

# Living

MAGAZINE

## A Special BOND

Local grandparents share why living close to their grandkids is so important to them.

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# WELCOME

## A GRANDPA and his grandson

Jolene and I are new to this grandparenting thing. We are only weeks in, but, so far, so good. We had heard how wonderful the experience is from others, but, like most things in life, we didn't fully understand until we began to live it.



Our middle daughter, Samantha, got married a few years ago. She and her husband, Brady, then moved to Arizona. We missed them, and, thankfully, they missed us, too. As they began to talk about starting a family together, they came to the conclusion that they wanted to be close to family again and were moving back to the area.

We were able to see Samantha through the pregnancy process, and we were at the hospital shortly after their son was born. Holding Callahan in my arms for the first time was amazing, and doing so each time since has been as well. No phone call or video call could ever replace that.

I am greatly looking forward to the years ahead, too. Walking. Talking. Birthday parties. Ball games. And whatever he chooses to be involved in. But what I look forward to the most is the time we can spend together, just the two of us. Playing games at the kitchen table. Working on a project together in the garage. Going on boat rides. And just talking about whatever he wants to talk about.

My grandparents had all died by the time I was 5 years old, but I have a few wonderful memories of my Grandpa Lane. I can still envision him. In bib overalls. Sitting in his recliner. Looking at me and thinking how he could make me laugh. He would ask me if I wanted to see a monkey, and, of course, I always did. So I would jump up on his lap, and he would pull out his pocket watch and turn the shiny side over so I could see my reflection. And we both would giggle. I fell for that one repeatedly.

I was fortunate to be able to spend time with my grandpa, albeit not as much as I would have liked. I loved him dearly, and I want to do all I can to be sure my grandson and my future grandchildren will have those same opportunities with me.

This month, we share the stories of grandparents who live nearby their grandchildren and are able to create these types of cherished memories — and maybe see a few monkeys, too.

Thanks for reading. ■

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LENDER

# A Special BOND

Local grandparents share why living close to their grandkids is so important to them.



By Joe Baumgarten

These days, kids often grow up, move away and start family and careers far from where they grew up. Siblings are often scattered across the country and even the globe. Dinners with the extended family is now regulated to the holidays, when those who are able make the trip “back home.” But there is something about grandkids that brings about another family shift. Many young families decide their kids would benefit from having family close by, and many grandparents find retirement is the perfect time for making a move closer to family. Some of those grandparents who live close to their grandkids share what it means to them to form the special bonds that come from time spent together.

Bob and Regina Montgomery and their granddaughters enjoy time together.



# FEATURE

## Having the time

Molly and Dick Bennett have lived close to grandchildren Allison and Madeline since they were born. In fact, they live just a few blocks away.

“Living close to your grandchildren is important because it helps you maintain a close relationship with them. We get to see them grow up,” Dick explains. “We’ve had some influence on how they’ve grown. Hopefully, it’s been good,” he adds with a laugh and glance at his oldest granddaughter, Allison.

Allison, now a high-school senior, smiles back at her “Papa” and agrees wholeheartedly.

“I have lived close to them my whole life, just down the street. We have so much in common,” she says. “We go on the same bike trails, we go to the same ice cream shop. That would be hard if we didn’t live so close.”

“When I was a kid, my grandparents lived in Chicago, and I rarely saw them,” Molly says. “They weren’t a part of our lives. We know the girls’ friends; they know our friends. They invite us to their events, and we invite them to ours.”



Molly and Dick Bennett have lived close to grandchildren Allison and Madeline since they were born. In fact, they live just a few blocks away.

As with most things in life, the key is to find the right balance, the “sweet spot” of just the right amount of involvement.

“All that being said,” Molly says, “we try not to interfere with their lives.”

Grandparents are often blessed with a key factor: lots of available time. When the kids were young, Molly occasionally took care of them while their parents were at work.

“Oh yeah,” Allison suddenly recalls. “Remember that one time you took Madeline to the circus but I couldn’t go because I was in school? I was so jealous!”

“I still feel bad about that,” Molly laughs. “But, remember, you and I had two years of just us before Madeline came along.”

Now that the girls are older, they can do many fun activities and adventures together.

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They enjoy biking. When they have worn out the local trails, they pack everything up and ride the High Trestle Trail in Madrid. They recently rode their bikes down the trail to Valley Junction for pizza and bingo. Allison occasionally appears at Molly and Dick's Saturday pickleball group and gives the older folks a workout.

Their favorite activity to do, by far, is to have everyone together at Molly and Dick's summer cabin at the Lake of the Ozarks. While there, they enjoy all the classic "summers-at-the-cabin" activities: swimming, boating and hiking the trails.

"Grammy and I like to cook, do puzzles and play cards," Allison says.

Molly and Dick are regular attendees at the girls' school activities: plays, sports and special events.

"We don't get much time to talk to them, but they know we are there and always thank us for coming," Molly says.

One favorite annual event is the family's Valentine's Day celebration. Besides getting together for a meal, Molly arranges a game or theme for each year.

"A few years ago, we did a murder mystery. Everybody came in character. It was so much fun," Molly recalls.

To keep up with kids, Molly has embraced social media.

"They Snapchat me," she says proudly.

However, when it comes to technology, Dick explains the commonly understood house rule: "No cell phones at the table."

Allison elaborates, "I might pull out my phone for a few minutes just to check in, but when I'm here, I try not to be on it much at all. I feel very comfortable here. I feel at home."

"I feel like I tell my grandparents more than I tell my parents," Madeline says. "They don't get mad or tell me what to do. They just listen to me."

"When they are troubled or have troubles, they bring them to us," Dick echoes. "We are not their parents, so it's easier for us to avoid getting emotionally involved in the situation. We can see the bigger picture. The girls will come to us for our thoughts and guidance."

"We have the great advantage of being able to be in their lives but not have to be the disciplinarian," Molly says. "We can listen to their side of the story without judging or punishing. We get all the great stuff without all the hard stuff. We get the wagging of the tail."

## Present from the beginning

Like Dick and Molly, Bob and Regina Montgomery have been involved with their two granddaughters since birth.

"Regina and I have lived in Urbandale our whole lives," Bob explains. "One of our sons and his wife are also here. That means we are super-close to our two granddaughters. We get to see them at least once a week when we pick them up from school for an evening at our house."

Regina had a special role when the youngest granddaughter was born.

"Her mom had a lot going on at the time, between work, two young children, and moving houses. She asked if I could take the girls one evening a week. Bob and I would joke and say, 'Let's get the chicks.' Soon it became 'Chicklett Night.' We will pick them up from school, have dinner together, and help them with their homework."

Afterward, they might go to the park or swim in the complex's pool together. They also enjoy playing cards and board games together. Regina and Bob also have a significant supply of sidewalk chalk for artwork on the driveway.

When Bob and Regina were ready to downsize a few years ago, they moved into a townhome built to their specifications.

"I wanted to have a basement where the kids could hang out and be kids," Bob says. "A couple of times a year, they will come here and spend the night."

Going to the lake is also a major family gathering each summer.

"We've been going to Okoboji for one week each summer for all of our kids' lives and now all of our grandkids' lives," Bob says. "We do other things as well. We did a family Christmas trip to The Great Wolf Lodge in Kansas City this year."

"This is way more fun than parenting," Regina says. "It's less responsibility."

Bob shares his favorite quote, "Grandkids are your gift for raising successful kids."

"It's fun to watch your child be a parent. It's very rewarding," he says.

Familiarizing the girls with their lineage is another plus, Bob says.

"They know us, and they know Regina's mother, who is their great-grandmother. It gives them a better appreciation of where they come from," he says.

Bob is looking forward to what Dick and Molly are already enjoying.

"The girls know that they have someone here to lean on if they need to," he says. "It's not a big deal today since they are still young. As you get older, however, it's nice to know that you have a safety net."

## Sharing values

Continuing the trend, Marilee and Kent Myers also have two granddaughters, ages 9 and 11.

"We've lived close to them since they were born," Marilee says. "They live just a mile down the street."

"Each May, we give them a list of places to go and things to do in the Des Moines area," Marilee continues. "They pick their favorites, and one day each week during the summer they stay with us, and we do one or two of their choices. These include, among other things, aquatic centers, movies, parks, bowling, restaurant and picnic lunches, bike trails, library programs, trampoline centers, fishing, the Science Center, Blank Park Zoo, the State Fair and play productions. In addition, we do some at-home activities like crafts, baking, games and scavenger hunts. The list gets tweaked every year as they grow older, and we find new options."

Marilee and Kent are also looking for that sweet spot of just enough involvement but not too much.

"We try not to impede on the core family group," Kent says. "We get them for lunch every Sunday and one full day a week in summer."

Having raised two sons, the couple is excited to have two girls to grandparent.

"They are not as rambunctious as the boys were," Kent adds. "Our grandson out in D.C. is only a year old, but I can see that he's going to be much more active."

Being close to the two girls in Iowa has been fantastic, Kent says.

"We won the grandparent lottery here in Iowa with the girls, and my daughter-in-law's parents won the grandparent lottery out in D.C. with our grandson there," he says.

"Both Marilee and I traveled a lot in our jobs, but, now that we are retired, it's nice to see that we might have some impact on the girls' development — maybe share some of our values with them."

Now retired, the couple has made the penultimate grandparent sacrifice.

"They are what keeps us in Iowa in the winters," Marilee laughs.

"We enjoy being around them so much," Kent adds. "We love seeing them develop."

He acknowledges grandparenting is different from parenting.

"Grandfathers are like fathers but with no rules," he says. "If they want ice cream, we're going to go get some ice cream."

Kent and Marilee both agree their time



## FEATURE

together with the girls has made a positive impact on them.

“They get to experience life with a different generation,” Kent says.

Now that the girls are older, the activities that Marilee and Kent can do with them have gotten more ambitious.

“Last year, we went up to the Boone railroad. They have a quad bike that sits on the rails, and you pedal it down the track,” Kent says.

“We have taken them to a nearby orchard and picked strawberries together,” Marilee remembers. “I’ve also gotten them interested in sewing. Each girl picked out some fabric, and I helped them make their own pillowcases.”

The girls even tried their hand at removing the sword in the Urbandale Stone.

“I found it on the internet,” Marilee says. “It’s an actual sword buried in a stone. We read all about King Arthur and then each girl tried to pull out the sword.” (See [www.roadsideamerica.com/trip/49190](http://www.roadsideamerica.com/trip/49190).)

But it’s not just fun and games. Marilee volunteers for Meals on Wheels program and takes the girls along to deliver the meals.

“It’s good for everyone,” she says.



Merilee and Kent Myers let their grandchildren choose summer activities from a list of possibilities they create each year.

### Grandkids worth the move

After a lifetime of hard work, many older adults look to their retirement years as just-rewards. Dr. Dan and Elaine Hanson are no exception. After Dan’s career in higher education and volunteer management, the couple was more than ready to relax and enjoy



Now that they are retired, Dr. Dan and Elaine Hanson enjoy having more time for their grandchildren and appreciate one-on-one time with each.

retirement life. Rather than packing up and moving to Ft. Myers or South Padre Island, the Hansons chose to move to Iowa.

“We absolutely love living near our six grandchildren,” Elaine says, “and we feel so blessed that our retirement came to this fruition.”

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Elaine and Dan Hanson enjoy taking their grandkids to area holiday celebrations. This photo was taken before the birth of their sixth grandchild.

Entertaining six grandchildren — three boys and three girls ranging in age from 10 months to 7 years — is not a problem for these super-cool grandparents.

“We love reading books together and biking on the area trails,” Elaine says. A favorite activity is spotting deer and various birds in the wooded area close to their home. Of course, nothing can beat climbing into the lap of a grandparent for cuddles, hugs and kisses. One wonders who enjoys it more, the grandparent or the grandchild.

Like most kids these days, the grandkids are heavily engaged in a plethora of extracurricular activities like soccer, basketball, football and school functions. Not only do Elaine and Dan make it to the all-important games, but they also attend many of their practices.

The Hansons say they make excellent use of the Urbandale Public Library, where they can find great books to read and age-appropriate activities for the kids.

Living close to their grandchildren has many advantages for Dan and Elaine. First, spending so much time with the youngsters keeps the two of them active and flexible, they report.

“Our grandchildren keep us actively learning the latest about sports, movies, books and whatever they may be interested in, such as ships or Barbies,” Elaine adds.

Elaine says they also have the “opportunity” to care for their two youngest grandchildren every week. It’s a blessing for the grandchildren, for their parents, and for themselves — a true win-win-win.

Finally, what can be more exciting to a grandchild than having the grandparents all to themselves? No brother or sister, no mom, no dad. Just Mimi and Papa for a whole day.

“It gives us a wonderful opportunity to get to know them as unique individuals and to spoil them,” Elaine says.

Sociologists tell us that the unconditional love that grandparents give to their grandchildren tells them that they are loved just as they are. Grandparents can become fantastic mentors, coaches, champions, educators and role models of values that are so important in our world today.

But don’t bother telling this to the Hansons. They discovered this seven years ago.

## Plenty of fun to be found

Rob and Linda Wilson feel “totally blessed” to be near their four grandchildren. They have two in Grimes that are 1 and 3 years old and two in West Des Moines, also 1 and 3.

It would seem that having four grandchildren at such a young age would limit the amount of things they can do together, but not for Linda and Rob. When the weather is nice, they like to take walks on Urbandale’s many area trails. They also have a lot of fun exploring different playgrounds in the area, each with something different to offer. When the weather isn’t so nice, especially for the younger ones, they stay inside and play with toys. One of the kids’ favorite indoor activities to do with Grandma is the baking (kinda fun) and eating (more fun) of sugar cookies.

Entertaining such young ones, especially during winter in Iowa, is daunting enough for any parent, but the Wilsons have found a cornucopia of activities in the Urbandale area just in December alone.

“I look for age-appropriate activities at the local libraries, churches, businesses and parks,” she says.

One recommendation Linda offers is to borrow an Urbandale Public Library Adventure Pass ([www.urbandalelibrary.org/adventure-pass/](http://www.urbandalelibrary.org/adventure-pass/)).

“In December alone,” she says, “we used it to go to the Blank Park Zoo and the Des Moines Children’s Museum.”

They also had a wonderful time visiting the Miracle on 86th Street holiday lights display at the Charles Gabus Memorial Tree Park.

“We got some amazing photographs, especially of the 1-year-olds in front of the giant ‘JOY’ sign,” she says.

Also in December, they attended the monthly Toddler Time program at the Jester Park Nature Center. The kids enjoyed the program that taught them about different types of rocks. And, with December being the Christmas season, they found a couple of Christmas programs at the area churches to attend as a family.

“We went to the Comfort and Joy event at the Westview Church in Waukee and also the Christmas Carnival at The Bridge church in Johnston,” she says.

The ever-resourceful Linda even found some fun activities for everyone on New Years Eve — without having to keep the kids up past their bedtimes.

“We capped off 2024 and rang in 2025 at the Urbandale Library’s ‘Noon Year Eve’ party,” she laughs. “They had balloons, bubbles, crafts and a firetruck. The event ended with a balloon drop and a countdown at noon.”

Linda says she is grateful the City of Urbandale and the surrounding towns provide such a wide variety of fun activities for them to share with their very young grandchildren. ■



Rob and Linda Wilson manage to find many activities to enjoy with their grandchildren, despite their young age.

## RECIPE

# TACKLE wellness goals by adding a touch of green

Better-for-you recipes inspired by savory salad kits

*(Family Features)* Around the start of a new year, many people are setting their wellness intentions, from incorporating a variety of greens into meals to boosting daily step goals, drinking more water and practicing gratitude.

As part of the journey, it's important to rethink nutrition and your recipe repertoire to include better-for-you meals. For example, you can satisfy seafood cravings while getting your protein fix with Italian Crusted Salmon with Creamy Truffle Caesar Salad. This one-pan solution is paired with a Fresh Express Twisted Creamy Truffle Caesar Chopped Salad Kit, inspired by high-end dining experiences with flavors that transport you to the finest restaurants around the world.

The kit allows you to indulge in crunchy garlic brioche croutons paired with garden fresh crispy romaine lettuce, delicate sprinkles of truffle Parmesan cheese shreds and creamy dressing, transforming every bite into a sensation to be savored.

Visit [freshexpress.com](http://freshexpress.com) to discover more than 380 fresh recipes and find a store near you. ■

## Italian crusted salmon with creamy truffle Caesar salad

**Prep time:** 10 minutes

**Cook time:** 20 minutes

**Servings:** 2

- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons chopped, fresh rosemary
- 1/2 teaspoon honey
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 3 tablespoons panko breadcrumbs
- 3 tablespoons finely chopped walnuts
- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 2 salmon fillets
- nonstick cooking spray
- 1 bag (9.3 ounces) Fresh Express Twisted Caesar Creamy Truffle Caesar Chopped Kit Salad
- 2 lemon wedges (optional)

### DIRECTIONS

- Heat oven to 425 F. Line sheet pan with parchment paper.
- In small bowl, combine garlic, lemon juice, rosemary, honey and salt. In another small



bowl, combine breadcrumbs, walnuts and olive oil.

- Place salmon on prepared sheet pan. Spread mustard mixture over fish; sprinkle with panko mixture, pressing to adhere. Lightly coat with nonstick cooking spray.
- Bake 12-15 minutes, or until fish flakes easily with fork.
- Place greens from salad kit in large bowl. Drizzle with dressing; mix well.
- Evenly divide salad among two plates. Top with salmon. Serve each with lemon wedge, if desired.

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# NO BETTER Valentine gift than well-being at home

Stephanie, 70, has lived in her townhome in Urbandale for nearly 30 years and hopes to remain there, but her two sons are worried. Stephanie is healthy, but if she were to need assistance at some point, her sons can't always provide immediate help, as one lives out of state and the other travels for work.



Stephanie's sons' concerns are reasonable; staying in our homes independently as we age is not always possible. Health challenges can make living independently ill-advised, and full-time assistance at home is expensive.

So, you may be asking yourself, on your own behalf or on behalf of someone you love: "If moving into a community for older adults is not a desired option and there are concerns about health or independence issues, what can I do?"

Consider a continuing care at home (CC@H) membership. Usually administered by an organization that serves older adults, a CC@H program is designed to help people proactively focus on their health at home while planning for potential services and care down the road.

If you're interested in looking into such a program, make sure to ask specifically what it includes. A reputable CC@H program not only will offer services to enhance your well-being so you can remain

independent longer; it will also help fund future long-term care needs.

Here are some questions you'll want to consider asking before you join a program:

- **Does the program feature personal support?** Studies show people who embark on a life-enriching program or activity will be more likely to succeed with encouragement from a trusted adviser, advocate, or coach.

- **Does it include care costs?** A solid program will help pay for your care, if it's needed, whether through home healthcare or services in a community later on.

- **How long has the organization that's backing the program been in business, and what's its reputation?** Even if the program itself does offer all the services you're looking for, make sure you're comfortable with the organization itself. A reputable provider will have longevity and solid outcomes behind it.

Not all continuing care at home programs are created equal! If a specific one appeals to you, make sure it meets both your current and future needs and provides you with peace of mind. ■

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. To learn more, visit [wesleylife.org/wellahead](http://wesleylife.org/wellahead).

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# WHERE it all began

Couples share their stories of meeting at Denny Arthur's.



Becky and Jerry Peugh

For nearly 45 years now, Denny Arthur's has offered central Iowans a place to relax with friends over a drink, maybe even cut a little rug on its famous dance floor.

And one more thing: find love.

Julie Johnson, who has worked at the Urbandale establishment at 2400 86th St. since 1993, had noticed over the years that many of the couples who were regulars had something in common: They had met at the bar. With a 45th anniversary coming up in April, Johnson had an idea.

She reached out through social media to ask if any couples had met at the dance bar establishment.

"I came up with the idea for the Facebook post when talking to Jerry and Becky (a couple who frequent the establishment) about our upcoming 45th anniversary," she says. "They got married at Dennys in 2015. He asked if they were the only ones to do that. They are not, but it got me thinking about how many couples have met at Dennys."

Johnson wanted to know, and the best way these days to get a barometer on such matters is to go to social media. The response was great.

"We have had 100 comments," she says. "I had 31 couples that commented they met at Dennys."

Such was the case with Jerry and Becky. On Saturday, July 4, 2009, at Denny Arthurs, Jerry worked up enough courage to ask Becky to dance. The response? No. But, she didn't close the door entirely.

She initially said no, but did indicate she wanted to dance to a different song, Johnson relays. They continued to meet back up weekly at Dennys to dance, and, in December 2010, they were engaged and celebrated the occasion, naturally, at the very same place where it all began. And, on July 4, 2015, they were married. At Denny Arthur's.



The dancing has continued ever since. The longtime dance regulars can be found there nearly every week.

The same is true with Bob and Susan, who were introduced on Oct. 22, 1990. That's all it took. Once they danced together, it was all over. The couple was married in 1992 and held their reception at Denny Arthur's. When the dance floor was replaced in 1995, they retrieved several pieces of the floor for keepsakes for themselves and friends.

"We have the best customers," Johnson says. "We just have a way of bringing people together." ■



Bob and Susan Seeley then and now



# ESTATE planning for stages of life

Estate planning is not only about directing the distribution of your assets when you pass away. Effective planning helps you manage each stage of your life, depending on your specific needs.



Young parents need to protect and provide for their minor children. Older couples need to plan for their financial and healthcare quality of life. Following the death of a spouse, the survivor needs to address important legal issues. Retired couples want to protect their assets in the face of long-term care costs.

The process of estate planning raises difficult emotional and personal issues. Your loved ones will be affected by the plans you make now. If you fail to make plans, your spouse or family will be left to handle those

issues without guidance. For many people, the most difficult step in the estate planning process is deciding to do it.

Estate planning comprises three major areas: planning for incapacity, directing your wealth and preserving your assets.

The first component to estate planning is often overlooked. It is likely that, before you die, something will happen to you that will render you unable to assist in your financial or medical decisions. You should have in place contingent documents — financial power of attorney, healthcare power of attorney, and living will — that nominate somebody to help you make decisions.

The second step in estate planning is to direct your wealth. Your will or trust will designate your beneficiaries. Most people naturally think of planning for spouses, children and relatives first. But you also have to take into account the possibility

that your spouse may be in poor mental or physical health or that your children may be minors. Effective planning will consider these contingencies.

The third part of estate planning works to minimize taxes and preserve assets. Careful estate planning minimizes inheritance tax and preserves the recipient's basis for calculating capital gains taxes. Long term care costs can be devastating to a couples' savings. Both spouses should establish estate plans that will maximize asset transfers to your heirs and minimize estate taxation.

You are never too young to think about estate planning. It is vital for every person to be responsible enough to create a plan for themselves and their family. Consult an attorney who specializes in 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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# URBANDALE COUNCIL RECAP



## January 21, 2025 - Council Meeting

The Mayor and City Council met on Tuesday, January 21, and the night began with the Mayor and Chief of Police presenting the CALEA Accreditation award to the community, recognizing the Police Department's dedication to professionalism and excellence in law enforcement. Since 2013, the Urbandale Police Department has been accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, the premier accreditation body for policing in the nation. As one of only 11 accredited law enforcement agencies in the state of Iowa, (and one of only three in the state that achieve the advanced accreditation status) the Urbandale Police Department is committed

to meeting the standards of excellence required to maintain this prestigious recognition. Achieving this advanced accreditation status requires that the Urbandale Police Department meet almost 400 standards of performance and demonstrate compliance with them every year.

Four new members of the Urbandale Fire Department—Firefighter Paramedics Trenton Swartwoudt, Daniel Howieson, and Oscar Kruse, along with Firefighter EMT Jacob Schiller—took their oaths of office, committing to protect and serve the community.

The Greater Des Moines Partnership provided an update on economic development efforts, highlighting regional progress and opportunities for Urbandale.

Additionally, the results of the 2024 Community Survey were shared, offering valuable insights into residents' perspectives on life in Urbandale. Residents feel exceptionally safe, with ratings for overall safety and crime prevention services exceeding national averages. Inclusivity and engagement saw notable improvements, including stronger connections among residents, increased openness to diversity, and better care for vulnerable populations.

## January 7, 2025- Council Meeting

The Mayor and City Council met on Tuesday, January 7, 2025, and began by welcoming Joe Cacciatore as the newest Councilmember. He was officially sworn in after being appointed to fill a vacancy on the Council. The meeting also included the swearing-in of two new Police Officers, Alex Heckman and Dyllan Rosenbaum.

The Council also held a public hearing to discuss changes to the City's zoning to allow a Sikh place of worship, called a Gurudwara, to be built at 11000 Douglas Avenue. This included a first look at a new ordinance that would update zoning rules for places of worship across the city. These changes help show how Urbandale continues to grow as a welcoming and inclusive community for everyone.

## Newsletter Sign-Up



You get plenty of e-mail already, that's why the City's official e-newsletter is delivered only once per month. It's your place to get a quick, streamlined, monthly update about all things Urbandale. [www.urbandale.org/news](http://www.urbandale.org/news)



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**FAITH** By Steve Smith

## WORSHIP and witness

Our friends thoroughly enjoyed their experience at the local restaurant we visited with them recently. They will not hesitate to elaborate on their enjoyment of the meal to anyone who will listen.

In the same way, a Christ follower's appreciation of their relationship with the Lord will naturally result in a declaration of how good it is.



God's "good news" of which Paul said, "I am not ashamed" (Romans 1:16) is that every human being has a natural inclination to live contrary to God's word, will and way. We prefer to choose our own path (Isaiah 53:6). Our rebellion deserves God's wrath, but in His mercy, He made a way for us to be forgiven and become His forever children (Romans 6:23).

God's sinless Son, Jesus, died on the cross, taking upon Himself the punishment for our evil (Romans 5:8). Everyone who turns from their rebellion and believes He died for them personally receives pardon and new life in relationship with Him (John 11:25-26).

That we can go from being God's adversary to becoming a member of His family and trading a pointless for a purposeful existence through faith in Jesus is truly good news.

Paul described those who receive the good news this way: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ he is a new creature, the old things passed away; behold, new things have come" (2 Corinthians 5:17). Guilt and shame are replaced by forgiveness and acceptance. Ours is evil not condoned, but atoned for — God's wrath against us satisfied by Christ's sacrifice. His resurrection offered proof that God accepted the payment for sin.

Christ followers are not only rescued from the penalty of sin, but also from its present power to run and ruin our lives (Romans 6:3-6). God's Spirit's enables His children to "put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another..." (Colossians 3:12-13a).

To "feast" on God's gracious pardon of our sin, grand purpose in living for Him, great power over sin, genuine peace within, and good promise of spending eternity with Him — that is worship that can't help but spill over into our witness.

God's children captivated by His grace poured out on them in undeserved pardon are more likely to report to others what great things the Lord has done for us and how He had mercy on us (Mark 5:19).

If our witness is lagging, perhaps our worship is lacking. The witness of good news stated above is an invitation for those who've not done so to turn from self and trust Christ as Savior (2 Corinthians 5:20). ■

Information provided by Steve Smith, Creekside Church, 2743 82nd Place, Urbandale, 515-279-3919.

# A LEAP of faith

Jamisons' new life in Urbandale



Saralane Jamison and her husband, Christopher, did something some might find scary — they bought their house sight unseen. From California.

“We could tell it had good bones and was well taken care of, and we could add our personal touches to it,” she explains.

The Jamisons officially moved to Urbandale a year and a half ago and were drawn to the area because their parents live in Polk City and Johnston, and it was close to her work.

Since moving in, Jamison has found so much more to appreciate about the home.

“I love the windows overlooking our backyard, the woodwork, the amount of space, and our large yard that the kids can play in — not to mention the bike path,” she says.

The convenience of the home is nice, too. They’re in close proximity to stores like Hy-Vee, Target, Homemakers and more.

Jamison also enjoys the community at large, especially how friendly and welcoming their neighbors are ... even some newfound distant family members.

“We found out that we are related to our neighbors on the left,” Jamison shares. “I love that we are central enough to get to tons of areas all across the city. I love that my kids have lots of kids their age that they can play with. There are so many things I love about our neighborhood.”

When the family moved to town in summer 2023, they came in time to enjoy Urbandale’s beloved 4th of July parade.

“It was magical,” Jamison says. “Coming from a place where our neighbors barely spoke to each other, it just felt like we were home. It is



Saralane and Christopher Jamison are happy to be raising their children in Urbandale. The couple purchased their house without ever visiting it in person when they decided to move from California to Iowa.

hard to explain. I was in search of the ‘Gilmore Girls’ type town but slightly bigger, and I feel like I got that and more. All of the kid-friendly events that we have, the parks, it was easy for us to feel at home.”

Ultimately, Jamison says they lucked out with their move to Urbandale.

“I’m just so blessed and thankful that we

put in an offer during a climate where it was so hard to buy in Los Angeles, and our offer was accepted,” she reflects. “Then we moved here not knowing if our choice was a good choice, and it ended up being better than our dreams.”

She adds, “I am not sure this is our forever home, but I sure am glad to raise our family here.” ■



# COMMUNITY-WIDE book club kicks off



Urbandale Mayor Bob Andeweg announces the 2025 book selection for the All Urbandale Reads program is “The Light Pirate” by Lily Brooks-Dalton.

The City of Urbandale has announced “The Light Pirate” by Lily Brooks-Dalton as the 2025 selection for All Urbandale Reads, a citywide book club that unites the community through reading and discussion.

In addition to two community book discussions in May and September, the Urbandale Public Library will host a special guest speaker in October on the topic of climate change resilience.

Anyone who attends an All Urbandale Reads event in 2025 can enter a prize drawing for a Barnes and Noble gift card.

The All Urbandale Reads program is sponsored by the Urbandale Library Foundation, whose support provides multiple copies of the title for check out, as well as covering the costs for speakers and prizes.

For more details, visit [www.urbandalelibrary.org/all-urbandale-reads](http://www.urbandalelibrary.org/all-urbandale-reads) or sign up for the library’s newsletter for the latest updates.

### About the book

A Good Morning America Book Club pick and an NPR “Book We Love,” “The Light Pirate” is a gripping novel about resilience in a world reshaped by climate change.

As the publisher explains, the story is “told in four parts — power, water, light, and time — “The Light Pirate” mirrors the rhythms of the elements and the sometimes quick, sometimes slow dissolution of the world as we know it. It is a meditation on the changes we would rather not see, the future we would rather not greet, and a call back to the beauty and violence of an untamable wilderness.

“Florida is slipping away. As devastating weather patterns and rising sea levels wreak gradual havoc on the state’s infrastructure, a powerful hurricane approaches a small town on the southeastern coast. Kirby Lowe, an electrical line worker, his pregnant wife, Frida, and their two sons, Flip and Lucas, prepare for the worst. When the boys go missing just before the hurricane hits, Kirby heads out into the high winds in search of his children. Left alone, Frida goes into premature labor and gives birth to an unusual child, Wanda, whom she names after the catastrophic storm that ushers her into a society closer to collapse than ever before.

“As Florida continues to unravel, Wanda grows. Moving from childhood to adulthood, adapting not only to the changing landscape, but also to the people who stayed behind in a place abandoned by civilization, Wanda loses family, gains community and, ultimately, seeks adventure, love and purpose in a place remade by nature.” ■

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# FORBES exemplifies energy conservation

Study: Taking action builds sense of empowerment.

In 2024, Iowa faced billions of dollars in costs due to climate-related disasters, creating a worrisome situation for its residents. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that taking personal actions against climate change may help alleviate climate anxiety.

A recent study conducted by Bath University in the United Kingdom involving 10,000 young adults from around the globe found that 84% felt significantly apprehensive about environmental issues, with over 60% experiencing sadness and anxiety linked to climate change. Some individuals have even chosen not to have children due to concerns about their physical and financial well-being.

In response to these concerns, 185 scientists and professors from 32 Iowa colleges and universities issued their 14th annual Iowa Climate Statement (<https://ehsrc.public-health.uiowa.edu/iowa-climate-statements/>) to address the emotional impact of climate change on young people.

David Osterberg, professor emeritus at the University of Iowa and a supporter of the climate statement, remarked, "Climate change is not just a concern for those in California and Massachusetts. Iowans need to know there are people here trying to make a difference."

Iowans can promote energy efficiency by purchasing energy-efficient appliances, installing solar panels, and reducing energy consumption. However, Osterberg emphasizes the importance of supporting local initiatives to combat climate change.

The authors of the Iowa Climate Statement suggest that Iowans can



John Forbes had a geothermal heat pump installed.

transform despair into empowerment by taking action and connecting with like-minded individuals.

John Forbes, a pharmacist from Urbandale and former state lawmaker, understands those feelings. He did not expect to become an advocate for energy conservation when he entered the Iowa House of Representatives in 2013.

However, through his involvement in energy policy discussions, he soon recognized the connection between regulations and greenhouse gas emissions.

"I realized I needed to practice what I preached," Forbes said.

To reduce his carbon footprint, he abandoned his gas-powered vehicles for a fully electric Tesla and a gas/electric hybrid Lexus. He upgraded his home with geothermal heat pumps, energy-efficient windows, and low-energy lighting, cutting his energy costs by up to 40%.

In 2014, he added solar panels and a geothermal system to his Medicare pharmacy, which now covers 85% of its energy usage, increasing its value to buyers when he sold the business a decade later.

Although he has since stepped down from the Iowa House of Representatives, Forbes remains committed to sustainability. He has recently invested in solar panels for a distillery in southern Iowa using proceeds from the sale of his pharmacy business.

To find out how well you are doing in reducing your carbon footprint, check out the Carbon Footprint Calculator at [www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/carbon-footprint-calculator](http://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/carbon-footprint-calculator).

For more ideas on how you can reduce your impact on the environment, go to [www.un.org/en/actnow/ten-actions](http://www.un.org/en/actnow/ten-actions). ■

*Wayne Bruns is an Urbandale resident and a member of Sustainable Urbandale (formerly known as Urbandale Climate & Social Justice).*



John Forbes charges his Tesla vehicle.





# URBANDALE Public Library news

## RSV can cause serious illness in infants and older adults.

RSV can cause fever, runny nose, wheezing and more. Vaccines and antibodies can help protect those most at risk.

### Who should get the RSV vaccine?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends the RSV vaccine for

- All adults 75 and older.
- Adults 60-74 with medical conditions like heart or lung disease.
- Children 8-19 months who are at increased risk for severe illness.
- Pregnant women in weeks 32-36 of pregnancy.



Health and Human Services



Ask your healthcare provider about RSV vaccines for your family.

Source: cdc.gov

### AARP Tax-Aide

The Urbandale Public Library is one of the AARP Tax-Aide locations in the Des Moines metro area. Offered in cooperation with the IRS, assistance is available by appointment only. Appointments will be available until Tuesday, April 8. You can find more information and a link to schedule your appointment on our website under the “Resources” tab.

### All Urbandale Reads

All Urbandale Reads is a “one book, one community” reading initiative that encourages all Urbandale citizens to read and discuss the same book to unite the community and promote literacy through one inspiring read. The title selected for 2025 is “The Light Pirate” by Lily Brooks-Dalton. “Told in four parts — power, water, light and time — “The Light Pirate” mirrors the rhythms of the elements and the sometimes quick, sometimes slow dissolution of the world as we know it. It is a meditation on the changes we would rather not see, the future we would rather not greet, and a call back to the beauty and violence of an untamable wilderness” (provided by publisher). Multiple copies are available for checkout, and we hope you can join us for our book discussions in May and September, as well as guest speakers in September.

### Libraries with Heart

February is American Heart Month, and the library has partnered with the American Heart Association’s Libraries with Heart Campaign to offer blood pressure monitor kits for checkout. You can find the kits near the Reference Desk with other collection items like puzzles, memory kits, and knit/crochet kits.

### The Gift of Knowledge: DMU’s Body Donation Program

Edward Christopherson, body donation coordinator at Des Moines University, will share the vital role body donation programs play in advancing medical education and research on Tuesday, March 4 at 6 p.m. Learn about the history of this program, the requirements for donors, and the simple steps to register. The program will conclude with an educational display by current DMU students to answer questions and share their thoughts on how the program has shaped their education. ■

### Urbandale Public Library

3520 86th St., Urbandale  
515-278-3945  
www.urbandalelibrary.org  
Monday – Thursday: 9 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.  
Friday – Saturday: 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
Sunday: noon to 6 p.m.







# BUILDING LIFELONG FRIENDSHIPS

## Register for the 2025-26 school year!

Located in the heart of the metro, Urbandale is a big-time school district with a small-town feel. Our average graduating class size is 325 students providing many opportunities for students to get involved, stay connected, and feel a true sense of belonging. Families describe their experience in the Urbandale Community School District as welcoming, encouraging, caring, and supportive. Students develop lifelong learning skills while building lifelong friendships.

Additionally, any family can choose to attend Karen Acres Elementary which operates on a year-round schedule. At Karen Acres, students are in session the same number of days as other elementary schools, but breaks occur more frequently to give everyone a chance to reset and refresh.

Join our J-Hawk family by registering for the 2025-2026 school year!

**Now  
Open**

### Preschool Preregistration

Began online January 28, 2025

*For those needing assistance with the preschool preregistration process, contact the Urbandale Preschool Program at (515) 457-5855.*

**MAR  
3**

### K-12 Registration

Kindergarten-12th grade registration begins online March 3, 2025

[urbandaleschools.com/learn](http://urbandaleschools.com/learn)



Educational Equity Statement  
It is the policy of the Urbandale Community School District not to discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, religion, marital status (for programs), ethnic background, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, age (for employment), or socio-economic background (for program) in its educational programs and its employment practices. There is a grievance procedure for processing complaints of discrimination. If you have questions or a grievance related to this policy, please contact the District office at 2132 Aurora Avenue, Urbandale, IA or call 515-457-5000. The District's Equity Coordinator is Stephanie Davis, equitycoordinator@urbandaleschools.com.



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## EVENTS IN THE AREA

Check for cancellations

### Upcoming in Urbandale Living magazine:

**Foreign Exchange Students:** Have you hosted a foreign exchange student in the past or are hosting one this year? Tell us about sharing your home and culture with a student from abroad and what you learned from the experience. Email [tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com](mailto:tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com) to be included in the April issue.

### Talk with Officials

Saturdays, Feb. 22 and March 29, 10:30 a.m. to noon  
Urbandale Chamber of Commerce office, 2830 100th St., Suite 110, Urbandale, and available virtually

Talk with Officials is a forum for the community to connect with elected officials representing Urbandale at the state, county, city and school district. Space is limited. The Talk with Officials events are open to the general public and held on the last Saturday of each respective month. Registration is required for in-person attendance. Virtual attendance is unlimited; however, registration is still required to receive the link.

Invited elected officials include: Mayor Bob Andeweg, Sen. Matt Blake (D), Rep. Eddie Andrews (R), Rep. Dan Gehlbach (R), Rep. Larry McBurney (D), Polk County Supervisor Jill Altringer, School Board President Jason Menke.

To register, visit the chamber's calendar and click on the event: <https://businesses.uniquelyurbandale.com/events/calendar/2025-02-01?c=6>.

### Urbandale Historical Society events

Second Sunday events, 2 p.m.

Urbandale Public Library, 3520 86th St.

The Urbandale Historical Society will feature history programs at the Urbandale Public Library on the second Sunday of the month. Upcoming programs are:

- March 9, Urbandale High School Athletics and Activities, presented by Tim Carver.
- April 13, Starting Your Garden, by Megan Bannister.
- May 18, TBD.
- June 8, Urbandale Schools by Dr. Doca/Dean Hatch.

### DSM Book Festival

Saturday, March 22, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Franklin Event Center, 4801 Franklin Ave., Des Moines

Readers and book lovers in central Iowa will be thrilled to find an outstanding array of authors appearing at this free, fun-filled event, presented by Beaverdale Books and Beaverdale Neighborhood Association. In addition to author programs, panels, workshops and children's activities, the event will offer attendees the opportunity to have their books signed, visit with publishers, and enjoy mingling with fellow book lovers. For the complete schedule, visit <https://beaverdalebooks.com/dsmbookfestival/>.

Four headlining presentations will be offered in the venue's large theater, including fiction writer Claire Lombardo, historian Alexis Coe, award-winning Hanif Abdurraqib and AViD author C.J. Box.

# EVENTS IN THE AREA

To submit calendar items for consideration, send to [tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com](mailto:tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com)

Check for cancellations

## CITYVIEW'S Chocolate Walk

Feb. 21  
West Glen Town Center, 5465 Mills Civic Parkway, West Des Moines  
[chocolatewalk.dmcityview.com](http://chocolatewalk.dmcityview.com)  
CITYVIEW and West Glen Town Center will once again bring the Chocolate Walk to West Glen Town Center on Friday, Feb. 21 from 5-9 p.m. For a ticket price of \$25 (\$35 at the door), attendees will receive 10 drink tickets that can be redeemed for sample cocktails at participating venues. Participating establishments are Wellman's, Anna Dolce, Shotgun Betty's, Grimaldi's, The Irish, Tonic, El Fogon, The Breakfast Club, Coach's Pizza and Hurts Donut.



## Urbandale Senior Rec Center programs

7305 Aurora Ave.  
515-278-3907

A variety of programs are offered. For a full listing, more information and registration, visit the website, [www.urbandaleseniors.org](http://www.urbandaleseniors.org).

- **Cooking for One or Two, Thursday, March 13, 1-2 p.m.,** \$5 R/\$7 NR, deadline to register is March 6. One and two-person households are the fastest-growing segment of the population. Learn to use MyPlate for meal planning and unpack a toolbox of tips for planning, shopping and preparing well-balanced meals.
- **One-on-One Tech Support:** Sign up for a 30-minute appointment on a Friday afternoon through April to have high school students and tech experts from Waukee's APEX program provide one-on-one tech support at no charge. Bring your mobile device and a few questions about what is tripping you up.
- **5 Buck Bingo, Thursday, April 3, 1-2:30 p.m., free.** Bingo is back, and now it's easier to play. No registration is required. Play up to 10 rounds, and winners from each round will take home a choice of \$5 gift card.
- **Watercolor: Gerbera Daisies, Monday, March 24, 1-2 p.m.,** \$25 R/\$33 NR, deadline to register is March 17. Join in the fun of learning beginning watercolor with Amanda from Rainbow Lizard Design. Learn techniques then paint a guided work of art showcasing the bounty of spring colors in a riot of Gerbera daisies. ■

## Elks Annual St. Patrick's Day Celebration

Saturday, March 15, 5:30 p.m.  
West Des Moines Elks No. 2752, 2060 N.W. 94th St., Clive  
The Elks Annual St. Patrick's Day Celebration will begin with the Foy School of Irish Dancers performing at 5:45 p.m. They will perform for about 20 minutes, followed by the Elks' famous St. Paddy's Day corn beef and cabbage with Irish potatoes meal for \$12 per serving.

## Friendly Sons of St. Patrick Pre-Party and Parade

March 15 and March 17  
The Friendly Sons of St. Patrick is back with its St. Patrick's Day celebrations. Join them on Saturday, March 15, from 2-6 p.m. at The Shop DSM, 901 Cherry St., Des Moines, for a Pre-Paddy Party, featuring live music from Black Dirt Ramblers, a food truck and cash bar for an at-will donation. The parade is on Monday, March 17, and begins at noon. Participants will proceed from E. First Street, west on Grand Avenue to Eighth Street, with the parade officially ending at Eighth and Grand Avenue. The after party will be in the Des Moines Marriott Downtown Hotel. Visit [www.friendlysonsiowa.com](http://www.friendlysonsiowa.com) for more information.



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- Dogs of Service** March 2025
- Shift: The RAGBRAI Documentary** Jan 2025

*All Creatures Great and Small*

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# PLANNING a trip?

Do you travel out of state or out of the country, whether to visit family, to go on a vacation or to escape the Iowa winters?

Being a funeral home, we know there are times when a death occurs away from home. It happens more often than people would probably expect.

What people do not always realize is that it can be difficult to get a person transported back home — and there can be unexpected expenses.

While the funeral home does everything it can to make these situations as seamless as possible and to keep extra expenses at a minimum, there can still be some challenges.

Fortunately, there is an affordable solution that can provide a tremendous amount of peace of mind to those who frequently travel.

Travel plans offered through a funeral home can be very affordable (usually a modest one-time payment), and they can help ensure that, if the inevitable happens away from home, everything will be covered to bring the loved one back home to where services will be provided.

If you are a traveler — or plan to become one in your retirement years — then visit with your funeral provider of choice and ask if they offer a travel plan.

As we often like to say, you will be glad you did. ■

Information provided by Kathy Dunbar, Advanced Planning Counselor, Hamilton's on Westtown Parkway, 3601 Westtown Parkway, West Des Moines, IA 50266, 515-697-3681



# MEET Kylie Tiffany

For the love of children

Walnut Hills Elementary School has been the beloved “work home” of Kylie Tiffany for the last 10 years.

“I started working with kids at my church with a program called One Body that involves children with special needs,” she explains. “I really enjoyed working with the special needs kids. I heard about becoming an associate at the local schools. I applied and have been here ever since.”

Kylie says she enjoys working with children and that her job at Walnut Hills has been wonderful. Her main duty is working with Level 2 special education students. These students need a bit of academic support, some behavioral support, or both.

“We’re mostly in the general education classroom,” she says. “Sometimes, I modify the lesson that the teacher gives the class so that my students can do it, and sometimes I help my students stay on task. The goal is for them to eventually not need an associate’s help, so I try to help modify where I need to, help them stay on task, then I step back and let them do as much as possible on their own. If there are disruptions, I help the student get back on track.”

One of the joys Kylie finds in her work is being able to help her students grow academically. She recalls an example of one of her third-grade students, whom she has worked with since first grade.

“It is so much fun and joy to see how he has grown over the years and to know that I played a part in him getting to where he is now from where he began, and to see my students get to where they don’t need an associate anymore,” Kylie says. “Being able to be a part of that is amazing.”

She also enjoys getting to witness students find the “a-ha” moment and grasp a concept they have been working on for a long while.

Some of Kylie’s greatest challenges in her role involve handling certain behavioral issues.

“Sometimes, I see that a student is frustrated, but I don’t know why,” she shares. “The challenge is to figure out how to help the student get what is in their head to their mouth and communicate it so that I can help them better.”

Kylie also assists in deescalating students when they are frustrated or overwhelmed with a task.

“I tell them that the work that needs to be done doesn’t go away. For example, if there is a writing assignment and the student doesn’t like to write, we may do several sentences and take a break, then come back to it later.”

Kylie says it has been a journey to learn which strategies work and which ones don’t for each student under her tutelage. However, her journey isn’t done yet.

“I am in the para program that Waukee is doing through Western Governors University (WGU),” she shares. “I am doing schoolwork outside of school so I can become a special education teacher for mild to moderate levels. I hope that, in the next year and a half, I can have all my schooling done and start on this next journey.” ■



Kylie Tiffany enjoys working with kids with special needs as an associate.

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# RIBBON Cutting

A ribbon cutting was held for Workflow Coworking, 7177 Hickman Road, Urbandale, on Jan. 30.



Craedin Vetter and Chelsea Vetter



Jude Gaumer and Trison Vetter



Ryan Nady and Barry Hesse



Bryson Hammer and Lindsay Wesdorf



Andrea Gaumer, Emily Keegan and Jill Trost



Nick Dressen and Nick Sideris



Andy Gaumer and Greg Altmaier



Ann Hartz and Nick Sideris



Sarah Volkmann and Bella Gagne



# AM Exchange

Urbandale AM Exchange was held at HartSmart Products, 9850 Douglas Ave., on Jan. 28.



Creighton Cox, Brandon Hart and Shelia Twaroski



Luke Van Roekel and Jared Harrison



Karla Rangel and Mollie Frideres



Charlie Nicklaus and Zach Huntley



Megan Cowden and Rhonda Mock



Jessica Bishop and Brad Johannsen



Lanna Finch and Kayli Mernka



Kimberley Jackman and Josh Alvarez



Ashley Johnson and Robert Seaberg



Eric Meints and Pat Pithan



Alissa Martin and Keith Riden



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