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MAY 2025

*Living*

# ***Pampered Pets***

**Residents share how  
they go the extra mile  
to spoil their critters**

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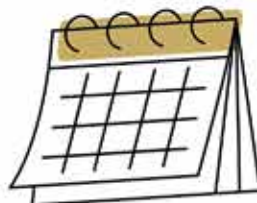


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WELCOME

# A LITTLE dog and a pink sweater

My only requirement in searching for a family pet was that it had to be a short-haired, masculine-looking dog. Now, before you start calling me sexist, you should know that I didn't really care if the dog was male or female. In fact, I preferred female dogs. I just didn't want a poodle named Fifi.

After lengthy searches, we eventually adopted a female miniature pinscher named Pudding. She was quite small and quite chubby. As such, Pudding was a fitting name, but it did not match the masculinity thing I was seeking. So, we compromised a bit and renamed her Roxy.

Keep in mind that, at the time, I was the father of three young girls, all who mothered this dog like a newborn child. They showered her with clothes and toys and treats. I wanted to be the dog.

As the dad, I was charged with the doggy duty of taking Roxy out for bathroom breaks and walks, and I was bound and determined to work the pudding off this dog. What I didn't expect was the harassment from my neighbor, Robert, as he mocked me and my little dog in her pink sweater.

"Hey, Goodman," he yelled at me one morning after one of our first walks. "You are looking tough with that little dog in the pink sweater!"

It clearly was not a macho moment. I got over it, eventually. But that pink sweater quietly disappeared.

Two decades and three dogs later, we were still pampering a pet. More clothes. More toys. More treats. And now for dogs of all sizes.

Today, we no longer have a dog, but we continue to hang on to much of the dog "stuff," apparently just in case we opt to pamper one again someday.

Time will tell. Meanwhile, the royal treatment we gave our dogs pales in comparison to how some residents spoil theirs. Whether you are a pet lover or not, you will certainly be amused by these stories.

Have a great month, and thanks for reading. ■



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# Pampered Pets

By Lindsey Giardino

Many pet owners view their animal companions as part of the family — deserving of the best care, lots of attention, and at least a few perks. Besides the usual walks, pet beds and toys, some of these pampered pets get extra special treatment: pup cups from drive-throughs, birthday parties, paw soaks and a special place in those important days of their owners' lives — as well as in their hearts.

Residents share how they go the extra mile to spoil their critters

Scott Bailey with Avocado, Ava for short, an iguana he and his wife, Ashley, adopted after it was found wandering the streets of Des Moines.



## FEATURE

### A zoo crew

Bradley Miller once said, “Teaching a child not to step on a caterpillar is as valuable to the child as it is to the caterpillar.”

Ashley Bailey firmly believes this to be true and holds deep respect for nature and the vulnerability of all creatures.

Since childhood, she has been surrounded by animals. She had a cat, a dog, hermit crabs, bunnies, a garter snake, and even tadpoles that she and her brother collected, placing them in a pool and watching them grow through their life cycle until they eventually hopped away.

Later in life, she met her husband, Scott Bailey. On their second meeting, he asked her if she wanted to feed one of his hermit crabs some plums.

“At that moment, I knew two things: that Dollar was the biggest hermit crab I have ever seen,” she says, “and that Scott, well, he was alright, too.”

From there, the couple had no specific plans to become pet parents to many animals.

“We simply knew we both liked them and enjoyed being around them,” Ashley says.

In the early years of their relationship, Scott bought a saltwater aquarium — and then another — bringing the ocean into their home.

“So many nights we were able to sit back and simply stare in awe at the little piece of the ocean right there in our living room,” Ashley shares.

The aquariums housed creatures like emerald crabs, cardinal fish, tomato clowns, a sea apple, sea slugs, candy cane shrimp, and even an accidental mantis shrimp.



The Baileys have two dogs, Roscoe and Lindi, that are pampered along with their more exotic pets.

As time passed, they learned that, while ocean life is incredible, it ultimately belongs in the ocean. During that same period, they visited a local shelter where they met Frida, a pup in poor condition. She was missing an ear, and her pupils weren't the same size.

At 3 years old, Frida — now Frida Mae Brown — went home with the

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Baileys and became beloved in their apartment complex, often running out into the hallway to lay down and receive pets.

Shortly after, they were asked to take in a hedgehog.

“We named her Wilson, as when we first handled her, she puffed, as hedgehogs do, and my first reaction was ‘I’m sorry, Wilson, I’m sorry,’ — a line from the movie ‘Castaway,’ — and that name stuck,” Ashley says.

Eight years ago, two humans, a cat, and a hedgehog moved into a small house on a quiet street in Elkhart to begin their lives... and grow their “zoo.”

Soon, they brought home an iguana that police had found wandering the streets of Des Moines. The Baileys fell in love with Avocado, Ava for short.

“Scott built her a large enclosure, and we assumed our little ‘family’ was complete,” Ashley says. “Not long after, we did get a call.”

The call came from AHeinz57 Rescue about a dog they had previously seen online named Lindsay (aka Lindi). They adopted her, and she became their second dog. Then came Ongo, a Russian tortoise in need of a home. And, soon

after, two bearded dragons joined the family.

“All of this within one year of moving into our home,” Ashley shares.

When the Baileys started looking for a companion for Lindi, who was still learning how to be a dog and enjoy toys and treats, they found Roscoe, a dog with an uncertain past.

“One summer evening, 4-year-old Roscoe came for a meet and greet,” Ashley recalls. “He casually meandered the lawn, navigated the house, sniffed the cat once, which earned him a ‘pap pap’ from Frida, and settled in. He spent the night to see how he did, and then, well, his owners never came for him, and he never went home.”

Suddenly, the Baileys’ small home in Elkhart became home to Roscoe — a massive Great Dane.

Since then, the couple has continued to welcome animals in need. They have rescued eight hedgehogs; a three-legged rat named Mabel; a hamster they named Ted E. Bear, Attorney at Law, after finding it on New Year’s Day after surviving more than 24 hours outside in an orange ball; a very sick blind and crippled bearded dragon that Scott syringe fed;



Scott Bailey with a hedgehog that is part of the family’s “zoo.”

and many others.

Today, the Baileys live with eight rescue pets.



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"However, over time, pets become family," Ashley says. "I recently read that, in Hawaii, they call caregivers of pets Kahu. This word, while not a direct translation of 'owner,' carries a deeper meaning, emphasizing the role of guardian, protector and steward of a beloved companion."

Kahu signifies the sacred responsibility of caring for and cherishing a pet, not as property, but as a cherished part of one's soul.

That's exactly how the Baileys feel.

And their pets are thoroughly spoiled. Scott grows a garden with an edible flower bed for their herbivores. Roscoe has two human-sized dog beds. When shopping for new couches, the Baileys chose ones Roscoe and Lindi could climb onto comfortably. Frida has multiple food dishes for her variety of meals and often takes the big chair in Scott's office, leaving Ashley to find him working from the smaller one. Lindi will only eat when hand-fed and was even honored in the Puppy Mill Hall of Fame.

"We spoil our pets with treats, time, patience and love," Ashley says.

And when Ashley's father was tragically killed by a car in 2022, it was the animals who

reminded her to keep going.

"I needed to feed them and give them their medications," she says. "I needed to interact with them. When a death like that happens, it's those things that you need to do that keep you putting one foot in front of the other."

Ultimately, the Baileys spoil their pets simply because they love them. They want them to be comfortable and to ease any suffering they might experience.

"They say in life to pay attention to what brings you joy," Ashley says. "I've always noticed I am the happiest when I am around animals, and so that's how I plan to spend my life. As a hospice nurse, I also find my animals bring others joy. Many of my patients enjoy funny stories about my animals or seeing their pictures or videos."

## Pampered kitties

Christine White grew fond of cats while studying veterinary technology. Shortly after graduating, she adopted Smokey, a 14-year-old black male cat. Later, she adopted Zita, a 13-year-old female with "torbie" fur (half tortoiseshell, half tabby), after the stray showed

up while White was living in Chicago.

"Smokey and Zita are my first adult pets, so they have been considered my 'first-born children,' long before I had children of my own," she shares.

Smokey and Zita live leisurely lives. They love spending time on White's screened-in porch, watching the birds at the feeders and other wildlife.

They are also welcome to sleep anywhere they like.

"At night, Zita sleeps on my head, and Smokey sleeps at Matt's feet," White says. "Smokey sits on my husband's lap when he works from home and has even made a cameo during his video meetings."

They get brushed daily and enjoy several scratching posts that double as toys for White's toddlers. The cats enjoy playtime, too — Smokey's favorite toy is a makeup brush, and Zita's is a catnip-filled lemon. Zita tests how many times a day she can counter-surf before getting caught, while Smokey hunts for spider webs on the patio in summer.

Every year on their birthday, the cats split a can of tuna.



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## FEATURE

"We put candles in the can of tuna and all sing Happy Birthday to them," White says. "They, of course, also get a stocking for the fireplace mantle at Christmas and join us as we open gifts on Christmas morning — mostly by attacking the ripped wrapping paper."

The Whites also budget for high-quality veterinary care, including annual visits for Zita to the ophthalmologist at Iowa State University to monitor her glaucoma. The cats receive annual dental cleanings, lab work and radiographs. They have been on monthly preventatives and prescription diets their entire lives to prevent bladder stones as well.

"Overall, we try to do whatever we can to ensure both their physical and mental health is as good as it can be," White says.

As a vet tech and now owner of Home Comfort Pet Nursing Services, White says this level of care comes naturally.

"Pampering pets is my passion," she says.

White's cats hold special meaning in her life, having stayed by her side through six moves, including from Chicago to Des Moines, and many milestones like marriage and raising children.



Smokey and Zita are pampered in their senior years by owner Christine White.

And White is keenly aware that pets live short lives.

"I have made it my passion, both personally and professionally, to provide them with the highest quality of care and compassion while they are with us," White says. "They are

'forever children,' meaning they are innocent creatures unable to advocate for themselves. Therefore, it is our duty as their caretakers to go above and beyond when it comes to protecting, nurturing and enriching their short little lives." ■

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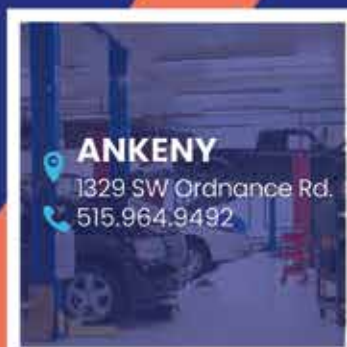
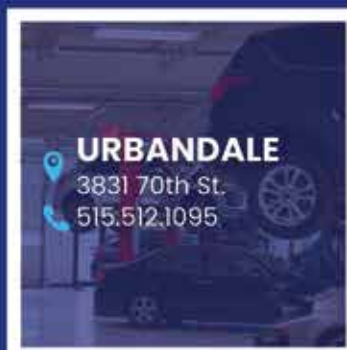


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# ASIAN ground turkey bowl is healthy and flavorful

When our girls were younger, and we were running from one activity to the next seemingly every night, we treated ourselves, often to Chinese take-out. Shane and the girls loved the sweet sauce on orange chicken. My choice was cashew chicken, and we all devoured the fried rice.

We like Asian food, but it has not been something I cook at home. This recipe caught my eye the other day, so I thought I would test it out. My family loved it!

I appreciate this Asian ground turkey bowl recipe for its perfect balance of flavors and textures. The savory turkey, cooked with garlic, ginger, hoisin sauce and soy sauce, brings a rich base that pairs well with the freshness of crunchy vegetables. It is a healthy yet satisfying dish with lean ground turkey providing a great source of protein.

I also appreciate how customizable it is. You may choose to add a little spice with sriracha or keep it mild. Adjust the flavors to your taste. The rice gives it a comforting feel, while the vibrant toppings — like cucumbers and lettuce — add just the right amount of crunch. It is one of those meals that feels indulgent but is actually good for you with only 366 calories and 32 grams of protein per serving.

Enjoy and let me know what you think. ■



## Asian ground turkey bowl

### Ingredients

- 2 pounds lean ground turkey
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 red pepper, diced
- 1 green pepper, diced
- 4 green onions, chopped
- 1.5 cups carrots, shredded
- .5 cup water chestnuts, chopped
- 4 teaspoons minced ginger
- 4 teaspoons minced garlic
- 4 tablespoons low sodium soy sauce
- .75 cup hoisin sauce
- 2 tablespoons rice vinegar
- 2 tablespoons sesame oil
- 4 cups rice (any variety – I use Jasmine)
- 1-2 cups lettuce, finely chopped
- 1-2 cups cucumbers, diced

### Directions

- Make sauce by combining hoisin sauce, soy sauce, rice vinegar and sesame oil. Save for later.
- Heat olive oil over medium high heat. Add turkey once hot and brown for 3-5 minutes. Push the



turkey to the sides of the pan. Add red and green bell peppers, green onions, water chestnuts, garlic and ginger. Stir together and cook for 4-7 minutes. Cook until turkey is cooked. The vegetables should be tender-crisp.

- Add sauce and cook 2-3 minutes. Sauce will thicken and coat the turkey and vegetables nicely. Serve turkey and vegetables on top of a bed of rice. Top with lettuce and cucumbers. You can add additional carrots and green onions if desired. Serves eight.

Information provided by Jolene Goodman, vice president of Big Green Umbrella Media.

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# WHEN IS the right time to start the conversation about senior living?

For many families in Ankeny, Polk City and across Iowa, the idea of moving a loved one into senior living can feel overwhelming. It is a delicate topic — one that is easy to delay until a crisis forces the decision. But waiting until the last minute often creates more stress, fewer choices and missed opportunities for a better quality of life.

So, when is the right time to start the conversation?

The answer is: sooner than you think.

Most older adults want to maintain their independence for as long as possible. But what we often overlook is that true independence can actually be supported — and extended — by the right environment. Senior living isn't about giving up freedom. In many cases, it's about regaining it.

Here are a few early signs that it might be time to start talking:

- You notice safety concerns like falls, confusion with medications, or difficulty navigating stairs or the shower.
- Meals are skipped or nutrition suffers, either from lack of appetite or difficulty cooking.
- Social isolation is increasing, and your loved one is spending more and more time alone.



- Caregiver burnout is building, whether you're the caregiver or another family member is feeling the strain.

The truth is, many families wait too long. They hold off out of love, guilt or the hope that things will improve. But the earlier you begin the conversation — when your loved one is still relatively independent — the more involved they can be in the decision-making process. They can tour communities, meet staff, and choose the place that feels like home, rather than feeling rushed or forced into a move later.

Starting the discussion doesn't mean making an immediate decision. It simply opens the door. It creates space for questions, hopes, concerns and thoughtful planning. It's not about pushing someone out of their home — it's about preserving dignity, safety and joy in the years ahead.

If you're unsure how to begin, start with curiosity: "What would make life easier for you right now?" "What would help you feel more comfortable and confident at home?" These gentle prompts can go a long way.

Talking early isn't just smart — it's compassionate. And it gives your loved one the chance to make their last move their best move. ■

Information provided by Erik Ofloy, Sales and Marketing Director at CopperWood at Prairie Trail, 2855 S.W. Vintage Parkway, Ankeny, IA 50023, 515-425-3262, eofloy@copperwoodsl.com.

## Join Us for Fun, Flavor & Community

Mark your calendar to explore CopperWood Senior Living.  
We're hosting a series of special events to bring our community together.

### Stars, Stripes and Sizzles A Backyard Bash at CopperWood

**Friday, May 23 • 5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.**

Celebrate summer with burgers and hot dogs, including festive sides. Enjoy bourbon lemonade, Patriot Punch and firecracker cookies, while enjoying yard games like cornhole and giant Jenga!

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# PALLIATIVE care: What is it, and how does it help?

**Q:** My wife's nurse practitioner suggested we look into palliative care. I'm nervous, as this is not a type of care I'm familiar with. My wife has diabetes and suffers from congestive heart failure. While her care team says she could live with her conditions for several years, we would both like her to have a better quality of life.

**What can palliative care do for her?**

**A:** Great question. Palliative care is a specialized form of care focused on providing relief from the symptoms, pain, and stress of a serious illness. Rather than trying to cure the illness itself, palliative care is designed to improve the quality of life for both the person living with illness and their loved ones.

**Here's what you should know about palliative care.**

Anyone with a serious or chronic health condition, regardless of their prognosis, can take advantage of it. The goal is to alleviate suffering and improve comfort by managing physical symptoms while also addressing emotional, social, and spiritual needs.

A variety of specialists, such as physicians, nurses, social workers, chaplains, and therapists, make up a palliative care team. They will all work together to create a care plan that's tailored to your wife's needs.

It helps manage symptoms such as pain, fatigue, nausea, breathing



difficulties, and anything else that goes along with illness. If your wife is dealing with discomfort related to her chronic condition, palliative care can significantly help decrease that.

It also supports family members. Assistance offered with palliative care can include counseling, caregiver support and education, and help navigating health care systems and decisions.

Palliative care doesn't replace other treatments. It can be used alongside curative treatments, helping to manage the side effects or help cope with difficult symptoms during treatments like chemotherapy or dialysis.

It's offered anywhere. If receiving care at home is preferable to you and your wife, make sure you find a provider that offers home-based palliative care.

The overall aim will be to provide your wife with enhanced quality of life while managing the challenges presented by her conditions. Palliative care is highly personalized, and most families report that it enhances comfort and helps everyone navigate the health care journey more smoothly. Best wishes to you both. ■

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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## REAL ESTATE

By Jacquelyn Duke

### WHY stage your home for sale?

When it comes to selling a home, first impressions matter — and that's where staging comes in. Home staging is the process of preparing and decorating a property to highlight its best features, making it more appealing to potential buyers. While it may seem like an extra step, staging can significantly impact how quickly your home sells and the price you receive.



A staged home helps buyers envision themselves living in the space. By decluttering, rearranging furniture and adding tasteful decor, you create a neutral, welcoming environment that resonates with a broader audience. This emotional connection can lead to faster offers, often at or above the asking price.

According to "Home Staging Statistics" from The Zebra, staged homes sell faster and for more money compared to non-staged properties.

It also helps your listing stand out in photos and online searches, which is especially important given that most buyers begin their home search digitally.

Even small staging efforts — like improving lighting, repainting walls in neutral tones or adding fresh plants — can make a big difference. Professional staging may require an upfront investment in time and/or money, but it is often offset by a quicker sale and higher return. Check if your Realtor offers a free consultation and accessory stage. ■

Information provided by Jacquelyn Duke REALTOR®, CRS, e-PRO, Realty One Group Impact, 617 S.W. Third St., Ankeny, IA 50023, 515-240-7483, jacquelyn@sellingcentraliowa.com, www.SellingCentralIowa.com.

## INVESTMENT

By Kyle Matzen

### SHOULD investors 'go it alone'?

Here's an interesting finding: A study by financial research firm Dalbar revealed that investors who worked with a financial advisor were far more likely to have estimated what they'll need for retirement, and much more likely to be satisfied with the amount of their retirement savings, than "do-it-yourself" investors.



These results reflect the effort of financial professionals to help clients like you by learning everything they can about your hopes for retirement. What kind of lifestyle do you desire? Where do you want to live? Would you be open to doing part-time work or consulting? By getting the answers to these and many other questions, a financial professional can help you create the appropriate savings and investing strategies.

Furthermore, a financial professional can help you avoid mistakes such as overreacting to short-term market declines by selling investments that still have good prospects and are still appropriate for your needs and goals.

In some areas of life, going it alone can be exciting — but when it comes to investing for your future, you may benefit from some company on the journey. ■

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# KIWANIS Seniors of the Month

The Polk City Kiwanis Club has named the following students Seniors of the Month.

## Elizabeth Ann Grier

"Hi, my name is Elizabeth Grier, but I go by Lizzy. I live in Polk City with my mom, Sara, and my cat, Holly. I moved to North Polk my sophomore year, and I have participated as a wrestling manager and in girls golf throughout high school. I am a member of the National Art Honor Society, and ceramics is my favorite part of the art program at North Polk. I attend St. Luke the Evangelistic Catholic Church in Ankeny. During the summer, I teach Red Cross swim lessons to people of all ages, as well as serving as a lifeguard for the city of Ankeny. This summer I plan to continue classes at DMACC and get my dental assistant license while on the waitlist for the dental hygiene program at DMACC.



specifically Newspaper." She is involved in Student Council and Environmental Club.

Zoe is enlisted in the Iowa Army National Guard and is serving one weekend each month at Camp Dodge. "I have been promoted twice already in less than a year to a Private First Class for referral to enlistment and leadership," she said. "Over the summer, I will complete my job training as a 42A, Human Resource Specialist, at Ft. Jackson, South Carolina. Afterwards, I plan to start my fall semester at Drake University and double major in law and something in the School of Journalism and Mass Communications."

## Grace Livvie Anne Cory

"My life is fully spent on loving people as I have been loved," she says. "I dedicate my life to serving God and showing everyone around me the joy I have through Christ. Community is a huge influence in my life.

I surround myself with people that support me and pick me up when I fall down. I can never thank my family enough for the love and happiness they have given me. They are truly the most important people in my life, and I can never say thank you enough. I love to be the person that helps other people. I try my best to make people feel seen and help them when they need it most."

Grace's parents are TJ and Shawn Cory of Alleman. Siblings are Joe, Cassandra, Grant, Claire and Janessa. Her favorite classes are

literature and art, and she participates in Art Honor Society, artist assistant, rugby and tennis. She has received academic achievement awards and the All-Conference 2024 Art Team award. She participates in church, youth group, Student Leadership Team, Hearts for Des Moines, Students Offering Services, and as a VBS volunteer.

After graduation, Grace says, "I plan on staying in the workforce but plan on doing internships with missionaries around the world who are preaching the gospel to the nations. I am also debating an internship at my church to better understand the bible. My ultimate goal is to serve Jesus all throughout my life."

## Reis Estey

"Hi! My name is Reis Estey, and I am a senior at North Polk. Throughout high school, I have participated in Student Council, Key Club, Environmental Club, National Honor Society, tennis and Mock Trial. In my free time, I love playing Uno with my family, watching sports with my friends, and am always looking to try new things. In the summers, I am a volunteer camp counselor for Childhood Cancer Connection (and they are always looking for extra help). This coming fall, I will be attending the University of Iowa and majoring in biochemistry."

Reis' parents are Andrew and Amanda Estey of Elkhart. Reis has one sibling, Maverick. ■



## Zoe Marquez

Zoe Marquez is the daughter of Elsa Isela Hernandez and Fidencio Miguel Marquez. She has one sibling, Ian Mikel Marquez Hernandez. Her favorite school subject is "anything English based,



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# TYPES of trusts and their benefits

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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	<b>Activities for Adults and Kids</b>

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for more information**

## LIBRARY

# POLK CITY Community Library news

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

The library will close at noon on Friday, June 27, and will be closed Saturday, June 28. Come and see us at the Four Seasons Festival.

### SUMMER READING PROGRAM

This year's theme is Level Up at Your Library. We have programs for kids, teens and adults.

**Kids and teens: June 1 – July 31.** Stop by the library to pick up our paper packets for details on how to participate. See what free events we have and how to earn prizes. We'll have Movies on Mondays, Story Time on Tuesdays, Comets Kids Club on Wednesdays (K-5), and our Performers Series on Thursdays during our summer reading program. There will also be teen events. Programming runs from June 9 to July 24, but you can begin logging your reading June 1.

**Adults: June 1 – July 31.** Tickets toward grand prizes can be earned by reading and attending programs. We have a fun lineup of summer programs including DIY programs, School of Adventure, The Secret History of Iowa and more.

### EVENTS

• **Movie Mondays, June 9, 16 and 23 10 a.m.** Each Monday, we will be showing a family movie in the library multi-purpose room. June 9, "Wreck-It Ralph"; June 16, "Jumanji"; June 23, "Frozen - Sing-Along."

• **Story Time, Tuesdays at 10 a.m. or 3 p.m.** Join us at the library for stories, songs, bubbles and a craft or activity. New this year: The 3 p.m. Story Time will be held at a variety of locations around town. Watch our website and social media posts for each week's location.

• **Comets Kids Club (K-5), Wednesdays at 10 a.m. or 11 a.m.** Join us at the library for fun arts and crafts activities. Weekly registration is required. Registration will open on Wednesday of the previous week. June 11, color and create a card deck box for your Reading Dragon cards; June 18, make your own travel game; June 25, design your own jigsaw puzzle.

#### • Thursday Summer Performers Series:

**June 12, 10 a.m.,** at Polk City Community Center in City Hall, Magician David Casas (sponsored by Mi-Fiber) provides family-friendly entertainment for audiences of all ages.

**June 19, 10 a.m.** at Luana Bank Community Room (use north entrance), Dinosaur Dimensions (sponsored by Luana Savings Bank). Children of all ages will meet dinosaurs (an amazing collection of realistic puppets) in this top-notch stage-style show.

**June 27, 6 p.m.** at Polk City Community Center in City Hall, Game Show Party (sponsored by Fareway). Join host Denny Ray Burn for fun, games and prizes. Game shows were at the start of television and have never gone away. Join the "live studio audience" for all the excitement of knowledge, skill and chance. Make a match, hit the buzzer, have a lucky guess or choose the right deal to go home with great memories and prizes.

• **Adult Crafternoon: Melted Crayon Jewelry, Tuesday, June 10, 2 p.m.** All supplies will be provided. Ages 17 and older, registration required. ■

### Polk City Community Library

1500 W. Broadway St., Polk City  
515-984-6119  
[www.polkcitylibrary.org](http://www.polkcitylibrary.org)  
Monday - Wednesday: 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.  
Thursday: 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.  
Friday: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Saturday: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
Sunday: closed

# IT'S NOT spoiling; it's self-care for you and your pet

May is Mental Health Awareness Month, and if you've ever cuddled your dog after a rough day or whispered secrets to your cat like it's your therapist, you already know: Pets are good for the soul. Their goofy antics, nonjudgmental snuggles, and the way they light up when you walk through the door can lower stress, ease anxiety and even reduce blood pressure.

So how do we thank them for all that emotional support? By caring not just for their physical health, but their mental health, too.

Yes, mental health matters for pets. An overstimulated cat or a lonely pup can experience the animal equivalent of burnout. Pampering helps — when done with purpose. Sure, the occasional pup cup or plush bed is lovely, but pampering isn't about excess. It's about intentional care.

The simplest and most meaningful way to pamper your pet? Your time. Pets crave connection. Social interaction prevents loneliness and enriches their emotional lives. Depending on the species, this might look like a walk around the block, a game of laser tag with your cat, or a few minutes training your parrot or cuddling your guinea pig and making



sure they have a companion.

You can also make grooming part of your bonding routine. Brushing and bathing (when done gently and at your pet's comfort level) can be a relaxing ritual that supports both hygiene and connection.

Just like us, pets are individuals with personalities shaped by temperament, past experiences, life stage and even hormones. They thrive when allowed to express themselves through species-specific behavior in a calm, enriching environment. Pay attention to triggers like unpredictable noise, visitors or schedule changes. Simple changes like calming music, enrichment activities to add interest and encourage exploration, or anti-anxiety tools during fireworks can make a world of difference.

So go ahead. Give your dog that extra treat or let your cat commandeer the comfiest blanket. Pampering isn't just fun — it's a meaningful way to show love. And, in a world that often feels overwhelming, those quiet, intentional moments with your pet may just be what both of you need to breathe a little easier. ■

Information provided by Dr. Amanda Gigler, Ankeny Animal & Avian Clinic, 742 S. Ankeny Blvd., Ankeny, 515-964-7387, [amandagigler@ankenyanimal.com](mailto:amandagigler@ankenyanimal.com).



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## May Is Hepatitis Awareness Month

Hepatitis is an inflammation of the liver that can cause health problems, such as liver cancer and liver failure.

Learn the ABCs of this serious virus.

### Hepatitis A

- Spread through contaminated food and drink.
- It's very contagious and you can spread the virus even if you don't have symptoms.

### Hepatitis B

- Spread through contact with an infected person's blood or other bodily fluids.
- There's no cure for hepatitis B, but treatment can delay or reduce the risk of developing liver cancer.

### Hepatitis C

- There isn't a vaccine to prevent hepatitis C, but treatment is available.
- Most people with hepatitis C can be cured with just 8–12 weeks of treatment.

## Help Protect Your Liver From Hepatitis



Ask your healthcare provider about hepatitis vaccines and testing.

Source: cdc.gov 4/25

## EDUCATION

By Jackie Wilson

## BUILDING a Comet legacy

NP Schools fundraiser May 31; all are invited.

Have you ever wondered what it's like to be a school principal for a day?

You might get the experience if you are awarded the winning auction bid during the North Polk Gala fundraiser.

This year, The Celebrate North Polk committee is hosting an event, Building a Comet Legacy, on May 31 at the FFA Enrichment Center on the Ankeny DMACC Campus. The annual event raises money to help enhance educational opportunities and extracurricular activities for all students.

The CNP distributes funds equally among North Polk's three groups: Fine Arts Boosters, Athletic Booster Club and North Polk Foundation. Representatives from these groups join forces to host this yearly event.

The fundraising committee was established in 2011 and consists of 24 volunteer members. Last year, they raised \$80,000 for NP Schools.

The group discusses and votes on the best way to spend the money. Past items include tablets, pottery wheel, senior scholarships, STEM materials, climbing net, rock wall and more.

Holly Hunter, chair of the CNP committee, says the Building A Comet Legacy theme came about after the district won several state athletic tournaments — plus, the academics at NP Schools consistently rank high.

"We're celebrating our success. Kids, parents and educators have had a fantastic year at the district," Hunter says.

Hunter has served on the CNP committee for five years and began volunteering because two of her kids attend North Polk.

"I'm really proud of the school district my kids go to," she reflects. "I've met a lot of good people in the district."

As the head of the committee, it's her goal to use funds wisely.

"We spend as little as possible and try to make as much as possible. We've had our announcer and auctioneer for free; we get a discount on food," she explains.

The evening consists of social hour, dinner, video program, live and silent auctions, games, live music and a dessert dash. High school tech team students are putting together a video of North Polk highlights to show at the gala.

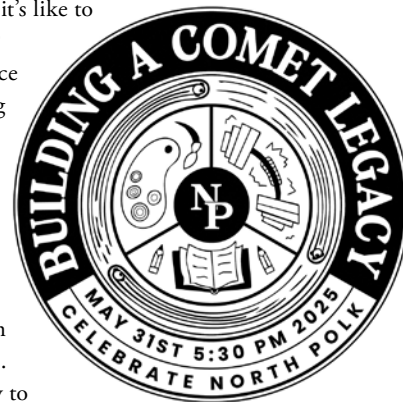
Hunter invites parents, grandparents, friends and community members of the district to attend.

"This event is for anyone. It's not a fancy event. It's open to friends and families of the district. Anyone who has a love for education and wants to help support North Polk students are welcome," she says.

She says it's a fantastic committee to serve on.

"It's such an awesome evening that helps support all kids in our district. It's a great night of camaraderie, where supporters come together to celebrate North Polk."

For information or tickets, visit [www.celebratenorthpolk.org](http://www.celebratenorthpolk.org). ■



# WHEN IS the right time for home projects?

Many homeowners' goals include projects like renovations or additions. Whether you want to update an outdated kitchen or bathroom or reconfigure a space to suit your family's needs better, the list of home projects can be exhilarating yet overwhelming.

When it comes time to tackle your list of home projects, you want to consider the time of year and your financial plan.



## Get your quotes

You can't create a budget without knowing what the home project will cost. We recommend getting multiple quotes to compare. Ask about the best times of year for your specific project and any off-season discounts.

While some home projects may not be large or offer returns, some projects (like kitchens and bathrooms) can provide a good return on investment. A good rule of thumb is to keep your budget under 30% of your property's market value.

## Decide how you want to finance

When it comes to financing your home project, you have options. The option that is best for you will depend on the project's cost, your financial health, and when you want it completed.

- **Personal savings:** This option may take longer (and hopefully, you are well-disciplined), but it can be a good option for a smaller project. Some companies may even offer a cash discount.

- **Personal loan:** If you don't want to use your savings, and the project is small to mid-size, a personal loan may be a good option.

- **Home equity loan:** A common and popular option, especially for larger home projects, home equity loans can offer lower interest rates than personal loans and allow for you to get started when you want instead of waiting.

- **Home equity lines of credit (HELOC):** If you have multiple projects and want more flexibility, a HELOC may be your best choice. You can use it when you need it and only pay back what you use.

- **Specialized savings account:** If your project is smaller, and you don't want to take out a loan or use your personal savings account, many banking institutions offer variable-rate savings programs to help you reach your goals faster.

If you've been putting off your home projects because of finances, we encourage you to review the above options with your banking institution and make a plan. You don't have to wait to enjoy your home however you want. ■

Information provided by Nikki Mulbrook, Mortgage Banker, NMLS 1752770, Home State Bank, 101 E. Bridge Road, Polk City, 515-329-8801.

## HOME STATE BANK *Happenings*

### 2<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL SECRET SAVERS SCAVENGERS HUNT COMING SOON!

We're excited to bring back our Secret Savers Scavenger Hunt across Polk City!



#### Scavenger Hunt:

June 2<sup>nd</sup> - June 27<sup>th</sup>

#### Bike Giveaway Presentation:

June 28<sup>th</sup> at the Four Seasons Festival from 11:30am - Noon

More details and participation materials coming soon!

## WELCOME NEW HIRES

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Universal Banker



**Tawnee Roecker**  
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## EVENTS IN THE AREA

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

Be sure to check for cancellations.

### Upcoming in North Polk Living magazine:

**Yards: Enjoying the green spaces around your home:** Do you have a lush, green lawn with plenty of open spaces? Tell us how you keep your yard healthy and how your family makes the best of the space. Perhaps your yard provides space for barbecues, fun around the pool or hot tub, room for play equipment and lawn games. Email [tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com](mailto:tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com) with your experiences enjoying the cool feeling of grass beneath your feet.

### Celebrate North Polk

Saturday, May 31, 5:30-11:30 p.m.  
DMACC FFA Enrichment Center, 1055 S.W. Prairie Trail Parkway, Ankeny

Celebrate North Polk is the biggest event of the year to raise money for the additional expenses North Polk Community School has and create opportunities for students, athletes and the arts. CNP distributes funds equally among Fine Arts Boosters, Athletic Booster Club and North Polk Foundation. To purchase tickets, visit [www.celebratenorthpolk.org](http://www.celebratenorthpolk.org).

### Memorial Day Ceremony

Monday, May 26, 9-11 a.m.  
Polk City Square

This Memorial Day, take a moment to reflect on what this day truly means for our community. Through words, traditions and tribute, we will honor our fallen heroes and the values they fought to protect. The community is welcome to join the Polk City American Legion Post 232 as we honor and remember those who gave the ultimate sacrifice. The ceremony will be held on the Polk City Square followed by refreshments at the Legion. In case of inclement weather, the ceremony will be held at the Legion, 114 W. Broadway. For more information, visit the Polk City Iowa American Legion Post 232 on Facebook.

### Garage sale, free will donations, and bake sale

Saturday, June 7, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.  
Sheldahl United Methodist Church, 609 6th St., Sheldahl

Free coffee and bottled water. Visit Slater Main Street 7:30-11:30 a.m. for Vendor Market and Junk in the Trunk.

### DMPA Free Outdoor Family Events

Des Moines Performing Arts announced the engagements headed to Des Moines as part of its 2025 Free Outdoor Family Events series. These free presentations are designed to engage new audiences and performing arts enthusiasts alike, while also removing the barrier of cost.

- **May 2-26:** OPTIK, Cowles Commons
- **June 14-17:** Bindlestiff Family Circus, parks across the metro
- **July 21-22:** Dupont Brass, parks across the metro
- **June 11, July 9, Aug. 13:** Storytime Under the Green Umbrella, Cowles Commons
- **June 21, July 12, Aug. 23:** Dancing on Cowles Commons

For more information including times and park locations, visit [www.desmoinesperformingarts.org/whats-on/series/free-outdoor-family-events](http://www.desmoinesperformingarts.org/whats-on/series/free-outdoor-family-events). ■

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# NORTH POLK COMETS

SUMMER SCHEDULE 2025

## V. BASEBALL

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
May 19	7:00PM	Ankeny	North Polk High School
May 21	7:00PM	Van Meter (DH)	North Polk High School
May 23	5:00PM	Waukee Northwest (DH)	North Polk High School
May 28	7:00PM	Carlisle	Carlisle Baseball Complex
May 29	7:00PM	Norwalk	North Polk High School
May 30	5:30PM	Hampton-Dumont-CAL	Hampton-Dumont High School
June 2	5:00PM	Gilbert (DH)	North Polk High School
June 4	7:00PM	Bondurant-Farrar	North Polk High School
June 6	2:00PM	Sioux City North (DH)	North Polk High School
June 11	7:00PM	Boone	Memorial Park
June 12	7:00PM	ADM	North Polk High School
June 13	5:00PM	Waverly-Shell Rock (DH)	North Polk High School
June 16	5:00PM	Carroll (DH)	North Polk High School
June 17	6:00PM	Linn-Mar	North Polk High School
June 19	7:30PM	Saydel	Saydel High School
June 23	5:00PM	Ballard (DH)	Nite Hawk Baseball Diamond
June 26	7:00PM	Boone	North Polk High School
June 26	7:00PM	Bondurant-Farrar	Bondurant-Farrar MS
June 27	10:00AM	Waukee	North Polk High School
June 27	12:15PM	Sergeant Bluff-Luton	North Polk High School
June 30	5:00PM	Winterset (DH)	Winterset High School
July 1	7:00PM	Webster City	North Polk High School
July 2	7:00PM	ADM	ADM High School
7/7/25	7:00PM	Carlisle	North Polk High School

## V. SOFTBALL

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
May 27	7:00PM	Webster City	Webster City High School
May 28	7:30PM	Carlisle	Carlisle High School
May 30	7:00PM	Ames	Ames
May 31	9:00AM	Multiple Schools	Williamsburg Recreation Center
June 2	5:00PM	Gilbert (DH)	North Polk High School
June 3	7:00PM	Waukee Northwest	North Polk High School
June 4	7:00PM	Bondurant-Farrar	North Polk High School
June 7	9:15AM	Multiple Schools	Oskaloosa
June 11	7:00PM	Boone	Gary Creasman Field
June 12	7:15PM	ADM	North Polk High School
June 13	3:00PM	Multiple Schools	Xavier High School
June 16	5:00PM	Carroll (DH)	North Polk High School
June 17	7:00PM	St. Edmond	North Polk High School
June 20-21	9:00AM	Multiple Schools	Harlan Rogers Sports Complex
June 23	5:00PM	Ballard (DH)	Ballard MS
June 24	7:00PM	Estherville Lincoln Central	North Polk High School
June 25	7:00PM	Boone	North Polk High School
June 26	7:00PM	Bondurant-Farrar	Bondurant-Farrar MS
June 28	6:00PM	Urbandale (DH)	Urbandale High School
June 30	5:00PM	Winterset	Winterset High School
June 30	7:00PM	Winterset	Winterset High School
July 1	7:00PM	Pella	North Polk High School
July 2	7:00PM	ADM	ADM High School
July 3	10:00AM	Multiple Schools	Dallas-Center Grimes
July 7	7:00PM	Carlisle	North Polk High School



Schedules are subject to change. Scan for up-to-date schedule.

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## POLK CITY gears up for a fun-filled season of community connection

As temperatures rise and the days grow longer, Polk City is welcoming the warmer months with a packed lineup of exciting events designed to bring people together. From outdoor markets to community celebrations, now is the perfect time to get involved, meet your neighbors and experience the joy of local connection.



- **Polk City Farmers Market**, Thursdays, May 16 – June 27, 4:30-8 p.m., Town Square. The weekly Farmers Market brings local produce, handmade goods, food trucks and live music to the heart of Polk City. Come stroll the square, meet vendors and enjoy a relaxed, welcoming vibe each Thursday evening.

- **Cops and Bobbers**, Saturday, May 18, 8:30-10 a.m., Big Creek Lake. Hosted by the Polk City Police Department and Iowa DNR, this event invites North Polk youth to fish alongside local officers — building relationships and making memories in the great outdoors.

- **Firefighters Deliver Pizza**, Tuesday, May 21, 5-8 p.m., Papa's Pizzeria. Order your favorite pizza and get a special delivery from a Polk City firefighter. All tips go directly to support the fire department. It's a fun and tasty way to give back.

- **Celebrate North Polk** at DMACC FFA Enrichment Center in Ankeny, Saturday, May 31, 5:30-11:30 p.m. Ankeny. Join us for an evening of community, connection and celebration. With food, music and great company, this event is the perfect way to close out May.

- **Citywide Garage Sale**, June 6-7. Get ready to hunt for treasures or clean out your garage. This community-wide sale is a great way to recycle, reuse and connect with neighbors.

- **Summer Kick-Off with Polk City Police**, Friday, June 6, 6-8 p.m., location TBA. Join the Polk City Police Officers Association for a family-friendly evening to welcome summer with fun activities and community spirit.

- **Polk City Classic Golf Tournament**, Thursday, June 27, 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Spend the day on the greens supporting local efforts while enjoying camaraderie and competition.

- **Four Seasons Festival**, June 28-29, at the Town Square. Cap off the season with Polk City's biggest celebration, featuring live entertainment, food, kids activities and more. ■

Information provided by Staci Allen, Executive Director, Go Polk City Chamber, P.O. Box 226, Polk City IA 50226, 515-984-3098, [admin@polkcitchamber.com](mailto:admin@polkcitchamber.com).

### Stay in the Know Scan and Go!



See what's happening in Polk City – events, festivals, and more, right at your fingertips!

## Join Us

### Pickleball Fanatics

Join Us Tuesday, Wednesday & Fridays  
8:30-11am \$2 ea. day to play in Air Condition!  
**NO PICKLEBALL THE MONTH OF JULY**

### Indoor Walking

Monday's 9am-12 noon • Friday 12-2pm

### Define Wellness

Thursday's 6am or 9am  
Register with Haley



### Assumption Book Club

5/17, 7/12, 8/16 • 9am in the Adult Faith Room

### Adoration/Benediction

3rd Tuesday of the Month at 6pm

5/20, 6/17, 7/15, 8/19

### Memorial Day Mass

@ Beaver Catholic Cemetery

5/26 at 9am

Parish Offices Closed for Memorial Day 5/26

### Baby Bottle Fundraiser for InnerVisions

5/31 - 6/1

### Rosary every Tuesday evening at 7:30pm

7/1 Assumption Parish Picnic (Potluck)

@ Centennial Park in Granger starting at 11am-1pm

### Fr. Dominic's 50th Birthday Celebration

6/7 after the 5pm Mass in the gym

### K of C & Catholic Women's Club Meetings

3rd Thurs. of the Month

Knights - 5/15 starting with rosary followed w/  
Mass meeting and dinner

CWC - Out to eat the month of May @ Food Depot @ 6pm

### Vacation Bible School (VBS)

Egypt - Journey with Joseph from Prison to Palace

6/23-27 from 9am-12 noon • K-5th Grade

Register online at the Church website

### Adult Summer Bible Study

Monday evenings @7pm on Catholicism 6/2-8/4

### Baptismal Prep Class

Intended for new parents and those who have  
not taken class within last 3 years.

5/18 and 7/13 @ 1pm

Register by calling Brenda in the Parish Office

1st Saturday of the Month morning Mass at 8am

MASS TIMES: Monday-Friday: 8am | Saturday: 5pm | Sunday: 9am & 5pm

RECONCILIATION: Saturdays at 4pm



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# CHAMBER Lunch

The Polk City Chamber of Commerce lunch was April 16 at Polk City City Hall.



Colby and Rob Cupp



Clayton Harreld and Tawnee Roecker



Kelley Hesse and Alex Van Overbeke



Mark Triplett and Brandon Converse



Staci Allen and Owen Trampe



Shane Torres and Eric Hockenberry

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## OUT & ABOUT



Jeremy Arends and Tiff McClain at the Polk City Chamber of Commerce lunch April 16 at Polk City City Hall.



Katie Egli and Brady Trent at the Polk City Chamber of Commerce lunch April 16 at Polk City City Hall.



Eric Hockenberry with Home State Bank, which sponsored the Polk City Chamber lunch on April 16.



North Polk Middle School staff and students participated in the Comet Relays on March 14. Photos courtesy of North Polk schools. Names not provided.

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# COMET Relays

North Polk Middle School staff and students participated in the Comet Relays on March 14.

Photos courtesy of North Polk schools. Names not provided.

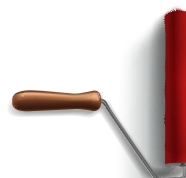


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# COMET Relays

North Polk Middle School staff and students participated in the Comet Relays on March 14.

Photos courtesy of North Polk schools. Names not provided.



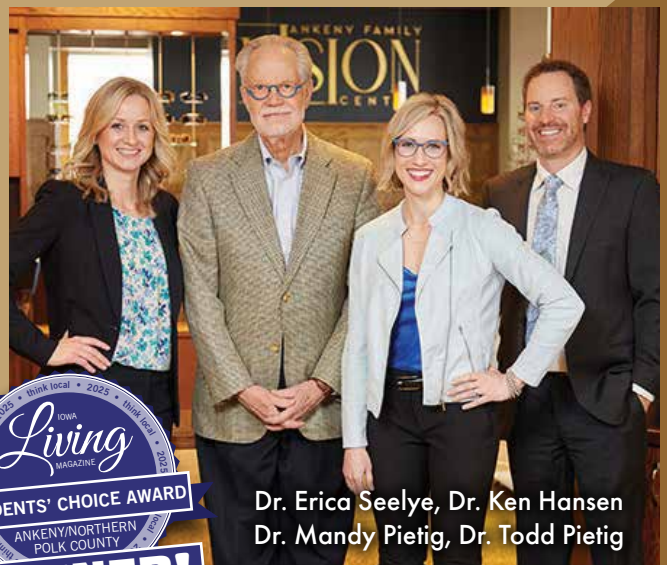
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# THE COMETS CORNER

NEWS FROM NORTH POLK CSD

MAY 2025

## NEW — AND ADDITIONAL — BASEBALL AND SOFTBALL FIELDS SET TO OPEN

After nearly two years of planning, a successful community referendum, and ongoing construction, North Polk's new baseball and softball fields are ready for their first pitch.

These additional fields provide much-needed space as student participation in activities continues to grow. Both feature 100% synthetic turf playing surfaces, updated lighting systems, dugouts with storage and team areas, bullpens, and batting cages. North Polk-branded elements are embedded throughout the complex, including a feature logo in both center fields and behind home plate.

As final concrete gets poured and finishing touches put in place, we will be having a grand opening here soon. **Please check our website and Facebook pages for updates and event details.**



## LET'S GET YOUR STUDENT(S) REGISTERED FOR SCHOOL!

If you're a North Polk family, you know spring is a busy time, between activities, field trips, and the end-of-year rush, a lot is going on. That said, the 2025–26 school year will be here before we know it, so now's the time to register.



Registration is open for both new students and returning families. To ensure your busing requests are processed in time for the start of the school year, **please complete registration by June 1.**

**Get started by scanning the QR code.**



## FREE SUMMER MEALS FOR KIDS

We know summer break can be tough for families when school meals aren't available. That's why we want to make sure you know about a helpful resource from the USDA: the **Summer Meals for Kids Site Finder**. It shows locations across the country where kids and teens can get free meals during the summer.



NO KID HUNGRY

Some sites offer meals that can be picked up and taken home, while others provide meals that are eaten on-site.

If you need help finding a location or have questions, the USDA National Hunger Hotline is available:

**1-866-3-HUNGRY (1-866-348-6479)** – English

**1-877-8-HAMBRE (1-877-842-6273)** – Spanish

**Text "Food" or "SFSP" to 914-342-7744** (Automated service available 24/7)

Hotline staff are available Monday through Friday, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. ET. **Help is just a call or text away.**





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