

INDIANOLA

OCTOBER 2025

# Living

MAGAZINE

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# FINALLY, YOUR TEEN CAN DRIVE



By Randall  
Jackson

With the school year underway, Iowa's Special Minor's Restricted License (SMRL) offers families a practical way to manage their teen's transportation to school, work, and extracurriculars. It also provides relief to parents who've spent

numerous untold hours driving their kids back and forth to their practices while attempting to stay on top of work responsibilities and other home duties. Back in the old days, we called a prior version of the license the "School Permit", and it was a great help to get to those sports practices and play rehearsals.

To obtain an SMRL, the teen must be at least 14½ years old, complete an Iowa-approved driver education course, and hold a valid instruction permit with a clean driving record for six consecutive months before applying. The parent or guardian must fill out and sign a Form 430021 (Affidavit for SMRL), and the school official or homeschool instructor must also sign it. The teen may need to pass a driving test at the DOT. Once the form is complete, schedule an appointment to submit it and receive your license. You'll also need Form 430022 (Parental Consent), which must be carried in the vehicle and shown to law enforcement upon request.

With this license, you may drive without adult supervision to and from school, school-sponsored activities, work,

or farm-related tasks, as long as the destination is within 25 miles and you use the most direct route. You're also allowed to stop for fuel while en route. At any time, you may drive with a parent, guardian, immediate family member age 21 or older, a driver education instructor, or someone age 25 or older with written parental permission—provided they hold a valid driver's license.

## UNLESS THEY (OR YOU) LOSE THEIR RIGHT TO DO SO

A single criminal offense or traffic violation, except most parking tickets, will cause the teen to lose the license. Even equipment violations resulting in citations, 5 mph speeding tickets, and seatbelt violations will result in suspension. The use of electronic devices while driving, carrying more than one non-relative minor passenger without supervision, or driving to unauthorized locations will also result in suspension. A violation will result in a three-month suspension and an additional 6-month delay in the teen becoming eligible for an Intermediate License.

In other words, in addition to your teen avoiding all other violations, double check that you (or they) have paid your vehicle registrations & auto insurance. Make sure those mufflers are quiet and either leave the window tint off the teen's vehicle or make certain it is within legal limits. If you don't, you may be driving them to their practice this fall.

## YOUR TEAM THAT IS #MAKINGADIFFERENCE

Ryan Ellis, Randall Jackson,  
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WELCOME

# HALLOWEEN is not just for kids

If you have not yet decided on a Halloween costume, you might want to hurry up. You can't wear that Elvis costume every year.

Yes, Halloween is near, and it's not just for kids. Most all of us have great memories of trick-or-treating with our siblings and friends, amassing a bag of candy we would struggle to carry.

Choosing a costume as a kid was not high pressure, as I simply wore whatever Mom had for me, which was usually a hand-me-down from my siblings. I really didn't care. As an adult, though, the pressure in choosing a Halloween costume intensified. I could no longer strap on a plastic mask and call it good.

Through the years, Jolene and I had some costume hits and some costume misses. The biggest miss was in our younger years when we dressed as mummies, wearing white long underwear tops and bottoms and covering each other with strips of white bed sheets. It seemed like a great idea — until we had to go to the bathroom.

Another year, we went with a group and dressed as the Gilligan's Island crew. Jolene and I were Mr. and Mrs. Howell. And, yes, I carried the teddy bear.

Speaking of bears, a few years later, we tried Goldilocks and the three bears with another couple. It didn't work. We looked like a little girl and three giant mice.

Jolene and I also did stints as the farmer and the cow, the hunter and the deer, the Lone Ranger and Tonto, and Farrah Fawcett and Michael Jackson.

The best costumes we ever had, though, were when we dressed as the couple that was throwing the party. We pulled that one off twice, to the dismay of the hosts.

I encourage you to get into the Halloween spirit this year. Attend a costume party or event, or just dress up and entertain the kids who are trick-or-treating. And, if you struggle to come up with a costume, well, there is always Elvis.

Happy Halloween, and thanks for reading. ■

## SHANE GOODMAN

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**WRITER NEEDED:** Do you live in Indianola, enjoy writing, and are interested in telling the stories of the community? Reach out to [tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com](mailto:tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com).



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# Costume CREATIONS

Residents share how they  
add their own touches to  
Halloween garbs.

By Becky Kolosik

When it comes to Halloween, some people like to pull out all the stops. They turn their yards into haunted or cartoon landscapes. They carve pumpkins, bob for apples, and offer the best treats to their trick-or-treaters. And, they put their energy and holiday spirit into making sure their costumes — or their kids' — make others “ooh” and “aah” ... and perhaps shudder.

Kensi Malaney's Carnival Dragon costume earned her a blue ribbon this year in the 4H Innovative Challenge category.



## Creativity comes to life

Thirteen-year-old Kensi Malaney enjoys expressing her creative side. Whether she is sketching and designing costumes for Halloween and other holidays or playing a character on stage, her talent and imagination shine through.

When it comes to costumes, her mom says Kensi is typically drawn to things that are not as popular with other kids her age.

“While her friends were playing with things like Shopkins, Kensi wanted Ghostbusters and Star Wars Rebels,” Jennifer Pfeifer-Malaney, says. “It started at a very young age for her.”

Kensi would agree that her costumes are inspired by things she likes, and most are based on existing characters.

“First, I think of a theme or character, then I sketch my design and tell my mom what I might need,” Kensi explains. “I usually get an idea when I’m really into something. For example, my 2024 4H project was designed around my favorite Sanrio character, Kuromi.”

Kensi’s costumes often start with clothes she finds at the thrift store. Then she might paint on them or use materials such as tulle, wire, cardboard, stickers or foam tubes in the design process.

Her mom does the sewing but says it has to be easy and something she can hand stitch.

“I also sometimes help her troubleshoot,” Pfeifer-Malaney says. “Owning a hardware store certainly helps with that part because we have access to all sorts of different glues and construction materials.”

Making her fantasy costumes look real can sometimes be the most difficult part of the process, but Kensi is up for the challenge. The end result is worth it because she enjoys showing off her costumes and hearing from people about how much they enjoy her creations.

Kensi has competed in the 4H Innovation Challenge category for the last three years.

Sailor Moon was her first project in 2023. She dyed boots from Goodwill, had a collar made, added hair extensions, and used some of her great grandmother’s costume jewelry to make the accessories.

The Kuromi Hello Kitty costume that she made in 2024 is her favorite.

“It was all thrifted clothes, and I loved gluing things together to make it cute,” Kensi says. “My favorite part was painting on my white shoes.”

This year, she received a blue ribbon in the Innovative Challenge category for her “Carnival Dragon” costume. The black tulle skirt is covered in sparkly, colorful sequins, while the tail is made from sequin-covered wire and paper. Her wings are foam tubing draped with layers of tulle to match her red top.

Other costumes she has created over the years include:

**Captain America** — Made from a costume dress with an added shield, blue polar fleece and blue star sunglasses.

**Ghostbusters** — A friend painted the Ghostbuster logo on the sleeves of a firefighter suit, and they made a proton pack out of a tote box.

**Monkey** — Kensi started with a mouse costume that was made by her great grandmother for her mom when she was in third grade. They found some ears that could be fashioned into monkey ears.

**Vanille Von Sweets (“Wreck it Ralph”)** — She added beads to a black wig to make it look like candy and wore a light green zip-up sweatshirt and brown skirt with added tulle.

**Artemis (“Ready Player One”)** — She purchased the wig, added face makeup and found clothing pieces that looked like a biker chick.

A costume Kensi hasn’t made yet — but has always wanted too — is Judy Hopps from “Zootopia.” Her family can’t wait to see what she comes up with next.

“It’s always fun to show off my costumes,” Kensi says. “I hope I can inspire other kids — and even adults — to get creative, too.”



## Costume ideas

### WORK-APPROPRIATE COSTUMES

Good Housekeeping ([www.goodhousekeeping.com/holidays/halloween-ideas/g28212494/work-appropriate-halloween-costumes/](http://www.goodhousekeeping.com/holidays/halloween-ideas/g28212494/work-appropriate-halloween-costumes/)) offers “63 Work-Appropriate Halloween Costumes HR Would Totally Approve.”



Examples include:

- **Peppa Pig:** Break out your shift dress and rain boots to recreate this Peppa Pig look. Cut out a pink circle out of construction paper and attach it to a popsicle stick to make your pig snout.
- **Sriracha Bottle:** Anyone who loves a good spicy kick with their food should try out this innovative getup. You’ll need a red shirt, iron on transfer paper, green felt, styrofoam cone, and cylinder forms and faux peppers. To get the look: Download a sriracha label template and print it on iron on transfer paper. Cut out the details and iron them on to a red T-shirt. Use the styrofoam forms to create the bottle cap hat and cover them with green felt, attaching them with hot glue. Then add an elastic strap to secure it to your head.
- **Mario Bros.:** If you already have a long-sleeved shirt and pair of jeans in your closet, you’re halfway to transforming into the Super Mario Bros. Just add suspenders, a hat, and a faux mustache to really drive the look home.
- **Care Bears Costume:** For a comfy look that’ll be sure to get some laughs at the office, try out a Care Bears costume. All you need is a pair of pastel-colored sweats and to get crafty with felt and puffy paint. It can also easily transition into a fun group costume.
- **Scarecrow Costume:** This cool costume just needs a plaid flannel, rain boots, and denim overalls. If you really want to bring it to the next level, grab a yarn wig, and hay arm cuffs, but you don’t have to.
- **Mime:** If you already own a pair of black overalls and a beret, you’re halfway done with this costume. Just add a striped shirt and white face paint to complete your look.

- **Snake Plant Costume:** So, your desk is the one with all the plants, huh? Well, take your love of greenery to the next level with this adorable look. To make, cut 1.5-inch wide strips of light green crêpe paper and 1.75-inch strip of dark green. Curve the tops into points. Spread a glue stick all over a light green strip. Place a length of floral wire down the middle of the strip, and top with a strip of dark green crêpe paper. Smooth with your fingers and let dry. Curve the strips to create a leaf effect and attach to a hat with hot glue or safety pins. Fill shirt pockets with more leaves to complete the look.
- **Brownie Costume:** This DIY brownie outfit will have everyone craving something sweet during their lunch break. Make your own by gluing pom-poms to a brown dress.
- **Cat With Yarn Ball Halloween Costume:** Attach a tangled mess of yarn to your stomach to make a classic cat costume fit your current state. Plus, it'll be fun to have a few strands of yarn to fiddle with throughout the work day.

## BOO-TIFULLY EASY

buzzfeed.com (www.buzzfeed.com/laurafrustaci/easy-last-minute-halloween-costumes) provides "140 Last-Minute Costume Ideas That Are Boo-Tifully Easy."



- **Miss Universe Runner Up Costume:** Put on your runny make-up, make yourself a beauty queen sash, and you're all set.
- **Lumberjack costume:** Supplies needed: plaid shirt, suspenders, a fake axe (a paper towel roll and aluminum foil will do nicely).
- **Egg costume:** Paint a big yellow dot on any white t-shirt to make yourself an egg costume. If you have a red scarf, wear it and say it's bacon!
- **Life Hanging Out Lemons Costume:** Wear a yellow outfit, with a nametag saying "Life" and carry a basket of lemons. You will be set to go with this unique idea.
- **Pig In A Blanket Costume:** Wrap yourself in a blanket, add some pig ears and a pig snout and you're done.
- **Dora the Explorer Costume:** Wear a bright shirt and pants, carry a map and throw on a backpack.
- **A Bunch of Grapes Costume:** Easy enough, just attach a bunch of balloons to yourself and put some green leaves on your head.
- **The Louvre Museum Costume:** Put a tinfoil pyramid on your head and attach pictures of the artworks at the Louvre. You will be one of a kind. ■



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# THE KEY to success

Program rewards Indianola FFA members who earn American Degree.



A group of Indianola FFA members received their Iowa Degree in May at the 97th Iowa FFA Convention and will be the first students in the Class of 2025 to be eligible for the \$500 award from Blessed Beyond Belief LLC.

In 2013, the Indianola FFA chapter celebrated its 75th anniversary and the more than 700 students who had become members during those years. Since then, the chapter has continued its excellence in agricultural education.

FFA members in Indianola earn their Greenhand Degree, followed by their chapter and Iowa FFA degrees. A new program, sponsored by Blessed Beyond Belief LLC, Brad and Rhonda Ross and the Indianola Chapter of the Iowa FFA Alumni Supporters wants to reward Indianola High School FFA members to reach higher and earn the American FFA Degree.

Brad Ross was an ag educator and knows first-hand the benefits of the American FFA degree. He says that the achievement shows more than a member's dedication to his or her chapter and state association. It shows a key quality employers want to see in potential employees — an ability to go above and beyond to achieve excellence.

Any eligible FFA members, starting with the graduating class of 2025 and beyond, who meet the requirements will receive a cash

award of \$500 from Blessed Beyond Belief and a certificate of recognition from the alumni chapter.

Requirements include completion of a public speaking course at either the high school or post-secondary education level and receipt of an American FFA Degree.

In the weeks following the Iowa FFA Degree ceremony, recipients will be contacted to confirm their future education or employment plans. If the FFA member presents proof of the two requirements, they will be contacted in regard to an awards ceremony where they will receive \$500 and a certificate.

“Rhonda and I know the degree is highly recognizable in the industry and employers will place additional emphasis on recruitment when they see this accomplishment on a resume,” Brad says. “We founded Blessed Beyond Belief LLC to support individuals and organizations, and being a part of this program is a way to give back to our community and help young people.”

For more information, email the Indianola Chapter of the Iowa FFA Alumni Supporters at [indianolaFFAalumni14@gmail.com](mailto:indianolaFFAalumni14@gmail.com). ■

## The American FFA Degree

The American FFA Degree is the highest level of membership an FFA member can achieve and is awarded to less than 1% of all members annually. To earn the degree, a member must meet a demanding set of criteria, including:

- Receiving the State FFA Degree
- Being an active FFA member for the past three years
- Completing at least three years of agricultural education
- Being at least 12 months out of high school when the degree is granted
- Operating an outstanding SAE program with comprehensive records
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**LEGAL** By Ken Winjum

## INTENTIONAL acts exclusion

When one suffers injuries or damages because of another's actions, often the source of relief is from the insurer of the wrongdoer. Because insurance is founded on the principle that coverage exists for fortuitous losses which are not anticipated by the parties, most liability policies of insurance exclude coverage for "intentional acts." Although policies and coverages differ, a typical policy might contain the following language:



"We (insurance company) will not pay for bodily injury or property damage which was caused intentionally by any person, even if the actual injury or damage is different than that which was expected or intended."

Iowa courts have generally upheld such language. In *Altena v. United Fire and Cas. Co.*, 422 N.W.2d 435 (Iowa 1988) the Iowa Supreme Court adopted the view that the exclusion applies where the insured intended the act and to cause some kind of bodily injury. The facts of the *Altena* case were fairly sordid and involved criminal actions by the insured. In *McAndrews v. Farm Bureau*, 249 N.W.2d 117 (Iowa 1984), an insured person got into a fight with another man at a county fair. The Supreme Court held that the act of striking another was an act excluded from coverage.

Interestingly, the Court had a different perspective where an 11-year-old boy intentionally threw a baseball at his friend, hitting his temple. The friend died as a result. In *AMCO Insurance Co. v. Haht*, 490 N.W.2d 843 (Iowa 1992), the Supreme Court determined that the "intentional act" exclusion in a homeowner's policy did not apply. The Court observed: "An eleven-year-old boy, animated by an obscure playground snit, lacks the same capacity to formulate an intent to injure that is possessed by an adult, or even a youth of more maturity."

A different result was obtained when a 15-year-old shot his friend in the eye with a BB gun. In *American Family v. Wubbena*, 496 N.W.2d 783 (Iowa App. 1992), the Iowa Court of Appeals determined that the firing of a BB gun at another is substantially different than throwing a ball. Therefore, the "intentional act exclusion" applied and there was no coverage.

The Court of Appeals decided that an "intentional act exclusion" did not apply where the injured party and insured person were engaged in a game of "bump and run" with their vehicles. See, *Pekin Insurance v. Auto Owners*, 630 N.W.2d 614 (Iowa App. 2001).

Conclusion: The above examples are just a snapshot of the many cases involving "intentional acts" exclusions. From the injured party's perspective, it is often preferable that the wrongful actions are not "intentional." Unfortunately for the victim, if harm was intended, there may be no coverage provided by the liability insurance carrier. ■

Information provided by Ken Winjum, The Winjum Law Firm, P.L.C., 1220 Sunset Drive., Suite 103, Norwalk, 515-981-5220, [www.winjumlaw.com](http://www.winjumlaw.com).

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# HIDDEN gem of caregiving: adult day services

Caring for a loved one can certainly be rewarding, but balancing work, household responsibilities, and your own well-being can feel overwhelming. The good news: Resources are readily available in the form of adult day services, which can provide meaningful enrichment during the day while easing the stress of caregiving.



**What are adult day services?** Adult day services offer daytime support and engagement for adults who may need help with daily activities, face safety risks when left alone, or simply benefit from social interaction. Participants can attend daily or just a few times a week. While many participants live with dementia, a memory-challenge diagnosis is not required.

**Safety and peace of mind.** Safety is a cornerstone of adult day programs. Participants

thrive in secure environments with professional oversight, while families gain confidence knowing their loved one is supported.

One caregiver shared that she found relief when her husband, who was living with dementia, began attending an adult day program. At home, he had begun leaving the stove on and water running. “I was trying to work from home to make sure he was safe, but I couldn’t get anything done. Adult day was a godsend. I finally felt like I could stop worrying 24/7.”

## More than “something to do.”

Programming is designed to nourish body, mind and spirit through:

- Social activities that reduce isolation
- Nutritious meals and snacks
- Physical and cognitive activities that promote engagement
- Safe spaces where participants can thrive, even with chronic conditions

## Why families choose adult day services.

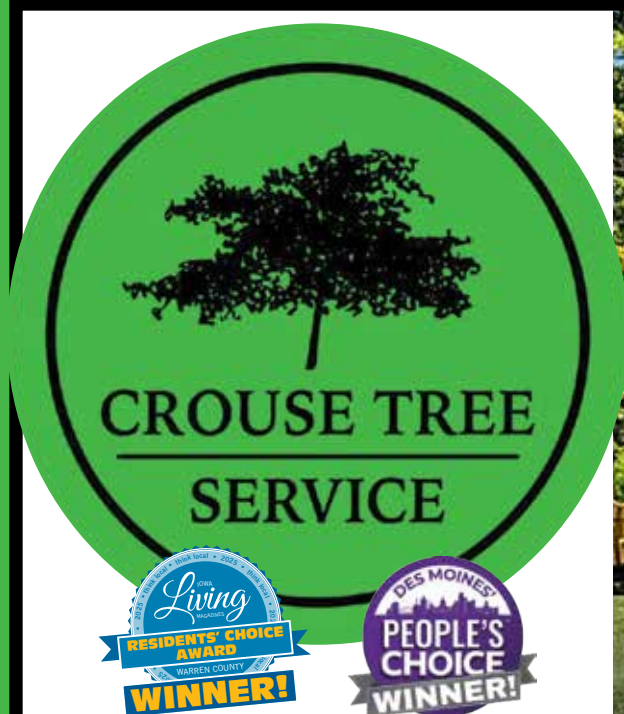
Although adult day services can make a

tremendous difference, many families are unaware they exist. Too often, the services remain a best-kept secret until caregiving stress reaches a breaking point.

Benefits extend to both participants and caregivers. Participants enjoy engagement, connection, and better nutrition. Caregivers experience reduced stress, more time for self-care, and confidence that their loved one is thriving.

**Take the first step.** If you’re balancing caregiving and searching for peace of mind, consider exploring adult day services in your area. These programs provide the support your loved one deserves — and the breathing room you need to be at your best. ■

Aaron Wheeler is Vice President of Home and Community-Based Services for WesleyLife, which provides health and well-being services for older adults — including adult day services in Des Moines and Newton. To learn more, visit [wesleylife.org](http://wesleylife.org).



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- Revamped wellness area with weight gym and yoga room
- More "pampering" services with an improved hair salon that can also offer manicures, pedicures and massage
- Renovation to our long-term care households that includes all private suites and private half baths
- A refresh to our current Aspen independent living building common areas

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email [amcdonald@wesleylife.org](mailto:amcdonald@wesleylife.org).



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# ASSISTED living provides peace of mind

A supportive solution for aging adults and their loved ones

As loved ones age, families often face growing concerns. Is Mom eating enough? Is Dad lonely? What if something happens when no one is there? These worries can be especially heavy when trying to balance work, kids and caregiving responsibilities. That's where assisted living can make a life-changing difference, offering a supportive environment that eases daily stress for both residents and families.

**A safer living environment.** Falls, medication mix-ups, or even forgetting to turn off the stove are valid concerns for older adults living at home. According to the CDC, millions of seniors report falls each year. In assisted living, safety is a top priority. Residences are equipped with grab bars, emergency response systems, secured entries and trained staff available 24/7 to help when needed.



For families in the Des Moines area, knowing their loved one is in a secure and supervised setting brings immense peace of mind.

**Relief from everyday tasks.** Many older adults begin to feel overwhelmed by the demands of running a household. Cleaning, cooking, laundry, yardwork and repairs can become exhausting or even dangerous. Assisted living removes those burdens, allowing residents to enjoy their time without daily chores. Residents typically receive housekeeping, laundry services and maintenance support, along with delicious chef-prepared meals and scheduled transportation so trips to the grocery store or snow removal in winter are no longer concerns.

**A social and connected lifestyle.** Isolation can be as harmful to seniors as chronic illness. In Iowa, winter months in particular can contribute to loneliness and social withdrawal. Assisted living provides built-in opportunities to engage: from book clubs and art classes to movie nights, fitness programs and social outings. Residents can stay active and make meaningful

connections. This can be especially reassuring for families who may not live nearby or who worry about their loved one spending too much time alone.

## **Personal support, when it is needed.**

Residents receive support based on individual needs, whether it is help with dressing, bathing, medication reminders or mobility. The goal is to maintain independence while offering a helping hand when required. This flexibility ensures aging adults continue to live with dignity and confidence.

**Final thoughts.** For many families in the Des Moines area, assisted living offers more than care. It offers clarity, comfort and confidence. It allows older adults to live well while their families can breathe a little easier knowing they are safe, supported and surrounded by community. ■

Information provided by Ashley Bergman, Addington Place of Des Moines, [addingtonplaceofdesmoines.com](http://addingtonplaceofdesmoines.com). Written by Discovery Senior Living, 3461 Bonita Bay Blvd., Suite 100, Bonita Springs, FL 34134.

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# FALL car care musts

With the leaves turning and the air cooling, it is a sure sign that winter is on its way. That is why October is the official Fall Car Care Month — the perfect time to get your vehicle ready for the change in seasons and the busy holiday travel just around the corner.



While keeping up with your import vehicle's maintenance is essential all year, it becomes even more critical as colder weather approaches.

Following this simple checklist, your service technician can ensure your vehicle is ready for the colder months ahead.

**Wipers:** Worn-out wiper blades that streak or chatter should be replaced. While they might seem fine in the summer, you'll be glad you changed them once snow and sleet start to fall. It's recommended to replace them every 15,000

miles.

**Battery:** Keep your battery connections clean, tight and free of corrosion. Cold weather is hard on batteries, so it is essential to have your battery and charging system checked.

**Heating and defrost:** Ensure your heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems are functioning properly. A functional heater and defroster are crucial for comfort and safety, and your AC system can even help defrost your windshield faster. This is also a good time to check your cabin air filter, which can improve air quality inside the car by removing allergens and pollen.

**Tires:** Check all your tires, including the spare, for proper pressure and tread depth. Look for bulges, bald spots and uneven wear, as these can indicate the need for a wheel alignment. Consider investing in a set of dedicated winter tires for the best performance on snow and ice. They'll also extend the life of your all-season tires.

**Brakes:** Your brakes are critical for safety. Have your brake system inspected, including the brake lines, pads and rotors. It's also important to ensure your brake fluid service is up-to-date, as old fluid can hold moisture that may freeze and affect braking performance.

**Fuel system:** As temperatures drop, moisture can condense in your fuel tank. When this water freezes, it can cause performance issues and even damage your fuel system, especially in diesel vehicles. Make sure your fuel system is in top shape for a trouble-free winter.

By following these guidelines early in October, your vehicle will be ready for the journey ahead, ensuring you and your passengers are safe and comfortable.

Happy motoring. ■

Information provided by Chris Werner, owner and lead technician, Werner's Elite Auto, 506 1/2 E. Euclid Ave., Indianola, 515-259-0122, [www.wernerseliteauto.com](http://www.wernerseliteauto.com).



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# MARKET strategies

## Three ways to play defense in your stock portfolio

Defensive investment strategies have common goals: to help a portfolio better withstand an economic downturn and withstand periods of market volatility. Some of these strategies we mention may help you manage risk without giving up investment growth.



other hand, tend to be priced higher relative to current earnings, reflecting future potential, but also carrying higher risk than value stocks.

### 2. Temper volatility

All stocks fluctuate, but some have been less volatile historically than others. Certain mutual funds and exchange-traded funds (ETFs) are designed to minimize volatility.

A common measure of a stock's volatility is its beta, with the S&P 500 Index considered a beta of 1.0. An investment with a beta of 0.8 might experience only 80% of market gains during an upswing and only 80% of losses during a downswing, leaving less ground to recover when markets rebound.

### 3. Seek out dividends

Dividend-paying stocks can provide steady income even when prices fluctuate. Dividend stocks tend to be sensitive to interest rate changes, so there are times when they can either drag down or help boost portfolio performance. When rates fall, the lower yields on fixed-income

investments could make the yield on dividend stocks seem more attractive. The flip side is that dividend-paying stocks may not have as much growth potential as non-dividend payers.

The return and principal value of all investments fluctuate with changes in market conditions. Shares, when sold, may be worth more or less than their original cost. Investing in dividends is a long-term commitment and the amount of a company's dividend can fluctuate with earnings. Dividends are typically not guaranteed and could be changed or eliminated. ■

At City State Bank, we are here to help guide you through investment strategies to help you achieve your long-term goals. For more information, please contact Kourtne Klocko with City State Bank Trust & Investments at 515-981-1400. Not FDIC insured. Not deposits or other obligations of the bank and are not guaranteed by the bank. Are subject to investment risk, including possible loss of principal. City State Bank does not provide tax or legal advice. Each taxpayer should seek independent advice from a tax professional. These materials are based upon publicly available information that may change at any time without notice.

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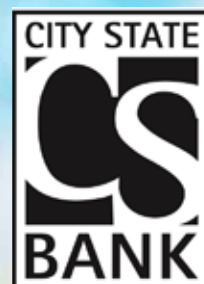
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## CREAMY tomato soup is rich with sun-ripened flavor

There is something special about cooking with ingredients grown from your own backyard. Recently, I was watching our grandson at my daughter and son-in-law's house. He and I ventured outside to check on their garden and discovered a bumper crop of tomatoes.



Since the weather was cool, I decided that a batch of tomato soup for dinner would serve the harvest well. Our grandson, just 8 months old, is already a curious observer in the kitchen. He keeps me company from his high chair, happily armed with a dozen measuring cups to toss and a few snacks to keep him content. This creamy tomato soup, made with an abundance of fresh-picked tomatoes and a blend of herbs, is rich with sun-ripened flavor. Paired with a golden, melty grilled cheese on homemade sourdough, it was the perfect fall dinner — simple, cozy and made even sweeter by sharing it together with my grandson. ■

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

### Creamy tomato soup

Total time: 45 minutes

Servings: 4

#### Ingredients:

- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 3-4 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tablespoons olive or avocado oil
- 2 pounds fresh tomatoes (about 6 large), blanched, skins off and chopped
- 2 cups chicken broth (low sodium preferred)
- 1/3 cup Parmesan cheese, grated
- 1/2 -3/4 cup heavy (whipping) cream
- 2 tablespoons honey
- Salt and pepper, basil, oregano — more of everything than you think
- Pinch of rosemary
- Fresh basil or parsley (optional, for garnish)

#### Directions

- Heat oil over medium heat. Add onion and sauté for about 5 minutes until soft.
- Add garlic and cook all for 2 more minutes.
- Add tomatoes and cook for 10 minutes.



- Add chicken broth and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 20 minutes, uncovered. Stir occasionally.
- Blend until smooth by using an immersion blender and scooping the mixture into a traditional blender. Return soup to the pan.
- Add whipping cream and honey and stir. Season with salt, pepper, basil, oregano and other herbs of choice.
- Simmer for 5 more minutes.
- Serve immediately. Garnish with fresh basil or parsley. This pairs well with a grilled cheese sandwich on sourdough bread. Enjoy!

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## Fall Fish and Chicken Dinners

Oct. 24, Nov. 7, 14 and 21  
St. Thomas Aquinas Parish Hall,  
210 S. Wesley St., Indianola

The Indianola Knights offer their fall fish and chicken dinners with serving from 5:30-7 p.m., dine-in or take-out. Cost for adults and take out orders is \$13. Children ages 6-12 are \$6 and children 5 and younger are free. Boy Scout Troop 123 will host a dessert table. Three dollars from each meal will be used to support Helping Hand, Heal House, Hope Foundation and the Indianola Ministry Association.

## Free Community Meal

Tuesdays, 5:30-6:30 p.m.  
Lighthouse Community Center,  
109 W. Boston Ave., Indianola

Free home cooked meal every Tuesday. Everyone is welcome. Come and enjoy food and fellowship with individuals and organizations in the community.

## Tuesday Tunes & Treats: Been There, Done That

Tuesday, Oct. 28 at 1 p.m.  
Indianola Activity Center, 2204  
W. Second Ave., Indianola

This three-piece band features Tom Petersen, Roger Young and David Pitt, who play country, light pop and gospel music. The concert is free. Refreshments provided by Indianola Hy-Vee.

## Medicare Open Enrollment assistance

Oct. 15 to Dec. 7  
Indianola Activity Center, 2204 W. Second Ave., Indianola

Do you have questions about Medicare Open Enrollment? SHIIP/SMP can help. Every year between Oct. 15 and Dec. 7, persons with Medicare Part D have the opportunity to review their drug plan coverage. SHIIP/SMP volunteer counselors are available for a free, confidential and unbiased review of cost and coverage, with changes taking effect Jan. 1. Call 515-962-5375 to schedule your appointment at the Indianola Activity Center. Phone appointments also available. SHIIP/SMP is a service of the State of Iowa. Volunteer counselors do not sell or promote any insurance companies, policies or agents.

## Indianola Public Library Events

207 N. B. St., Indianola

### KIDS

- Spooky NERF (grades 3-5): Friday, Oct. 17, 5:30-6:30 p.m.
- Kids Create: Saturday, Oct. 18, 2-3 p.m.
- After School Bingo (grades 3-5): 3:30-4:30 p.m.
- Chess Club: Thursday, Oct. 23, 6-7 p.m.

### STORYTIME

- Storytime with Janis: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:30-11 a.m.
- Saturday Storytime: Saturdays, 10:30-11:15 a.m.
- Pajama Storytime: Mondays, Oct. 13 and 20, 6-6:30 p.m.

### TEENS

- Teen Hangout: Wednesdays, 2:30-4:30 p.m.
- Teen Art Cart: Saturdays, all day

### ADULTS

- TBR Book Club: Monday, Oct. 27, 6:30-7:30 p.m.
  - Morning Book Club and Evening Book Club: Tuesday, Oct. 28, 6:30-7:30 p.m.
- All Iowa Reads Community-wide Book Discussion.

## Wesley Woods Fall Fest

Saturday, Oct. 11, 1-4 p.m.  
Wesley Woods Camp and Retreat  
Center, 10896 Nixon St., Indianola

Enjoy the Fall Fest at Wesley Woods. Family-friendly activities will include crafts, an inflatable bounce house and obstacle course, apple pressing for cider, pony rides and more. Come enjoy the beautiful fall scenery, take a hike, and have some fun. This is a free event.

## Scuba Skill Practice

Various dates

Indianola Wellness Campus,  
306 E. Scenic Valley Ave., Indianola

Keep your scuba skills fresh during the cooler months with Scuba Skill Practice sessions at the Indianola Wellness Campus heated competition pool. These two-hour open pool sessions are designed for certified divers looking to maintain proficiency in a controlled environment. Open to members and nonmembers. Dates are as follows:

- Sunday, Oct. 19, 1-3 p.m.
- Sunday, Nov. 16, 1-3 p.m.
- Sunday, Dec. 21, 1-3 p.m.

More information and registration available at <https://tinyurl.com/IWCSubaPractice>.

## Indianola Community Blood Drive

Friday, Oct. 10, 1-5:30 p.m.  
Trinity Unity Presbyterian  
Church, Fellowship Hall,  
200 S. Howard St., Indianola

Give the gift of life. Walk ins are welcome to this community blood drive.



## Fall Festival and Open House

Tuesday, Oct. 21, 5 p.m.  
Indianola Wellness Campus,  
306 E. Scenic Valley Ave., Indianola

Explore Indianola's resources and services for adults age 50 and older, with free information, fun giveaways and door prizes. This is a new location for 2025. Tours of the facility will be available. The event is free and open to the public.

## Children's Costume Party

Saturday, Oct. 25, 10 a.m.  
to noon  
Indianola Town Square

Enjoy free, fun family activities on and around the Indianola Square. Children up to age 10 can compete in a costume contest and trick-or-treat at businesses around the Square. There also will be a dog costume contest at 10 a.m.

## Wine, Witches and Brews

Friday, Oct. 24, 5-9 p.m.  
Indianola Downtown  
Mainstreet

Calling all witches. No one does Halloween like Indianola Main Street featuring its most popular event. A spooktacular evening packed full of fun. Shopping, sipping, costumes, parties and more. ■



# FALL garden cleanup

Fall is the time to get your garden, flower beds, trees, shrubs and containers ready for winter, and here are several tasks that will make next year's landscape look awesome, while enjoying the cooler fall weather. Here are a few of the things to take care of before the snow flies.

While harvesting those last tomatoes, peppers and squashes, start clearing the garden of the vegetation. Compost this green material for next year, unless you have noticed pests or powdery mildew on your plants, then dispose into the garbage, burn or bury. You do not want to pass these problems on to next year's garden through your compost. Once cleaned off, work compost or decomposed manure into the garden to be ready for spring garden planting.

Flower beds are a little bit trickier, but not complicated. Prune back herbaceous peonies, daylilies, lilies and hostas and compost any of these that do not have powdery mildew or pests. Most perennials can be left for the winter. Some, like coneflowers, black-eyed Susans and other flowers with seed heads, should be left. Birds will enjoy the seeds throughout the fall and winter. They will add winter interest to the garden beds as well.

Are you putting in fall bulbs for spring blooms? Now is the time to do that also. You know where your perennials are, so you can work around them. Think "Dig, Drop, Done" with your bulbs, planting them no deeper than twice the height of the bulb, using a layer cake concept with large bulbs at the bottom and smaller bulbs in the next layers. Then, when the ground has frozen, put on a layer of shredded leaves or straw. This will help protect the bulbs and perennials from freeze-thaw heaving during the winter.

Mulch landscape trees and shrubs and keep watering through fall until the ground is frozen. Evergreens are especially susceptible to damage if the soil is dry going into winter. If you have planted trees and shrubs this fall, do not forget to keep them watered as well. The one difference is fruit trees. Leave them less mulched so the freeze will kill any pests living in the ground around them. Mulch them in late winter to early spring.

Did you plant elephant ears, cannas or other non-hardy bulbs for the summer? Wait for the first frost, then cut back the foliage and dig up the bulbs and corms, rinse and allow to dry a few days in the shade. Put them in a paper bag or cardboard box and place in a cool dry basement for the winter. If you put an elephant ear in a container, you can bring it in before frost and keep as a houseplant until next spring.

Clean out all your containers of summer annuals, composting what you can. After frost, take out hardy fall garden mums and plant in the garden for next year. If you want, plant some spring blooming bulbs (tulips, daffodils and hyacinths) in your containers and let them stay outside or in an unheated garage, and you will have color in your containers before you plant next year's annuals.

Take time this fall to enjoy the crisp cooler weather, and you will have a head start on next spring's gardens. ■



Information provided by Barry Laws, co-owner, Quilted Gardens Nursery and Landscaping, 19635 130th Ave., Indianola, 515-720-3089, [www.quiltedgardens.com](http://www.quiltedgardens.com).


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# CELEBRATING Audiology Awareness Month

## Why choose an audiologist

October's Audiology Awareness Month is the perfect time to reflect on the benefits of receiving hearing health care from an audiologist.

Since they are highly trained, licensed professionals who hold a master's degree or doctorate in audiology, audiologists are able to provide patients with the medical model of care, which helps ensure their hearing loss journey is a success.

### Medical model of audiological care

When you choose an audiologist to help manage your hearing health, you will receive:

**In-depth hearing tests.** These tests determine the precise type, severity and frequency range of your hearing loss.



### Medically based methods and testing.

Your audiologist will rule out any other negative health conditions that could be causing hearing loss, such as fluid in the middle ear or an abnormality that requires medical attention.

Selection and fitting expertise. They will work with you to ensure you get the hearing devices that are best suited for your lifestyle and needs.

**Expert programming.** Audiologists are trained to program hearing aids to the exact specifications of your hearing loss.

**Real-ear measurements.** They use advanced verification of hearing aid settings to determine the effectiveness of the hearing loss treatment.

**Extensive follow-up care.** This ongoing care is vital for helping you hear your best.

A commitment to best patient outcomes. An

audiologist counsels patients and their families about all aspects of hearing aid use and care to ensure success with new hearing devices.

**Professional clinic environment.** Many audiologists meet with patients in a high-tech, private and convenient medical office space.

In short, an audiologist is your long-term hearing care partner, focused on providing you with the best hearing solutions for your health and quality of life.

In honor of Audiology Awareness Month, please share this article with a friend, neighbor or family member who has been reluctant to schedule an appointment with an audiologist. It may be just the encouragement they need to start the journey to better hearing. ■

Information provided by Dr. Kelly Cook, Audiologist, Iowa Hearing Center, 1228 Sunset Drive, Suite B, Norwalk, 515-416-5990, [www.iowahearingcenter.com](http://www.iowahearingcenter.com).

# October is Audiology Awareness Month



**Be informed. Take action. Stay connected.**

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# POSTMENOPAUSAL hip tendinopathy in women

Understanding the pain and path to recovery

Hip pain is a common complaint among postmenopausal women, yet its root causes are often misunderstood or misdiagnosed. One increasingly recognized culprit is gluteal tendinopathy — a condition affecting the tendons that connect the gluteal muscles (in the buttocks) to the hip bone. Unlike arthritis or bursitis, gluteal tendinopathy stems from tendon degeneration and inflammation and affects women in greater numbers than men.

**The hormonal connection:** Menopause brings a significant drop in estrogen levels, which has far-reaching effects on the musculoskeletal system. Estrogen plays a crucial role in maintaining tendon health, bone density and joint lubrication. When estrogen declines, tendons lose elasticity and strength, making them more prone to injury and slower to heal; muscle mass decreases, reducing support



around the hip joint; inflammation increases, contributing to pain and stiffness; and collagen production drops, weakening connective tissues.

These changes create a perfect storm for tendinopathy, especially in weight-bearing joints like the hips. The gluteal tendons, which stabilize the pelvis and enable walking, climbing and standing, become vulnerable to overload and microtrauma.

## Why women are more susceptible:

Postmenopausal women are particularly at risk due to a combination of factors:

- Pelvic structure: Women's wider pelvis alters the angle of tendon pull which increases mechanical stress.
- Weight redistribution: Menopause often leads to central weight gain, which shifts posture and gait, further stressing the hips.

Gluteal tendinopathy typically presents as lateral hip pain, worsened by lying on the affected side, walking upstairs or prolonged standing.

**Diagnosis and treatment:** Accurate

diagnosis is essential. Imaging like MRI or ultrasound can confirm tendon degeneration or inflammation. Treatment focuses on reducing pain, restoring function and preventing recurrence.

As part of a non-surgical treatment option, acupuncture can assist with healing the inflammation and pain in the effected joint(s). Acupuncture has also been shown in research to help reduce the recurrence of inflammation by addressing the underlying causes and by helping to balance the hormones.

**Moving forward:** Postmenopausal hip tendinopathy is more than just a nuisance. It can significantly impact mobility, independence and quality of life. The good news? With proper awareness and a multidisciplinary approach, recovery is possible. ■

Information provided by Dr. Renee Dalrymple, LAC, SEED Meditation Instructor, Soaring Crane Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine, 14849 130th Ave., Indianola, 515-808-1548, call or text.

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## FAITH

By Tom Vanderbilt

# THE HEART of mercy

In Matthew 9:13, Jesus says, “Go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.” This verse captures a profound truth at the center of Jesus’ ministry: God values compassion over religious ritual. Speaking to the Pharisees, who prioritized outward observance of the law, Jesus reminds them of Hosea 6:6, calling them — and us — to embrace mercy as a way of life.



Mercy is more than a feeling; It is a choice to extend grace where judgment could be justified. It sees the brokenness in others and offers love rather than condemnation. Jesus embodied this when He ate with tax collectors and sinners, not because He condoned sin, but because He saw their need for healing.

In a world often quick to judge, Matthew 9:13 challenges us to reflect God’s mercy in our actions. Sacrifices and rituals have their place, but without compassion, they are empty. True discipleship begins when we recognize our own need for mercy — and respond by offering it freely to others. ■

Article provided by Pastor Tom Vanderbilt, Mount Calvary Church, Indianola.



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## WELLNESS

By Jen Penisten

# EMSELLA for pelvic health

Emsella is a revolutionary, non-invasive treatment designed to improve pelvic floor strength and address concerns such as urinary incontinence and overall intimate wellness. Using advanced high-intensity focused electromagnetic (HIFEM) technology, Emsella stimulates thousands of supramaximal contractions in just one session — far beyond what can be achieved with traditional exercises like Kegels. These contractions work to retrain and strengthen the pelvic floor muscles, restoring control and confidence for both women and men.



One of the greatest benefits of Emsella is its convenience. The treatment is performed while the patient remains fully clothed and comfortably seated on the specialized Emsella chair. A typical session lasts about 30 minutes, requires no downtime, and is completely painless. Many patients describe the sensation as a gentle tingling or muscle activation, and noticeable improvements are often reported after just a few treatments.

Emsella is FDA-cleared for the treatment of urinary incontinence and has also been shown to enhance sexual health by improving circulation and muscle tone in the pelvic region. It is an excellent option for women experiencing post-pregnancy changes, those navigating menopause, men struggling with erectile dysfunction, or anyone seeking to strengthen their core and regain control of their body. ■

Information provided by Jen Penisten, MSN, RN, NP-C, CEO/owner, Vivid Life Spa, 1951 E. 18th St., Suite 105, Norwalk, 515-850-7848, vividlifespaspa.com.



# FINDING hope and healing

Jesse J Sanctuary nourishes body and spirit.

A cancer diagnosis can bring profound physical and emotional shifts, deeply affecting how a person feels, navigates daily life, and connects with others. There is often fear, disbelief, anxiety and anger... both for the cancer patient and their loved ones.

Jesse J battled an aggressive form of brain cancer with unwavering courage and grace and passed away in December 2020. Her journey inspired her family to establish a foundation to help other cancer patients and their families. Today, Jesse J Sanctuary, which is tucked away in rural Warren County, is doing just that.

"A visit to the sanctuary is a chance to unwind, reconnect and immerse yourself in the beauty of nature," Minoo Spellerberg, Jesse's mother-in-law and president of the board, says. "Whether you're seeking quiet reflection or joyful togetherness, the experience is designed to nourish both body and spirit."

Guests and their family stay free of charge when they reserve the sanctuary, which is a fully furnished three-bedroom home. There is a .75-mile walking trail that is maintained by Spellerberg's husband that winds through the property, offering beautiful views. The sanctuary also offers a variety of complimentary activities:

- In-person meditation or yoga classes upon request
- Hay tractor rides
- Hot air balloon rides (donated by Al Appenzeller)
- Guided horseback rides
- Yard games and a playground for children
- Evening bonfires under the stars

Guests typically bring their own food and prepare meals together with friends and family. However, Whip It Good or Pete's Pizza periodically donate a meal.

"Whatever guests choose to do while they are here, our goal is simply to offer a haven where they can find peace, strength and renewed hope during their challenging times," Spellerberg says.

Jesse J Sanctuary is a 501(c)(3) that relies solely on donations. Many of the guests have limited financial means, so any and all donations help provide things such as grocery and gas gift cards for guests facing financial hardship; housekeeping services at the sanctuary; and enhanced amenities and activities for guests.

The foundation's long-term vision is to expand and build more sanctuaries across the country, reaching even more individuals who could benefit from this gift of nature and care. One-time gifts or ongoing support help create a haven for those who need it most.

Spellerberg's husband, Rick, is vice-president of the board, while Jesse's



The mission of Jesse J Sanctuary is to provide a space in nature to create memories with cancer patients and their loved ones.



A photo of Jesse hangs on the wall at the sanctuary to remind guests of her beauty and strength.

mom, Beth Johnston, serves as a director. Their hope is to continue to honor Jesse's memory while bringing hope and healing to cancer patients.

If you are a cancer patient interested in staying at the sanctuary, find Jesse J Sanctuary Foundation on Facebook and send a message or visit [www.jessejsanctuary.com](http://www.jessejsanctuary.com).

Want to help support the mission of Jesse J Sanctuary? Scan the QR code for more information. ■



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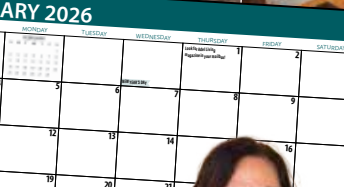
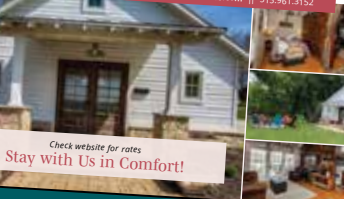
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## CITY and school board elections upcoming

City and school board elections are Tuesday, Nov. 4.

The city council is responsible for establishing city ordinances, the city budget and city policies. It decides the laws for the community and how its tax dollars are spent. The mayor acts as the chief executive officer of the city and presides over the city council meetings. Communities with city administrators, such as Norwalk, assign some of the mayor's executive duties to administrators.

School boards set the policies and budget for the school district within the parameters set by the state.

To find your polling location, visit: <https://apps.sos.iowa.gov/elections/voterreg/pollingplace/search.aspx>.



### Indianola city andidates

#### Mayor

Steven Richardson

#### City Council member Ward 2

Ron Dalby

Brad Ross

#### City Council member Ward 4

Tiffany Davis

#### City Council member at-large

Robert James Lane

### Indianola Community School Board

#### To fill vacancy

Jeanette Campbell

#### Three At-large seats

Joshua Lawrence

Bradi Darrah

Mack R. Rankin

Ryan Werling ■



# HONOR OUR VETERANS

Iowa Living magazines will be saluting veterans in November issues. If you are a veteran who would like to be included, please send a photo (military or current) and the following information:

NAME:

CURRENT TOWN:

MILITARY BRANCH:

RANK:

ENLISTMENT DATES::

QUOTE: "What would you like others to know about serving your country?"

Family members submitting on behalf of veterans should include the veteran's answer to the above question.

Email to [tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com](mailto:tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com) or mail to:

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**SUBMISSIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY OCT. 23.**





# RETIREMENT Party

A retirement party was held for Chief Sher on Sept. 12 at the Indianola Community Center.



Bill Mettee, Afton Bradley and Cassandra Hofer



Pam and Randy Prouty and Peyton Asher



Brad Metcalf, Don Duke and Rob Hawkins



Rick Largesse and Doug Eichholz



Chief Sher accepts a plaque in honor of his service to the community at his retirement party.



Kylie Ripperger, Dawn Bowman, Jean Croaks, Abby Ohnemus, Maegen Leach, Morgan Scott, Jamie Morawski, Ellie Phillips, Alaina Petersen, Sundi Smith and Piper Justice



Christina Beach, Chief Sher, Nicole Brown and Kevin Michels



Joe Tegels, Keisha Cretsinger and Robbie Hurley



Jay Hackett, Doug Bylund and Akhilesh Pal



Chief Sher, Jo Reynolds and Susie Sher





Trevor Tarkington and Mike Morrison at the Backyard BBQ competition Car & Bike Show Sept. 20 at Indianola Church of Christ.



David and Kathy Wetzler at the Backyard BBQ competition Car & Bike Show Sept. 20 at Indianola Church of Christ.



Cliff and Jan Alexander at the Backyard BBQ competition Car & Bike Show Sept. 20 at Indianola Church of Christ.



Clayton Givens at the Backyard BBQ competition Car & Bike Show Sept. 20 at Indianola Church of Christ.



Perrin Taylor at the Backyard BBQ competition Car & Bike Show Sept. 20 at Indianola Church of Christ.



Robert Herrold at the Backyard BBQ competition Car & Bike Show Sept. 20 at Indianola Church of Christ.



Vicki Drummond at the Backyard BBQ competition Car & Bike Show Sept. 20 at Indianola Church of Christ.



Chrissie Schuler, Ashley Noethe, Ashley Lester, Jenn McDonald, Jessica Robinson, Amye Shivers and Brooke Boden at the candlelight vigil for Charlie Kirk at First Assembly Church on Sept. 18.



Dean Scheffert at the candlelight vigil for Charlie Kirk at First Assembly Church on Sept. 18.



Emily Fox and Kendall Gilbert at the candlelight vigil for Charlie Kirk at First Assembly Church on Sept. 18.



Samantha Ashley at the candlelight vigil for Charlie Kirk at First Assembly Church on Sept. 18.



Kaylee McCann and Kelsey Reed at the candlelight vigil for Charlie Kirk at First Assembly Church on Sept. 18.



# CLASSIFIEDS

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## MEET Maisel

Bringing “paw-sitive” energy to the school day

Indianola teachers Mike and Sara Richardson have a family tradition of posting “back to school” photos on Facebook. While their kids are now grown and out on their own, there was a new member of the family heading back to school this year: their 3-year-old goldendoodle Maisel.

Maisel has been a part of the Richardson family since she was a puppy and has always had a good-natured, friendly demeanor.

“We often thought about therapy dog certification once she settled down from her crazy puppy days,” Sara says. “Other people who met Maisel felt that she would make a great therapy dog, too.”

The Richardsons recognized right away that Maisel had a way of making people happy.

“She can tell when someone needs her attention,” Mike explains. “Her tail wags with excitement when she greets people, and, of course, she loves getting affection back.”

They started Maisel in classes at the Des Moines Obedience Training Club as a puppy and spent time training her at home. For her therapy dog certification, they went through the Alliance of Therapy Dogs (ATD). Her testing involved visits to nursing homes and the school. Both the dog and the handler are observed because that relationship is just as important as how the dog interacts with others. Both Mike and Sara completed the certification process.

As for the first day of school... students often have nervous energy, and Maisel did, too. But she settled into her classroom — the library — which has a lot of activity. During sixth-grade library orientation, Maisel wanted to play.

“She grabbed her stuffed frog with a squeaker in it and tried getting attention by squeaking it for quite a while,” Sara says, laughing.

Maisel and Sara spend mornings at the middle school before heading to the high school in the afternoons. She starts the day greeting front office staff and then follows Sara around as she turns on lights and unlocks doors in the library. After getting her water dish filled, they head out to greet students entering the building and also to interact with staff before the bell rings.

Maisel provides comfort, support when needed, and an overall calming presence. Students and teachers stop and give Maisel a quick pet or linger and visit a bit longer. She has had the attention of five or six middle school students petting her all at the same time and enjoys it. If a student is feeling moody or anxious, they can come to the library to see Maisel.

“Sometimes it only takes a minute of interacting with her to change their emotions,” Sara says. “Now kids can come check out a book and spend a few minutes with Maisel. For now, our focus is on student mental health, but my hope is that she can also start to support students with their academic growth — especially reading.” ■



Students and staff at Indianola middle school and high school welcomed Maisel the therapy dog with open arms, and her job is simply to make people smile and be happy.

## THE DARK tunnel

The old joke is that the light at the end of the tunnel is actually an oncoming train. And there are certainly seasons in our lives where we may think, “Yeah, that sounds about right.” We think it can’t possibly get worse... until it does.

In such times, and we all have them, we do best to remember a fact and a person.

First, the fact. It is by no means rocket science, but being conscious of the reality that difficult times come upon each of us can keep us from adding to our own burden by beginning to look around and think everyone else has it good. No one else seems to be having such hardship. No one else seems to be struggling. Why me? What did I do to deserve this? Once we get to that point, all we’re really doing is adding the weight of self-pity to our load. (No judgment here. We’ve all done that, too.)

No, it’s better to constantly keep before us that not all things will go as we wished. That isn’t meant as a pessimistic retort. If we remember that everything is broken in the first place, instead of self-pity, we can look to the person mentioned above.

A very dark time were the final minutes leading up to the betrayal, arrest and crucifixion of Jesus Christ. In fact, just moments after these events are set in motion — when Jesus tells Judas the betrayer, “What you’re doing, do quickly” — we’re told “and it was night.” This doesn’t simply mean the sun went down. This means “and everything was grim.” Things were bad.

But Jesus is the person we need to remember. He tells His distressed disciples that they can have peace in Him. He doesn’t promise they’ll not suffer in this life. In fact, quite the opposite. But He tells them to take heart, because He has overcome the world. He has conquered the broken world and opened a way to the Creator of all things. Through faith in Him, we can now come to God with anything and everything that threatens to overwhelm us. No tunnel is too dark that He cannot see.

Philippians 4:6-7 — Don’t worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. ■



Information provided by Kevin Mayer, New Heights Church, 200 E. First Ave., Indianola, 515-442-5111.



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