

Living

Handmade FOR THE holidays

Residents share the joy
of gifts from the heart.

Meet Quinn O'Connor
EDUCATION

Apple cinnamon muffins
RECIPE

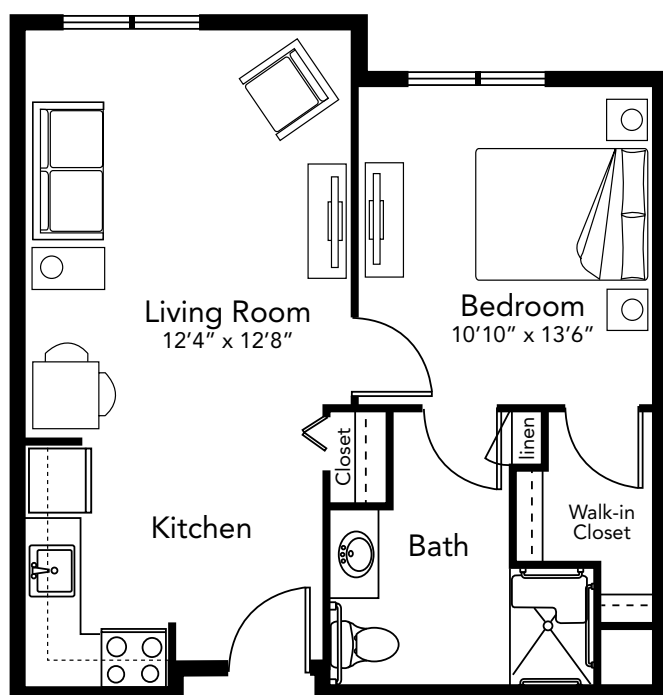
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WELCOME

MADE by hand

There was a time in my life when I may have viewed a homemade Christmas gift as a cheap way out for the giver. If I am being honest, I didn't truly appreciate the time and work that a person would put into creating such a gift. Today, I view it differently.

Now, don't get me wrong. I don't need another horse painting from Aunt Velma or a CD of self-recorded polka music from my neighbor Bill. In fact, I have a few to offer, if you are interested.

When my brother Steve and I were young, Mom made us each a homemade quilt, created with fabric from various pieces of clothing we no longer used. They were warm and fuzzy scrapbooks of sorts. We used them so much, we wore them out. Years later, to our surprise, Mom repaired and recrafted them. Decades later, mine is showing its age again, but it still warms me up on those cold winter evenings. In fact, I laugh because I sometimes find a needle tucked away in it. I guess that is Mom's way of still poking me from time to time. That quilt brings more smiles than any store-bought present ever could.

I also smile each year when we put the ornaments on our Christmas tree, as we recount the times when we bought or received each one. I have known our editor, Tammy Pearson, for many years, and she has been kind enough to give us handmade ornaments many times. Most are ones she created with her kids, and that makes them even more special. Some years, she didn't give any. I am not sure what that means.

Of course, some of the best homemade gifts are the edible ones. You simply can't go wrong with candies and cookies. My favorite is the chocolate fudge, and I can go through a tray of it faster than I want to admit. One year, my 16-year-old daughter, Sara, thought it would be nice to take a plate of cookies and candies out to some of the folks who were working on Christmas day. So, she loaded up several boxes and drove around to stores, dropping off the goodies and wishing them a merry Christmas. She said she got some strange looks, which was unfortunate. Even so, I bet — after a bit of testing — they eventually ate them. Especially the fudge.

In this issue of your Living magazine, we share the stories of homemade gifts and the smiles they put on the givers and the receivers. Merry Christmas to you all, and thanks for reading. ■

SHANE GOODMAN

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



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

Tami Thompson
Advertising Account Executive
515-953-4822 x308
tami@iowalivingmagazines.com



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Handmade FOR THE holidays

Residents share the joy
of gifts from the heart.

By Darren Tromblay

The quilt from a beloved aunt. Knitted sweaters from Grandma. A child's table and chairs crafted in a relative's workshop. A personalized ornament. Handmade gifts are unique, but, more than that, they are gifts of time spent in the crafting, imagination in their design and love in their giving.

Aubrie Doyle (right) and neighbor Amanda Webb get together, along with Renn Nelson, to put together scented Christmas gifts.



Aubrie Doyle gifts her “Christmas In A Bag” each holiday season.

An aromatic gift

Aubrie Doyle, a Realtor by trade, enjoyed putting together plates of baked goods to give to friends and clients each Christmas season.

But, as the years went by, she realized her annual “project” was becoming more and more time consuming. Too much so.

“It was way too much,” she laughs. “I don’t even know what I was thinking.”

Then, along came her friend and neighbor, Amanda Webb, who gave Doyle a gift of a simmer pot in a jar when they were having coffee with another friend, Renn Nelson.

“I thought they were cool, thoughtful and simple,” Doyle says.

The idea of doing the same for friends and clients was bantered about, and Doyle decided it sounded like a good, fun idea. What better way to ring in the holiday season than with a pleasant aroma? And “Christmas In A Bag” was born.

“These are simple, make your house smell good, and are just cozy,” she says.

The three have made it an annual ritual to get together two weeks before Christmas at Doyle’s home to put the bags together.

The recipe is quite simple, beginning with some cinnamon sticks in the bag, followed



Taylor Laning creates Christmas gift baskets that combine two of her favorite things: thrifting and creating. She is pictured with sons, Beckett and Calder, and husband, Nick.

by a sprinkling of cloves, an orange, fresh cranberries and some rosemary. Instructions are also included, telling the recipient to add the contents into a small pot of water, simmer on low heat for a few hours, and, voila, one has a wonderful smelling home.

The time together is special as well.

“The holidays are so hectic, and we’re all so busy, that it gives us a chance to catch up,” Doyle says. “It’s something fun to do, and we’re spreading joy around. It’s nice to share this with them.”

Last year, the trio put together 150 of the gifts. And, although it was time consuming doing all of the deliveries, Doyle doesn’t mind it one bit.

“I just love doing little things like that to show love,” she says. “Sometimes it’s the simplest of gifts that bring you the most. Like that jar Amanda gave me that day. I wasn’t expecting that. It was just so thoughtful, and I love the ones that are personalized.”

Putting it all together

Last year, Taiyler Laning put together a Christmas gift basket that combined two of her favorite things: thrifting and creating.

As part of a local church group, she made



Taiyler Laning’s gift basket consists of a loaf of sourdough bread, cookies, ranch seasoning and a jar of homemade jelly from her aunt.

a loaf of sourdough bread, cookies and ranch seasoning and added a jar of homemade jelly from her aunt and a store-bought item to put in a thrifted basket she had purchased. It wasn’t just any old basket. Laning wanted it to mean something.

As a stay-at-home mom with two young children of her own — as well as watching two more four days a week for a friend — Laning had schedules to work around. But, she made it work.

“I tried to fit things in where I could,” she says.

Laning grew up liking to make things.

“I have a very specific memory of making mobiles for my grandparents and a couple of other people out of clothing hangars, pictures I made and string and ribbon,” she says. “I was so proud of it, but I’m sure it was junk.”

A couple of years ago, Laning made tie-dyes for family members, and, more recently, she has made and painted Christmas ornaments with her children.

“I feel like they’re better mementos,” she says. “It’s hard to buy for my in-laws and my mom. You don’t want to get them junk or something they already have.”

Laning says the hope is that handmade gifts from her children, Beckett, 3, and Calder, 6



Shelly Zeimet's Rudolph cakes are a big hit each Christmas season.

months, will mean more, especially during this time of year.

As for husband Nick's involvement in this creative process?

"Um, no," she laughs.

As a young family, the Lanings are still very much trying to figure things out, so to speak.

"So far, it's been very different every year with travel. My family is fairly local, while my husband's family is in Minnesota or North Dakota. In a perfect world, we'd be home every year for Christmas, and it would be the same thing, with going to church on Christmas Eve, Santa coming, etc."

Something else new this year will be Beckett's first foray into a store to pick out presents for his mom and dad and baby brother. The spirit of giving — not receiving — is something that the family wants to instill into the youngster at an early age.

"It's something that we want them to learn to be intentional with, knowing whether it's something they want or something that Mommy would want," Laning says. "I'm really excited to be able to start that. We'll get there eventually."

Handcrafted with love

For years, Shelly Zeimet has been the giver of all things good during Christmastime in her Altoona neighborhood.

Good in a delicious way: cookies. Each Christmas season, Zeimet, the owner of Shelly's Handcrafted Expressions, where she specializes in custom cakes, cookies and macaroons, has been giving out boxes of cookies to friends, neighbors, teachers and others to help spread the holiday cheer.

"I'll make them in specialty designs to celebrate the holidays and thank them for all of their help in our life," she says.

She, in return, gets to be the recipient of her community's generosity in the form of handmade soaps, bath bombs and the like.

But, it is the giving that Zeimet especially enjoys — particularly the Rudolph cakes, which have gained a certain amount of sweet notoriety over the years. The cakes are a delicious combination of hot cocoa flavor mixed with a marshmallow cream filling.

"The first year I did it, it was a gift to a friend, to help bring that childlike joy that comes with making it," she says. "It kind of took off from there when people saw it."

It takes two to three hours per cake to make, she says, but the work is worth the result: joy.

"It just brings me such a feeling of warmth and joy to give someone something that I made with love," she says.

Zeimet and her husband, Dustin, and their two boys moved from Cedar Rapids to Altoona



Shelly Zeimet has been giving out boxes of cookies to friends, neighbors, teachers and others to help spread the holiday cheer.

four months ago, and, despite the chaos that goes with a big move, the family has very much enjoyed their time here thus far.

"It's been great," Zeimet says. "I've enjoyed meeting new people, our neighborhood is wonderful, and more than once I've given out baked goods to our neighbors to help introduce our family to the community. No one ever says 'no' to a free cookie." ■

MEET Quinn O'Connor

Sparkling imagination while teaching history

As a 2013 graduate of Southeast Polk, Quinn O'Connor's family continues to create deep roots within the local community. It began with O'Connor's father and all of his father's siblings graduating from the district, followed by O'Connor, his siblings and his cousins. Now, along with his wife, who is also a 2013 alumni, O'Connor has returned to his alma mater as a teacher.

"Teaching at Southeast Polk is rewarding because I'm able to impact the community I grew up in and still live in," O'Connor says. "I had a lot of great teachers going through Southeast Polk, so it is a neat opportunity to be part of shaping the next generation of SEP students making their way through life."

After high school, O'Connor enrolled at Drake University to study business before transitioning to secondary education and social studies. He first taught at North High School in Des Moines for seven years before returning to Southeast Polk. O'Connor is currently in his second year teaching Modern U.S. History at the Southeast Polk Junior High.

"What I enjoy most about working in the district is the opportunity to make a difference in people's lives, whether it's about history, economics, critical thinking or just making good choices in life," O'Connor says.

O'Connor incorporates fun and interactive learning in his classroom. One example is when students studied imperialism and the rise of the U.S. as a global power. In this unit, O'Connor created a game for students to compete in groups to see who could conquer the most territory in the Western Hemisphere.

O'Connor's students also participated in a recent simulation where they experienced life in 1920s America. Students could play the stock market, take out loans, get pay raises and more. By the end of the simulation, the stock market crashed and students experienced some of the panic that occurred at the start of the Great Depression.

In the upcoming months, O'Connor is excited to teach what are typically considered popular topics in his Modern U.S. History Class, including World War II and the Cold War Era. During their time digging into the Cold War, students will research a specific part of the Cold War Era, such as the space race, Watergate, how rock 'n roll music impacted the culture, and more. Students then create projects in the form of scrap books, pitches for a Netflix show and museum exhibits.

"As someone who has always been interested in history, government, geography, economics and human behavior, it has always been immensely rewarding when my students have their own imaginations sparked by these important topics," O'Connor says. ■



Quinn O'Connor, a graduate of SEP schools, is now teaching in the district's junior high.

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Holiday hours

- Wednesday, Dec. 31: Open 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- Thursday, Jan. 1: Closed

Adult programming – Ages 18 and older

- **Social Security and Retirement Planning Basics**, Wednesdays, Jan. 7 OR Jan. 21, at 6:30 p.m. Join guest speaker Ryan Biniak with the Society for Financial Awareness for a seminar covering tips on when to file for Social Security, ways to avoid higher taxation of your benefits, and protecting yourself from retirement threats. Registration required.
- **Bullet Journaling**, Thursday, Jan. 22, at 6 p.m. Learn to create your own bullet journal. This customizable system combines organization, planning and creativity. Whether you're new to journaling or looking to refresh your routine, you will learn the basics of setting up your own bullet journal and more. Registration required.
- **Social Stitch**, Saturday, Jan. 31 at 1 p.m. Bring your knitting, cross-stitch, hand sewing or other fiber crafts to the library and enjoy a relaxing afternoon with fellow stitchers. Whatever you are working on, drop in to share tips, swap patterns and make new friends. No registration required.

Children's programming

- **Shimmie Shake**, Mondays from 10-10:30 a.m., starting Jan. 5. Come dance, groove and learn at this interactive storytime filled with songs and fun stories. Ages 5 and younger. No registration required.
- **Pokémon Club**, Wednesday, Jan. 7 from 3:30-4:30 p.m. Pokémon fans stop by for themed crafts, activities and games. Show off your cards, play or chat with other fans. Grades K-6. No registration required.
- **Water Bottle Design**, Wednesday, Jan. 21 from 3:30-4:30 p.m. Design and print your own water bottle using the Maker Hub sublimation printer and press. Grades 4-6. Registration required.

Teen programming – Grades 6-12

- **Handmade Hangout**, Monday, Jan. 12 from 6-7 p.m. Working on a crochet project? Dabbling in drawing? Bring your project and hang out with other creative friends. We'll also have crafty activities available to try. All crafters and artists welcome. No registration required.
- **Laser Tag Lock-In**, Friday, Jan. 16 from 6-8 p.m. Join us for a battle in the stacks. After closing, the whole library will be our battlefield for laser tag. Registration required.
- **Nano Tape Crafts**, Monday, Jan. 19 from 2-3 p.m. You've seen it on social media — stop by the library to make nano tape crafts. We'll have supplies and instructions ready to make squishies, cubes and other smooshy goodies. No registration required.
- **Teen Maker Lab**, Thursday, Jan. 29 from 6-7 p.m. The Maker Lab is a chance for you to learn about and use the equipment in our Maker Hub. This month, we'll make stickers using the Cricut machine. Registration required.

To find a complete list of events and to register, visit our website at altoonalibrary.com. Click on the Upcoming Events tab. ■

START the new year strong with tutoring support

A new year brings a fresh start, renewed motivation and the perfect opportunity for students to build strong academic habits. Whether your child is catching up, keeping up, or looking to get ahead, personalized tutoring programs can help set the tone for a confident and successful year. With expert teachers, proven methods and a supportive environment, a tutoring center gives students the boost they need right from the start.



January often reveals the areas where students need extra support. The excitement of a new school year has worn off, and mid-year skills become more challenging. This is where a tutoring center shines. Their tutors take time to understand each student's strengths, challenges and learning style before building a customized learning plan. Instead of a one-size-fits-all approach, the center meets students exactly

where they are and guides them forward step by step.

One of the keys to starting the year strong is rebuilding academic confidence. When students feel overwhelmed or stuck, it can affect all their classes. Small-group and one-on-one instruction creates a comfortable space for students to ask questions, make mistakes, and learn without pressure. As they begin to understand concepts more clearly, their confidence grows — and that confidence often sparks renewed excitement about school.

Another advantage of tutoring in the new year is consistent structure. After winter break, many students struggle to regain steady routines. Regular tutoring sessions help re-establish good study habits, organization and time-management skills that will carry students through the rest of the school year. From homework help to test prep, students stay engaged and on track.

For families looking ahead, there are enrichment opportunities that help students stretch beyond the classroom. Advanced reading

and college readiness courses empower motivated learners to challenge themselves and explore new interests. The new year is an ideal moment to set goals — not just for improvement, but for growth and curiosity.

Most importantly is to make progress measurable and meaningful. Parents receive updates on exactly how their child is improving, and tutors continuously adjust instruction to match progress. This commitment to results ensures students don't just start the year strong — they stay strong.

With the right support, every student can step into the new year with confidence, clarity and momentum. Proven tutoring programs offer the guidance and encouragement needed to make that happen. Start the year with personalized tutoring and give your child the tools to thrive academically all year long. ■

Information provided by Angela Jones, Owner and Center Director of Sylvan Learning of Altoona, 301 Center Place, Suite C-1, Altoona, 515-957-2923, Angela.Jones@sylvanlearning.com.




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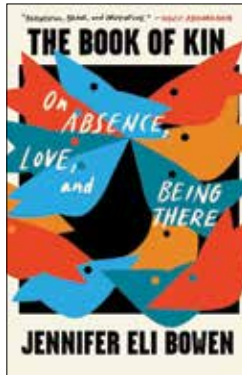
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'The Book of Kin: On Absence, Love, and Being There'

This is such a book of the moment, for me. It is healing and kind and full of the parts of humanity we rarely see these days, the power of what can be accomplished together. It is a radiant blend of memoir, essay and cultural insight that explores how love and presence shape our humanity and, ultimately, heals us in myriad ways.

The Minnesota Prison Writing Workshop was founded by the author and remains the country's largest and most enduring prison-based literary organization. Working with the incarcerated people has had a profound effect on her view of the world, and that shows in her earnest, beautiful writing about grief, family, loneliness and what it means to care. These might be some of the most human essays I've ever read — unflinching but overflowing with generosity.

Lyrical and life-affirming, this is a gorgeous book for anyone feeling the strain of these divided days. It would make a brilliant gift for those who might feel lost or alone. When everything feels so heavy, it is books like this that remind us how to lighten the load — together. ■ — Review by Julie Goodrich



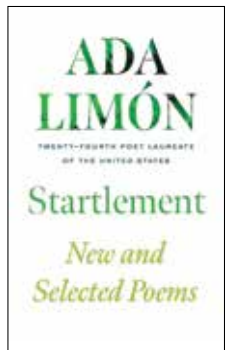
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'Startlement: New and Selected Poems'

There is a lot of talk about how poetry enhances storytelling. Lyrical, rhythmic words in a novel add punch and feeling to a narrative. I'm guilty of it myself. I reach for books with pretty words and sharp wit.

My newest revelation is that the converse can be true, too. In this glorious, tremendous collection celebrating one of the best poets in existence, we see the power story and narrative can have in the tiny space of a poem. This collection feels almost voyeuristic, like the best memoir filled with pinpoint experiences and voluminous emotion and the universal lessons that can only come from a single person's memories.

Poetry isn't for everyone, but for those who can see the magic in it, Ada Limon needs no introduction. Her unique take on the mysteries of life is legendary, and this bountiful book contains both new and beloved poems organized into a path that reads almost like a fairy tale. It would make the loveliest gift for any poetry-fiend or even the poetry-curious. ■ — Review by Julie Goodrich



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HOLIDAY CLOSINGS

City Offices are closed on the following dates:

Christmas: 12/25 and 12/26

New Year's: 1/1

The Altoona Public Library will not be open on the following dates:

Christmas: 12/24 and 12/25

New Year's: 12/31 at 3pm and 1/1

**Shortened hours on additional days surrounding the holidays will be posted via social media and website updates.*

SPECIAL CENSUS

After a brief pause caused by the federal government shutdown, the United States Census Bureau has reopened, and our Special Census has officially resumed.

If you previously received a Census ID number in the mail, the online census form is now available again, and we encourage residents to complete it at their earliest convenience.

If you no longer have your Census ID number, a new one will be mailed to you on December 17th and the 29th. As a reminder, you will still receive the mailings even if you've completed your census. The online census form will remain open through January 6, 2026.

You can find out all of the information about our Special Census at Altoona-iowa.com

Thank you for your participation and support!

CHRISTMAS TREE PICK-UP

Live Christmas Tree Collection

A live Christmas tree is beautiful for the season, but eventually you're left with a dried-out heap. Fortunately, your live tree can also be collected curbside during winter collection!

Just set your tree out before 6 AM on your regular collection day with one Compost It! sticker attached. When you set it at the curb, the sticker is the only decoration your tree can have. All ornaments, lights, and wires need to be removed. Wreaths and garlands are not accepted.

If you find yourself with yard waste after winter collection ends, year-round disposal is available at Metro Park East Landfill or Metro Park West Landfill, where we turn it into Grow Gold Compost. Please visit www.WhereItShouldGo.com/wintercollection or call Metro Waste Authority at 515.244.0021 for more information.

CITY TRAILS IN WINTER

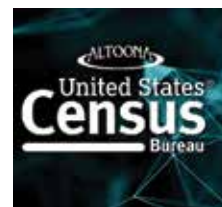
The City of Altoona does clear the snow off of the trails during winter. However, we do not treat the trails with salt or sand. The trails are cleared last, following the city facilities' sidewalks and parking lots. Please enjoy the trails but be cautious of the weather conditions.

POND SAFETY

Please limit your winter recreation at city ponds to fishing from the shore. Ice skating is permitted at the rink the Iowa Wild sponsors and sets up at Ironwood Park. Please see the city's website or social media accounts for the latest skating season announcement and rink information.

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Wishing you a happy holiday season from the City of Altoona!

FRIEND'S apples create a perfect cozy treat

When Cheryl Castile shared a bag of freshly picked apples with me, I knew exactly what to do — turn them into something warm, comforting and perfect for sharing. I love to bake, and these apple cinnamon muffins are the result: soft, fragrant and filled with cozy autumn flavor in every bite. There is something special about baking with fruit that comes straight from someone's tree.



As they bake, the kitchen fills with the irresistible scent of cinnamon and caramelizing apples, promising a treat that is both nostalgic and homemade. These muffins strike the right balance — tender on the inside with just a hint of golden crispness on top. They are wonderful for breakfast, a mid-morning snack or an afternoon pick-me-up with coffee or tea.

Simple to make and even better to share, these muffins are a sweet way to say thank you or to celebrate the small gestures of kindness that brighten an ordinary day. So, if you have a handful of apples and a little time, this recipe transforms them into something truly special — a batch of warm, cinnamon-kissed gratitude. ■

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

Apple cinnamon muffins

Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 1/2 cup brown sugar, packed
- 1 large apple, Granny Smith works well
- 2/3 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup butter
- 2 eggs
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 1 1/2 cups flour
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 pinch salt
- 1/2 cup milk (can use soy, almond or other varieties)

Directions

- Combine cinnamon and brown sugar and set aside. Peel apple, dice into small pieces and set aside.
- Mix flour, baking powder and salt and set aside. Cream together sugar and butter using a mixer.
- Add eggs and vanilla and mix well. Stir in flour mixture. Slowly stir in



milk until combined.

- Grease a 12-muffin pan. Divide dough, diced apples and cinnamon/brown sugar mixture in half. Place one half of the dough among the 12 muffin cups. Follow with one half of the apples and then the cinnamon/brown sugar mixture. Repeat.
- Bake at 350 degrees for 25-30 minutes. These can be frozen up to three months or enjoy warm.

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Last Friday, Monthly
3:30 p.m. - 5 p.m.

WINTER GREENS

Garden Inspired Workshop

Enjoy refreshments and conversation with residents as you craft a tabletop greenery arrangement.

Wednesday, January 14
1:30 p.m. - 3 p.m.



THE VALUE of banking in a branch

From paying bills to making deposits, online banking helps make managing your money convenient. While the advantages of online banking are undeniable, the value of banking in person at a branch is often overlooked. There are certain aspects of in-branch banking that make a trip to your bank worth your time.



to-face communication can make all the difference, and they can play a key role in reaching your financial goals.

Access to full products and services

When you visit your bank in person, you gain access to their full suite of products and services, not just what is included online. It is easier to be aware of all the resources available to you. You may even learn about a product or service you did not know was available before your visit.

There are also certain banking tasks that are best to do in person at a branch. Depositing large amounts of money is one of them. Additionally, most banks offer safe deposit boxes, which are an in-branch service meant to serve as a private and secure place for you to store your most valuable items. Many branches also provide notary services, making it convenient to handle legal documents while you are there. Give yourself peace of mind knowing your money, documents and belongings are safe.

Real-time solutions

Another important advantage of in-person banking is the ability to receive real-time solutions when urgent issues arise. If you notice anything suspicious on your account, a banker can review the activity and identify a plan of action for you all in one visit. If you lose your debit card or it is compromised, you can get a new one in minutes. Urgent matters do not have to be as stressful when you have an expert to address and fix problems on the spot.

Finding the balance between using in-person and digital banking services will help you make the most of your financial experience. The next time you need financial advice or just want to meet your banker, consider stopping by your local bank for support. ■

Information provided by Mary Simon, VP, Altoona Branch Manager, 3820 Eighth St. S.W., Altoona, 515-245-5480, MSimon@BankersTrust.com. Bankers Trust NMLS ID: 440379.



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POLK COUNTY'S HUMAN SERVICES OUTREACH & INVESTMENTS



CENTRAL IOWA SHELTER & SERVICES

Polk County approved more than **\$817K** in funding to support critical infrastructure repairs including HVAC, plumbing, electrical, kitchen repairs, and security upgrades. In addition, the county approved an enhanced annual financial agreement. The County's annual support increased from **\$149k to \$319k** to specifically help cover first-night shelter and meal expenses, costs related to increased staffing, higher costs of materials, and other essentials during weather amnesty.



IOWA HOMELESS YOUTH CENTER (YSS)

The Iowa Homeless Youth Center (IHYC) is the only emergency shelter bed program in Polk County exclusively serving homeless young adults between the ages of 18 and 24 years. In August, Polk County approved a 3-year agreement to provide **\$150K** annually in funding to ensure the program remains viable and the beds available at the youth emergency shelter in downtown DSM.



JOPPA

Polk County invested more than **\$1.28 million** in federal funding designated for affordable housing towards JOPPA's tiny village project. In October, JOPPA received approval by the City of Des Moines for their site at 2501 Maury Street in Des Moines. The tiny village will provide permanent homes to 50 men and women who would otherwise be chronically homeless. The Village will offer supportive services, work opportunities, and access to public transportation for off-site employment opportunities.



ANAWIM HOUSING

Polk County utilized **\$1 million** in federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars in support of Anawim Housing's Monarch Apartments located at 4845 Merle Hay Road in Des Moines. This 40 unit project converted a former Days Inn Hotel into permanent supportive housing. Monarch Apartments opened it's doors in Spring 2025

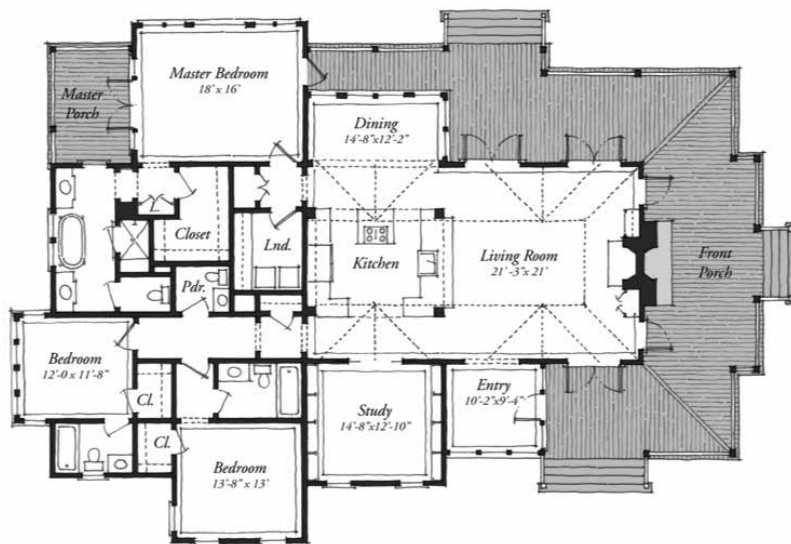


FOOD PANTRY ASSISTANCE

When the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits were temporarily suspended on November 1, 2025, due to the federal government shutdown, the Polk County Board of Supervisors held a special meeting to provide **\$1 million** to the Food Bank of Iowa, Des Moines Religious Council, and Caring Hands to help fill their pantries. Shortly after SNAP benefits were suspended, pantries saw more than a 50% increase in demand and Polk County's special investment allowed for immediate distribution to organizations at the forefront of the food crisis during this time.

NEW Tideland Haven

The New Tideland Haven blends timeless charm and modern comfort, featuring three bedrooms, 3.5 bathrooms, and 2,622 square feet of single-level living. A grand wraparound porch welcomes you inside, where vaulted ceilings and an open floor plan create an inviting, airy space for everyday living and entertaining. ■



Floors: 1
Bedrooms: 3
Bathrooms: 3.5
Foundation(s): Pier
SQUARE FEET
Main Floor: 2,622
Total Conditioned: 2,622
Front Porch: 923
Rear Porch: 104
DIMENSIONS
Width: 80'-10"
Depth: 57'-2"
Height: 23'-0"
HOUSE LEVELS

Level Name Ceiling Heights
Main Floor: 9'-0"
CONSTRUCTION
Wall Construction: 2x6
Exterior Finish: Lap Siding, Board & Batten
Roof Pitch: 10:12
FEATURES
Kitchen: Island, Snack
Primary Bedroom: Tub, Double Sink, Shower, Porch, Private Toilet, Walk-in Closet
Additional: Fireplace, Porch, Screened Porch, Home Office/Study

Photography by Laurey W Glenn. Designed by Our Town Plans, LLC.
 Plan number SL-1824. houseplans.southernliving.com

USEFUL and heartfelt gifts

Finding the perfect Christmas gift for your older loved ones can feel challenging, but it is also an opportunity to show love, appreciation and thoughtfulness. Seniors often value comfort, practicality and meaningful connections over trendy gadgets or flashy items. Here are some ideas that combine usefulness with heartfelt sentiment.

Cozy comfort items: Winter can be harsh, and warmth is always welcome. Soft blankets and plush, rubber-soled slippers make excellent gifts that provide comfort. Weighted blankets are another great option; they promote relaxation and better sleep. Pair these with a cozy robe for the ultimate comfort package.

Personalized keepsakes: Personalized gifts never go out of style. Photo albums, custom calendars featuring family pictures or engraved jewelry can bring to mind cherished memories. Digital photo frames preloaded with family photos are perfect for older adults who may not be tech-savvy but love seeing familiar faces.

Health and wellness essentials: Health-conscious gifts such as ergonomic pillows, foot massagers or subscription boxes for healthy snacks are great options. For active seniors, wearable fitness trackers can encourage gentle exercise and monitor vital signs. Even simple items like a pill organizer or a stylish water bottle can make daily routines easier.

Experiences over things: Sometimes, the best gift isn't something



you can wrap. Experiences create lasting memories. Gift certificates for favorite restaurants, tickets to local concerts, or a planned family outing can bring joy and connection. Even a simple "day together" coupon, where you spend time doing what they love, can mean more than any physical gift.

Technology and connection: Isolation can be a daily challenge for seniors, especially during the holidays. Simple to use tablets or video calling devices help them stay connected with family and friends. Digital assistants, such as Alexa, can also make life easier by setting reminders or playing music with voice commands.

Practical everyday helpers: Think about items that make daily life easier: kitchen gadgets, reach tools or easy-grip utensils. These practical gifts show thoughtfulness and help maintain independence. Even something as simple as a stylish tote bag for errands can be useful and appreciated.

When choosing a gift for a senior, consider their lifestyle, health needs and personal interests. The most meaningful presents combine practicality with emotional significance. Whether it's a cozy blanket, a personalized photo frame or a shared experience, the goal is to make them feel valued, comfortable and connected during the holiday season. ■

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



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HEALTH

By Dr. Kari Swain and Dr. Elizabeth Ellrich

CHIROPRACTIC care essential for kids

Parents often have questions about why their child should see a chiropractor. Regular chiropractic care by a board-certified pediatric chiropractor provides essential benefits for children's overall wellness, development and lifelong health.

Chiropractic adjustments reduce nervous system stress, allowing the body to function in a greater state of health. When the nervous system is healthy, communication between the brain and the body flows more efficiently. Specific adjustments significantly affect how children think and behave, leading to improved attention span, decreased behavioral issues, better sleep patterns and balanced emotional processing.

Children have a high activity level and experience falls, bumps and accidents frequently while playing. Children are resilient and don't appear to be injured, but these small falls and bumps can turn into minor spinal injuries that go unnoticed until adulthood, making corrections more difficult later.

All children should have their nervous system evaluated as symptoms are not always present. However, many symptoms such as recurrent ear infections, colds and sickness, asthma and breathing issues, allergies, sleep difficulties, emotional processing issues, mood swings, behavioral and attention issues, clumsiness or lack of coordination, constipation or elimination issues, frequent accidents or bed wetting can indicate the need to address nervous system issues with chiropractic care.

Board certified pediatric chiropractors perform thorough examinations and are trained to provide specific adjustments from infants to young adults. By incorporating chiropractic care as part of a healthy lifestyle, parents give their children the foundation for self-healing and lifelong wellness. ■

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

HEALTH

By Ashley Powell

SLEEP better, live better

Good sleep is essential for overall wellness, but many people struggle to get the rest they need. Both CBD and THC have been shown to improve sleep quality by reducing stress, easing pain and promoting relaxation. CBD can help manage chronic pain, which often disrupts sleep patterns.

Low doses of THC can help regulate the sleep-wake cycle, particularly for those struggling with insomnia or anxiety. THC enhances REM sleep, the restorative phase, and may promote deeper sleep with fewer awakenings. Additionally, functional mushrooms like Reishi help balance cortisol levels and calm the nervous system, encouraging natural, restful sleep.

Another cannabinoid, CBN (cannabinol), is also gaining attention for its sleep-promoting benefits. CBN has sedative effects, helping users fall asleep faster and enjoy deeper rest. When combined with CBD and THC, CBN can provide an enhanced, natural sleep solution.

Our customers find success pairing CBD, CBN and low-dose THC products for a more restful sleep. Together, these natural remedies work in harmony to reduce stress, alleviate discomfort and promote relaxation.

Visit your locally owned CBD store to discover the best natural sleep aids for you. Certified hemp consultants are available to guide you to products that support peaceful nights and energized mornings. ■

Information provided by Ashley Powell, CBD American Shaman, 800 S. 50th St., No. 106, West Des Moines, 515-380-5251, and 3418 Eighth St. S.W., No. 3, Altoona, 515-967-4036. Sources: Shannon, S., Lewis, N., Lee, H., & Hughes, S. (2019). "Cannabidiol in Anxiety and Sleep: A Large Case Series." *The Permanente Journal*. Wasser, S. P. (2017). "Medicinal Mushrooms in Human Clinical Studies." *International Journal of Medicinal Mushrooms*.

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THE TRUTH about aging

We've all seen it: creams that promise miracles, trends that come and go, and conflicting advice about how to "stop" aging. The truth? Aging is natural, but how your skin shows it is something you can influence. Healthy skin is the ultimate goal, and there are science-backed solutions that protect and restore your skin — not just quick fixes that lead to disappointment.

The biggest factor in visible aging isn't genetics; it is lifestyle and environment. Sun exposure alone accounts for nearly 80% of fine lines, dark spots and skin laxity. That means the most effective anti-aging product is still the simplest: daily sunscreen. Add in consistent skincare with ingredients like retinol, peptides, antioxidants and growth factors, and you've already built a powerful foundation.

But sometimes skincare can't do the whole job. That is where modern aesthetic treatments come in. Neuromodulators soften expression lines, DiamondGlow boosts radiance and skin health, and collagen-stimulating treatments, such as laser skin rejuvenation and SkinPen microneedling, help firm and rejuvenate from within. These are not shortcuts; they are tools that work with your biology to keep your skin healthy and strong.

The biggest myth? That aging must be "fixed." Aging skin should be supported. Beautiful and healthy skin at any age comes from understanding what truly works and choosing personalized care that honors your unique features.

Curious what your skin really needs? Visit your trusted medical aesthetic provider to guide you with honest, expert recommendations you can trust. ■

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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PLAN AHEAD

By Buffy Peters

GRIEF and the holidays

When grief comes along for the holidays, the absence of someone special can feel even more amplified. Holiday traditions can bring up memories from the past, which perhaps now feel painful and in direct opposition to the holiday cheer that seems inescapable this time of year.

What about the proverbial "elephant in the room"? Someone is missing this year, but, if we talk about it, that might make people sad, or worse, cry, reminding them of the loss. It might feel like it is better to not say anything and pretend it isn't there.

What I have learned from grief is that, when you acknowledge the elephant, it allows us to walk alongside one another together instead of being left alone in our grief. Yes, tears may come, and that's OK. But you know what else might come? When the elephant has a seat at the table, it is no longer fighting for our attention, using all of our energy to pretend we aren't grieving. That acknowledgement makes room for grief, love and joy to coexist. It's not an either/or; it certainly can be a both/and.

You can be grieving and find glimmers of joy this season. Allow yourself to feel however you are feeling (with no judgement) and make room for the things that bring you joy. It is not dishonoring your loved one, and it won't make your grief disappear, but it might just make this time of year a bit more bearable. ■



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

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EVENTS IN THE AREA

Be sure to check for cancelations.

Coming up in the Altoona Living magazine:

"I do!" Stories about marriage proposals: Share the story of how your courtship culminated in a proposal to remember. Email tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com to share your story!

Live music at Prairie Meadows

1 Prairie Meadows Drive, Altoona

- Friday, Dec. 26, 8 p.m.: Jordan Beem featuring the John Griffiths Band
- Saturday, Dec. 27, 8 p.m.: Night Like This Band
- Saturday, Dec. 27, noon: 80 Grit Band
- Sunday, Dec. 28, 8 p.m.: Recoil Band
- Monday, Dec. 29, 8 p.m.: Get Off My Lawn Band
- Tuesday, Dec. 30, 11 a.m.: Richie Lee and the Fabulous 50s Band
- Tuesday, Dec. 30, 8 p.m.: Decoy Band
- Wednesday, Dec. 31, 8:30 p.m.: Grand Marshall Band
- Wednesday, Dec. 31, 11 a.m.: Tommy Browder and the Country River Band
- Saturday, Jan. 17, 7 p.m.: Young Elvis Tribute Band



Uptown Ankeny Wonderlights

Through Dec. 31
Ankeny Market and Pavilion park, 715 W. First St.

Uptown Ankeny, in partnership with the city of Ankeny, features more than 50 animated light displays in and around six blocks of S.W. Third Street and throughout the Ankeny Market and Pavilion park. This magical holiday light experience is free and open to the public and can be enjoyed on foot, by bicycle and by car each evening.



Des Moines Community Orchestra Concerts

• **Winter Concert: Sunday, Feb. 22, 2 p.m.**, Staplin Performing Arts Center, 3650 Woodland Ave., West Des Moines. Guest Conductor: Joshua Barlage, Featured Soloist: Curtis Barr, Cello

• **Spring Concert: Sunday, May 10, 2 p.m.**, Drake University Sheslow Auditorium, 2507 University Ave., Des Moines. Guest Conductor: Kara Mather Des Moines Community Orchestra, Featured Soloist: Dr. Kevin Allemagne, Clarinet

To submit calendar items for consideration, send to tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com

Programs at Edencrest at The Tuscany

1600 Eighth St. S.E., Altoona

• **Central States Mobility Showcase, Thursday, Jan. 15, 1-2 p.m.**

Discover innovative mobility solutions designed to enhance comfort, safety and independence. Representatives from Central States Mobility will showcase their latest products and services, answer questions and provide expert insights on maintaining mobility and quality of life. Enjoy light refreshments as you learn more about how these solutions can support active, independent living.

• **Home Instead, Thursday, Feb. 12, 1-2 p.m.** Join Home Instead for an informative, hour-long presentation about in-home care services. Topics include personalized support options, caregiver assistance and resources available to help seniors maintain independence and quality of life.

• **Telecommunications Access Iowa, Thursday, March 12, 1-2 p.m.** TAI officials will share details about their statewide program that helps individuals access specialized telecommunications equipment, including amplified phones, captioned phones, and other adaptive devices that support easier communication.

• **Everystep, Thursday, April 16, 1-2 p.m.** EveryStep and Dr. Mouser will present an informative, one-hour overview of their compassionate care and support services, including hospice, home care, grief support and community health programs designed to help individuals and families navigate life's transitions. Light snacks and refreshments will be provided.

For more information on programs, call Mallory Wentland, 515-850-6119.

Ankeny Gingerbread Lane

Through Dec. 31 • S.E. Richland Court, Ankeny

Gingerbread Lane consists of 31 decorated houses on S.E. Richland Court, and the holiday tradition goes back more than 30 years. Richland homeowner Brooke McHose says the cul-de-sac members enjoy working together and giving back to the Ankeny community. Gingerbread Lane requests food donations for the Food Bank of Iowa.

New Year's Eve Pops: Cirque

Dec. 31, 8 p.m.

Des Moines Civic Center,
221 Walnut St.

www.dmsymphony.org

Ring in the New Year among the stars. The Des Moines Symphony and world-renowned Cirque performers from Troupe Vertigo take you on a cosmic journey of music and motion, blending breathtaking aerial feats with space-inspired symphonic masterpieces for an unforgettable night of celebration. Space-themed music from "Star Wars," "Harry Potter," "The Planets" and more comes to life with breathtaking choreography. Experience the thrill, the artistry and the unexpected — all in one unforgettable evening.



CITYVIEW's Fire and Ice

Saturday, Jan. 24, 1-4 p.m.
Valley Junction

CITYVIEW brings back its legendary Valley Junction area pub crawl. Fire and Ice is a hockey-themed liquor sampling event that will be sure to warm up your winter blues. With your event ticket, you will receive 10 individual drink tickets to sample some of the best winter cocktails from establishments in the Valley Junction area. Tickets are \$25 in advance and \$35 at the door. Follow the QR code for tickets.



Be sure to check for cancelations.

Winter Arts Exhibits

Olson-Larsen Galleries

542 Fifth St., West Des Moines
• **Through Jan. 31: The Animal Show 2025**

Polk County Heritage Gallery

Polk County Administration Building,
111 Court Ave., Des Moines
www.polkcountyheritagegallery.org
• **Through Dec. 31: The Invitational: Curated Show**

Ankeny Art Center

1520 S.W. Ordinance Road, Ankeny
www.ankenyardcenter.org
• **Through Jan. 14: Members Show**

The Des Moines Art Center

4700 Grand Ave., Des Moines
• **Through April 19: Bill Owens: Work and Leisure:** Bill Owens documented the suburbs in the 1970s, capturing the lives of prosperous, predominantly white Americans at a moment after the cultural shifts of the 1960s but before the dawn of the digital age of computers and video games in the 1980s. His photographs were compiled in the best-selling coffee table books "Leisure" (1972), "Our Kind of People" (1975), and "Working: I Do It For the Money" (1977).

Des Moines Art Center Museum Highlights Tour

Saturdays, 1-2 p.m.
Des Moines Art Center,
4700 Grand Ave, Des Moines

Discover the vast variety of the Des Moines Art Center's permanent collections during the Museum Highlights Tour. This tour offers a unique journey through the galleries, featuring a selection of timeless paintings, sculptures and more. Join knowledgeable guides to uncover the stories, techniques and inspirations behind the art on view, and experience the highlights of the Art Center in a fresh and engaging way. This guided tour is perfect for art enthusiasts of all ages. Free to all, no registration required.

Stage and Theater

Des Moines Performing Arts
Des Moines Civic Center, Cowles Commons, Stoner Theater, Temple Theatre, 221 Walnut St., Des Moines

www.dmpa.org

- Jan. 13-18: "SIX"
- Feb. 3-8: "Kimberly Akimbo."
- Feb. 24 to March 1: "The Outsiders."
- March 20-22: Meredith Willson's "The Music Man."
- March 28: "The Wizard of Oz in Concert" with the Des Moines Symphony.
- April 28 to May 3: "Suffs."

Holiday Horse-Drawn Rides

Dec. 26-31, every half hour, 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Jester Park Equestrian Center,
11171 N.W. 103rd Court, Granger

Staff will hitch up their draft horse team to take your group for a 30-minute horse-drawn ride through Jester Park. If there's no snow, plan for a wagon on wheels instead of a sleigh! Sleigh Rides require a minimum of 6 inches of packed snow as a proper base for the sleigh. A wagon will be used when there is no snow or not enough snow to pull a sleigh. Registration is required. Private holiday rides, which cost \$200, can hold a maximum of 12 guests. Small children who can sit on an adult's lap for the duration of the ride do not need to be included in the count. To register, follow the QR code.



Square Dance Lessons

Sunday nights starting
Jan. 18, 6:30 p.m.

Douglas Avenue Presbyterian Church,
4601 Douglas Ave., Des Moines

Ankeny Square Dance Club is sponsoring Square Dance Lessons. Cost is \$20 per person for the entire session accepted at the third lesson. Attend with or without a dance partner. You'll learn the calls, one at a time, taught by a caller (instructor) and volunteers. For more information, call Sandy Townsend, 515-294-2624, or visit www.ankenysquares.com.



The Iowa Files: A History Series

Various dates, 3 p.m.

Community Room of the West Des Moines Public Library, 4000 Mills Civic Parkway

This joint West Des Moines Historical Society and West Des Moines Public Library program is free and open to the public, thanks to the generosity of West Des Moines Historical Society members, Bravo Greater Des Moines and the Friends Foundation of the West Des Moines Library. All programs are streamed on the WDMHS Facebook page and YouTube channel.

• Jan. 11: Iowans in Andersonville Prison.

Andersonville Prison (also known as Camp Sumter) was a Confederate prisoner-of-war camp during the final 14 months of the American Civil War. The prison was overcrowded to four times its capacity and had an inadequate water supply, inadequate food and unsanitary conditions. Historian, teacher and all around fascinating storyteller Kent Halstad will share the stories of the Iowans who experienced Andersonville.

• **Feb. 15: Ako Abdul-Samad; A Life Working for Justice.** Ako Abdul-Samad has served the community in numerous capacities as an elected official, mediator and community organizer. Ako will share his thoughts on the state of equality and the fight against systemic poverty and racial injustice and his life-long commitment to the power of dialog to make positive change.

• **March 15: The Monuments Men and the Saving of Culture.** The Monuments Men (and Women) had a seemingly impossible job: save some of the world's most precious cultural artifacts and art from the Nazis, who treated Europe as their private looting grounds. Presenter Ruth Ehler's grandfather, Ralph Hammett, was one of the men. Ruth will recount stories of the amazing and frantic work that saved and returned treasures to their rightful owners and institutions.

• **April 12: Colfax, the Spring City.** In the 1870s, underground mineral water, which was a cure-all health craze at the time, was discovered in Colfax. The water sparked health resort and bottling industries which made Colfax a world famous destination at the turn of the 20th Century. Kevin Williams, Cofax Historical Society's board president, will share information and pictures about this little-known boom in Colfax.

• **May 17: Villisca; Living With a Mystery.** On the morning of June 10, 1912, Josiah and Sarah Moore, along with their four children and two young overnight guests, were found brutally murdered in their home. Dr. Edgar V. Epperly has written dozens of articles and blog entries and appeared on CourtTV and other radio and television programs. He will be joined by filmmakers Kelly and Tammy Rundle, whose 2004 documentary explores the crime's aftermath in a small town. ■

THE RUTHLESS elimination of hurry

I don't know about you, but, for me, most of my worst moments as a husband, father, pastor and as a human being are when I'm in a hurry. Late for an appointment, behind on my unrealistic to-do list, trying to cram too much into my day. I can ooze anger, impatience and tension. I ignore and rush by people. This is the opposite of love. Hurry and love are like oil and water — they simply do not mix.



Can you imagine a stressed-out Jesus? Snapping at Mary Magdalene after a long day, "I can't believe you spilled the olives! What were you thinking?" Can you picture Jesus half talking to you and half texting on his iPhone, giving you some "uh-huh's," as he tries to multitask? Can you imagine Jesus saying, "I'd love to heal your leg, but I have a plane to catch. Good luck!"

That just doesn't sound like Jesus, does it? But it does sound like us. There was something different about Jesus' life and his relationship to time that made him present, patient and full of love. I want to learn this way of life.

I love how Jesus modeled for us an unhurried life. Jesus was relentlessly present to people. He didn't ignore or rush by. He was so locked into the moment, attentive to those God put in his path. With margin and slowness, he really noticed people, really listened, and really loved.

It's like Jesus had an internal cruise control that was set to the speed of love. Love is slow. Love takes time. Love means being present, not hurried. No matter what happened, no matter what the interruption, no matter the demand, Jesus just kept cruising at the speed of love. This is why Dallas Willard, when asked what his most important spiritual advice was, said, "You must ruthlessly eliminate hurry from your life."

But that is hard. Despite our best intentions and our best efforts, there is something in us that derails our attempts at living at the speed of love. It is like something is unsettled in our souls. We feel a need to prove ourselves by what we accomplish. We feel a need to compete against others by living a better life. We have a fear of missing out.

Jesus doesn't just model the speed of love; he also has a word of love for you from the cross: You are loved. You are forgiven. You have nothing to prove and no one to compete with. You are mine and you are loved. You can rest in that love. That kind of love sets us free from hurry by changing our inner motivations. In the year ahead, may that love enable us to live at the speed of love. ■

Information provided by Pastor Nathan Anenson, Lutheran Church of the Cross, 1701 Eighth St. S.W., Altoona, 515-967-4818.



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SETTING goals: Support local businesses

As much as the holiday season is a favorite of many, it sometimes feels as though it is the craziest and most fast-paced, energy-draining four to six weeks of life. As we end one year with all its ups and downs, we look forward to welcoming a new year, looking for a fresh start.

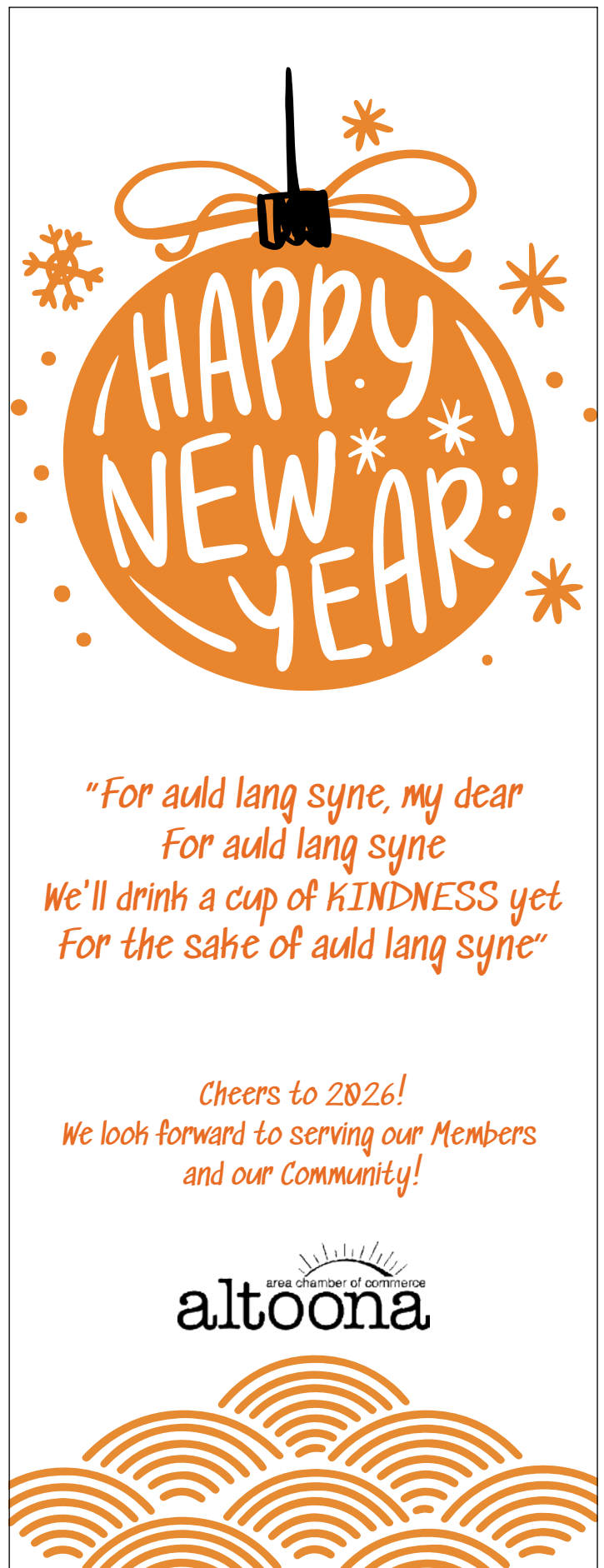
Fresh starts for the new year usually include goals such as getting healthy, losing weight or maybe becoming more active with a new or reinvigorated exercise program. For some, it is setting new financial goals such as sticking to a budget, getting out of debt or saving more money. Then, for those wanting to de-clutter, it's getting organized and having order, not only in our homes, but maybe also in our lives.

Just as many of you have set goals for your personal lives, your local chamber board has set goals for 2026 as well, with a strong focus on supporting our small businesses, improving community engagement and committing ourselves to doing things that will have a positive impact now and into the future. We want to take what we have done well and make it a little bit better. We want to try new things and see new faces at our events, as well as more volunteers and participation in the events and activities that are offered.

Not only would we like to see you involved with the many events during the year, but we would also like you to continue to support the many great locally owned businesses in Altoona. From one edge of town to the other, there are restaurants, coffee shops, retail gift stores, pet stores, flower shops, salons, real estate agencies, chiropractors, banks and health and wellness businesses with owners and managers who are focused not only on servicing the community well but building long-lasting relationships with those they serve. If you want to know more about a local business, the Altoona Chamber does an excellent job of offering various ways to connect you, whether through social media, their website or the Community Guide.

So, as you are setting your personal goals for 2026, maybe you can add "support my local community" to your list? We are planning some great things for this year, and it just won't be the same without you. ■

Information provided by Twila Shreves, 2026 Altoona Chamber President, Owner, Hidden Treasures Gifts and Book-Tea-Que.



OUT & ABOUT



Stephanie Groom, owner of Stems Flower Shop, at the Holiday Bazaar hosted by Altoona Chamber on Dec. 6 at Northbridge Event Center.



Marcie Vinsand of Marci Vinsand Handmade Designs, and Megan Freel of Handmade by Megan Mae, at the Holiday Bazaar hosted by Altoona Chamber on Dec. 6 at Northbridge Event Center.



Logan Olson and Joey Cheers of Just a Smidge Vintage at the Holiday Bazaar hosted by Altoona Chamber on Dec. 6 at Northbridge Event Center.



Debbie Chamberlain, author, at the Holiday Bazaar hosted by Altoona Chamber on Dec. 6 at Northbridge Event Center.



Kevin Hyberger with Communication Innovators presented at Altoona Area Chamber of Commerce's Business 2.0 on Dec. 11 at the Townsend Community Center.



Angela Ossian, Pennie Carroll and Jon Yesulis at Altoona Chamber's December 2025 Business 101 at the Townsend Center.



Jon Yesulis and Dan Douglas at Altoona Chamber's December 2025 Business 101 at the Townsend Center.



Richard Arndt, Joe Gillie and Kyle Lee at Altoona Chamber's December 2025 Business 101 at the Townsend Center.



Nora Hernandez and Karla Amaya at the Altoona Area Chamber of Commerce's "Business 2.0" on Dec. 11 at the Townsend Community Center.



Kyle Lee and Jon Yesulis at the Altoona Area Chamber of Commerce's "Business 2.0" on Dec. 11 at the Townsend Community Center.



Chris Barr, Jeff Larkins and Kevin Hyberger at Altoona Area Chamber of Commerce's Business 2.0 on Dec. 11 at the Townsend Community Center.



Tiffany Bickel and Victoria Veatch at the Altoona Area Chamber of Commerce's "Business 2.0" on Dec. 11 at the Townsend Community Center.

OUT & ABOUT



Kyin Thompson, Caitlin Thompson and Keyser Thompson at Pennie Carroll & Associates' Annual Gingerbuild.



Jane Ferguson, Lily and Brian Ferguson at Pennie Carroll & Associates' Annual Gingerbuild.



Alec De La Cuba, Lucas De La Cuba, Avery McGuffin and Olivia De La Cuba at Pennie Carroll & Associates' Annual Gingerbuild.



Graber Carroll, Daniel Hoyos, Natalie Carroll-Hoyos, Elias Hoyos and Andres Hoyos at Pennie Carroll & Associates' Annual Gingerbuild at Copper Creek Club House, Saturday, Dec. 6.



Lori Cramer and Rob Cramer at the Altoona Area Chamber of Commerce Perk Before Work at Northbridge Event Center on Dec. 2.



Joel Morrow and Christine O'Hern at the Altoona Area Chamber of Commerce Perk Before Work at Northbridge Event Center on Dec. 2.



Rob Cramer and Rick Kroeger at the Altoona Area Chamber of Commerce Perk Before Work at Northbridge Event Center on Dec. 2.



Kevin Hyberger and Kyle Lee at the Altoona Area Chamber of Commerce Perk Before Work at Northbridge Event Center on Dec. 2.



Linda Lawson at the Altoona Area Chamber of Commerce Perk Before Work at Northbridge Event Center on Dec. 2.



Gabe Dubberke at the Altoona Area Chamber of Commerce Perk Before Work at Northbridge Event Center on Dec. 2.



Matt Keller at the Altoona Area Chamber of Commerce Perk Before Work at Northbridge Event Center on Dec. 2.



Dan Douglas at the Altoona Area Chamber of Commerce Perk Before Work at Northbridge Event Center on Dec. 2.

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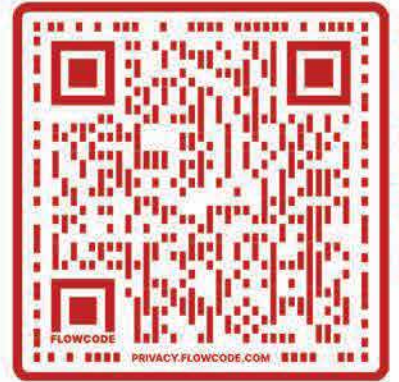


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