. Every Friday, he picks up donations from local grocery stores and takes them back to the food pantry.

For Monson, volunteering is all about doing what she can to make others' lives easier.

"It gives to me far more than I give," she says. "My week isn't complete unless I've somehow helped people during that time. I don't see a greater need for anything I do than to help people who are less fortunate. It's so meaningful to me." ■


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## Do you know a neighbor who deserves recognition?

Nominate him or her at [tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com](mailto:tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com).

## 'A Haunted Girl'

Over the last decade or so, mental health and its importance has been a balm for anyone with a chemical imbalance. Understanding and empathy have vastly improved in many spheres, but, for children and teens, the complications of mental illness are especially harrowing. In this beautifully sad and hopeful story, it's never been clearer just how vital it is to support the most vulnerable among us.

Cleo struggles with intense depression that has stolen so much from her young life. She feels helpless, despite the love and support of those around her. When strange things start appearing — from terrifying ghosts to a strange little boy — she finds herself drawn into a fight only she can win. Cleo soon discovers that she has a power nothing can take from her, not even her illness.

Full of raw descriptions of depression, bold and heartfelt imagery, and a story that consumed me from the first page, this graphic novel absolutely won my heart. Highly recommended for anyone struggling to find their inner strength. ■ — *Review by Julie Goodrich*



By Ethan Sacks  
6/4/24  
132 pages  
\$14.99  
Image

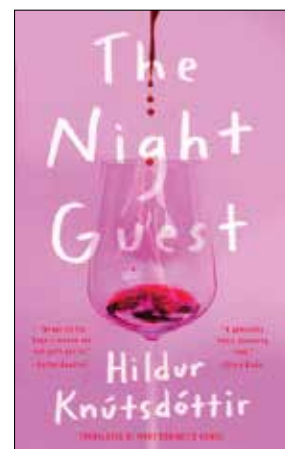
## 'The Night Guest'

Are you the kind of person who counts the days until spooky season? Do you start planning your Halloween costume as soon as the fireworks are over? If so, I've got just the book to tingle your spine.

Iounn is exhausted; so tired, she can barely function. Despite several doctor visits and test after test, she still has no answers. With the stress of her sister's recent tragic death causing family strife, and conflict with a coworker, Iounn resorts to trying anything to relieve her stress and get some rest. After getting a fitness watch, she learns a creepy new symptom — she's been sleepwalking thousands of steps each night. Terrified and confused, Iounn's journey to understand what's happening to her is both horrifying and compulsively readable.

This is a wild psychological thriller set in the fascinating city of Reykjavik that had me at the edge of my seat. It's fast-paced and deeply disturbing in the best ways. I desperately want to read more Icelandic literature, just maybe something with a bit less nightmare fuel. Then again, it's almost October! ■

— *Review by Julie Goodrich*



By Hildur Knútsdóttir,  
Mary Robinette  
Kowal (Translator)  
9/3/24  
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Tor Nightfire

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# MEET Audrey Kennis

New director of human services and inclusion

A new human services director hopes to create a community of care, where residents rally together to care for one another.

Audrey Kennis was recently named director of Human Services and Inclusion for the city of West Des Moines. She replaces longtime director Althea Holcomb, who retired.

Kennis is well-versed in serving West Des Moines residents. She was previous director of DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion) for WDM. In her new role, she explains why DEI and Human Services merged.

"We're thinking of needs for all of our residents. We see an intersection of a lot of people who come through our doors," she explains. "We have immigrants, income-eligible folks and the elderly. We want to integrate them into the community, to be successful and accessible. We ask, how can residents fully participate in what West Des Moines has to offer."

She says a merged role is a great way to identify opportunities for the community.

"We're looking for ways to be more efficient as a city and community. We have a lot of cultural vibrance and a diverse range of businesses," she explains.

Kennis became involved in the human services field as it "made sense."

"It's been a part of my life. My parents were at the food bank — it's not far from my own experience," she reflects.

She graduated from college with an education degree then later obtained a degree in city planning. With human services, she wants to create a "heart of care."

"I've centered my life around a just community. At Human Services, we meet people where they're at in life. How do we cultivate a community rooted in care?" Kennis says.

She knows a diverse community, such as West Des Moines, needs to be fully integrated to thrive.

"There's lots of opinions. How do we all coexist?" she asks. "We need to be mindful where everyone can coexist in a community where all needs are met."

She says she feels blessed to work in a caring career.

"It's a calling — not a job. I deeply believe in the work and to serve others," she says. "You never know where God takes you."

Kennis says WDM residents are part of a generous community.

"West Des Moines has so many incredible people who step up and serve. Generous people fill in the gaps," she says.

She suggests residents become involved.

"It takes all of us to rally together and roll up our sleeves. We have the opportunity to enact change at the local level, recognizing the need in our own backyard.

"The best way to do that is volunteer, donate or show up.

"We can't do it without our volunteers. You can directly impact the community by helping out," she says.

For more information on volunteering, visit [www.wdm.iowa.gov/government/human-services](http://www.wdm.iowa.gov/government/human-services). ■



Audrey Kennis, director of Human Services and Inclusion for the city of West Des Moines

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# THE ROLE of a trust in estate planning

Creating an estate plan is the way to ensure that your assets pass to your loved ones following your death. There are several different estate planning options, but a common one is to create a trust.

A trust is comprised of three separate parties: a grantor, a trustee and the beneficiaries. The grantor (or settlor) creates the trust. The trustee manages the assets held within the trust. The beneficiaries are the individuals or groups who receive the benefits provided by the trust.

There are two main types of trusts that a person can create as part of an estate plan: a living trust and a testamentary trust.

A living trust — also called a revocable trust — is created during the grantor's lifetime, and the grantor funds the trust while still alive. The trust contains provisions as to how you choose for your assets to be distributed after you die. You can name a trustee to manage the assets in the trust, or you can act as the initial trustee.

The grantor has the authority to decide when and to whom trust distributions are made. The grantor can also change the trust,



appoint a new trustee, or revoke the trust entirely.

Living trusts are good options for planning for potential incapacity. They are a good way to manage assets during your lifetime as well as have an orderly plan for disposition after you die. Further, living trusts allow those settling the estate to avoid probate and get the assets distributed to the beneficiaries more quickly and efficiently.

The second type of trust is a testamentary trust. Testamentary trusts are trusts which are created within a person's will. Because they are not created until the death of the grantor, testamentary trusts do not hold any assets or have any power until the grantor has died. After the grantor's death, assets are transferred into a trust for the benefit of the beneficiaries. Testamentary trusts are most commonly created in a will for the benefit of minor children, a spouse, or a disabled adult child.

When created properly, trusts are an efficient and effective way to ensure that loved ones receive your assets. Be sure to consult with an experienced attorney when choosing a trust for your estate planning. ■

Information provided by Ross Barnett, Abendroth Russell Barnett Law Firm, 2560 73rd St., Urbandale, 515-278-0623, [www.ARPCLaw.com](http://www.ARPCLaw.com).

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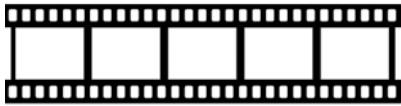
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Check for cancellations



## Moonlit Movies

Friday, Sept. 20, 8:30 p.m.  
Jamie Hurd Amphitheater, 4100 Mills Civic Parkway, West Des Moines

Enjoy "Ferris Bueller's Day Off" at the final Moonlit Movie of the season.



## Pumpkin Walk

Oct. 27, 2-5 p.m.  
Valley Junction

Pumpkin Walk in Valley Junction is a delightful Halloween celebration held in the heart of Historic Valley Junction. This family-friendly event features activities that cater to all ages. Kids can enjoy trick-or-treating along the 100-300 blocks of Fifth Street; hayrack rides start at 1st National Bank at 301 Fifth St.; various activities are set up throughout the district to keep the little ones entertained; and enjoy a variety of food and drink options from local vendors. The Betty Hill Dancers will perform, adding to the festive atmosphere. Free pumpkins are available for attendees to take home for the holiday while supplies last. The event is a perfect opportunity to dress up in your favorite costumes and enjoy a wholesome Halloween tradition with your community.



## Applefest

Sept. 14  
Living History Farms, 11121 Hickman Road, Urbandale

All things apple, from cider, pie bobbing and everything in-between, Living History Farms hosts this quintessential fall-themed festival. [www.lhf.org](http://www.lhf.org)

## Farmers Market Music in the Junction

Through September, Thursdays,  
4-8:30 p.m.  
100-300 blocks of Fifth Street and Railroad Park

The Valley Junction Farmers Market features more than 80 weekly vendors selling fresh produce, baked goods, plants and flowers, arts and crafts, and prepared foods. The Farmers Market is from 4-8 p.m. Music in the Junction is 5-8:30 p.m. at Railroad Park. The beverage garden opens at 5 p.m. with live music starting at 6 p.m. Concerts are:

Sept. 19: Jana West and Retrospect

Sept. 26: The Punching Pandas



## Singles Again 50-year celebration

Sept. 18  
Machine Shed, Urbandale

Fifty years ago, in 1974, a group was formed which has since had a great impact on the lives of many people in the Des Moines area. Singles Again, Inc., was organized as an alternative to Parents Without Partners for those single or previously married people who didn't have children, and, therefore, were not eligible to join PWP. In 1985, SA was opened to all single adults. Many lasting friendships have formed over the years and, although this is not a dating service, they have seen many marriages as well. The group holds approximately 10 activities per month ranging from happy hours to cultural offerings, educational programs and occasional day trips. On Sept. 18, the group will hold an anniversary luncheon. To learn more about Singles Again, call 515-277-9986.

## Multicultural Pow Wow

Sept. 20-22  
Jester Park, Granger

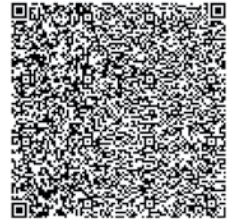
This year will mark the 25th year of the Pow Wow. The event will not only showcase some staples of Native American heritage, but other cultures' customs as well. Vendors and a variety of activities are featured. Finding common ground among all people is something we should all strive for, says organizer Ralph Moisa. For more information and schedule of events, visit [www.whiteeaglepowwow.com](http://www.whiteeaglepowwow.com).



## West Des Moines Historical Cemetery Tour

Saturday, Oct. 5  
Jordan Cemetery

Meet new and fascinating "residents" of Jordan Cemetery. Reenactors will play the parts of early settlers. Learn about the rich symbolism on gravestone markers and hear what the plans are for the historic Huston Cemetery. Scan the QR code to reserve tickets.



## Vintage & Made Fair

Saturday, Sept. 21, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
Dallas County Fairgrounds, 28057 Fairgrounds Road, Adel

This indoor/outdoor market celebrates the handmade and vintage community. You will find antiques, vintage, home décor, jewelry, handcrafted goods, seasonal flora, food and beverage trucks, live local music and everything you need to create a vintage and handmade lifestyle. Admission is \$10 with 12 and younger free.

## Blue Believers Run/Walk

Saturday, Sept. 21, 7:30 a.m.; run/walk event 8:45 a.m.  
Principal Park, 1 Line Drive, Des Moines

Blue Believers, a local nonprofit dedicated to raising awareness and funds for prostate cancer, is holding a run/walk event in collaboration with Team Blue Iowa. Included is a 1-mile walk, 5K walk, timed 5K run and kids fun run. The theme is superheroes and participants are encouraged to dress as their favorite superhero. Live local music will be featured throughout the day, and a survivor recognition ceremony will be held. A moment of remembrance will also be held. Proceeds will be donated locally to support Iowa men and families affected by prostate cancer. Register at [www.teamblueiowa.com](http://www.teamblueiowa.com).

Check for cancellations



## Log Cabin Days celebration

Sept. 28-29  
Heritage Village, 1300 W.  
Second Ave., Indianola

Highlights of the Log Cabin Days celebration include the parade at 10 a.m. on Saturday, Sept. 28, followed by a chicken and noodles lunch and Heritage Village Experience, crafts of the past, children's craft fair, raffle and food and vendors from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. On Sunday, tournaments (cribbage, chess, horseshoes and corn hole), bingo, family games, food and vendors will be featured 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.



## Halfway to St. Pat's Charity Car Show

Sunday, Sept. 22  
Charlie's Filling Station, 305  
Grand Ave., West Des Moines  
[www.friendlysonsiowa.com](http://www.friendlysonsiowa.com)

The Friendly Sons of St. Patrick are holding a fundraising car show to benefit the St. Patrick's Day Parade. Bring your classic or unique vehicle. Registration is 11 a.m. until 1 p.m. Trophies will be awarded at 3 p.m.

## CITYVIEW Wine and Whiskey Walk

Friday, Sept. 20, 5-9 p.m.  
West Glen Town  
Center

Tickets are \$25 in advance, \$35 at the event, for 10 tickets for sample-size whiskey cocktails. Enjoy free wine samples at participating retail locations. For more information and ticket link, visit <https://whiskeywalk.dmcityview.com>.



## Paint Madison County, a Plein Air Festival

Sunday, Sept. 22

The public can watch artists at work at various sites around Madison County from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. A reception and sale will be from 4-7 p.m. at Covered Bridges Winery, 2207 170th Trail, Winterset. New this year is a youth division for participants with prizes awarded. For more information, visit [www.madisoncounty.com](http://www.madisoncounty.com). ■

## Christian Authors Fair

Saturday, Sept. 21, 1-4 p.m.  
The Church at Union Park, 821 Arthur Ave., Des Moines.

The Des Moines chapter of Word Weavers International is hosting a Christian authors fair with the following authors participating: Angie Dicken (romance, historical fiction), David Burrier (children's), Dawn Ford (young adult fiction), Derek Dunnagan (biblical fiction), Diane Holmes (historical fiction, memoir), Glenda Mathes (nonfiction, middle-grade fiction), Jolene Philo (nonfiction, mystery), Kathleen Bird (speculative fiction), Kenan Bresnan (nonfiction), Lois Kennis (contemporary novel), Patricia Tiffany Morris (poetry), Sherry Kubalski (children's), and Susan R. Lawrence (historical and contemporary fiction, middle-grade fiction, devotionals). For additional information, enter Iowa Christian Author Fair in a Facebook search. With chapters across the country, Word Weavers meets monthly to critique each other's work and provide a forum to encourage writers and help them develop their craft. Local writers — aspiring or published — are welcome to join. For more information, contact Judy Hagey, [judy.hagey@gmail.com](mailto:judy.hagey@gmail.com), or Susan Lawrence, [srlauthor@mchsi.com](mailto:srlauthor@mchsi.com).



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# GOLF Par Tee

The West Metro Golf  
Par Tee was Aug. 22 at  
Beaver Creek Golf Course.



Gina Wright, Sidney Jacobson, Randy Pelham, Tiffany Menke, Anna Mable and Fletcher Barry



David Adamiak and Matt Wagner



Lynda Clayton and Zachary Clayton



Nicholas Hullermann and Bryan Campbell



Tyler Gosnell and Thanasy Telios



Dustin Lindsey and Roy Jones



Max Hytone and Eric DeVries



Nicole Moreno and Elise Broken



Janelle Ward and Arita Balken



Rose Hanke and Natasha Lawler



# OUT & ABOUT



Aaron Tacker and Shawn Patterson



Randi Willard and Tony Betzer



Hayley Vanderpool, Adam Lenze, Eric Eigenfeld and Ben Proffitt



Mike Compiano and Monica McDowell



Jenna Schaeffer and Laura McNichols



Alex Wilson and Tessa Simons



Jason Siemens and Andrew Brommer



Nancy and Jay Reagan



Tim and Dawn Bauer



Joe Meyers and Tami Billerbeck



Jana Rieker and Nick Reuter



Lacy Miles and Dom Bottenfield



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