

Living

MAGAZIN

'Tis the season of *gratitude*

Residents share stories
of thankfulness.

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EDUCATION

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RECIPE

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WELCOME

FOCUSING on gratitude

Gratitude. It's such a simple word with such a complex meaning. Defining it is nearly impossible to do without using the words "thankful" or "grateful." It is a feeling of appreciation for someone or something.

The word gratitude comes from the Latin word "gratus," which means "pleasing" or "thankful."

As Thanksgiving time rolls around again this year, we often think of gratitude and what we are truly thankful for.

When asked, most of us would immediately respond with family, friends or good health. And, certainly, those are all things we should be grateful for.

Then, there are some things we too often take for granted that we should also be grateful for. A job that provides us with a steady income. Safety in our streets and in our communities. A quality education system. The freedom to practice the religion of our choice. Access to modern medicine. Clean water and clean air.

Yes, we strive to improve all these things, and we should. But, we sometimes need to slow down and reflect on how good we actually have it right now, too. We don't need our parents or grandparents to tell us how much easier things are today. If we are being honest, we already know.

Unfortunately, with all these modern improvements, we are also facing serious distractions that can take it all away. Drug and alcohol addictions. Excessive gambling. Overeating. Gluttony of all sorts. I have often quoted legendary Iowa high school wrestling coach Al DeLeon, who said, "A little bit of everything is good; too much of one thing is bad."

So, take a deep breath and look around you right now. Then show some appreciation to the people who created scenarios so you can truly enjoy all this world offers. Think about the things in your life that you are grateful for. Observe the beauty of something you encounter every day. Thank some people for the positive influences they have had on you. Do something kind for another person. Meditate or pray with a focus on giving thanks. And, most importantly, pay attention to the things in your life that bring you joy and peace.

As always, I thank you for reading. ■



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A blood drive is one of the many events held by Living Ava's Way.

'Tis the season of *gratitude*

Residents share stories of thankfulness.

By Rachel Harrington

This time of year encourages us to be grateful for our blessings: family, friends, health, a warm home, festive meals and gatherings, and so much more. Some find ourselves thankful for an unexpected helping hand when we most need it. From a neighbor shoveling the sidewalk to a nonprofit offering supplies and hope, we often see the spirit of kindness around us. And, some are motivated by their gratefulness to pay it forward, spreading the holiday spirit even farther.

Living Ava's Way

Living Ava's Way was born out of a blend of trials, tragedy and blessings. Joni and Kris Hutchinson share that their daughter, Ava, was diagnosed with brain cancer when she was 2 years old. She passed away just two days before her 12th birthday.

"She never let cancer define her but was constantly doing things for others," Hutchinson says.

Three main initiatives define Living Ava's Way: a school food pantry that is based in the intermediate school and works with the high school, two scholarships for Bondurant seniors each year, and Ava's Garden. The Hutchinsons do occasional deliveries of food to the school for the pantry. Ava's Garden has new sensory equipment and a paved parkway. The Hutchinsons also hold other events in the community like a blood drive for the past nine years, delivering pop tabs and occasional meals to the Ronald McDonald House, and the Great Cycle Challenge that supports research for children's cancer.

"These are things that impacted Ava's life," Hutchinson says. "Each one of our initiatives looks normal on the surface, like everyday things, but each one has a special meaning. For example, we do the food pantry because, during cancer treatment, food is hard. At 4 years old, Ava was only 24 pounds. Parks were special places for Ava. Having places for her that were accessible made her happy. We do the scholarship because Ava loved school. It is a way for us to give back.

"Gratitude is what pushes us forward," Hutchinson adds. "We do these things because people did so much for us. When Ava relapsed, she was terminal. My husband and I were completely devastated and didn't know how long we had with her. We both quit and paused our jobs. The community did a big fundraiser for us when Ava turned 11 for her birthday called Ava's Birthday Bash. Ribbons were hung all around town. Even now, about half a dozen of our neighbors have pink and purple lights on their houses. The funds from the fundraiser helped us pay bills and our mortgage. Ava passed away Sept. 17, 2017, and the neighbors still keep their lights on."

The Hutchinsons are also grateful to everyone who shows up for the blood drive each year.

"With what has been donated since we started, over 1,700 lives have been helped," Hutchinson explains. "People show up every



The Ronald McDonald House is supported by Living Ava's Way.

year and ask about the blood drive and what we will be doing that year. Another thing we are grateful for is that the kids at school every year did sparkles for Ava during the homecoming game during the years of her cancer. She would have graduated in 2024, and they still remembered her. We did a fundraiser the year she passed away — a card collection and fundraiser for the Children's Cancer Connection in Des Moines. I still see people wearing T-shirts for her around town."

Other organizations around Bondurant have pitched in to help Living Ava's Way. They received a grant of \$10,000 for an update for Ava's Garden, which helped purchase sensory equipment. A Bondurant Men's Club donation helped pave the sidewalk in the garden.

"We've had numerous sponsors," Hutchinson shares. "The people who paved the sidewalk donated their services to put in the park equipment. I just think how great it is that there are so many people who donate and remember Ava."

During Living Ava's Way blood drives,



Ava Hutchinson's memory lives on through the many causes supported by Living Ava's Way.

people can bring food for the pantry or make a monetary donation to purchase pantry items.

"There are also donation boxes around town and at Ava's Garden," Hutchinson says.

Along the Way

Jason Brown is the founder of Along the Way, a local nonprofit organization that focuses on aiding in fundraising for community projects. Brown, a country music artist by trade, endeavors to use his talents to give back to others.

“I wanted to have more of a purpose for my music,” he shares. “I developed Along the Way to come in and support communities in their fundraising efforts.”

Along the Way focuses on supporting community project fundraisers and fundraisers to retain community legacies.

Brown says he has enjoyed a good success rate in talking to people. The shows and concerts he puts together are paid for by corporate sponsors, allowing those who attend to funnel their gifts toward the community instead of for entry or attendance fees.

“At the first official Along the Way event, we had a \$100,000 goal,” Brown recalls. “Around 15 minutes from the end of the show, we were at \$96,000. I took the stage to thank everyone and let them know the total for the night. During the last song, Heath from Ratcliffe American Legion told me we had someone willing to help us reach the goal — Bryant Heating and Cooling — who used to live in Ratcliffe and wanted to help finish the goal with \$4,000. I have so many stories like that, and it happens at almost every event.”

Another success story was in Melrose, where a town of 113 people raised \$86,000 for their Parks and Recreation Department.

“We had more anonymous donors there than ever before,” he shares. “To see anonymous givers give is really special to me because it shows that people are giving out of the kindness and goodness of their hearts.”

When Brown sees how community members rally together to give in support of their community, he finds great joy in what he does. He says volunteers are the heart and soul of helping the events succeed.

“It is so cool to see people gather no matter their background or whether they have ever crossed paths and give of themselves to support a cause in the community,” he says. “I’m just so grateful for volunteers. Our whole thing stems from volunteer work. If it wasn’t for volunteers, not only would my nonprofit fail to succeed, but other nonprofits would not succeed. For a person to offer their time for something you or someone else believes in, there is no way to sufficiently thank them for that.”



Along the Way helps communities raise funds for local causes by putting on a concert.

Examples of volunteers who Brown is grateful for include people who manage entry gates and collect tickets, those who manage the social media for events, stagehands graciously provided by the town of the event, flyer distributors, security detail the day of the event, and “troops on the ground” — those who help lobby for and collect donations from the community of the event.

Though the opportunity has not arisen for Along the Way to support a Bondurant-based project, Brown hopes to one day do something for his own community.

“When I do,” he remarks, “I hope the community will come out and support the cause Along the Way seeks to aid in the community. Any donation goes directly to the community we seek to support, not to Along the Way.”

Bondurant American Legion Auxiliary

The American Legion Auxiliary is a program founded under the American Legion. It serves, advocates for, and supports veterans, their families and the community of each unit. The Bondurant American Legion Auxiliary Unit No. 396 was first chartered in 1920. Over the years, its members have donated significant time and volunteer hours promoting patriotism and good citizenry, but most of their time and resources are devoted to serving and advocating

for local veterans and their families.

A large variety of programs serve to raise funds that assist veterans with needs like yard clean up or transportation to and from VA doctor appointments. These programs include car shows and monthly breakfast fundraisers.

“The ALA promotes programs like ‘Be the One’ where we check on veterans in a variety of ways to make sure they’re OK and help decrease the risk of suicide,” Darla Davidson, Bondurant ALA unit president, shares.

Other programs exist to honor veterans for their service, including poppy distribution for Memorial Day, Wreaths Across America and Quilts of Valor.

Poppies are the symbol of remembrance for fallen veterans.

“When we distribute poppies, the community has always been good about donating toward the American Legion and the ALA, supporting our veterans and their families,” Davidson says. “We are grateful for that support.”

The annual Wreaths Across America will take place on Dec. 13 at 11 a.m. Wreaths will be placed on veteran gravestones in Bondurant Cemetery. The veterans’ names are spoken aloud and thanked for their service to our country. Quilts of Valor are special patriotic quilts sewn and given to honor their veteran recipients.

Some programs supported by the American



The American Legion Auxiliary supports many programs for the community and veterans.

Legion, ALA, and the Sons of the American Legion support the families of the veterans and the local community. One such program is Girls State and Boys State, where young men and women in their senior year of high school are sent to Drake University and Camp Dodge, respectively, to learn 18 months' worth of education regarding our government in five days. There are opportunities for participants to be nominated to go to the national level, and Iowa has had several successes in that endeavor.

When the community participates in the group's events and gives monetary donations, it makes scholarships for local seniors possible and allows gift cards to be purchased and given to vets and their families in need. Volunteers regularly aid in yard work for veterans, visit veterans at the VA hospital and assist them in getting to appointments. Volunteers and new members are welcome and invited to attend a breakfast or visit their website or social media pages for more information.

The Bondurant American Legion hosts a community breakfast on the third Saturday of every month at the Legion Hall from 7-9:30 a.m.

Davidson says she has been a member of the ALA for 54 years, following in the footsteps of her parents and grandparents. Member volunteers keep the organization running, and their goals would not be possible without them.

"I am also very thankful for my two grandfathers who served in the Army and Navy," she says. "They were proud of what they did, and I am proud of them because we can live the life we live today."

The American Legion and its programs, including the ALA, would like to thank all veterans, past and present, those who paid the ultimate price and those who came home, for their service to our country, allowing us the freedoms we enjoy today. ■

MUCH to be thankful for at the library

Thanksgiving is a time to reflect upon all the things we are thankful for. Here at the Bondurant Community Library, we have so many things. First and foremost, we are thankful for our patrons and the support they give to the library and all our staff members. We are also thankful for the city's Public Works department because they help keep our building and grounds running smoothly and looking great. The staff at City Hall helps us pay our bills so we can keep the books on our shelves and the lights on, too. We are so thankful for two organizations that are dedicated to raising funds for the library. The Bondurant Community Library Foundation and the Friends of the Bondurant Community Library work to fundraise for special events and items outside of our normal budget. They also apply for grants to help us with special projects such as the holds locker and the new play kitchen.

As the library director, I am so very thankful for my wonderful library staff. They are dedicated to providing the absolute best library service to our patrons and work so very hard to do so.

Bondurant Community Library

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Monday - Thursday, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

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

Sunday, noon to 5 p.m.

Here is what is happening at the library in December

- Story Times: Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday at 10:30 a.m.
- Baby Story Time: Thursday at 9:30 a.m.
- Fit For Life: Monday and Thursday at 8:30 a.m.
- Dec. 1: After School Open Play at 2:30 p.m.
- Dec. 2: Reading Dragons & Friends (grades 3-5) at 6 p.m.
- Dec. 3: Pokémon Club at 4:15 p.m.
- Dec. 4: Adult Craft Night, Folded Book Tree at 6 p.m.
- Dec. 8: After School Open Creation Stations at 2:30 p.m.
- Dec. 9: Book Discussion for Adults, Bring Your Own Book, at 6 p.m.
- Dec. 10: Curious & Creative Kids Club at 4:15 p.m.
- Dec. 11: Family Game Night: BINGO at 6 p.m.
- Dec. 13: Messy Munchkins, Gingerbread Houses at 10:30 a.m.
- Dec. 14: Teens Only Gift Making Stations at 3 p.m.
- Dec. 15: After School Giving Stations for Courtyard Estates at 2:30 p.m.
- Dec. 16: In the Middle Book Club (grades 6-8) at 6 p.m.
- Dec. 18: Anime Club at 4 p.m.
- Dec. 18: Paint Night for Adults, Paint by Numbers at 6 p.m.
- Dec. 19: Coffee Social at 1 p.m.
- Dec. 20: Saturday Stories at 10:30 a.m.
- Dec. 22: After School Movie and Hot Cocoa Event at 2:30 p.m.
- Dec. 22: Teen Café (ages 12-plus) at 4:30 p.m.
- Dec. 31: Noon Year's Eve Party at 11 a.m.
- Gift wrapping station Dec. 12-Dec. 31
- Story Time break Dec. 22-Jan. 2
- Library closed at 1 p.m. Dec. 23.
- Library closed Dec. 24-25 for Christmas
- Library closed at 1 p.m. Dec. 31 for New Year's Eve ■

GRATITUDE as a path to wellness

As the crisp air settles in and leaves turn, the Thanksgiving season invites us to pause and reflect on the blessings in our lives. Thanksgiving is more than just a holiday centered around food and family. Thanksgiving is a powerful reminder of the importance of gratitude, a practice that not only nurtures our relationships but also helps strengthen our minds.

Gratitude is more than a feeling; it is a mindset that can be nurtured daily. One of the easiest ways to do this is through a gratitude journal. By taking just a few minutes each day to write down things you are thankful for, whether it is a warm cup of coffee, a kind word from a friend, or a call from a loved one, you begin to train your brain to focus on the positive.

Research has shown that consistent



gratitude practices can lead to improved brain function. When we express gratitude, our brain releases dopamine and serotonin that enhance mood and promote feelings of happiness. Over time, this “rewiring” helps reduce stress, improve sleep and even boost immune function.

Moreover, gratitude journaling has been linked to enhanced cognitive performance. Studies suggest that individuals who regularly reflect on what they are thankful for experience better focus, increased resilience, and improved decision-making.

Beyond journaling, there are many ways to show thankfulness during Thanksgiving and beyond:

Write a thank-you note to someone who has made a difference in your life. The act of expressing appreciation strengthens social bonds and uplifts both the sender and the receiver.

Volunteer your time to help those in need. Whether it is serving meals at a shelter or donating to a local food bank, giving back fosters a sense of purpose and community.

Share gratitude aloud. Encourage family and friends to name something they are thankful for; it can spark meaningful conversations and deepen connections.

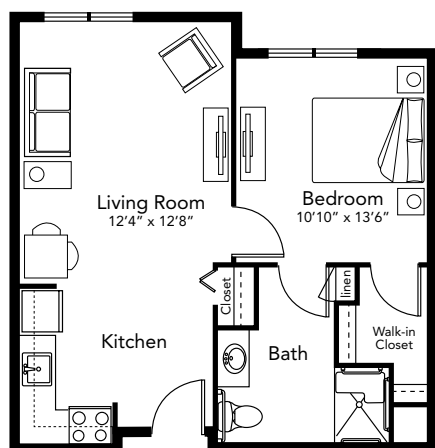
As we gather with loved ones this Thanksgiving, let us remember that gratitude is not just a seasonal sentiment; it's a lifelong habit that enriches our emotional and brain health. By embracing practices like journaling and intentional thankfulness, we not only honor the spirit of the season but also invest in our own well-being.

So, grab a pen, open a notebook, and start your gratitude journey today. Your brain and your heart will thank you.

“The more you practice the art of thankfulness, the more you have to be thankful for.” ■

Information provided by Stephanie Proper, executive director, Valley View Village, 2571 Guthrie Ave., Des Moines, 515-265-2571.

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PARMESAN garlic focaccia bread is a slice of comfort

This month, I share another recipe from my daughter, Samantha. She loves to make all kinds of bread. Few things make a kitchen feel more welcoming than the aroma of freshly baked bread, and parmesan garlic focaccia delivers that comfort in every bite. Golden and crisp on the outside yet soft and airy inside, this Italian favorite is elevated with the irresistible pairing of roasted garlic and nutty parmesan cheese. It is the kind of bread that feels special but is surprisingly simple to make at home. Serve as a side with soups and pastas, cut into squares for an appetizer board, or enjoy warm right out of the pan. Focaccia is versatile and crowd pleasing. The drizzle of olive oil, a sprinkling of herbs and the cheesy finish give it that bakery-style touch you will love sharing — or keeping all to yourself. Enjoy! ■



Parmesan Garlic Focaccia Bread

Ingredients:

- 1½ cups warm water (about 110°F)
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 2¼ teaspoons instant yeast (1 packet)
- 4 cups flour
- 1½ teaspoons salt
- 1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil, plus more for greasing
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2/3 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 teaspoon dried Italian herbs or chopped rosemary
- Flaky sea salt

Directions

- Combine warm water, sugar and yeast. Let sit for 5 minutes until foamy. Add flour and salt. Mix until dough forms. (It will be sticky.) With a mixer, kneed for 5-7 minutes or by hand for 8-10 minutes until smooth. Brush dough with olive oil and cover.
- Let rise 1-1.5 hours in a warm spot until dough has doubled.
- Heat 2 tablespoons olive oil with minced garlic until fragrant (about 1 minute) in a

pan. Keep for later.

- Place dough in greased 9-inch by 13-inch pan. Gently press to corners. Let rest 10 minutes, then stretch. Cover and rise 30-45 minutes.
- Preheat oven to 425 F. With your fingers, dimple the dough all over. Brush with garlic oil. Then sprinkle parmesan cheese, herbs and sea salt on top of dough.
- Bake 20-25 minutes until golden brown. Cool 10 minutes in pan, then transfer to wire rack.
- Slice and serve warm. Store bread for two days at room temperature or freeze up to three months.
- **For the best results, follow these additional steps:** Make sure your water is warm (110 F), not hot. For the best texture, let the dough rise completely. Use plenty of oil in your pan, as this will give your bread a crisp crust.



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REAL ESTATE

By Austin Sullivan

NAVIGATING real estate during the holidays



The holiday season can be one of the most magical times of the year, but if you are buying or selling a home, it can also bring a unique set of questions. Many people wonder whether they should list their home, take a break until the new year, or how much decorating is too much when trying to appeal to potential buyers. The truth is, real estate does not stop for the holidays, and this time of year can actually offer some great opportunities.

If you are thinking about selling your home, the holiday season can work in your favor. While there may be fewer buyers out looking, those who are searching tend to be serious and motivated. Job relocations, year-end moves, and buyers eager to close before the new year can create strong opportunities for sellers. With fewer homes coming on the market, your listing may face less competition, allowing it to stand out even more.

When it comes to decorating your home, it is absolutely fine to add a festive touch. A few tasteful decorations can help create a warm, welcoming atmosphere that appeals to buyers' emotions. The key is to keep things simple and uncluttered. Think cozy, not crowded. A wreath on the door, soft lights, or a nicely decorated tree can make your home feel inviting without distracting buyers from its best features.

For buyers, the holiday season can also be a great time to shop. Sellers who list during this time are often motivated to make a deal, and there may be fewer competing offers. Real estate professionals, lenders and inspectors also tend to have slightly lighter schedules, which can make the process move more smoothly.

If you decide to list your home during the holidays, plan ahead for showings and open houses. Make sure walkways are clear of snow and ice and keep your home warm and cozy for visitors. Flexible scheduling and clear communication with your agent will help you balance the season's festivities with your selling goals.

The bottom line is that buying or selling a home during the holidays is completely possible. With the right preparation, a positive attitude and a little seasonal charm, you can take advantage of a quieter market and find real success during this special time of year. ■

Information provided by Austin Sullivan, Re/Max Concepts, 3880 Prairie Fire N.W., Altoona, 515-943-9797, austin@soldwithsullivan.com.

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Bondurant

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November 2025



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Merry & Bright

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December 24th, 2025 (Christmas)
December 25th, 2025 (Christmas)





Bondurant Community Fridge

The Bondurant Community Fridge, hosted by the Bondurant Library, got an upgrade thanks to Half Price Appliance! A Community Fridge is a free, no-questions-asked resource where anyone can take or leave food. It's a grassroots way to reduce food waste and support neighbors facing food insecurity. Located inside the library, it's open during regular hours — now with space for both fresh and frozen items! Big thanks to ReGeneration Farm for making this initiative a reality! Scan the QR code for more information. 

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MEET Jana Bahr

Shares passion for art with elementary students

This year marks Jana Bahr's 15th year teaching in the Bondurant-Farrar Community School District. Bahr, the K-2 art teacher at Morris Elementary School, began her journey in 2011 teaching kindergarten art every other day at Anderson Elementary. As the district's enrollment grew and Morris Elementary opened, she added first and second grade to her schedule.

"The incredible community and welcoming feel of the district drew me in," she shares. "The supportive parents and school community are wonderful."

For Bahr, teaching has come naturally. Growing up, she had a passion for learning and working with children, leading her to what has been the perfect fit: a career in teaching.

Bahr graduated from Drake University in 2001 with her teaching degree and earned her master's in education from Viterbo University in 2009.

What she enjoys most about her job is watching her students grow. "The amazing ideas and energy they bring to the art room are inspiring," Bahr adds. "The moments my students accomplish something they didn't know they could or solve a problem and learn to believe in themselves is priceless. I love supporting each student and helping them discover new things about themselves as a person and an artist."

While Bahr faces the daily challenge of providing enough time for students to explore art — there is always so much to learn and create — she finds creative ways to make it work within her limited class time.

Over the years, she has also made plenty of lasting memories. Her favorites are when students come together as a team to create large community projects. They have participated in Art on the Lake and the Festival of Trees and Lights multiple times.

"Each year, my students work hard to share a special piece of themselves to make creations for these events shine," Bahr says. "In turn, they make a difference in their community and help those around them. We also are very fortunate to have an incredible library where Morris is able to share art with the community once a year. Being able to celebrate our creations in and out of the classroom is an unforgettable experience."

Outside of work, Bahr lives in nearby Des Moines with her husband and two daughters. She enjoys spending time with family, playing games, reading, spending time outdoors and, of course, creating.

"I am blessed to work in such a wonderful community and with such kind, creative students," Bahr says. "They are truly something to celebrate." ■



Jana Bahr says her students — and their creativity — are to be celebrated.

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News from the **BONDURANT-FARRAR** COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

November 2025

Personalized Learning, Real-World Experiences at Bondurant-Farrar

Students thrive when they have opportunities to explore what matters to them. At Bondurant-Farrar, high school students can choose courses and experiences that align with their interests. By offering diverse pathways, our goal is that every Bluejay graduates with a career plan and the learning experiences to support it.

► COLLEGE CREDITS THROUGH DMACC:

Through our partnership with Des Moines Area Community College, students earn college credit while gaining real-world experiences AND saving on tuition.

2024-25 DMACC HIGHLIGHTS:

- 269 Bluejay students took DMACC courses
- 1,547 total DMACC credits earned
 - 474 in-house at BFHS
 - 955 online
 - 21 on campus
 - 107 Career Academy
- 89% course success rate
- 5 students earned a DMACC degree/certificate
- 38 students in 2025 Class continued at DMACC
- \$298,571 saved — \$1,109 per student
- 6 certified DMACC instructors on staff at BFHS

► SUPPORTING STUDENT INTERESTS:

Personalized learning and real-world experiences go hand in hand, ensuring every Bluejay graduates with the skills, confidence, and career plan to succeed in college, career, and life.

CAREER EXPLORATION:

Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs prepare students for careers in today's evolving fields. Through hands-on learning in agriculture, business, industrial technology, and family and consumer science, students build technical and employability skills that complement their core academics.

Additionally, students engage in other experiences that connect learning to life and support career planning:

- iJAG programs (Iowa Jobs for America's Graduates)
- Career counseling with DMACC
- Business field trips and exploration
- Student internship opportunities

You're Invited: Join District Leaders for Open Conversations on School Topics

We're excited to invite our Bondurant-Farrar community to "Let's Chat, Bluejays!", a new opportunity to sit down with district leaders, ask questions, and discuss a variety of school-related topics.

Each session will feature a focused topic with time for open conversation and Q&A.

Let's Chat, Bluejays!

Join us for discussions regarding the new elementary school and future strategies to improve traffic and student safety!

- **Wed, December 3 at 11:30 a.m.**
- **Thurs, December 4 at 8:30 a.m.**

These 45 minute sessions will be held in-person, with a virtual option available for those who cannot attend on-site.

► WHAT TO EXPECT:

- Learn more about upcoming initiatives and plans
- Ask questions and provide feedback
- Connect directly with district leadership

► LOCATION:

Bondurant-Farrar District Office
300 Garfield Street SW, Bondurant

Enter on the east side of the intermediate school, near the intersection of 3rd and Garfield.

► LEARN MORE:

For more information, future topics, or to join virtually, please scan the QR code or visit our website:

www.bfschools.org/updates



Contact Us:

Bondurant-Farrar District Office
300 Garfield Street SW, Bondurant
Phone: 515-967-7819
Online: www.bfschools.org/contactus

Stay Connected:

Facebook: @BFDistrict
X: @BF_District
YouTube: @Bondurant-FarrarCSD
Flickr: www.flickr.com/photos/bfcsd/albums

HONORING OUR LOCAL *Veterans* AND THOSE ACTIVELY SERVING.

Allen Ihde

Bondurant
Military branch: U.S. Army
Rank: SP5
Served: 1966-1969



Ronald Peterson

Bondurant
Military branch: Marines
Rank: Corporal E4
Served: 1965-1968
"It was an honor to serve my country."



Breeana Meyer

Pictured with her husband, Ryan
Bondurant
Military branch: Marine Corps
Rank: E-4
Served: September 2011 to September 2015

Ryan Meyer

Bondurant
Military branch: Marine Corps
Rank: E-6
Served: June 2000 to September 2014
"Serving our country teaches you so much about yourself and who you can become. We are honored to have served our country and are proud of everyone before us and for those to come." – Breeana and Ryan Meyer



Lukas Schroeder

Bonduraunt
Military branch: U.S. Army
RECON
Rank: E-6 Staff Sergeant
Served: 2000-2003, 2008-2014
"Freedom is not free."



How can the public best honor veterans?



Dan Clark

Bondurant

Military branch: Army National Guard • Rank: E4

Service: Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Vigilant Relief

"Thank a veteran. A simple 'Thank you' goes a long ways. If you see a veteran, shake their hand and ask how they are doing. Volunteer your time at a local Veterans Hospital or donate to local veterans charities. When you see a flag in a parade, stand, remove your hat and put your hand on your heart. Always remember that veterans fought and died carrying and defending the American flag in combat. The American flag means the world to a veteran, so never let it touch the ground. And lastly, never forget those who sacrificed their life, those who paid the ultimate price defending the American way of life."



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Edward Jones
edwardjones.com

Doug Williams

Bondurant

Military branch: U.S. Navy (Naval Mobile Construction Battalion), U.S. Air Force

Rank: E-5

Deployments: 2007-2008, Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom

"Honor and respect the flag we have all served under to protect our liberties, rights and freedoms. Never forget those who have paid the ultimate price to help protect each and every one of us."



Jana Parsons

Military branch: U.S. Air Force

Rank: TSGT

Service: 1986 to 1997

"The public does a great job of recognizing the 'obvious' soldier (and rightly so): The young people deployed multiple times to harrowing war (like my son). There are others, though, that paid an equally heavy price that is invisible to most (like myself). I would like the public to recognize that any veteran who was brave enough to walk away from their normal life because they wanted to do something for their country is worthy of recognition."



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Be sure to check for cancellations.

Coming up in the Bondurant Living magazine

Handmade gifts: If you have made or received a cherished handmade gift, we would like to share your story for the December issue. Email tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com.

Merry and Bright

Sunday, Dec. 7

Merry and Bright is back for 2025. A day full of activities and cheer is planned. The carriage rides return, along with a lighted parade, visits with Santa, winter market and much more.

Check for updated details and locations at <https://secure.rec1.com/IA/bondurant-ia/catalog> or scan the QR code.



Holiday Shopping Extravaganza

Saturday Nov. 22, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Union Park United Methodist Church, 2305 E. 12th St., Des Moines

The Extravaganza features many crafters with a variety of creative items that are perfect for the holidays. Free admission. Close-up parking and lunch available to purchase.



Tinseltown in the Park

Nov. 22 - Dec. 20

Water Works Park, 2201 George Flagg Parkway, Des Moines

Mark your calendars for Tinseltown in the Park, featuring live Christmas tree sales, biergarten specials, food trucks, entertainers, unique visits from holiday A-listers, photo opportunities, and more to celebrate the holiday season in the park. Visit www.waterworkspark.org/tinseltown-in-water-works-park/ for schedule of events.

Indoor Market & Vendor Fair

Sunday, Dec. 7, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Bondurant-Farrar Junior High School, 1201 Grant St. N., Bondurant

This annual event by the Bondurant Farmers Market will host more than 100 local vendors with gifts and decor, food and more.



Santa's Wonderland at Bass Pro Shops

1000 Bass Pro Drive N.W., Altoona

Christmas Tales: Every Tuesday until Dec. 23 at 5 p.m., Santa or Mrs. Claus will read holiday stories to families, followed by photos. Free reservations are required at www.basspro.com/b/santas-wonderland.



The Christkindlmarket

Dec. 4-7 and Dec. 11-14

Principal Park, 1 Line Drive, Des Moines

Experience a German-inspired Christmas Market. Enjoy the sights, sounds, smells and flavors of the holidays as you participate in a 750-year-old tradition. Shop regional vendors selling old-world, hand-crafted products from wooden vendor stalls; enjoy lively performances of polka music, traditional dance and choirs in Yuletide Hall; participate in children's activities; sip Glühwein (warm, mulled wine); and savor European beer. More information available at www.christkindlmarketdsm.com.

Bondurant Emergency Services Grand Opening

Saturday, Dec. 6, 8:30-11 a.m.

500 Campus Drive S.E., Bondurant

Celebrate the grand opening of the new Bondurant Emergency Services facility with a community pancake breakfast. Any cancellations or updates will be posted on the city of Bondurant's website and social media accounts. Register at <https://secure.rec1.com/IA/bondurant-ia/catalog>.

Breakfast with Santa and Mrs. Claus

Sunday, Dec. 14, 8 a.m. to noon

West Des Moines Elks Lodge, 2060 N.W. 94th St., Clive

Santa Claus and Mrs. Claus will be giving out goody bags, talking with children and providing photo opportunities. The breakfast buffet includes biscuits and gravy, French toast, scrambled eggs, bacon, sausage patties, cheesy potatoes, and, of course all-you-can-eat pancakes (including blueberry and chocolate chip pancakes), orange juice, milk and coffee. Enjoy a Bloody Mary or mimosa for \$3.50. Serving is from 8 a.m. till noon. Cost is \$11 for adults and \$5 for children 10 and younger. There will also be a Christmas bake sale. The Elks hold a breakfast the second Sunday of the month. Proceeds support the Elks' Hoop Shoot Program, other youth activities, veterans and community charities.



Holiday Promenade

Various dates, 5-8 p.m.

Historic East Village

Enjoy extended hours at local shops and restaurants, special promotions and pop-up experiences, live music and entertainment, visits from Santa and other holiday characters and free trolley rides throughout the neighborhood.

- Dec. 5: Winefest's Vino at Promenade with free wine samples.
 - Dec. 12: Ugly Sweater Contest across East Village businesses.
 - Dec. 19: Drone Show with Santa Claus.
- Visit eastvillagedesmoines.com/promenade for the latest event updates and details. ■

A WAY to find hope

Happy Thanksgiving to the most amazing community that anyone could hope to call home. In many homes this Thanksgiving, we will sit around the table and share from our hearts the things that make us thankful. But not every Bondurant resident will be able to feel the deep family connection that seems to be a prerequisite for the holiday. Many of us are broken-hearted from earthly loss and, though grateful for our blessings, lament the way things used to be. And some don't have a celebration to attend.

Grief and depression are rampant during the holiday season. Many homes will have one less place setting in comparison to 2024. Where phone calls and cards sharing love and holiday greetings will go unanswered. Life constantly changes for us all, and if we are not prepared to address the emotion that this season creates, we'll be left with more questions than we have answers. The holiday season is statistically shown to be a time of year with increased stress and anxiety.

The remedy for these challenges, according to the world, would be to medicate, self-medicate or seek counsel that would make you feel better about being you. What if I were to tell you that there is a way to find hope amid heartache, struggle and pain? God calls us to gather, remember our blessings, discuss what we should be grateful for and give a portion of our overabundance to those in need.

The word "church" literally means a gathering, and, as we gather to celebrate, we must acknowledge the entity who gave us the very breath of life necessary to exist. God loves you and wants you to be filled with joy, to not be concerned about this temporary world (John 16:33) but focused on loving his creation and spreading the good news of the saving grace of his Son Jesus Christ.

Look forward to the cross, and, by believing and confessing (Romans 10:10), you afford yourself an eternity in a perfect place where there is no death mourning, crying or pain (Revelation 21:4). Knowing that, regardless of the condition of your life on this earth, you will be a co-heir with Christ some day in heaven can provide us with the perspective necessary to trudge through the challenging waters of this life. You don't have to live this life alone; God calls us to care. ■

Information provided by Pastor Trevor Pinegar, Federated Church of Bondurant, 103 Second St. S.W., 515-967-2243.



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PSALM 95:2

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BONDURANT-FARRAR

2025-26 WINTER SCHEDULE



FOR ALL BLUEJAYS SCHEDULES

Schedules are subject to change.

Scan for most up-to-date schedules.

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VARSITY BOYS BASKETBALL

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
12/5/25	7:30 PM	Ballard	Bondurant-Farrar High School
12/9/25	7:30 PM	Winterset	Winterset High School
12/12/25	7:30 PM	Carlisle	Carlisle High School WAC
12/16/25	7:30 PM	ADM	Bondurant-Farrar High School
12/19/25	7:30 PM	Boone	Bondurant-Farrar High School
1/2/26	7:30 PM	Carroll	Carroll High School Gym
1/6/26	7:30 PM	North Polk	Bondurant-Farrar High School
1/9/26	7:30 PM	Gilbert	Gilbert High School Gym
1/13/26	7:30 PM	Des Moines Hoover	Bondurant-Farrar High School
1/16/26	7:30 PM	Ballard	Ballard High School
1/20/26	7:30 PM	Winterset	Bondurant-Farrar High School
1/23/26	7:30 PM	Carlisle	Bondurant-Farrar High School
1/24/26	1:30 PM	Mount Vernon	Casey's Center
1/27/26	7:30 PM	ADM	ADM High School North Gym
1/30/26	7:30 PM	Boone	Boone High School Gym
2/3/26	7:30 PM	Carroll	Bondurant-Farrar High School
2/6/26	7:30 PM	North Polk	North Polk High School HS Gym
2/10/26	7:30 PM	Gilbert	Bondurant-Farrar High School
2/12/26	8:00 PM	Knoxville	Knoxville High School
2/17/26	7:30 PM	Newton	Bondurant-Farrar High School
2/19/26	7:30 PM	Indianola	Bondurant-Farrar High School

VARSITY GIRLS BASKETBALL

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME	LOCATION
11/25/25	Norwalk	7:30 PM	Bondurant-Farrar High School
12/1/25	Des Moines Lincoln	7:45 PM	Lincoln High School Roundhouse
12/5/25	Ballard	6:00 PM	Bondurant-Farrar High School
12/9/25	Winterset	6:00 PM	Winterset High School Competition Gym
12/12/25	Carlisle	6:00 PM	Carlisle High School WAC
12/16/25	ADM	6:00 PM	Bondurant-Farrar High School
12/19/25	Boone	6:00 PM	Bondurant-Farrar High School
12/30/25	Carlisle	8:00 AM	Bondurant-Farrar High School
1/2/26	Carroll	6:00 PM	Carroll High School Gym
1/6/26	North Polk	6:00 PM	Bondurant-Farrar High School
1/9/26	Gilbert	6:00 PM	Gilbert High School Gym
1/13/26	Des Moines Hoover	6:00 PM	Bondurant-Farrar High School
1/16/26	Ballard	6:00 PM	Ballard High School
1/19/26	Indianola	7:15 PM	Bondurant-Farrar High School
1/20/26	Winterset	6:00 PM	Bondurant-Farrar High School
1/23/26	Carlisle	6:00 PM	Bondurant-Farrar High School
1/27/26	ADM	6:00 PM	ADM High School North Gym
1/29/26	Pella Christian	7:15 PM	Bondurant-Farrar High School
1/30/26	Boone	6:00 PM	Boone High School Gym
2/3/26	Carroll	6:00 PM	Bondurant-Farrar High School
2/6/26	North Polk	6:00 PM	North Polk High School HS Gym
2/10/26	Gilbert	6:00 PM	Bondurant-Farrar High School
2/12/26	Knoxville	6:30 PM	Knoxville High School



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FARRAR Bluejays

VARSITY WRESTLING

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME	LOCATION
12/4/25	Multiple Schools	5:30 PM	North Polk High School HS Gym
12/5/25	Multiple Schools	9:00 AM	Coralville Recreation Center
12/11/25	Boone	5:00 PM	Boone High School Gym
12/12/25	Multiple Schools	5:30 PM	Montezuma High School
12/18/25	ADM - DCG Duals	5:30 PM	ADM High School North Gym
12/20/25	Multiple Schools	9:00 AM	Pleasantville High School
1/8/26	vs Winterset	5:30 PM	Bondurant-Farrar High School
1/10/26	Multiple Schools	10:00 AM	Marshalltown High School
1/15/26	vs Gilbert	5:30 PM	Bondurant-Farrar High School
1/15/26	vs Carlisle	7:30 PM	Bondurant-Farrar High School
1/17/26	Multiple Schools	10:00 AM	Jefferson High School
1/22/26	vs Carroll	5:30 PM	Bondurant-Farrar High School
1/24/26	Multiple Schools	9:00 AM	Urbandale High School
1/31/26	Multiple Schools	10:00 AM	Ballard High School Gym

VARSITY BOWLING

DATE	OPPONENT(S)	TIME	LOCATION
11/24/25	Norwalk	3:00 PM	Great Escape
12/2/25	Nevada	3:00 PM	Great Escape
12/11/25	ADM	3:00 PM	Adel Family Fun Center
12/16/25	Carroll	3:00 PM	Great Escape
1/8/26	Ballard	2:30 PM	Perfect Games
1/13/26	Greene County	3:00 PM	Great Escape
1/15/26	Madrid	3:00 PM	Tiger Bowl
1/20/26	Gilbert	2:30 PM	Perfect Games
2/9/26	Multiple Schools	10:00 AM	Perfect Games

Photos provided by Photos By Ben.

Let's Go, Blue Jays!

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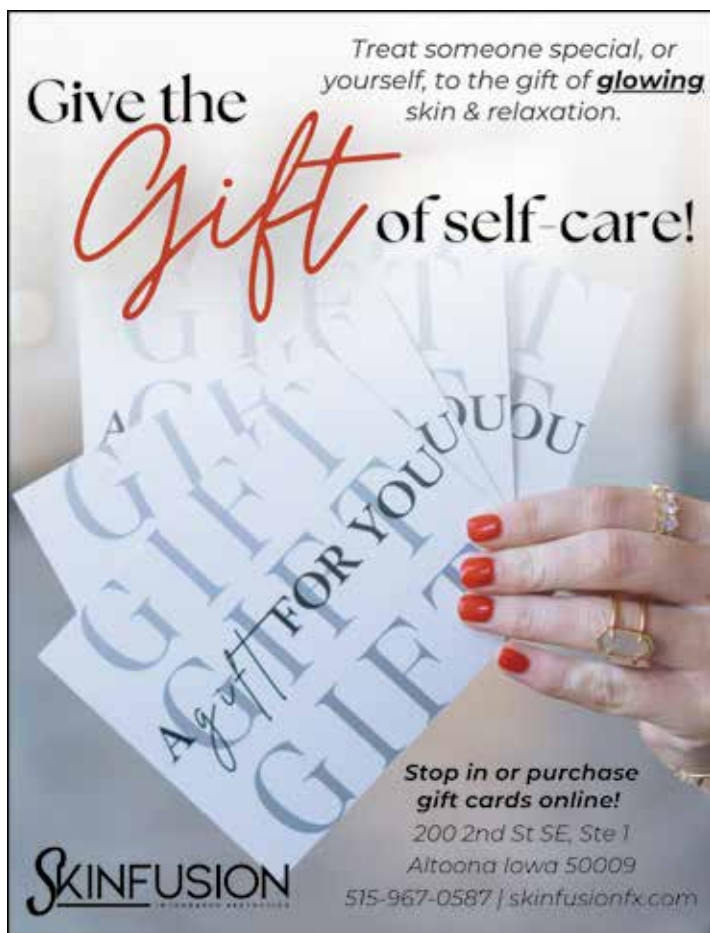
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WELLNESS

By Nikki Morgan

MINDFUL beauty

Balancing stress and self-care this holiday season

The holidays are meant to be joyful, but, between shopping lists, family gatherings and packed schedules, it is easy to feel more frazzled than festive. Amid the hustle, taking time for yourself is not indulgent; it is essential. Mindful beauty is about slowing down, being present and nurturing both your skin and your spirit.

We believe true radiance comes from balance. When stress levels rise, your skin often shows it first through dullness, breakouts or sensitivity. Incorporating small rituals of self-care can make a big difference. Start with a few mindful minutes each day: take deep breaths while cleansing your face, apply your moisturizer with gentle intention, or pause to appreciate how your skin feels after a nourishing treatment.

Professional treatments like DiamondGlow, LED therapy, or a restorative facial can do more than improve your complexion; they create space to exhale and recharge. Pair these with consistent hydration, adequate rest, and moments of gratitude to help your natural glow shine through the season.

This year, give yourself permission to slow down. When you take care of yourself inside and out, you will greet the holidays not just looking refreshed, but feeling truly renewed. ■



Information provided by Nikki Morgan, DNP, ARNP, SkinFusion, 200 Second St. S.E., Altoona, 515-967-0587, www.skinfusionfx.com, nikki.skinfusionfx@gmail.com

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HEALTH

By Dr. Kari Swain and Dr. Elizabeth Ellrich

SUPPORTING your immune system

As the seasons change and the holidays are on the horizon, now is the time to take steps to build a strong immune system that can adapt when exposed to illness and stress. Some children and adults seem to become trapped in an endless cycle of illness, and, just as one cold or virus clears, another illness arrives. Some battle persistent coughs, disrupting sleep for the entire family, perpetuating the cycle of sickness.

Most colds resolve on their own within five to seven days, but the recurring pattern indicates the immune system is struggling to keep up, and the body needs support.

As with all health concerns, addressing the root cause is key to long-term health. Rather than simply managing symptoms, supporting the nervous system and immune system function enables the body's natural ability to self-heal and self-regulate. Chiropractic adjustments help regulate the nervous system, which controls immune responses and supports the body's ability to adapt to stressors.

A healthy immune system starts with a foundation of nervous system-focused chiropractic care and is built up with consistent care and supportive healthy habits. Prioritize rest by establishing consistent sleep routines. Ensure adequate hydration by encouraging water intake throughout the day. Choose whole foods and limit processed foods and sugars. Consider immune-boosting nutrients and supplements with individualized guidance from your chiropractor.

Breaking the cycle of chronic illness requires supporting the body from the inside out, giving the immune system the foundation it needs to function optimally. ■

Information provided by Dr. Kari Swain and Dr. Elizabeth Ellrich, Swain Chiropractic, 410 Center Place S.W., Altoona, 515-967-9300.

GINGIVITIS vs. periodontitis

Gingivitis: Teeth are not loose, and there is no irreversible damage to the jawbone, which supports the teeth. The gums become red and inflamed because bacterial plaque and tartar accumulate on the surface of the tooth.

Periodontitis: The gum and bone recede from the teeth and form large pockets. Bone and gum loss is irreversible and cannot grow back once it is lost. Dental plaque and tartar collect in the pockets between the gums and teeth, and bacteria populate the pockets. The immune system cannot remove plaque and bacteria, which causes gums and jawbone to back away from the bacteria and their toxins and, ultimately, the teeth.

Treatment of gingivitis: After brushing, rinse thoroughly with an antibacterial mouthwash to help fight plaque, gingivitis and bad breath, and floss or Waterpik at least once a day to remove food particles and plaque between teeth. See your dentist every six months.

Treatment of periodontitis: It is important to have plaque and calculus removed by a dental professional. This may be done using hand tools or an ultrasonic water stream that removes plaque and tartar. Depending on how much plaque and calculus is present, the process may take one or two visits and may require anesthetic. A professional cleaning is normally recommended twice a year, and possibly more often, depending on how much plaque accumulates. See your dentist regularly based on the recommended interval. ■

Information provided by Dr. Steven Neville, Kimball & Beecher, 108 Main St. N.E., Bondurant, IA 50035, 515-967-4002.



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PLAN AHEAD

By Dave Cortner

HEADING south for the winter or traveling for the holidays?

Are you traveling over the holidays to visit family? Are you a snowbird, and will you be heading south for the winter?

Have you ever thought about what you would do if something unfortunate happened during the time while you were away and you needed the services of a funeral home?

We don't like to think about these things, but, the truth is, they can happen. And when they do, having a plan in place can make a world of difference.

Perhaps a Travel Plan is something for you to consider — a plan that would take care of everything and bring your loved one back home, if such an unfortunate situation occurred.

These plans can be very cost effective and provide a great deal of peace of mind for those traveling or heading to their winter retreat.

Visit with your funeral home of choice and ask them if they offer a Travel Plan.

Better to have a plan in place and not need it than to wish you had done something to prepare. ■

Information provided by Dave Cortner, Hamilton's on Westtown Parkway, 3601 Westtown Parkway, West Des Moines, IA 50266, 515-697-3681.



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MOVE was meant to be

Petrichs find peaceful home in Bondurant.



The Petrichs chose to move to Bondurant, and one of the features that drew them to their current home was the landscaping.

More than a decade ago, when their youngest son was a freshman at Iowa State University, Stephanie Petrich and her husband began thinking about moving. But they couldn't decide where.

At the time, the couple was living in Illinois when Petrich's husband's job offered him the opportunity to open a new location in Des Moines.

"It's like it just fell in our lap," Petrich says. "After taking our son back to Iowa State after Christmas break, we decided to make the move to Iowa. I always remembered seeing the Ankeny/Bondurant sign off of I-35 and thought how fancy the name Bondurant was."

The Petrichs' real estate agent showed them several homes around the Des Moines metro before presenting the listing that would ultimately become their new home. When the couple visited the town and the house, Petrich immediately knew it was the one.

"We called the Realtor on the way back to

Illinois, and here we are today," she says. "We are home."

What made the house stand out was the first impression, especially the landscaping, which remains Petrich's favorite feature.

"My neighborhood is great, close to the bike trail for my long walks," she adds. "Also, my block is fantastic. We have block get-togethers and chat regularly via group chat."

Bondurant itself has also captured her heart.

"I love the quaint little town, the community gatherings and how the community comes together to help those in need," Petrich says. "A big family."

Speaking of family, fun fact: The son who was at Iowa State is now a successful architect — and one of the designers of the new Buffalo Bills stadium.

For the Petrichs, Bondurant feels like it was always meant to be.

"I just think we were meant to be here,"



Petrich says. "We were able to live close while my son was in school, and we just fell in love with this community. It has grown quite a bit since we moved here but is still my favorite place to be. Even as empty nesters with our boys all over the country, Bondurant is the place we want to be." ■



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CHAMBER

By Tricia Heberer

REPAIR, renew and refresh

Fall skin recovery before the holidays

As the temperatures drop and the leaves change, your skin is also entering a season of transition. After months of summer sun exposure, heat and humidity, it's common to notice more dryness, uneven tone, or lingering sun damage. November is the perfect time to give your skin a little extra attention and set the stage for a radiant holiday glow. We call this the "repair and refresh" season — a time to help your skin recover from summer while preparing for the busy (and photo-filled) holidays ahead.



Reverse summer damage

Even with good sunscreen habits, UV exposure from summer can leave behind discoloration, sunspots and fine lines. Treatments like BBL HEROic and MOXI are ideal for this time of year. These advanced laser treatments target pigmentation, sun damage and early signs of aging to reveal clearer, smoother skin.

Both options offer noticeable results with minimal downtime — perfect for those who want to look refreshed before family gatherings or holiday photos. By starting in November, you'll give your skin time to heal and glow beautifully by December.

Boost renewal with exfoliation

Cooler weather often brings dryness and dullness as the skin's natural cell turnover slows. Gentle exfoliating treatments like dermaplaning or chemical peels help remove dead skin cells and allow brighter, fresher skin to emerge.

Pairing these with a Glo2Facial or customized spa facial enhances hydration and promotes circulation, leaving your skin soft, smooth and glowing. Regular exfoliation also helps your skincare products absorb more effectively — making your at-home routine work harder for you.

Rebuild with medical-grade skincare

Repair doesn't stop when you leave the spa. Consistent at-home care makes all the difference in maintaining your results. Medical-grade products from brands such as ZO Skin Health or Obagi are specially formulated to target pigmentation, fine lines and uneven texture, helping you maintain that post-treatment glow long-term.

November is also a great time to review your skincare regimen. Swapping lighter summer formulas for richer hydrators and barrier-protecting serums can help your skin adjust to the cooler, drier air.

Plan ahead for the holidays

If you're considering injectables or filler touch-ups, November is the perfect time to schedule them. Treatments like neuromodulators (Botox, Jeuveau) and dermal fillers take a little time to settle, so planning ahead ensures you'll look naturally refreshed when the holiday parties begin. Appointments tend to fill quickly as the holidays approach — so booking your skincare and aesthetic treatments early will guarantee you the best results (and stress-free scheduling).

This November, give your skin the reset it deserves. Repair summer damage, refresh your complexion, and renew your confidence before the holidays arrive. You'll step into the season glowing — inside and out. ■

Information provided by Tricia Heberer, Owner/LE, Luxe Medical Spa and Aesthetics, 88 Paine Circle, Suite 7, Bondurant, theberer@luxemedicalspa.net, 515-630-8637.

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BUSINESS Safe Trick- or-Treat

Bondurant residents enjoyed festive fun on Oct. 29 as local businesses hosted special Business Safe Trick-or-Treat events.



Tiffany, Mack and Gunner Branneman



Cooper, Corison and Kinzlee Schevalier



Kim and Harper Glasgow



Katie and Shawn Hentges



Nicole and Everett Winebrenner



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OPEN House

The Bondurant-Farrar High School held a community open house featuring tours of the new addition and renovation on Oct. 20.



Josie and Mike Peterson and family



Cyndi and Michael O'Rourke and family



Lindsay Curtis and Drake Bailey



Erik Garnass and Rich Powers



Jessica Hartgers and Barb Birchmier



Maddison Martin and Afton McConnell



Kristen and Scott Rose



Gavin and Tayler Block



Tyler and Will Martin



Chad Driscoll and Jeff Hanson



Shyanne, Dakota and Danika Clark

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