

Living

MAGAZINE

CAMPING IN STYLE

Residents share the joy
of traveling with the
conveniences.

Mom's chicken salad
RECIPE

**Rotary offers youth
exchange program**
EDUCATION

**Weber uses indoor golf
to return to the game**
NEIGHBOR



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WELCOME

ADVENTURES in camping

"Sorry, folks. Park's closed. The moose out front should have told you."

Those lines from actor John Candy in the 1983 hit movie "National Lampoon's Vacation" were echoing in my brain as we pulled away from Mahoney State Park in Nebraska a few decades ago. Jolene and I drove about an hour to this campsite with our three young daughters, all packed in a minivan with a large tent, sleeping bags and more camping gear than any family could ever need.

But, I didn't make reservations, and the campsite was full. It was after 7 p.m. on a Friday night, and, one way or another, we were going camping. I asked the friendly guard at the gate if he could recommend another campground. He suggested one just down the road, and we immediately trucked the minivan to it.

We were in luck, as this campground had a few open spots. We all smiled as we pulled up to our site, only to open the doors and hear the deafening roar of stock car engines coming from a nearby race track. It wasn't the peaceful evening around the campfire we envisioned, but we made the best of it and pitched our tent, filled our air mattresses and rolled out the sleeping bags.

Eventually, the races ended — just in time for the rain to start. We huddled together as the wind whipped our tent around and the rain seeped inside. In time, we fell asleep, only to be awakened by the cold rain that flowed over our now-deflated air mattresses and into our sleeping bags. So, at midnight, I hastily packed up the family and our soaking-wet belongings and took the drive back home.

That was the end of our tent-camping adventures. Not too much later, we bought a pop-up camper. Then, we sold that and upgraded to a travel trailer. Then, we sold that and purchased a different travel trailer. Then, we sold that and dished out for a class C motorhome, which we still have today — along with that same aforementioned tent. With all the kids out of the house today, neither one gets used much now, but we still have many wonderful memories of RV camping and one not-so-wonderful memory in a tent.

In this month's magazine, we share the stories of local residents who are enjoying life in their RVs and creating camping adventures. You can bet that they make campground reservations in advance.

Thanks for reading. ■

SHANE GOODMAN

President and Publisher
Big Green Umbrella Media
shane@dmcityview.com
515-953-4822, ext. 305



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

Angela Ossian
Advertising Account Executive
515-953-4822 x307
angela@iowalivingmagazines.com



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Camping is a great way for the Jennings family to spend time outdoors.

CAMPING IN STYLE

Residents share the joy of traveling with the conveniences.

By Ashley Rullestad

Sitting around a campfire, toasting s'mores, telling stories and visiting with friends and family after a day of enjoying nature and exploring the big outdoors. Ah, the joys of camping! And you don't have to hike into the woods — covered in bug spray — and pitch a tent to partake in the fun. Those who prefer to make the trip with a camper share why they like to have some of the conveniences of home — bed, bathroom, air conditioner and more — on the trip with them.



Adventure time

Ed and Erin Jennings and their kids, Evan, 15, and Elliott, 11, are no strangers to outdoor adventures. The family enjoys being outside biking or hiking and taking trips to explore new terrain. The boys have been involved with tent camping through Boy Scouts, but it was COVID that led Ed and Erin to think about getting a camper of their own.

"We decided to get our camper in 2020 during COVID because we wanted to travel and didn't want to fly," Erin says. "We thought this would be a good way to socially distance and still have some fun. Campers were hard to find, and we came across this one at an RV dealership. The salesman said it was already spoken for, but he showed it to us to see if we liked the layout. We loved it and begged the salesman to check with the potential buyers to see if they still wanted it. They changed their minds. It was meant to be."

They have a Starcraft Launch, one of a line of travel trailers that comes in a variety of sizes and layouts. What they like about theirs is how the boys' large bunks are in the back, and the

main bedroom is in the front. It's a perfect layout for their family of four.

The Jennings crew has taken the RV to Colorado, Nebraska, Arkansas, Missouri and many state parks in Iowa. They like to kayak and mountain bike, so they are usually dragging one or the other with them as well.

"The best was in Estes Park, Colorado," Erin says. "We stayed in a campground and had elk walking through our campsite multiple times a day. It was incredible."

When it comes to choosing an RV, the Jennings advise doing a lot of research first, then learn how to operate everything once it is purchased. Make sure the truck or tow vehicle can safely haul the weight.

"Keep a travel journal for your camper. I have recorded and journaled about all 31 trips we have taken with it. It is fun to go back and read about our adventures."

Family time

Jason Richards grew up camping with his family. His wife, Karla, had never camped until she met him, but they both caught the

bug together, camping before their girls were born then bringing them along on adventures. The kids, Tajia, now 14, and Taya, 11, started tent camping, but they switched to a camper in 2017 after getting tired of the cold and rain that often seemed to happen on their trips.

Now, they have a mid-size travel trailer — their second as a family. The selling points included storage space and how it is organized. Today, they usually camp with friends or family. For them, it is not about big adventures but simple times — good food, time together, and a chance to play some cards.

Although they enjoy visiting state parks like Maquoketa Caves and Backbone, it is sometimes difficult to take off enough time to get away. They often find themselves closer to home now. Prairie Flower at Saylorville Lake has quickly become one of their favorites, but they also like Ledges near Boone, Spring Lake by Jefferson, Swan Lake near Carroll, Dolliver State Park near Ortho and Fogle Lake Park Campground in Ringgold County — anywhere they can hang out, go hiking, or maybe kayak.

Their advice for new campers is to get advice from a veteran camper who knows

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FEATURE

the ropes when it comes to setup, tear down, emptying and winterizing.

“Also, camp close to home the first time,” Karla says. “I guarantee you forgot to put something in, and it’s nice to be able to quickly run back and get things. It’s such a great way to enjoy the fields, have fun, enjoy nature, and be together with family and friends.”

Friend time

Zach Hermesen grew up camping. When he and his wife, Carrie, started a family, they knew they wanted to continue that tradition.

“We knew we wanted to continue to create memories around a campfire, so we bought a camper and camp with friends and family all summer long,” Zach says. “We love camping because it’s an opportunity to unplug and just enjoy the company of the people you’re with. When we’re camping, we don’t feel the pressure of the day-to-day tasks at home. We can relax and just enjoy the time together.”

The family has a travel trailer camper they purchased in 2020, and it is great for them. They are a family of three, including



The Richards family likes the relaxed pace of camping.

daughter Halle, 6, so it is just the right amount of space. Their camper gives them a place to hang out and play games when it is rainy and a great space to cool down when needed on hot summer days. They also like to make meals

when they camp, so Carrie enjoys having a nice kitchen space.

The Hermesens like to travel around Iowa and explore new places, but their favorite spots are near Ankeny, Prairie Flower and Cherry



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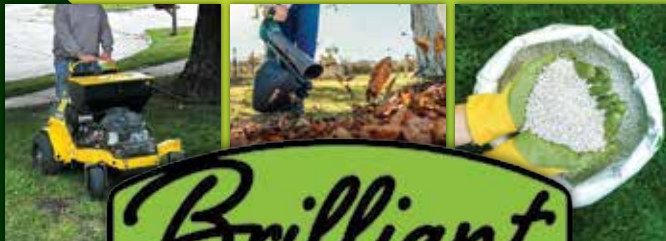
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Glen are both beautiful and such great spots to camp, Zach says.

Some of their favorite activities are yard games (intense games of bags are a must), going for walks, riding bikes, sitting around a fire, and just enjoying the slowed-down pace.

Camping also brings many memorable moments. One annual tradition their friend group has is called The Frost Buster. The husbands thought camping in April every year would be a fun way to welcome the camping season. Iowa weather in April can mean many things, and they have experienced it all, including rain, wind and, yes, even snow.

“But despite the unpredictable weather, every year The Frost Buster brings great times and lots and lots of laughs,” Zach says. “It has become a special tradition. My advice if you’re looking to start camping is to embrace the time with your family and to live in the moment. You don’t need to have the nicest camper or the fanciest gadgets to have a great time. Camping is what you make it. Relax, have fun, and enjoy your family and friends.” ■



The Hermstens regularly go camping with friends and family.

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TYPES OF RVs

Class A motorhomes: Largest drivable RVs, often associated with luxury and comfort. Their large bus frames are built on a truck chassis, providing RV manufacturers with the flexibility to make heavier and more spacious RVs.

Class B motorhomes: Smallest drivable RVs on the market. Also called campervans, they are nimble enough to fit in standard parking spaces yet big enough to have small kitchens, a flexible living and sleeping area, and sometimes even toilets and showers.

Class C motorhomes: Built on a van chassis with the living space constructed around the cab. Usually, the signature cab-over bed serves as a secondary sleeping space. These small motorhomes transform into comfortable living spaces when parked at the campground — especially those that come with one or more slide outs.

Fifth wheels: The largest towable RVs. A fifth wheel connects a pin-box from the front of the trailer to a u-shaped coupling mounted in a truck bed. Amenities like multiple slide outs, an outdoor kitchen, extendable patio, reclining chairs, office space and a kitchen island help make fifth wheels some of the most comfortable and luxurious trailers.

Toy haulers: An RV type all their own because of their garages. Toy haulers have living areas and a multi-purpose utility space designed to carry motorcycles, off-road utility vehicles,

kayaks, dirt bikes, or other toys inside of the RV.

Travel trailers: The most popular RVs on the market because they are versatile and come in many different lengths and weights. Larger travel trailers may have slide outs and separate living and sleeping quarters and amenities like a bunkhouse or outdoor kitchen. To tow a travel trailer, you must have a tow vehicle with a sufficient tow rating and a hitch installed to connect the trailer.

Pop-up campers: Hybrid RV tents. When the pop-up camper is in camping mode, the tent section of the trailer extends to provide more headroom, sleeping space and zippable sides and windows. People often choose pop-up campers because they are lightweight and easy to tow.

Tiny travel trailers: Sometimes called micro trailers, these have small and flexible living spaces. Tiny travel trailers include teardrop, fiberglass, clamshell and some smaller pop-ups. They are lightweight, and smaller SUVs and trucks can tow them.

Truck campers: Sit in the bed of a pickup truck, and, because of weight, they almost always require a one-ton or a dually (dual rear-wheel) truck. They range from lightweight with pop-up roof to more luxurious models with slide outs.

Find additional information at www.rvezy.com/blog/rv-types.

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WELLNESS plans

A smart way to care for pets — and your wallet

As pet owners, we all want to give our furry kiddos the best life possible — good food, lots of love, and high-quality veterinary care. But with rising costs and no end in sight, balancing what our pets need with a monthly budget can feel a little tricky. Fortunately, there is an increasingly available option that helps take the sting out of routine expenses: veterinary wellness plans.



Wellness plans bundle discounted preventive services — like exams, vaccines, lab work, and more — into one predictable monthly payment. They're designed to make it easier to budget for the care your pet needs throughout the year, rather than facing a big bill all at once during annual visits. Types of plans, customization and cancellation policies vary by clinic, so it's important to look closely

at what's included (and what's not) to be sure it fits your pet's needs.

Is this like pet insurance?

Not quite—but they work well together.

Wellness plans cover routine and preventive care, helping you stay on top of things like vaccines, parasite prevention and checkups. Pet insurance, by contrast, is designed for unexpected things like illnesses, injuries, emergency surgeries or sudden diagnostics. With insurance, you typically pay the full vet bill up front then submit a claim for reimbursement, while, with wellness plans, you pay the same amount each month over a year rather than one big bill and use the services when the pet is due. So, while wellness plans and insurance serve different purposes, together they can give you a fuller safety net — covering both the “everyday essentials” and the “just-in-case” moments.

One of the biggest advantages of wellness

plans is that they encourage regular checkups and preventive care — things that are easy to put off when life gets busy or budgets are tight. But staying on top of those routine visits often means catching little issues before they become big (and more expensive) ones. That kind of consistent care can lead to better outcomes, healthier pets, and fewer surprises down the road.

As costs continue to rise and the economy remains unpredictable, wellness plans can be a smart way to manage your pet's care — whether you are new to pet parenthood or have years of experience under your belt. If you are curious about how they work, your veterinary team can walk you through the details and help you decide if a plan fits your pet's needs and your budget. ■

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

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Dr. Jess Kelly

1. Do you have a special area of interest?

I'm passionate about working with exotic animals — whether it's parrots, rabbits, guinea pigs, or beyond. Helping expand care for these often-overlooked species is something I deeply value.

2. What's one tip you wish every pet owner knew?

I wish every pet owner knew the importance of monthly flea, tick, and heartworm prevention! Prevention is an easy, safe and effective way to protect your pet's health and quality of life — and your own peace of mind.

3. What do you love most about the bond between pets and their people?

I love how deeply genuine and unconditional the bond is. Pets aren't just animals — they are family, companions, and emotional support. I see firsthand how they bring comfort, routine, and joy into their owner's lives, often during their most vulnerable moments. It's a privilege to help people care for those who mean the world to them.



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FALL kids programs

As we start to say goodbye to a fantastic summer, Youth Librarians Ms. Brittany and Ms. Kelly are gearing up for a very special season of fall programming. Families with toddlers, preschoolers and elementary age children are sure to find both educational and entertaining opportunities at the library all season long.

Fall programs officially kick off on Tuesday, Sept. 2. All youth programs are designed to build early literacy skills and promote STEAM learning, depending on the age group. Here is a look at what is coming this fall.

Ankeny Kirkendall Public Library

1250 S.W. District Drive

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www.ankenyiowa.gov/library

Monday - Thursday: 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Friday and Saturday: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Sunday: 1-5 p.m.

WEEKLY PROGRAMS

- Story Times: Books, fingerplays, songs, dancing, bubbles and early literacy fun. Geared toward ages 2-5. Offered multiple days and times each week.

- Sing and Shake: Singing, dancing, bubbles and fun. Offered multiple times weekly.

- Babies and Books: A first introduction to books, rhymes, songs, music and more. Best for babies ages 0-18 months.

- K-5 Maker Crew: A different hands-on activity each month for students in kindergarten through fifth grade.

- K-5 Pokémon Club: Meet once a month to play Pokémon, trade cards, and connect with other fans. Open to children in kindergarten through fifth grade.

Can't make it on weekdays? We've got you covered. Each month includes two weekend programs and one evening program, so there's always time for family fun.

SEPTEMBER

- Sept. 2 – Drop-in Taste-It Tuesday: Pretzels, 6-6:45 p.m.
- Sept. 6 – Sing & Shake, 10 a.m.
- Sept. 21 – Drop-in Family Treasure Hunt, 2-4 p.m.

OCTOBER

- Oct. 4 – Drop-in Pick-a-Pumpkin Craft, 10 a.m. to noon
- Oct. 7 – Drop-in Taste-It Tuesday, 6-6:45 p.m.
- Oct. 19 – Drop-in Family Treasure Hunt, 2-4 p.m.

NOVEMBER

- Nov. 1 – Sing & Shake, 10 a.m.
- Nov. 4 – Drop-in Taste-It Tuesday, 6-6:45 p.m.
- Nov. 16 – Drop-in Family Treasure Hunt, 2-4 p.m.

Special Event: Drop-in Elephant Trunks & Treats. Join us on Oct. 30 from 9:30-11 a.m. for a special visit from beloved Mo Willems characters Elephant and Piggie. Come in costume and enjoy sweet treats from library staff as you explore the building and say hello to your favorite storybook friends.

We can't wait to see you this fall at the library for some fun. ■



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EVENTS IN THE AREA

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Upcoming in Ankeny Living magazine:

Home Improvement: Our annual Home Improvement issue in which we share residents' stories about their remodeling projects is coming up. Please share your stories about the work you have done on your home and how it has changed your use of the space and enjoyment of your home. Email tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com with your stories.

Costume Creations: Halloween fun is quickly approaching! If you forgo the off-the-rack costumes for something more creative, we want to hear from you. Tell us about your costume creations and the fun you had making them. Email tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com with your stories.

Uptown's Farmers Market

Every Saturday until Sept. 27, 8 a.m. to noon
Ankeny Market & Pavilion
Park, 715 W. First St.,
Uptown Ankeny

The 2025 Farmers Market will be open every Saturday through Sept. 27. Support local vendors featuring a variety of produce and items.

Acoustics Live in The District

Every Thursday through September, 5:30-8:30 p.m.

The District at Prairie Trail, S.W. District Drive, Ankeny

Enjoy live acoustic sets from your favorite local artists. The music comes to life on the patios of your favorite District restaurants, rotating weekly for the perfect summer vibe. Check The District at Prairie Trail's social media for lineups and patio locations each week. Enjoy a summer of music, food and community.

Martini Fest

Friday, Sept. 19, 5-9 p.m.
West Glen Town Center

CITYVIEW is bringing Martini Fest back to West Glen Town Center. For a ticket price of \$25 (tickets will be \$35 at the event), attendees will receive 10 tickets that can be redeemed at each participating stop for a sample-size martini. Reserve your tickets at www.eventbrite.com/e/cityview-martini-fest-2025-tickets-1291852588869 now so you can avoid registration lines at the event.

Family Fun Night at Edencrest Siena Hills

Aug. 29, Sept. 26, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
455 S.W. Ankeny Road, Ankeny

The public is invited to Family Fun Night at Edencrest at Siena Hills. Enjoy food, live entertainment, kids' activities and ice cream.

Ankeny Area Historical Society Ice Cream Social

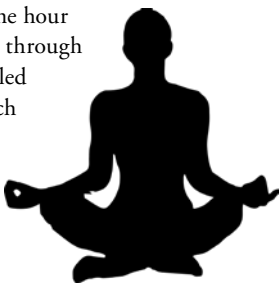
Sunday, Aug. 24, 2-4 p.m.
301 S.W. Third St., Ankeny

The 20th Annual Ice Cream Social at the Historical Society will include music, yard games, homemade desserts, ice cream and great conversation. The house and barn museums will be open for touring. The Police Department will be honored for its 122 years of service. Freewill donation. Bring the family. ■

Yoga in the Park

Saturdays through Aug. 30, 8-9 a.m.
Wagner Park, 410 W. First St., Ankeny

Bring a yoga mat and a friend to enjoy one hour of free outdoor yoga every Saturday morning through Aug. 30 at Wagner Park. Yoga in the Park is led by a different professional yoga instructor each week. Yoga in the Park is designed for improving community health, energy and relaxation. People of all ages and all skill levels are welcome to attend. Yoga in the Park is sponsored by UnityPoint Health - Des Moines. For more information, including a complete list of instructors, visit www.ankenyiowa.gov/465/Yoga-in-the-Park.



Halfway to St. Pat's Charity Car Show

Sunday, Sept. 14
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www.friendlysonsiowa.com

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INVESTMENT

By Kent Patterson

YOU HAVE an estate plan whether you know it or not

Think estate planning is only for the wealthy or elderly? Think again. If you own anything — a home, a car, a savings account, even a pet — you already have an estate plan. The only question is: Did you create it, or will your state do it for you? When someone passes away without an estate plan, state laws take over, deciding who gets what and when. This legal process may not reflect your wishes. That's why taking control of your assets through a personal estate plan should be a top priority.



At its core, estate planning is about clarifying your wishes and making things easier for your heirs. It ensures your assets are distributed according to your preferences, designates who will make decisions on your behalf if you can't and provides guidance for your care in a medical crisis. Most plans include four key components:

1. A will — This document outlines how your assets should be distributed after your death and names an executor to oversee the process in probate court. It can also designate guardians for minor children. Keep in mind that a will doesn't cover everything — certain transfer on death (TOD) accounts and jointly held property may bypass your will entirely.

2. Power of attorney — If you become incapacitated, you'll want someone you trust to be able to make decisions on your behalf. A durable power of attorney designates such a person, helping to ensure your bills are paid, your business continues (if you have one) and your wishes are honored.

3. Health care directive — Sometimes called a living will, this document spells out your preferences for medical treatment if you're unable to speak for yourself. It can also designate someone to make health care decisions for you.

4. Beneficiary designations — Accounts like 401(k)s, IRAs and life insurance policies transfer directly to the people you name, regardless of what your will says. It's essential to review these beneficiary designations regularly, especially after significant life events such as marriage, divorce, death of a spouse or the birth of a child.

One common myth is that a will is all you need. But wills only take effect after death; they don't help if you're alive but unable to make decisions. Another misconception is that estate planning is only for the wealthy. In truth, planning is about more than money — it's about making things easier for the people you love during difficult times.

An effective estate plan can prevent costly legal battles, reduce confusion and give your loved ones a clear roadmap to follow. It also allows you to leave a legacy that reflects your values and priorities. As your life changes, your estate plan should change along with it. Review your documents every few years or after major life events. It's often a good idea to seek help with such reviews. Your financial advisor or attorney can guide you through the process, ensuring your plan fits your unique circumstances.

In the end, estate planning isn't just about planning for what happens when you are gone. It's about feeling confident, knowing that what matters most — your family, your purpose, your legacy — is protected. ■

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Member SIPC. Information provided by Kent A Patterson, RICP®, AAMS®, Financial Advisor, 2005 S. Ankeny Blvd., Suite 500, Ankeny, IA 50023, 515-965-6901.

TO believe

God has what we need

I've been thinking a lot lately about what it means to believe in God. (I'm a pastor in a Christian faith tradition.) At this time in history and in our community, there probably aren't many people who haven't heard of "God" or the word "Faith." Quite the contrary, most can probably describe who protestant Christians identify as God, maybe even better than those of us who claim to know God best.



But how does a person go from describing God to "believing" in God? It can be hard to describe how someone should start believing — in anything. "To believe" can be defined as accepting something as true. I accept that God is real and that the truth of God's existence matters. Is that faith? "Faith" is defined as a complete trust in something. Is that also what it means "to believe" in God?

Over the next few months, I'll be offering suggestions (much like other pages in this magazine) on how you might consider stepping into the topic of this page — "FAITH." None of these suggestions will be perfect. None of them are intended to be in any order or be the final answer to all questions. I pray (sincerely) that these articles might encourage you, whether you have never considered believing in God or you have found that you can trust God has all that you need.

This month, let's step back into the definition of faith — a complete trust in something. How does one come to "trust" in God or begin to trust that God is even real? I believe that the Bible teaches that God desires to be known and that God is reaching out to us in love — even before we understand what that means. One of the ways I've learned to trust in God has less to do with finding facts or ways to prove God is real and more to do with learning through experience that God is trustworthy and can provide all that I need.

In the Bible, God teaches that if we are hungry or thirsty (for literal bread or spiritual well-being) that we should ask and trust that God can provide. Why not try that together over this next month? Perhaps the prayer below is one we could all use, without regard to our current understanding of "faith."

"God, I'd like to know you more. I'd like to believe in new ways. I want to learn to trust that you can provide what I need and that you will help me to believe. Would you provide to me what I'm missing — whether it is daily bread or deep connection and love — so that I might have new reasons to trust You? Please help me. I am grateful you hear me."

WHEN God answers, you can just say, "Thank you," and know that's a great place to begin (again). By the way, I'm praying this same prayer — not just for you, but also with you. When God answers — because God has answered this prayer for me many times before — I, too, will say, "Thank you, God," and learn all over again what it means to believe. ■

Information provided by John Wagner, campus pastor,
Christian Life Center, Ankeny First United Methodist Church,
john.wagner@ankenyfirst.org.

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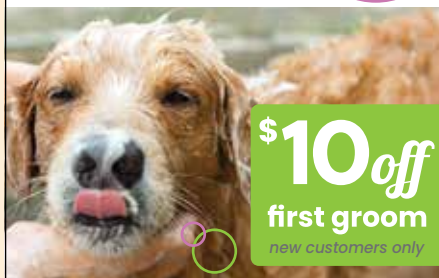
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EDUCATION

By Ashley Rullestad

EXPAND your horizons

Ankeny Rotary offers youth exchange program for high school students.



Second semester host parents Juan Arias and Patty Mungaia; Ada Sallares, Rotary Youth Exchange student from Barcelona, Spain (attended Ankeny Centennial High School the 2024-2025 school year); and first semester host parents Brenda and Steve Wieneke.

Rotary International has been offering a Rotary Youth Exchange program to high school students for 50 years. This program connects cultures, inspires service, and creates friendships that last a lifetime. The two Rotary Clubs in Ankeny (Noon and Evening) collaborate with Rotary District 6000 on the Rotary Youth Exchange (RYE) program by offering Iowa students a 10-month, long-term travel abroad opportunity.

"RYE provides the opportunity for young people to be Youth Ambassadors around the world," Youth Services Coordinator Steve Wieneke says. "The program's goal is for youth to advance their education, grow in global understanding, and contribute to local and international communities by allowing them to attend school in a different country."

Students who travel outbound live with host families in their adopted country under the supervision of the local host Rotary club. Because of the lengthy history of the Rotary Youth Exchange program, its long-term exchange program is known as one of the largest, best administered, safest and most economical program in the world.

The RYE outbound program application window runs from mid-August through mid-November annually. Outbound students and their parents complete an in-person interview in late November. Students who are accepted to participate in the program are informed of their approval shortly after interviews. They learn of the country they will be traveling to by early January, and they begin training to prepare for the next 18 months.

The cost to travel abroad as an RYE outbound student is usually around \$10,000 each year depending upon the country the student visits. Rotary Clubs may elect to provide financial assistance to cover incidental expenses.

Ankeny families are also invited to host students from abroad. Rotary clubs have the flexibility of offering the hosting of one student with one, two, or three host families during the school year. The Rotary Clubs of Ankeny provide monthly financial support to exchange students, but host families are not paid for hosting RYE students. RYE students are expected to participate in Rotary activities at the local club and district levels during the year.

Those interested in hosting will need to provide a private bedroom (or shared bedroom with no more than one of your own children of the same gender), a desire to welcome an exchange student to be part of your family, and a willingness to help an exchange student to learn English and immerse themselves in American culture.

More information can be found by visiting ankenyr Rotary.org or contacting Steve Wieneke, Rotary Club of Ankeny Evening Youth Services Coordinator, swieneked6k@gmail.com. ■

MOM'S Chicken Salad

Lately, I've been hooked on chicken salad — making a fresh batch every week for quick, satisfying lunches and the occasional no-fuss dinner. It is incredibly convenient to have a flavorful, ready-to-eat meal waiting in the fridge. I love its versatility, too, as it is perfect to pile on toast, toss over greens, or simply enjoy by the spoonful.



This version (I can't really call it a recipe) is more of a method passed down from my mother. She never measured anything, but just added a bit of this and a scoop of that, adjusting as she tasted. I have kept that spirit but added a few of my own touches along the way. I sometimes swap out the mayo for Greek yogurt, skip the onions (some family members are not fans), and change up the nuts depending on what I have on hand. I also ditched the sugar in favor of honey or a splash of lemon juice for brightness. Personally, I leave out mustard — but if you love that tangy kick, try stirring in a tablespoon of Dijon for a bold, earthy note.

It's a flexible formula that can be adjusted to your tastes — and your family's. Enjoy! ■

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

Lois' Chicken Salad

Ingredients:

- 3 cups chicken, diced
- ½-1 cup celery, diced
- ¼-½ cup onion, minced (optional)
- ½-1 cup of red grapes, cut in half (or use mandarin oranges)
- ¼-¾ cup pecans, chopped (or use walnuts or almonds)
- 2 tablespoons honey (or a splash of lemon juice)
- 1-1¼ cup mayonnaise (or low-fat Greek yogurt), add more if needed
- ¼ teaspoon garlic powder
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- ½ teaspoon salt

Directions

- Add first five ingredients to a medium-sized bowl. In a smaller bowl, combine the last 5 ingredients and add to the first bowl. Mix. Chill for one to two hours so flavors blend. Enjoy on bread, toast, bed of greens or on its own. Makes six to eight servings.



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ANTICIPATORY grief

Anticipatory grief is the kind of grief that occurs before a death. While this is our body's way of preparing for the loss, it does not necessarily mean that the grief experienced when the death does occur will be easier. For some, it might still feel surreal or even shocking when the death finally occurs because it has been long-anticipated. That long period of anticipation may lead to heightened anxiety for some. For others, the time to prepare makes the death feel less impactful when it does occur.

It is important to remember that grief reactions are highly individual and vary for each loss experienced. Feelings that may be more pronounced include anxiety and guilt. There may be additional layers added to grief, like the emotional toll of being a caretaker. And there are many secondary losses grieved along the way, like changes in abilities and cognition.

A few tips for coping with anticipatory grief: Give yourself permission to feel whatever you are feeling, especially contradictory feelings. Take care of yourself and find adaptive coping strategies that work for you. Seek out support and respite when you need it. Be as present as possible with the person who is dying and utilize this time for memory making and reminiscing.

It is easy to forget that dying is actually very hard work. Being present to someone doing the hard work of dying can be a powerful experience. ■

Information provided by Buffy Peters, Director of Hamilton's Academy of Grief & Loss, 3601 Westown Parkway, West Des Moines, IA 50266, 515-697-3666. For more information, resources or support visit: www.HamiltonsFuneralHome.com/academy-of-grief-and-loss.



THE NEXT champion

Weber uses indoor golf to return to the game.

The popularity of indoor simulation golf has been on the rise the past decade, giving birth to an entirely new generation of golfers looking to grab their clubs and have some fun out on the "course."

But what started out as a game to allow golfers in cold weather states to play year-round has now morphed into an industry, complete with professional leagues with some of the best golfers in the world.

And standing at the top of one of the most prestigious is Iowa's own Jordan Weber.

"I couldn't believe it," he says of the finish. "When I first signed up, my goal for each tournament was to just make my money back and finish within the top 300."

The former University of Northern Iowa golfer (2004-2008) and winner of nine professional tournaments including the South Dakota Open, was crowned the NEXT Golf Tour champion in 2024. The win earned him the opportunity to compete in Europe on outdoor courses on the world-renowned DP World Tour and three Challenge Tour starts at the Farmfoods Scottish Challenge, the Vierumaki Finnish Challenge and the Indoor Golf Group Challenge in Sweden.

It's been a long journey for Weber. After graduating from college in 2008, he left for Florida to pursue his dream of eventually playing on the PGA Tour. Those hopes were set back, unfortunately, when Weber developed a case of the "yips." His putting, once a strong part of his game, went south, so to speak. He was nervous. Shaky. His career was, too.

And three years later, it was over. Weber went to work as a data analyst for Wells Fargo. But, somewhere in the back of his mind, Weber knew it wasn't really over; it was simply a change of course.

Years later, Weber entered the world of sim golf, the NEXT Golf Tour. He played well in his second event, finishing 30th. A seed was planted. What began as an effort of "just hoping to survive," had grown into something more.

"I started to feel like I could maybe get into the top 10 in an event," he says of his newfound confidence. "Then, the third event, I played better than I ever have, shot 10 under and won the tournament along with a \$30,000 prize."

It was the most money Weber had won in a professional event and put him in contention for the year-end title. It was a long shot, he recalls, but still, there was a chance.

It ended up coming down to the last tournament. Weber got off to a slow start on the front nine, but then hit a hot streak with birdies on the last five holes for the win.

These days, Weber plays a limited professional schedule, which this season will include the Waterloo Open, Iowa Open and the NEXT tour the following year. His full-time job is that of a teaching professional at Net Par in Ankeny. For now, anyway. Who knows what will come around that next dog-leg right.

Weber is having fun. He encourages others to do the same.

"Learn as much as you can," he says. "Try it all, and stick with the things that work. Most of all, just enjoy the game and have fun." ■



Jordan Weber was crowned the NEXT Golf Tour champion in 2024.

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WHAT IS enough?

Rethinking success in the last chapter

We spend most of our lives striving for a career, a family, a home, financial security, or the approval of others. Somewhere along the way, success starts to look like a moving target. The goals shift, and so does our definition of what matters. As the pace of life slows, and we begin to reflect more than we reach, a deeper question begins to surface: What is enough?

It is a question many older adults quietly carry, especially when roles shift, health fades, or the loss of someone close brings life into sharper focus. In those moments, it can be easy to wonder, What is my purpose now? The world tends to reward productivity and accomplishment, but our worth was never meant to be measured by titles or achievements. We were created for something deeper.

There's a kind of peace that settles in when



we stop chasing the old definitions of success. You start to notice it in simple things such as sharing a story over lunch, showing up for your family, or remembering someone's name when no one else does. Those little moments might not come with praise, but they matter. They last.

I often meet people who worry that they no longer have anything to offer. But I see it differently. I see a generation shaped by trials and time, carrying a kind of wisdom that cannot be rushed. Their lives speak of quiet faithfulness, patient endurance, and the kind of care that shows up even when no one is watching. These qualities may not make headlines, but they bear the kind of fruit that lasts.

Sometimes enough isn't found in what we do, but rather in who we're becoming along the way. You start to see it in contentment, in learning to be OK with where things are currently at. You feel it in gratitude for what you have been through. You hear it when you offer a word of encouragement to someone younger who is still finding their footing.

So, maybe the invitation is not to do more, but to pause long enough to notice what already holds value. Whether you are in the thick of building your life or just beginning to reflect on what you've built, take a moment to ask yourself what truly lasts. The answer may not change your pace, but it might just change your direction.

We were not made to chase endlessly. We were made to live meaningfully by enriching the lives of others. Our purpose calls us to recognize where we have been and use that experience to make the most of where we are. What matters most is not mourning the loss of what was but choosing to let our past shape how we care for those around us, even in small ways. Sometimes, the richest kind of success shows up right where we are. ■

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.

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11 FAQs when buying your first home

Buying your first home is an exciting milestone, but it can feel overwhelming. If you are unfamiliar with the process, doing some research is a great place to start. Here are answers to common questions first-time buyers often ask.

Do I need a Realtor® to buy a home? A Realtor® isn't required but can be very helpful. They guide you through searching, inspections, negotiations and closing.

How do I determine my home buying budget? Lenders assess your income, down payment and debt. A good starting point is your debt-to-income (DTI) ratio — calculated by dividing your monthly mortgage by your pre-tax income.

Are there hidden costs when buying a



Mindy Selix



Yvonne Silvers

home? Yes. Once you own a home, you're responsible for maintenance, property taxes and potential HOA fees. Factor these into your budget.

How do I choose the right mortgage lender? Choose a lender who communicates clearly, offers personalized service, and helps you find the best financing options.

What's covered in a mortgage prequalification meeting? A lender will review your credit, income sources, loan options and rates. Most sellers require a prequalification letter before accepting an offer.

What's the difference between a 15-year and 30-year mortgage? A 15-year mortgage is paid off faster and typically has lower interest rates but higher monthly payments. A 30-year mortgage spreads payments out, making them more affordable each month.

Fixed-rate vs. adjustable-rate mortgage? A fixed-rate loan has the same interest rate for the life of the loan. An adjustable-rate loan's rate changes over time. Fixed rates are often preferred in volatile or low-rate markets.

What is an escrow account and escrow

analysis? An escrow account helps ensure timely payment of property taxes and homeowners insurance. An annual escrow analysis adjusts for changes in these costs.

What is a homestead credit, and do I qualify? This tax credit reduces your property taxes. Eligibility varies by state, but many have minimal requirements to qualify.

Should I waive a home inspection to strengthen my offer? Skipping the inspection can be risky. While it may make your offer more competitive, it exposes you to hidden repair costs. A Realtor® can suggest safer ways to strengthen your offer.

Can I build my dream home instead of buying? Yes. In tight markets, many buyers choose to build to get exactly what they want.

Buying a home is a big step, but help is available. Contact a mortgage loan originator to begin your journey. ■

Information provided by Mindy Selix, 515-222-2017, mselix@bankerstrust.com, NMLS ID#: 571223 and Yvonne Silvers, 515-222-2005, ysilvers@bankerstrust.com, NMLS ID#: 571224, 1925 N. Ankeny Blvd. Ankeny.

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DO YOU 'believe' in chiropractic?

When taking a history on a new patient, I often hear the comment that my husband, wife, friend, doctor, etc., doesn't believe in chiropractic. Just as it is unnecessary to believe in exercise, tooth-brushing, eyeglasses, antibiotics, eating a healthy diet, etc., for them to be effective, the same is true for chiropractic. Chiropractic is a time-honored profession, and manipulation of the spine is an effective treatment.

The goal of chiropractic spinal manipulation is to restore proper vertebral movement. Keeping your spine flexible and fully functional prevents degeneration of and around the vertebrae and allows the nervous system to function properly. The nervous system uses the spine as its protective conduit to get information from your brain to every tissue in your body. If your spine isn't functioning properly, the rest of your body is not functioning optimally.

A biological process known as "immobilization degeneration" begins to occur within the first week of a joint being immobile. There are hundreds of peer-reviewed research articles supporting this process. This is not up for debate. It is proven. In a nutshell, here is what happens: Normal joint movement is reduced, leading to altered movement patterns. This stresses the spine and other joints such as the knees, hips and ankles, as well as all the tissues within and around them. This stress creates inflammation, followed by the degeneration of the joint and its associated connective tissue.

Degeneration of the spine is like a dental cavity. It's a process that takes time to develop and is typically not painful until the final stages. Chiropractors are specifically trained to identify the early signs of structural stress and degeneration. The sooner normal movement is restored, the more complete the healing. When restoration of normal movement is delayed, the degeneration becomes more extensive and permanent. Therefore, the next time you are tempted to just take a pain killer for joint pain, please consider seeking our restorative treatment.

If you or someone you know is suffering from back or neck pain and have not found the relief you are looking for, please consider chiropractic. They may be able to help. ■

Information provided by Christopher M. Renze, D.C., D.I.B.C.N., of Renze Chiropractic Clinic, P.C. For more information, visit www.renzechiro.com or call the office at 965-3844.



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CHANGES to the Iowa ABLÉ account program

There are exciting new changes to the Iowa ABLÉ account program that help individuals with a disability make self-directed investments and purchases.

The Achieving a Better Life Experience Act (ABLE) is a way to save money for expenses related to a disability. It is similar to (and is part of the federal statute for) 529 college-savings plans. An ABLÉ account allows individuals with disabilities to fund accounts with their own resources. Others, such as family members, can also contribute to the account. The minimum contribution limit to an ABLÉ account was recently reduced to \$1, effective immediately, making it easier for eligible individuals to start saving.

The account can be used to supplement, but not supplant, benefits received through



other government programs like Medicaid and SSI. Money from an ABLÉ account can be used to pay for education, transportation, health services, and employment-related expenses. Additionally, unlike some Medicaid trusts, funds from an ABLÉ account can be used for housing and basic living expenses. The beneficiary is allowed to have direct access to the money.

Other Medicaid trusts, such as a Special Needs Trust, do not allow funds to pay for funeral or burial expenses after an individual dies. Money in an ABLÉ account can be used to pay for funeral and burial expenses.

Account owners and members of their support system now have the opportunity to transfer funds from a Medicaid SNT into an ABLÉ account. This allows more flexibility when it comes to how assets are used.

Another advantage of an ABLÉ account is that most Medicaid trusts contain mandatory provisions subjecting any money remaining

in the account after death to Medicaid recapture by the state. In Iowa, the Department of Health and Human Services is not permitted to recover money in an ABLÉ account, and remaining funds can pass to a named beneficiary.

Currently, to be eligible for an ABLÉ account, an individual must be disabled, and the disability occurred before the age of 26. However, recent changes to the law will raise the age limit to individuals found disabled up to 46 years old. The new law goes into effect Jan. 1, 2026.

If you have questions about how an ABLÉ account can complement your estate planning, contact an attorney who specializes in estate planning for individuals with disabilities. ■

Information provided by Gail Barnett, Abendroth Russell Barnett Law Firm, 2560 73rd St., Urbandale, 515-278-0623, www.ARPCLaw.com

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HOSPICE care focuses on quality of time spent together

For James' family, early fall had always meant tradition — a time to slow down, take in the changing colors, and gather for their annual apple orchard trip.

But last year was different. James's health was declining after a long journey with heart failure and COPD. Though he still looked forward to time with his family, he and his wife, Denise, weren't sure how he could fully take part in the outings they had always enjoyed.

Support from an in-home hospice team helped shift the focus from what James couldn't do to what he still could, giving the family space to create meaningful moments in a season they all cherished.

"Hospice began caring for James in late August," Denise recalls. "They helped manage his symptoms, and he was able to join us at the orchard one last time. That afternoon was



something special — peaceful, joyful. A real memory."

When you're exploring hospice care for someone you love, it may feel difficult to associate it with the idea of living. But that's exactly what hospice is meant to support: living well, with dignity and comfort, even as health declines.

Hospice care isn't one-size-fits-all. It can be provided at home, on a dedicated hospice campus, or as part of a blended approach — and the right option depends on your family's unique situation.

Whatever model you consider, an important question to ask is: "How can the care I'm looking for help my loved one live more fully during this time?"

Many people are surprised to learn that hospice can begin earlier than they think — as soon as a person is diagnosed with a life-limiting illness. Studies show that individuals who receive hospice care early experience greater comfort and improved quality of life. In fact, 80% of Americans say they would prefer to die at home, yet only about 30% do — and hospice can help

close that gap.

If you're supporting a loved one through serious illness, think about how you want the two of you to spend time together. Hospice providers often deliver care right in the home, helping preserve daily routines while supporting the person and their family.

Reaching out to a hospice team can feel daunting, but please keep in mind that compassionate, expert care can ease the burden and help families create moments of connection — especially during cherished seasonal traditions.

"Once hospice was involved, we could focus on the time we had," Denise says. "We didn't know how much we were holding until we could let go of the stress. That fall was a gift." ■

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.

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SUMMER can't be over already... can it?

With school right around the corner, it's wild to think we're already planning events for 2026. But before we get too far ahead, here is a look at what is coming up for the rest of 2025.



Back by popular demand, Witches Night Out is set to return on Thursday, Oct. 23, bringing a spirited evening of shopping, fun and festive costumes to the community. Sponsored by Nova MedSpa, the event is designed to encourage residents to shop local while enjoying a night out with friends. Participants are encouraged to come dressed in their best witchy attire as they board a charter bus and two trolleys that will whisk them around Ankeny's local shops — just in time for early holiday shopping. Each stop along the route will offer raffle prizes, with the chance to win fantastic giveaways. The evening will also culminate in a grand prize for Best Costume, adding a little extra magic to the night.

Witches Night Out is a beloved annual tradition that sells out quickly each year, so early registration is highly recommended. Whether you're looking to support small businesses, find unique holiday gifts, or simply enjoy a fun night out with friends, this is an event you won't want to miss.

We are excited to wrap up the year with our signature fall event, Discover Ankeny, presented by B&G Foods, Inc. The community is invited to join in the fun on Thursday, Nov. 6, from 4-7 p.m. at the FFA Enrichment Center. Designed as a celebration of all things Ankeny, the event offers residents and visitors the chance to sample the best local food, retail and services the city has to offer. Attendees can look forward to discovering new flavors from area restaurants and caterers, as well as exploring unique shopping experiences from Ankeny's vibrant business community. From delicious tastings and exciting giveaways to exclusive discounts and hands-on, family-friendly activities, there's something for everyone at Discover Ankeny. The atmosphere is reminiscent of a smaller version of the Varied Industries Building at the Iowa State Fair — but with a local twist.

This free, open-to-the-public event aims to support and spotlight Ankeny Chamber members, encouraging attendees to shop local and connect with businesses in a fun, engaging environment. Mark your calendars and make plans to Discover Ankeny on Nov. 6 — a perfect evening to explore, sample and celebrate community spirit.

Don't forget about our Ankeny Young Professionals. AYP is a group of young professionals who live, work or have a special interest in the Ankeny area. AYP gathers for professional development, networking, outreach and socializing. Members of AYP are a dynamic group that the chamber and community look to as future leaders in Ankeny. Their events include AYP in the AM, Lunch and Learns, AYP After Hours, and more. You can find all the information for chamber events, including AYP, on our website at www.ankeny.org. The Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce is dedicated to the promotion and development of our members within the community. ■

Information provided by Diane Weber, Director of Events & Communications at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce, 1360 S.W. Park Square Drive, Ankeny, IA 50023, 515-964-0685, dweber@ankeny.org.



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View Our Calendar for All Events & Details



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OUT & ABOUT



Members of the South Ankeny Hy-Vee Pharmacy accept the Residents' Choice certificate for Favorite Pharmacy.



Members of the North Ankeny Hy-Vee Pharmacy accept the Residents' Choice certificate for Favorite Pharmacy.



Colin Panzi with Redwood Builders accepts the Residents' Choice certificate for Favorite Home Builder.



Molly Maids of Ankeny accepts the Residents' Choice certificate for Favorite Cleaning Company.



Payton Enga with Ankeny Southeast Elementary accepts her Residents' Choice certificate for Favorite Teacher.



Members of the Ankeny Southeast Elementary front office staff accept a Residents' Choice certificate for Favorite School Building.



Gabriel Moore and DJ Doff at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce's Lattes and Leads, sponsored by New York Life Insurance Company, on July 22.



Andrew Thyer, Chad Harrison and Emily Dorothy at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce's Lattes and Leads, sponsored by New York Life Insurance Company, on July 22.



Heather Phillips and Mackenzie Cowden at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce's Lattes and Leads, sponsored by New York Life Insurance Company, on July 22.



Matthew Pillman, Russell McCuen and Shey Moore at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce's Lattes and Leads, sponsored by New York Life Insurance Company, on July 22.



Beth Barclay and Christen Nicoll at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce's Lattes and Leads, sponsored by New York Life Insurance Company, on July 22.

OUT & ABOUT



Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon cutting for Good Trip Travel Co., 104 S.W. Maple St., on July 18.



Teresa Herold, Brandon Converse, Ella Converse and Ann Wright at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for Good Trip Travel Co.



Cindy Gordon and Barb Wiedenman at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for Good Trip Travel Co.



Taylor Voitel, Alex Schwiete, Emma Stern and Michael Hidder at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for Good Trip Travel Co.



Bill and Victoria Ogier with Stella and Nora at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for Good Trip Travel Co.



Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon cutting for Schiltz Chiropractic, 105 N.E. Trilein Drive, on Aug. 4.



Dominique Bryant and Tracy Gibson at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for Schiltz Chiropractic.



Cami Schiltz, Nick Schiltz, Cameron Knoner, Mike Schiltz, Sedell Bishop and Darrel Bishop at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for Schiltz Chiropractic.



Jamie Dobson, Trent Murphy and Jamie Anderson at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for Schiltz Chiropractic.



Heather Phillips and Abbie Cross at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for Schiltz Chiropractic.



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For more information about WesleyLife Hospice, the Des Moines area's only Level 5 partner, visit wesleylife.org/hospice.



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