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SEPTEMBER 2025

Living

MAGAZINE

ROOM FOR

improvement

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RECIPE

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How to Ease Back-to-school Anxiety



1. Provide a safe space for children to share feelings.

Create regular one on one times with little distraction. Creative activities like playing and drawing in a low-key environment will encourage children to express their feelings to you.

2. Listen, listen, listen.

Let your child lead conversations. Resist the urge to do all the talking. When it is your turn to talk, remain calm and speak kindly and reassuringly.

3. Recognize that anxiety is normal.

Let your child know that being anxious or nervous is something that everyone goes through from time to time. Remind children that when they have a problem you are there to help.

4. Encourage kids to pace themselves.

Some teenagers particularly can become overextended. Encourage them to slow down and teach time management skills at an early age.

5. Maintain a normal daily routine.

Aim for your children to wake up and go to bed at the same time each day. Stay hydrated and keep up with a healthy diet. Encourage daily physical activity outside of school.

Consult your pediatrician if your child shows any of the following behaviors:

1. Has a significant change in sleep or eating habits.
2. Has repetitive, self-destructive behaviors such as hair-pulling or skin-pinching.
3. Withdraws from family, friends or activities.
4. Shows excessive worry about the future or needs constant reassurance.
5. Talks about self-harm or suicide.



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WELCOME

WE GET what we pay for

Sometimes, I drive by a remodeling project on a house and say to myself, "Wow, that is beautiful. Those folks really know what they are doing."

Other times, I drive by a project that is seemingly in the works for months (or years) and say to myself, "Wow, they are taking forever, and what they have done looks awful."

The difference usually has to do with having professionals do the work or relying on a handful of weekend amateurs.

Yes, some of you are quite skilled and can do quality DIY work. Others, like me, put forward a good effort but often end up with a less-than-satisfactory result. At some point, though, we all realize when we need to call in the experts.

This month's cover story will appeal to all sides, as we once again interview homeowners who have worked through the remodeling or construction process. They share their experiences, the lessons they learned, and how they might have done things differently.

Meanwhile, one of the common complaints we all hear is the challenge in lining up people to do the work. On occasion, that truly is a problem. More often, though, we simply don't want to pay the costs for quality workmanship — until, of course, we learn that we get what we pay for.

And then the people driving by say, "Wow, they are taking forever, and what they have done looks awful." We hope our efforts in this issue will help you avoid those comments.

Happy remodeling, and thanks for reading. ■



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ROOM FOR *improvement*

Residents share their home renovation experiences

By Jackie Wilson

Live in a home for a while, and one is likely to start thinking, “If only....” If only the bathroom had a walk-in shower.... If only the kitchen had new cabinets.... If only the old flooring could be replaced.... If only the basement was finished.... If only a room could be added.... If only that longed-for home improvement project could be completed ... then the house would be just right. Residents who have taken the leap from thinking about it to tackling their dream projects share their experiences.

Derek and Kayla Richards have completed numerous home improvement projects. Photo by Jackie Wilson

FEATURE

BEFORE



New patio weathers the elements

When Eric and Wendy Sorensen lived in Urbandale, they searched for a home with more privacy. They liked their neighbors, but Eric had grown up in the country and wanted more trees and a better backyard view.

They considered building, and, while searching for properties, they discovered a unique home that, while not an acreage, did not have a view of other homes in their backyard.

"We hadn't spent much time in Waukee and were surprised at how much it had grown," Eric says. "We were impressed with the Vibrant Music Hall and all that is coming to the city."

The walk-out ranch was ideal, and the back

AFTER



Eric and Wendy Sorensen's new patio is better suited for harsh weather elements. They can now use it nearly nine months a year. Photo by Jackie Wilson

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BEFORE



AFTER



Derek and Kayla Richards turned their unfinished basement into living space, bedroom and bathroom. Photo by Jackie Wilson

patio overlooked a grove of trees. Yet, the wood deck was small and exposed to the weather.

“We were constantly fighting the elements. We didn’t have much privacy, and the wind and heat was so much,” Eric says.

“We felt like we were imposing on our neighbors next door if we sat outside. We felt exposed,” Wendy adds.

The couple agreed on constructing a more private patio and hired a contractor that created a CAD drawing to discuss and narrow down their preferences. They tweaked plans and began the transformation.

They tore down the wood patio and built a composite deck that contains a steel frame underneath.

“Wood warps. I didn’t want to have to maintain a deck,” Eric explains. “If we have a storm, the deck will hold — even if the house won’t.”

Another unique element they wanted was a spiral staircase. A traditional step staircase took up too much room.

“The wood staircase was a view blocker,” Wendy says. “I’d rather see the trees. It’s a novelty that the kids like as well.”

The former patio was often windy with bright sun and bugs. They installed retractable shades that allow them to see out while others can’t see in.

“It helps tame the wind,” Eric explains. “It’s a game changer. It was expensive, but it gives us almost nine months of being able to be outside.”

To secure the posts, they used helical piles

— a type of corkscrew designed to better secure a foundation into the ground. The no-concrete footers stand up better for weather fluctuations.

Their previous patio furniture would often blow over in a storm. To remedy that, the couple purchased a 265-pound patio table that stays secure with wind gusts. The extra dining space has hosted family gatherings, where ceiling fans and heat lamps extend the patio seasons.

For the lower patio, they considered a concrete surface. However, a contractor suggested tearing up the concrete and putting in patio pavers instead.

“Concrete thaws and cracks,” Eric says. “Pavers you can always fix.”

The couple likes the new space.

“We love the view. It feels like we’re not in the city,” Wendy says. “Hopefully, this is our forever home.”

Finished basement

When Derek and Kayla Richards moved to their home last June, the basement was still unfinished, even after two previous owners had lived there since 2014. With two young kids, they knew they wanted extra space for their growing family.

The Richards contacted several contractors, each of which offered different ideas. They eventually chose one to carry out their final vision.

They built a bar area and rec room, bedroom and bathroom, along with a place for their kids to play. However, the bar area

morphed into a second kitchen.

“It transformed into a kitchen, and we put in a dishwasher and a large fridge,” Derek explains.

The island, which serves as a bar and table, turned out larger than they planned. The custom-made half-round pine wood trim is contained underneath the quartz island.

“The wood underneath the bar was extremely tedious,” Kayla says. “But I love the way it looks.”

Behind a cabinet door is secret hidden office for when Derek needs some quiet time.

Kayla hired a contractor to help planning the basement space to ensure room for entertaining and for a play area.

“They were good at showing us what colors worked,” she says.

They included brushed gold accents throughout the home.

“We didn’t know, but there are 24 shades of gold,” Kayla says.

Tucked underneath the staircase is a kids-height play area. A small window and door, which accommodates pint-sized people, opens to the family area. Adults need to duck down to pass through the door.

The new space offers two large-screen televisions for watching sports.

“The goal was to complete it by football season, and it’s right on time,” Derek says.

They couple likes the new space.

“It’s a kid-friendly spot, and we love the open area,” Kayla says.

FEATURE

Bathroom remodel

Darla and Marty Ryan moved into their Waukee home in 1997, right at the start of the population boom. The home was just right with regard to space and location.

Throughout the years, rooms became worn and dated. The Ryans finally decided to remodel portions of their home.

"We figured we won't be moving anytime soon," Marty explains. "We might as well invest in it for down the road. We've been wanting to do it for a long time but didn't have the money to do it."

Darla wanted to keep design elements simple.

"We wanted color but nothing fancy, and with black accents," she says.

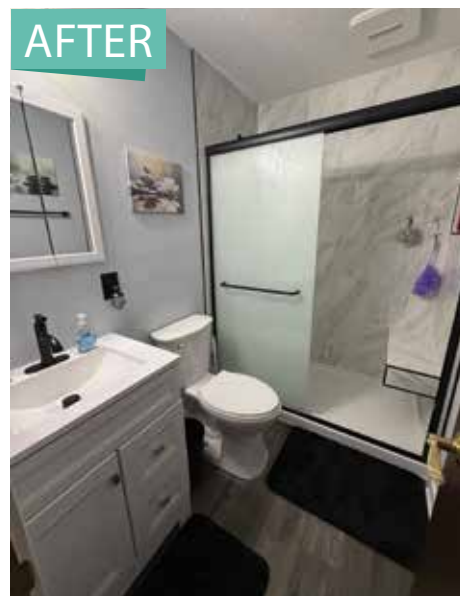
One feature they desired was a walk-in shower, as it would be easier to get in and out of. They ripped out the tub, vanity, toilet and



BEFORE



AFTER



Darla and Marty Ryan of Waukee remodeled the bathroom, replacing the flooring, tiles and bathtub for a new look and to make it more functional. Photo by Jackie Wilson

flooring and ended up replacing everything.

"They gutted everything," Marty says. It's a whole new bathroom from top to bottom."

Marty, who is skilled at stone work, installed a pond and pathway outside the home. When it comes to indoor work, the couple left it to the professionals.

"We're getting too old to do that," Darla

explains. "We wanted to hire someone to do it."

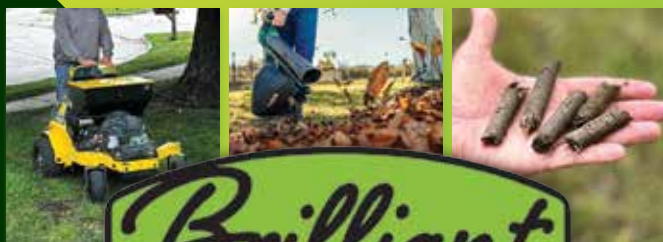
They are pleased with the new bathroom.

"I really like the shower," Darla says. "We've gotten a lot of compliments. It's nothing special, but it's new to us, and we love it."

The couple also put in new closets and doors in the bedrooms. Next up, they hope to renovate the kitchen. ■

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THE ROLE of a trust protector

A trust is a fantastic estate planning tool for managing assets and ensuring your family is cared for after you die. If you are concerned about changes to the law or family dynamics in the future, you may want to consider naming a trust protector.



You can change a trust while you are alive to adapt to evolving circumstances. But, after you die, your trust becomes irrevocable. A trust protector can ensure the trust continues to reflect your original goals and wishes.

A trust protector is a third party who is given the authority to interpret and modify the terms of a trust to comply with your initial intent. The trust protector has the ability to change parts of the trust document, give instructions to the trustee, and monitor the use

of trust assets.

A trust protector is different from the trustee. A trustee has a fiduciary duty to follow the directions outlined in the trust. As fiduciaries, trustees are strictly bound by the terms of the trust and are required to carry out the terms exactly as written. A trust protector doesn't owe a duty to the beneficiary; the trust protector is in place to extend your oversight after death.

Trust protectors can monitor the trustee's actions to ensure they are managing the trust correctly. They can intervene if a trustee engages in misconduct, removing and replacing the trustee to protect trust assets.

A trust protector can help safeguard inheritance from creditors, lawsuits or divorce. A trust protector can adjust trust provisions to adapt to changes in the law, such as Medicaid rules or federal estate tax updates.

A trust protector can interpret trust

provisions to react to unforeseen changes in beneficiaries' lives such as special needs requirements — that were not anticipated when the trust was established. Benefit programs like Title XIX and Social Security change frequently and a trust protector can help respond to new laws.

A trust protector can act as a liaison between a corporate fiduciary trustee (like a bank) and the beneficiaries. A trust protector can be your voice, telling the trustee what the beneficiary needs.

A trust protector can prevent or solve a multitude of problems. To save money, preserve your assets and prevent family conflict, consult with an attorney to see if your trust needs a trust protector. ■

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

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UNIQUE program offers senior living alternative

Michael has lived in his Ankeny house for more than 40 years. Now 79, he often thinks about what the next stage of life will bring — especially when it comes to his health and living arrangements.

Unlike some of his longtime friends who have relocated to senior living communities, Michael hopes to remain right where he is. He enjoys his neighborhood, his garden and the sense of independence his home provides him. Still, he worries about what will happen if he needs support in the future. His nearest family member lives several hours away, and he doesn't want to place unexpected burdens on her.

Michael's concerns are common. The idea of "aging in place" sounds appealing, but it can be complicated. Chronic health needs can make independent living unsafe, and 24/7 in-home care can become just as costly as moving to a senior living community.

So, what options exist for people who want to stay home but also want peace of mind about the future?

One solution is a Continuing Care at Home (CC@H) membership. These programs are designed to support older adults' well-being at home while also helping them plan financially for care needs that may arise later.



If you're exploring CC@H options, here are some important questions to keep in mind:

Do you know what's included? Strong programs provide not only health and wellness services to help you remain independent, but also financial coverage for potential long-term care.

Is personalized support available? Research shows that people who receive encouragement from a coach or advocate are more likely to maintain healthier habits and meet their goals.

What are the care pathways? A comprehensive program should cover both in-home care and access to care in a community setting if needed. Make sure you're comfortable with the provider's reputation and outcomes in both areas.

Choosing the right CC@H program should feel like choosing a plan that was created with your needs in mind. The right fit can help you protect both your health and your finances — and give you confidence about what's ahead. So, ask all your questions, and make sure you are satisfied with the answers. ■

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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EVENTS IN THE AREA

Be sure to check for cancelations.

Note about calendar events: This magazine is delivered the fourth Thursday of each month. Calendar items included are events happening after the delivery date and extend into the following month. If you receive and read your magazine upon delivery, you will not miss out on any calendar items.

Coming up in Waukee Living:

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.

Waukee Wauktoberfest

Saturday, Oct. 4
The Triangle

Enjoy a day full of fun with live music, German food, beer and the stein holding contest. Don't forget to wear your traditional attire and dance the night away to some lively polka music. For more information, see the story in this issue and visit www.facebook.com/WAHSWauktoberfest.



Guided Tour: Blue Star Welcome Week

Saturday, Sept. 27, 1-2 p.m.
Des Moines Art Center, 4700 Grand Ave., Des Moines

In celebration of Blue Star Welcome Week, the Art Center is offering a free guided tour titled "Sailor, Soldier, Airman, Artist." This themed tour asks the question, "How did the military experience influence mid-century modern artists?" with artist features such as Ellsworth Kelly (WWII), Sam Francis (WWII), or b. Robert Moore (son of a Vietnam veteran).

The Des Moines Art Center is a Blue Star Museum, offering free admission every day to everyone. Hosting this guided tour during Blue Star Welcome Week seeks to build support for the 600,000 military families who move to new communities each year. All military personnel and family members are invited to attend, whether new to the Des Moines community or not, to enjoy an afternoon at the Art Center.

Parks and Recreation events

Various dates

There is still time to register for these Waukee Parks and Recreation programs at Waukee.org/Registration.

- Red Cross Babysitting Training is Thursday, Oct. 2. Register your tween or teen by Sept. 28.
- Celebration Belle Fall Foliage River Cruise Trip for seniors on Oct. 23. Save your seat on the cruise by Sept. 28.
- Paint a Pumpkin on Friday, Oct. 10. Reserve your pumpkin by Sept. 29.
- Dinner Delights freezer meal party on Sunday, Oct. 5. Register by Oct. 2.
- Tumbling Tots, Monday-Thursday evenings, Oct. 6-9. Save a spot on the mat by Oct. 2.

Bowling family fun

Various dates

Warrior Lanes, 190 S.E. Laurel St., Waukee

Warrior Lanes holds a variety of family-fun events. The glow-in-the-dark bowling includes a one-topping pizza and pitcher of soda for up to five bowlers. For more information and booking, visit <https://warriorlanes.com/specials/>. All are on Sundays from noon to 1:30 p.m. with registration deadline at 6 p.m. two days prior.

Oct. 19, Halloween Party; **Nov. 16,** Turkey Time Party; **Dec. 14,** Ugly Holiday Sweater Party. A special Countdown to Noon Year's Eve event is Wednesday, **Dec. 31,** 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.



Trick-or-Treating

Oct. 31, 6-8 p.m.

Starting this year, the Waukee City Council has designated Halloween evening for trick-or-treating.

Leprechaun Bags Tournament

Saturday, Oct. 11, 11 a.m.
Sully's Irish Pub, 860 First St., West Des Moines

The Friendly Sons of St. Patrick of Central Iowa present the Leprechaun Bags Tournament. Registration begins at 11 a.m. Play starts at noon. \$30 per two-person team. Cash payouts for top three teams.

Visit www.friendlysonsiowa.com for details.



Dallas County Coat Giveaway

Saturday, Oct. 11, 9-11 a.m.
Adel First Christian Church, 218 N. Ninth St., Adel

More than 300 new coats and 100 gently used coats in sizes infant through adult will be available. In addition, the Clothes Closet will be open. The Coat Giveaway focuses on coats for residents of Dallas County and rural surrounding communities, though everyone is welcome. It is sponsored by the Adel Rotary, the Adel Women's Club, the Knights of Columbus from St. John's Church, and the Adel Christian Church. Everything is free.

WinterFest Friday, Dec. 5 Downtown Triangle

Bring on the holiday cheer with your friends, family and neighbors at Waukee's free annual WinterFest

celebration held at the Downtown Triangle. Enjoy warm holiday treats, games and activities, a visit with Santa, tree lighting and much more. www.waukee.org/476/WinterFest ■





IT'S BACK!

Who will be voted favorite in Dallas County?

We all have our favorite local people, places and things. And now it's time to share your choices and honor those who deserve the recognition.

Make your voice be heard and cast your votes in the 2025 Dallas County Residents' Choice Poll. This contest is being hosted by Iowa Living magazines, and the results will publish January in Waukee, and February in Adel and West Des Moines - Jordan Creek editions. You can vote in one or every category, or anywhere in between.

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HURRY! POLL CLOSES DEC. 19, 2025

See rules and vote at www.iowalivingmagazines.com/residentspoll.
One vote per resident, please.

FOOD AND DRINK

- Restaurant
- Restaurant for Breakfast
- Restaurant for Lunch
- Restaurant for Dinner
- Restaurant for Dessert
- Place for Ice Cream
- Pizza Establishment
- Bar
- Coffee Shop
- Catering Company
- Server/Bartender

AUTOMOTIVE

- Auto Service
- Auto Body Shop
- Car Dealership

COMMUNITY

- Preschool/Daycare
- Nonprofit
- School (name of building)
- Park
- Community Festival or Event
- Church
- Pastor
- Chamber of Commerce
- Library
- Camping Spot

SHOPPING

- Grocery Store
- Boutique
- Retail Store
- Thrift Store
- Home Improvement Retail Store
- Liquor Store
- Nursery or Garden Center
- Place to Purchase a Gift for a Man
- Place to Purchase a Gift for a Woman
- Bakery
- Florist

ENTERTAINMENT

- Dad/Child Date Spot
- Mom/Child Date Spot
- Place to Take Your Mom and Dad
- Place to Take Your Kids or Grandkids
- Place for Child's Birthday Party
- Golf Course
- Bowling Alley

HEALTH/BEAUTY

- Hair Salon
- Physicians Clinic
- Dental Office
- Orthodontist Office
- Mental Health Service
- Chiropractic Office
- Audiologist/Hearing Clinic
- Vision Care

HEALTH/BEAUTY

- Health Club or Gym
- CBD Store
- Pharmacy
- Cosmetic Service
- Physical Therapy
- Dance Studio
- Gymnastics/Tumbling Studio

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- Plumbing Company
- Senior Living Establishment
- Insurance Agency
- Realtor
- Bank/Credit Union
- Photographer
- Place for Guests to Stay
- Home Builder/Remodeling
- Outdoor Lawn Equipment Store
- Pest Control

WAUKTOBERFEST celebration

Festival's fourth year at Triangle



Are you ready to roll a keg, dance a polka or drink a stein of beer? Whether you're German or not, you can still join in on Waukee's Wauktoberfest.

Wauktoberfest, a German-style celebration, will be held on Saturday, Oct. 4, at Waukee's downtown Triangle. Festivities start at 3 p.m.

In its fourth year, Wauktoberfest is a fundraiser sponsored by the Waukee Area Historical Society (WAHS). The WAHS is a local nonprofit established in 2012. The event goes beyond celebrating, as it also supports a great cause: preserving, honoring and recognizing Waukee's proud history.

Jake Larson, committee chair for the festival and a board member of the WAHS, says more than 800 people attended the event last year, raising \$9,500 to support its mission. WAHS offered 38 history talks and cemetery walks.

"We had a great event and lots of positive feedback. People were happy with the weather and turnout," Larson says. "We had a good mix of people and families."

This year's event features German beer, a variety of foods — including German-style bites — along with other Iowa beers and beverages. During band intermission, there will be keg rolling, a yodeling contest, stein holding contest and other "tricks up their sleeves."

Music by the Schnitzel Brothers Bier Band will kick things off after the tapping of the golden keg, starting at around 3:15 p.m. The music



Enjoy a bier-stein holding contest, live music and much more at Wauktoberfest, held at the Triangle Oct. 4.

continues with Toaster at 6 p.m.

The Wauktoberfest funds go toward preserving Waukee's history. Organizers also offer roundtable discussions to gather stories.

"We have a lot of long-standing rooted citizens who tell the story of Waukee," Larson explains. "It's important to protect, understand and share Waukee's history."

Currently, historical elements of the WAHS are located inside the Waukee Library. Money raised helps fund the expansion of the collections and continued event programming. The WAHS hopes to eventually offer its own space. The past year, the group re-branded the WAHS.

"We wanted to bring it into this decade," Larson explains.

As a Waukee resident, Larson says he is happy to see the Triangle businesses participating in the event.

"We want to reinvigorate the Triangle. The street party brings awareness to our unique downtown," he says. "We have a lot of new residents who don't even know the Triangle exists."

Local Triangle bars are participating in the festival, with businesses volunteering and supporting the event.

"We are really excited for the community to show up and have a fun time on the Triangle," Larson says.

Advance tickets cost \$10 in advance or \$15 at the door. Commemorative mugs may be purchased for \$25, which includes one drink of choice. Children ages 5 and younger get in free. To learn more about the Waukee Area Historical Society or the Wauktoberfest, visit the group's social media sites or www.waukeehistory.org/wauktoberfest. ■



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FINDING purpose in service

Lee enjoys giving back through volunteer work.



For nearly a decade, Joyce Lee has called Waukee home. In that time, she has built, not just a life, but also a legacy of service.

One of the biggest ways she has contributed is through her volunteer work at WayPoint Resources (formerly Waukee Area Christian Services).

“Volunteering at WayPoint is very rewarding,” she shares. “You help clients that are in need.”

For Lee, making time to volunteer started as a way to stay busy, but it quickly became something much deeper.

“I enjoy visiting with the clients and see how grateful they are for what they get at the pantry,” she says.

Some of her favorite memories show just how impactful simple acts of service can be. She recalls one day when a client was overcome with emotion after receiving a pillow.

“She was so happy to get a pillow,” Lee says.

A simple thing, but one that brought Lee so much joy.

Another memory left an even stronger mark.

“A client came to the pantry, and she said she was so grateful that someone told her about the pantry because she hadn’t eaten for three days,” Lee shares. “That tugged at my heart and was very rewarding to be able to help her.”

Stories like these remind Lee why she continues to give of her time, talent and treasure. She believes others should, too — not just for the impact they make, but for the joy they’ll receive in return.

“I have met many good people at the pantry,” Lee says. “Some of the clients are good friends now. All of the other volunteers are great. The staff is wonderful. Some of these people have become some of my best friends.”

For Lee, life in Waukee feels fuller because of the connections, purpose and friendships she has found by serving others. ■



Travis Gaule of Trust Bridge Wealth Advisors presents the Neighbor Spotlight certificate to Joyce Lee.

Wealth Management & Retirement Planning

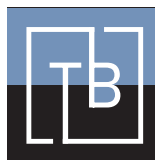


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City of Waukee Bulletin SEPTEMBER 2025

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Most of the electronics we use in our homes every day, like smartphones, tablets, power and lawn tools, laptops, e-cigarettes, headphones and toys, are powered by lithium-ion batteries. In fact, most everything that's rechargeable uses this type of battery. Lithium-ion batteries can overheat, start a fire or even explode if they are damaged or used incorrectly. Reduce the risk of getting hurt or damaging your home with these simple steps:

1. Look around your home, so you know which devices are powered by lithium-ion batteries. Involve the whole family, so everyone knows what to look for and how to make smart choices.
2. When getting new devices, tools or toys that use a lithium-ion battery, take time to research it. Look for a stamp from a nationally recognized testing lab on the packaging and product, which means that it meets important safety standards. Many products sold online and in stores may not meet safety standards and could increase the risk of fire.
3. Charge devices safely. Always use the cables that come with the product to charge it and follow the instructions from the manufacturer. If you need a new charger, buy one from the manufacturer or one that the manufacturer has approved. Charge your device on a hard surface, so air can circulate around it. Don't charge it under or on soft surfaces like a pillow, bed or couch. This could cause a fire. Don't overcharge your device. Unplug it or remove the battery when it's fully charged.
4. Don't throw lithium-ion batteries in the trash or regular recycling bins because they could catch fire at your house or in the waste facility. Take them to the free battery drop box in the entryway to City Hall, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m., the drop box at Public Works or another proper disposal site. Visit call2recycle.org to find a recycling spot near you.

Dates to Know

City Council Meetings

October 6 and 20, 5:30 p.m.
City Hall and Zoom
Waukee.org/CityCouncil

Bingo

October 3, 1 p.m.
Waukee Public Library
\$1 entry and \$0.10 per card

Mov

Oct
Cen
Wau



Changes to Gas Bills

Gas service from Waukee Municipal Gas Utility will transition to MidAmerican Energy on October 22, 2025. City staff have been working closely with MidAmerican Energy staff to match up customer accounts and transfer operations. Your October bill will be the last that includes gas charges from the City of Waukee. On October 22, gas billing will move to your existing MidAmerican Energy account since they already provide electric service to Waukee. Watch for more communications and direction on how to make account updates if you need to make changes to names on the account, contact information, automatic payments, etc. We'll post information and answers to questions at Waukee.org/Gas.

Outdoor Tips for Summer's End

Reduce or Turn Off Sprinklers: Without the long hours of hot sun and limited rainfall, your lawn won't need as much water to stay healthy. Save water and money by reducing run days and length or turning off your sprinklers for the season.

Store Portable Irrigation Meters: Take your portable meters inside for the winter and report your final meter reading at Waukee.org/UtilityBilling.

Empty Your Pool or Hot Tub with Care:

Chlorine and other chemicals used to keep your pool or spa clean cause BIG problems for fish and other aquatic life. As you prepare to drain your pool or hot tub/spa, allow the pool or spa to sit for at least 7 days without adding chlorine or other chemicals; the chlorine content should be 0.1 milligrams per liter. Ensure the pH of the pool or spa water is between 7 and 8. Drain water through at least 15 feet of a grassy landscape first (i.e., not directly onto concrete) to allow remaining chemicals to dissipate before reaching the storm drain. Keep the flow of water low (aim for 700 gallons per hour = about 12 gallons per minute) to prevent erosion or damage to landscaping. If you have a saltwater pool, discharge water into the sanitary sewer, so the water can be treated.



Safely Get Rid of Unneeded Prescriptions

Prevent pill abuse and theft by getting rid of potentially dangerous prescription drugs that you do not need anymore. For National Prescription Drug Take Back Day on Saturday, October 25, police officers will collect pills and patches from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the new Waukee Public Safety building (815 NW 20th Street). Or drop them in the silver disposal bin near the Police counter in the Public Safety lobby during regular hours, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.



Halloween Fun

Have you reserved your kid's spot for **Paint-a-Pumpkin** on Friday, October 10 from 5-6:30 p.m. at Centennial Park? Waukee Parks & Recreation provides the pumpkin, paints and brushes for participants to create a GOURD-geous masterpiece plus some snacks to fuel creativity! You must register by September 29 at Waukee.org/Registration. After painting, stick around for a free showing of **"Coco"** (PG) at dusk (around 6:30 p.m.) on the big outdoor screen.

Waukee Public Library has two sessions of **Monster Mash** on October 27. Kids can wear a costume and enjoy crafts, games and a dance party. Register at WaukeePublicLibrary.org/Events.

Choose the perfect costume and go **trick-or-treating** on October 31 from 6-8 p.m. Stay safe by traveling in a group and wearing light or reflective clothing, if possible. Drivers should be extra alert, especially when traveling through residential neighborhoods. Stop by one of our fire stations before you head out. From 5-6 p.m., Waukee Fire Department will hand out **glow-in-the-dark bracelets or fire hats** at 815 NW 20th Street and 1300 SE L.A. Grant Parkway.



Movie in the Park: "Coco" (PG)
October 10, dusk (~6:30 p.m.)
Centennial Park, free
Waukee.org/Movies

Trick or Trout
October 27, 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m.
Triumph Park, free
Waukee.org/TrickorTrout

Trick or Treating
October 31, 6-8 p.m.
Citywide

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Scott Eriksen Dave Cortner Kathy Dunbar Robert Christensen Sarah Masteller

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PLAN AHEAD

By Scott Eriksen

GET your funeral arrangements done now

The fair is over, and the kids and grandkids are back to school. Life is back on schedule, and it feels good. Now that things are "back to normal," it is time to get those things done that you have put off these past few months. One of those things might be addressing your final arrangements.

We hear it all the time: "I am so glad to have this taken care of." I can certainly tell you that no one ever regrets that their loved one planned ahead when the time comes that the services of a funeral home are needed.

Planning your final arrangements begins with a simple conversation and can be a pleasant process. Planning ahead also allows you time to give the thoughtful consideration that these important decisions deserve.

There are many options to think about when addressing your final arrangements, and there are even prepayment options available to those who wish to have their final financial obligations handled in advance.

An advanced planning consultant can walk you through these choices and options.

Make it a goal to get this off your "to-do" list before the snow flies... or you fly south for the winter. Reach out to your funeral home of choice and schedule a meeting to get your prearrangements in place. You will be glad you did. ■

Information provided by Scott Eriksen, Director of Hamilton's Advanced Planning, Hamilton's Funeral Home, 605 Lyon St., Des Moines, 515-697-3670, www.HamiltonsFuneralHome.com.



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SENIOR

By Jay Heaton

THE POWER of volunteering

As we grow older, many of us start to think about how we want to spend our time and what truly gives life meaning. Volunteering is a wonderful way to fill our days with purpose while also making a positive impact on ourselves and others.

One of the most rewarding parts of volunteering is the connection it brings. After retirement, it is common to miss the daily interactions we once had at work or in raising families. Volunteering opens the door to new friendships, fresh experiences and a sense of belonging. Whether it is reading to children, lending a hand at a food bank or greeting visitors at a community event, these small moments of service can spark joy and companionship.

Staying active is another important benefit. Volunteering keeps both the mind and body engaged. It may mean learning new skills, solving problems or simply getting out of the house and moving around. These things all help support better health and a brighter outlook.

Perhaps the greatest gift of volunteering is the renewed sense of purpose it brings. Knowing that your time, talents and kindness are making a difference adds meaning to each day. It is a reminder that, no matter our age, we still have so much to share. In the end, volunteering doesn't just help others; it helps us live fuller, happier lives. ■

Information provided by Jay Heaton, leasing counselor, Attivo Trail Waukee, 835 N.E. Boston Parkway, Waukee, www.attivotrail.com.



WHY therapy?

Many of us have a preconceived notion of therapy where we are laying on a couch with our hands folded on our chest and sharing our feelings with a therapist sitting in a chair taking notes — or that we cannot go to therapy because we shouldn't be sharing our family's "secrets." While this could be a possibility, therapy is what you would like it to be and what you need. This is a space for you to feel safe and discuss what is going on in life — the good, the bad and the ugly. This is a judgment-free space to be who you are, always. Whether it is talking through past issues, like Ted Lasso, or current stressors like Dani Rojas, it is the space for you to have all of the feelings and emotions — or simply exist. Not every therapist is the right fit for every person, so exploring the right fit for you is important. Not sure where to start? Psychologytoday.com is a great resource to find who is near you, who takes your insurance, what they charge out of pocket and so much more. Or, trying out a session with a therapist in person can be helpful. Therapy is designed for you — an outlet, a safe space, a resource. My question for you now is, why not therapy? ■



Information provide by Mary Doherty, LISW, Renewed Strength Counseling, 2910 Westown Parkway, Suite 314, West Des Moines, IA 50266, 515-809-2419.

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BENEFITS of bioidentical hormones for couples

Bioidentical Hormone Replacement Therapy can offer significant benefits for couples, extending beyond individual health improvements to positively impact their relationship dynamics. When both partners engage in hormone replacement therapy, they are three times more likely to achieve their health goals. This shared journey fosters a deeper connection and improved communication within the relationship.



Bioidentical Hormone Replacement Therapy involves using hormones chemically identical to those naturally produced by the human body, often derived from plant sources. These hormones, including estrogen, progesterone and testosterone, are used to address symptoms of low or unbalanced hormone levels, commonly experienced during perimenopause, menopause or andropause. As individuals experience relief from symptoms such as fatigue, mood swings and decreased libido, their overall well-being improves, which in turn sparks renewed satisfaction in the relationship. Sharing the experience of hormone replacement therapy can lead to increased desire for intimacy, and a general feeling of being "physically and emotionally awake" together. This mutual support can reinforce belief in each other and even save relationships strained by hormone imbalances. ■

Information provided by Viktor Vali and Amy Anderson-Vali, owners, 4 Ever Young, 1180 S.E. University Ave., Wauke, 515-304-2324, www.4everyyoungantiaging.com

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FALL into creativity and storytelling

As the leaves turn, and crisp autumn air drifts through Waukee, it's the perfect time to slow down, get cozy and explore the stories and traditions that make fall so special.

The Waukee Public Library is full of seasonal events throughout October, with something for all ages — from storytimes and hands-on craft sessions to spooky-themed programs that bring the season's magic to life.

Looking for inspiration at home? Creativebug, one of the Library's digital resources, offers tutorials for DIY costumes, fall garlands and party décor, perfect for adding personal touches to your seasonal celebrations. You can also check out fall-themed movies from the Library or pair your crafting with an audiobook from Libby. For younger readers, Bookflix and World Book Online provide engaging stories and folklore that spark curiosity and conversation. Best of all, these resources are free with your library card.

Celebrate the season in style with the Waukee Public Library Friends Foundation's "Read, Return, Repeat" T-shirts, available for order through Nov. 10 at <https://waukeelibrary.itemorder.com/shop/home/>. Each shirt helps fund programs, materials and resources that enrich our community — a cozy, meaningful way to share your library pride this fall.

Learn more about the library and sign up for a card at waukeepubliclibrary.org or contact staff at askme@waukee.org or 515-978-7944.

Programs and events: Most events require advanced registration and can be viewed at waukee.librarycalendar.com/events.

• **Art Gallery Exhibit:** "Trust & Wonder," Oct. 4-31, Even and Summer Hoyt.

• **Kids: Monster Mash,** Monday, Oct. 27, 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.: Join us for some (slightly) spooky fun at a monster-themed party. We'll have simple crafts, games and a mini dance party. Feel free to wear a costume. Registration is required.

• **Teens: Tween Crafts,** Friday, Oct. 17, 3:30 p.m.: Middle grade students are invited to discover a different fun craft project each month. This month, create Cheesecloth Ghosts. For students in grades 4-6. Registration is required.

• **Adults: "A History of Axe Murder,"** Friday, Oct. 24, 4:30 p.m.: Author Rachel McCarthey James has literally written the book on axe murder — and she's here to share the sharpest stories from a half-million years of history. True crime fans and history buffs alike will enjoy this witty look at one of humanity's oldest (and darkest) obsessions. The author will have her books available for purchase at the event. For adults. Teens may attend accompanied by an adult. Registration is required.

• **Multi-Age: Paper Nichos,** Sunday, Oct. 5, 1 p.m.: Nichos are three-dimensional folk-art frames popular throughout Central and South America. These boxes can house objects or photos that commemorate special people or events. Drop by to build and decorate a mini paper nicho, then take it home and add a photo that's special to you. For all ages. Registration is not required. ■

Waukee Public Library

950 S. Warrior Lane, Waukee

515-978-7944

www.waukeepubliclibrary.org

Monday - Tuesday, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.;

Wednesday - Thursday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.;

Friday, 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; Saturday, 9

a.m. to 4 p.m.; Sunday, closed

MEET Carrie Foell

Setting students on library adventures

Born in the Midwest, Carrie Foell spent much of her childhood moving between Kansas City and Chicago for her father's work. Her family eventually settled in West Des Moines when she was in sixth grade. After graduating from Valley High School, Foell earned a bachelor's degree in elementary education from the University of Northern Iowa and began her career in Tulsa, Oklahoma, where she taught for five years.

In 2005, Foell returned to West Des Moines where she taught at Van Meter while pursuing a master's degree in library science from UNI. As she was completing her thesis, a teacher librarian position opened in the Waukee Community School District, and she eagerly applied. Foell has now been a teacher librarian at Brookview Elementary School for the past 14 years.

"Working with little kids in the library is just plain fun. You get to hook them on reading early, watch their curiosity explode in every direction, and see them learn the basics — like how to hunt down a book or double-check a fact — almost without realizing it," Foell says.

Foell typically begins her day with open library time when students in grades K-5 can check out books. She currently has a team of fourth- and fifth-grade library leaders who help younger students locate books they will enjoy.

After that, Foell sees four to five classes each day. During this time, she teaches library standards, and many of her lessons incorporate technology. For example, first-grade students participated in an "app-smashing" project where they wrote a short story inspired by an author they studied. The students illustrated their main character in Keynote used ChatterPix Kids to make their drawing read their story aloud.

"One of the greatest rewards of being a teacher librarian in an elementary school is the opportunity to witness the tremendous growth students make over the course of their six years. I get to see them blossom into creative, critical thinkers, and it's deeply fulfilling to know that I play a small role in nurturing that transformation," Foell says.

To strengthen catalog-searching skills, fourth- and fifth-grade students play "Library Jenga." In this fast-paced, cooperative game, students split into four teams and take turns removing Jenga blocks, hunting for ones marked with numbers. Each number is passed to the team's "researcher," who enters it into a shared Google Doc to reveal a title and author from the library collection. The researcher locates the call number to hand off to the team's "search party," who races to retrieve the book and return it to the table. The team that locates the most books wins.

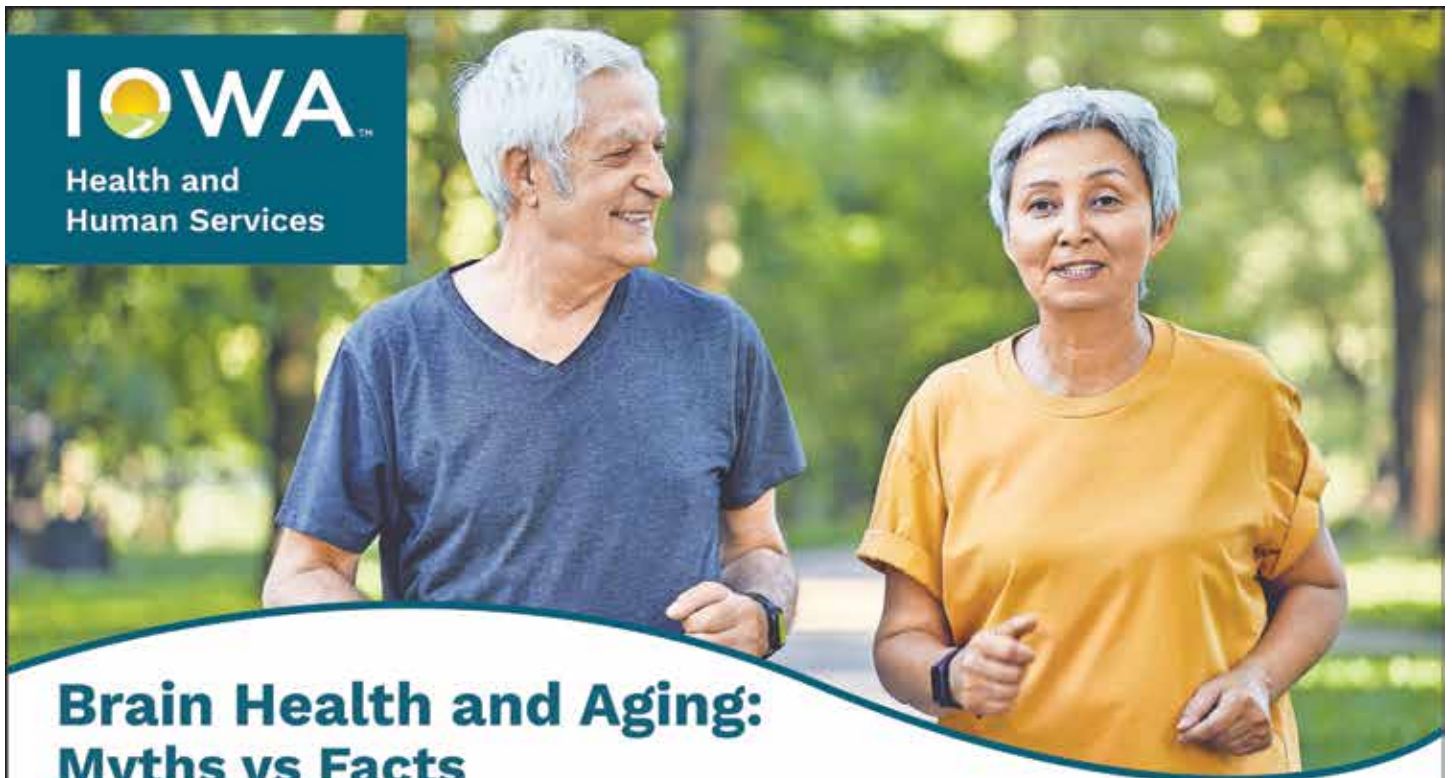
"Storytime and group projects help them practice kindness and teamwork, so the place ends up feeling like a safe hangout for everyone. Best part? Seeing their growth up close — like that first-grader who could barely sound out words in September and is suddenly the class book recommender by spring," Foell says. ■



Carrie Foell, a teacher librarian, has been with Brookview Elementary School for the past 14 years.



Health and
Human Services



Brain Health and Aging: Myths vs Facts

MYTH

I have to see a specialist to
get diagnosed with Alzheimer's

FACT

Most primary care doctors can assess whether a person might have Alzheimer's disease or related dementias (ADRD). They can do cognitive screenings, some even offer biomarker testing. They may refer you to a specialist or a diagnostic clinic, but starting with your family doctor is always a great first step.

You can also get a screening done at your free Annual Medicare Wellness Visit.

MYTH

I can't prevent or treat Alzheimer's

FACT

Research shows that up to 45% of dementia cases can be avoided by making positive lifestyle changes. These include managing your blood pressure, exercising, eating right, keeping your brain active and staying social. And now there are new medications that can slow Alzheimer's disease if caught in the early stages.

MYTH

There are no resources near me to
help with dementia caregiving

FACT

The Iowa HHS ADRD Program has a wealth of resources online from partner organizations all around Iowa. There is a thorough Dementia Resource Guide, a State Strategic Plan, options for caregiver support, the latest on research, local programs, training for professional workers and more.

If you or a loved one has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's or other dementias, you are not alone. The ADRD Program at Iowa HHS wants to help get you connected to the resources you need.

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INSURANCE By Chase VanWerden

UNDERSTANDING mortgage escrow and your insurance premiums



For many homeowners, paying for insurance and property taxes does not mean writing a separate check every year. Instead, these costs are often bundled into what is known as an escrow account, which is managed by your mortgage lender. Understanding how escrow works — and how changes in your homeowners insurance premium affect it — can help you avoid surprises.

When you make your monthly mortgage payment, part of that payment goes toward principal and interest, and another portion is set aside in escrow. Your lender uses the funds in escrow to pay your homeowners insurance premium and property taxes on your behalf. This ensures those bills are paid on time and helps protect both you and your lender.

Each year, your mortgage company provides an annual escrow disclosure statement. This document outlines how much was collected, how much was paid out for insurance and taxes, and whether there is a shortage or surplus in your account. If your homeowners insurance premium increases — as many do over time — your escrow balance may come up short.

When a shortage occurs, you typically have two options:

- Make a one-time payment to cover the shortfall and keep your monthly payment steady.
- Spread the shortage across the coming year, which means your monthly mortgage payment will increase slightly to make up the difference.

For example, if your insurance premium increases by \$300, your escrow may fall short by that amount. You could pay \$300 upfront to bring your account current, or you could choose to divide that shortage into your 12 monthly payments, adding about \$25 per month until caught up. In addition, your lender will also increase the monthly escrow portion of your mortgage going forward to reflect the new, higher premium.

This process can feel frustrating, especially if you were not expecting your insurance to rise. It is a good reminder to review your homeowners insurance policy each year and shop around if rates climb significantly. Sometimes adjusting deductibles or coverage limits — without sacrificing protection — can keep your premiums manageable.

By keeping an eye on your escrow statements and staying proactive about your insurance costs, you can avoid surprises in your mortgage payment and ensure your home remains properly protected. ■

Information provided by Chase VanWerden, IFG Insurance, 520 Walnut St., Waukee, 515-987-9598. Credit: Auto-Owners Blog



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CRACK corn dip

There's something special about recipes that come from family, and my daughter, Samantha, has a corn dip that fits the bill, especially when made with fresh Iowa sweet corn. There is nothing quite like the flavor of corn picked at its peak — crisp, juicy and naturally sweet.



Every summer, when the corn stands start popping up around town, we know it is time to whip up a big bowl of her famous dip. It is creamy and a little cheesy with just the right amount of spice, and that fresh sweet corn takes it to the next level. Whether we are hosting friends, heading to a potluck or just craving a snack on a hot afternoon, this dip is a hit. Served with tortilla chips or fresh veggies, it disappears quickly. I like that it has become part of our summer tradition, and now we're sharing it with you, straight from our kitchen and Iowa's golden fields. ■

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

Crack corn dip

Ingredients:

- 5.25 cups of fresh corn plus 1/2 each red and green pepper, finely diced (for the off-season use 3-15 oz cans fiesta corn or Mexicorn, drained)
- 1 can Rotel, 10 oz (reg or hot), drained
- 1 can jalapenos, 6 oz, drained and diced
- 1/2 cup green onions, sliced (5 stalks), optional
- 2 cups cheddar, shredded
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Pinch of sugar
- Handful fresh cilantro leaves, chopped

Directions

- Mix all the ingredients excluding bell peppers in a bowl. Refrigerator for 3-4 hours before serving. The dip will thicken as it sits in the fridge. Add peppers right before serving. Enjoy!



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OUT & ABOUT



Owners Amy Anderson-Vali and Viktor Vali at the first-year anniversary celebration of 4Ever Young, 1180 S.E. University Ave., Waukee, on July 31.



Tim Grimes, Brett Draper and Tom Anderson at the first-year anniversary celebration of 4Ever Young on July 31.



Tom Anderson and Amy Anderson-Vali at the first-year anniversary celebration of 4Ever Young on July 31.



Tonya Lynn and Olga Scheve at the first-year anniversary celebration of 4Ever Young on July 31.



Clarissa Walling, Chrissy Draper and Sherry Johnson-Murray at the first-year anniversary celebration of 4Ever Young on July 31.



Josh Currie and Bryce Anderson at the Waukee Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for Dorrian Heating and Cooling.



Waukee Area Chamber of Commerce hosted a ribbon cutting for Dorrian Heating and Cooling, 3260 Ute Ave., Waukee, on Sept. 4.



Megan Watt and Laura Rush at the Waukee Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for Dorrian Heating and Cooling.



Melissa Stimple and Michael Bartos at the Waukee Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for Dorrian Heating and Cooling.



Abbi Janes, Aly Davis and Terry Snyder at the Waukee Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for Dorrian Heating and Cooling.



Chelsy Dahms and Zach Vander Ploeg at the Waukee Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for Dorrian Heating and Cooling.

RIBBON cutting

Waukee Area Chamber of Commerce hosted a ribbon cutting for Trust Bridge Wealth Advisors, 4090 Westown Parkway, Suite 108, West Des Moines, on Aug. 26.



Melissa Stimple and Travis Gaule



Rob Grove and Mayor Courtney Clarke



Maddie Starman, Courtney Luna, Lennox Luna and Nate Luna



Nicole Berger and Terry Snyder



Gared Hassel and Zach Vander Ploeg



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