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A 'fur ever' HOME

Residents share stories about the animals they rescued.

By Ashley Rullestad

Abandoned. Abused. Neglected. The world is full of animals — big and small — that don't know the comfort of a full belly, a warm place to sleep, and the love of a caring owner. Some people seek out these needy animals when looking to add a pet to their family. Others come across them unexpectedly and are moved to rescue them. Whatever the case, rescued pets often give their humans as much love as they receive.

Leah Boarman enjoys cuddling with Elphie.



Jill Sterling with Hazel, a “foster fail.”

Puppy love

Jill Sterling knows a thing or two about rescue pets. She is currently fostering her 38th dog with AHeinz 57. For her, rescuing has fulfilled a few different purposes, and it has allowed her to make a difference in many animals’ lives.

“We adopted our dog Zoe from AHeinz57 in May of 2017,” she says. “Prior to COVID, I was super active in volunteering in various ways in the community, most of which centered around my kids. But when everything shut down in 2020 — and my oldest graduated high school — I suddenly felt unsteady. I didn’t have a place where I felt like I was making an impact anymore, and I just didn’t feel connected to anything.”

Once things started opening up again in 2021, she turned to AHeinz57 again. Sterling started going to the rescue to help with puppies and other adoptable dogs. She enjoyed that so much that, in April of 2022, she decided to start fostering. Their second foster, Hazel, was a “foster fail,” meaning they ended up keeping her. Since then, it’s been a revolving doggie door at the Sterling home.

“I love fostering. It’s so gratifying when you bring home a dog that has never been in a safe, warm house and watch them come out of their shell and start to trust again. Watching the tail come up, their eyes brighten, feeling them relax and trust you... it is just the best feeling. Dogs are incredible creatures. Even ones who have been so let down by humans are able to trust again. Probably a good lesson in there for all of us.”



Jill and Chris Sterling with their rescue pets, Zoe and Hazel,

The most surprising thing, she says, is how much more she has learned about dogs. She had dogs while growing up, and they had another dog prior to getting Zoe, so she thought she knew a lot. However, she has learned a ton about dog interactions, training, and what to watch for when introducing dogs.

Some of the benefits of fostering are being able to teach and watch a dog become a part of a family. Several dogs the Sterlings have fostered have never been in a house before. Watching them react to a TV has been entertaining. It is also a great feeling knowing they are taking a dog out of a shelter and opening up a spot for one of the many other dogs that need it.

For people considering fostering, Sterling advises giving it a try. The rescue gives you all the materials you need: food, medications and supplies. There is also an amazing group of people who will help you learn and support you along the way. If you are in a place where you don’t think you can commit to owning a dog, fostering is a great way to spend a little time with a dog without a long-term commitment.

“Fostering has filled the space in my heart and life that I didn’t know how to fill after my kids were grown. It’s given me purpose, joy, new friendships and a way to make a real difference — one dog at a time. I truly believe that fostering has saved me as much as I’ve saved these dogs.”

A safe space

Soneeta Mangra-Dutcher is a volunteer foster with Safe Paws Iowa. She has fostered more than 40 animals in the last four years and has adopted two foster dogs, Phoebe and Rolo.

Mangra-Dutcher says she is an animal person. When Safe Paws rescued both dogs and cats, she fostered both. Safe Paws stopped rescuing cats a couple of years ago due to lack of a place for people to interact with the cats. Safe Paws does not have its own facility, as the rescue is completely foster-based.

“I knew the rescue owners from a previous life we all had. I followed the rescue on Facebook, and one of the dogs they posted just broke my heart. Learning about the number of

FEATURE

animals being euthanized daily greatly angers me, and I wanted to do something to save them.”

Her first foster fail is an older dog, Rolo. Her second is Phoebe, who came to them at about 5 months old.

“Phoebe became the teacher or mentor to other foster dogs... She is super smart and so friendly, she makes all the other nervous dogs feel at ease and helps them learn, so we decided she was home with us,” Mangra-Dutcher says. “After several months of slow work, we were able to get our other dog used to her, and now they are best friends.”

It can be a challenge to resist keeping all the dogs. There are some you fall in love with but realize they aren't the right fit. It's hard to let some go, but Mangra-Dutcher knows she can save another life when they find forever homes for current fosters.

The foster caregivers are careful to assess behavior for the rescue organization, and they slowly introduce the animal to other dogs to make sure everyone is safe. They do not adopt out dogs they know will be unsafe, and they are careful with placement if they know young



Soneeta Mangra-Dutcher started fostering Phoebe when the dog was 5 months old.



Rolo was content to find a home with Soneeta Mangra-Dutcher.

kids or other animals won't be a good fit. Every dog is different. Some come from sad situations and have challenging behaviors. Others adapt

quickly.

“We do our best for the animals. They come first,” Mangra-Dutcher says.

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Kitty time

Robert and Eliza Boarman moved to Johnston in 2022 with their kids Ezra, 8, and Leah, 5, and their shetland sheepdog, Brady.

“We’ve always been a pet family,” Eliza says. “My husband, Robert, and I both grew up with pets; I grew up with dogs and cats, and Robert grew up with lots of outdoor cats. We’re originally from Indiana and moved to central Iowa shortly after completing our graduate training.”

As soon as the couple was settled in their new jobs and apartment in West Des Moines, they started looking for dogs. Shortly thereafter, they got Brady from a breeder in eastern Iowa. Brady, unfortunately, became ill last summer and passed away somewhat suddenly in July.

“It took us a few months to grieve Brady’s loss and prepare our hearts and our home for a potential new pet, but we knew it was time,” Eliza says. “One Friday afternoon, after our kids arrived home on the school bus, we surprised them by hopping in the car and heading over to the Animal Rescue League.”

The kids are both huge animal lovers, and Ezra had been begging for a kitten for years.

They had already tentatively planned on adopting a kitten shortly before losing Brady. They weren’t quite ready for another dog, but adopting a kitten felt like a natural way to bring another new pet into their lives.

They were not committed to getting a pet that evening, but they ultimately fell in love with a 10-week-old muted tortoiseshell kitten. They adopted her on the spot and have loved having Elphie in their home for the past four months.

This was the Boarman’s first adoption, and what surprised them was how easy and stress-free the experience was. They said the volunteers at the ARL did such a great job of showing them around, being patient as they spent time meeting the available pets and answering their questions. They set everyone up to easily transition Elphie into their home. To say they are obsessed with little Elphie is an understatement.

“She truly is the sweetest, friendliest cat,” Eliza says. “She is wonderful with our kids, allowing them to snuggle with her and enjoying lots of play time. Our neighbors, who have taken care of her while we have been on vacation, say she is the best kitty they have ever



Robert and Eliza Boarman and their kids, Ezra and Leah, with Elphie, the new addition to their family.

encountered. We are so happy that we adopted from a local shelter and are grateful for this sweet addition to our family. We will adopt a dog someday in the future, but, for now, we’re enjoying life with Elphie.” ■

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SUMMIT SUPERSTARS enjoy Special Olympics

Something new is going on at Johnston's Summit Middle School this year. For the first time in school history, Summit Middle School started a Special Olympics team. Nineteen students proudly represented the school as the Summit Superstars at this year's West Central Special Olympics regional competition, bringing energy, determination and incredible heart to every event. The 19 athletes were scored on shooting, passing and dribbling, competing against other athletes in their age/gender division. The athletes competed with confidence, supported one another, and showed the true spirit of teamwork that defines the school community.

From the moment they arrived, the students demonstrated resilience and joy — celebrating personal achievements, cheering for peers and embracing every challenge with a smile. Families, teachers and staff filled the stands, creating a wave of encouragement that lifted the athletes throughout the day.

All Special Olympic athletes were awarded a medal determined by their overall score. Those who received first in their divisions are invited to the state competition being held in Coralville on March 13.

As the weather gets warmer, the Summit Superstars will be gearing up for their next competition: track and field. These events will give these athletes another opportunity to showcase their skills at the regional level on April 15. The events range from a 100-meter walk to mini javelin throw to 4x400 relay. This event will be held at Ankeny High School and is open to the public.

“As we look forward to our next competition, we reflect on our pride for our athletes and the way they represented Summit Middle School and the Johnston Community School District. The Special Olympics allowed the athletes to experience pride from their hard work and perseverance. The Summit Superstars reminded us once again that inclusion, courage



and kindness are at the heart of who we are,” organizers said in a press release.

“A big thank you to those that participated, coached, cheered and/or contributed funds to help these young athletes in our first ever SO team at Summit. We can't wait to continue to expand this amazing program and are still looking for local companies to donate so the team can purchase equipment, outside practice facilities, snacks and other items that will help contribute to our success. If you have any further questions, contact Amy Eaton or Melissa Caudill at Summit Middle School. Let's go, Summit Superstars!” the press release continued. ■

INTRIGUING visitor stops at the Johnston Historical Museum

Although the Simpson House is open monthly most of the year at 2 p.m. for tours on the second Sunday, it is available for tours by appointment. Just before last Christmas, a person called asking for a tour on Saturday, the 20th, at 9 a.m. I was available and said I would take care of it. A young man arrived a little late, and I found out he had just ran 4 miles. He wanted to see the museum. I gave him the “VIP” tour, but he already knew quite a bit about Johnston. He knew about the 1993 flood that shut down the water system for the whole metro. But he didn’t know that Johnston and Pioneer worked together to attach our water system to Pioneer’s irrigation wells, and we could flush, bathe and do laundry while our neighbors were without for nearly a month. He knew about Camp Dodge and some of its history. But he didn’t know about the 18,000 soldiers who formed a living Statue of Liberty on a hot July day in 1918. He knew about the Inter-Urban streetcar/freight train that served Johnston from 1906 to 1949. But he didn’t know that Johnston got its name from John Johnston, who was the Johnston Station Supervisor for the electric streetcar. I could go on and on, but his knowledge of the area was amazing.

In learning more about Tyler Sullivan, I found he lived in North Liberty over by Iowa City where he has a good job. The past few years, he has developed an interesting hobby of visiting museums of all kinds in Iowa. This all started when he had a friend in Mason City, who he would visit regularly. On his ride through a number of northeast Iowa small towns, he wondered about their activities and history. He likes to attend festivals and compete in road races. He’s a runner! He has been to 97 counties and 1,300 cities throughout the state. He eventually found a list of museums including the county in which they could be found. In 2024, he visited 157 museums. In 2025, he passed his goal of going to 250 museums. He keeps track of his visits. After he completes all visits to museums within a county, he writes a poem about that adventure and creates a book with pictures. His goal is to complete all 99 counties.

To tie in his love of running, he runs though each town visited. He also studies up on each city to be ready to learn more. He told me about one visit he lined up with a small town to see their museum. When he got there, no one could remember who had the key. At another village, he met a 91-year-old man who wept when he showed the museum. The man said Tyler was the only visitor in the past three years.

The day that Tyler came to Johnston, he had to get up at 4 a.m. to get ready for a long day. From here, he went to the Olmstead-Urban museum in Urbandale. Of course, he had to add in time for a run. In the afternoon, a visit to the Gold Star Military Museum at Camp Dodge was planned.

The following day, he sent a message of appreciation for the tour. He said our displays were awesome. He invited anyone to follow his adventures by following Iowa Scenic Views by Foot. What an inspiration Tyler Sullivan is. ■



Tyler Sullivan toured The Simpson House as part of his quest to visit all the state’s museums.

Suggest a teacher

for an Iowa Living
education column!

Send an email to
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STOP the sniffles with Sick Day Soup

(Feature Impact) Coughs and sniffles don't have to derail you for long – not with a fresh, homemade stockpot full of Sick Day Chicken Noodle Soup. Loaded with rotisserie chicken, celery and carrots, it's sure to warm you from the inside-out as a warm, comforting meal. Plus, with eight servings, this dish can help solve dinnertime dilemmas throughout the week by storing leftovers in the refrigerator and reheating on the stove.

Warm up your winter meals with more comforting ideas available at Culinary.net. ■

Sick Day Chicken Noodle Soup

Recipe adapted from Tastes Better from Scratch

Prep time: 20 minutes

Cook time: 20 minutes

Servings: 8

INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 tablespoon butter
- 2 ribs celery, diced
- 3-4 large carrots, diced
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 10 cups chicken stock or broth
- 1/8 teaspoon dried rosemary
- 1/8 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1/8 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- chicken bouillon cubes (optional)
- 4 cups dry egg noodles
- 3 cups cooked rotisserie chicken

DIRECTIONS

- In large stockpot over medium-high heat, saute butter, celery and carrots 3 minutes. Add garlic and cook 30 seconds.



Photo courtesy of Shutterstock

- Add chicken stock or broth and season with rosemary, thyme and crushed red pepper. Add salt and pepper, to taste. Taste and add chicken bouillon cubes, if desired, for flavor.
- Bring to boil. Add noodles and cook until al dente. Remove from heat once noodles are tender.
- Add chicken. Taste and adjust seasoning as desired.

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A GARDEN grows at Summit

Barlow enjoys her role as a club sponsor.

One of Allison Barlow's favorite parts of her job as a teacher is being the Garden Club staff sponsor — a role that presented itself unexpectedly when she wanted to support one of her students.

"Students were challenged to create change for the greater good in one of my classes, and Quinnlyn Schulte's approach was to reinvigorate Summit's abandoned garden space with the goal of donating all harvested produce to the Johnston Partnership," Barlow explains.

During the 2021–2022 school year, Schulte, now a junior at Johnston High School, managed the garden on her own with support from her family. In spring 2022, she sought board approval to start a new club at Summit and asked Barlow, a seventh-grade teacher, to be the staff sponsor.

The club is now in its fifth year. Over four gardening seasons, the club has donated more than 2,800 pounds of produce to the Johnston Partnership, along with hosting donation drives each year for the Partnership.

"I love how Quinnlyn's passion for her community inspired me to take on this role — and even sparked a passion for gardening that I didn't have at the start of the journey," Barlow says.

Barlow, who has been at Summit for her entire teaching career, which began in 2012, admits she wasn't initially drawn to the Garden Club staff sponsor role.

"I knew nothing about gardening, and, truth be told, Quinnlyn ran the show during our first year," she explains. "I agreed because I was inspired by her passion. Who can say no to a student who wants to help feed her community?"

After Schulte left Summit, Barlow had to pick up the slack and learn a lot along the way.

"In our five short years, I've gained a tremendous amount of gardening knowledge, grown to love running Garden Club, and now even consider gardening a personal passion," Barlow says. "It's funny how life takes you down paths you never anticipated, and I'm thankful Quinnlyn roped me in all those years ago."

Barlow's journey into teaching was a natural one, shaped by many influences growing up. Her maternal grandmother was a teacher, and although she was retired by the time Barlow was born, Barlow admired how she connected with and supported people in her community. Barlow's parents also modeled service-oriented values by volunteering, coaching, supporting local organizations and encouraging others to give back. In addition, the many adults who supported Barlow during her



Allison Barlow with Quinnlyn Schulte, the founder of Summit's Garden Club.

time in the Urbandale school district inspired her to do the same for others.

"Since I always enjoyed school, a career in education felt like a natural fit," she says.

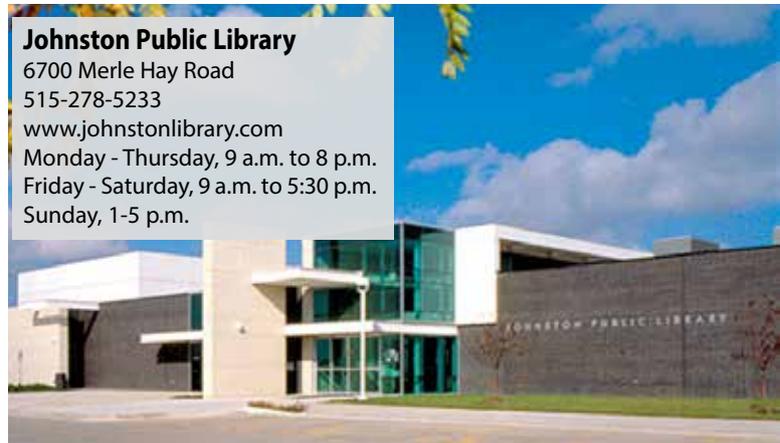
For Barlow, the hands-down best part of teaching is the kids, which likely comes as no surprise from an educator.

"Whether I'm watching them learn and grow in the classroom or seeing them develop gardening skills and impact their community through Garden Club, I feel very blessed to work with students in the Johnston community who have touched my life in so many ways," she says.

She says, what stands out most from her career is the sense of connection she has gained through her work in the district.

"I've built meaningful relationships with students, their families, the Johnston Partnership, and my coworkers," Barlow says. "Many of those coworkers have become close friends who feel like family. The relationships I've formed over the years are the most lasting and meaningful part of my career." ■

MARCH at JPL



Johnston Public Library
 6700 Merle Hay Road
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 www.johnstonlibrary.com
 Monday - Thursday, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.
 Friday - Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
 Sunday, 1-5 p.m.

If you're mad about the library, then join us for our exciting lineup of events this month. You can try your hand at fashion designing, pet an instrument, create a junk journal, catch some movies and more. Stop by JPL this March and get in the game.

As kids gear up for spring break, seniors can attend **Retirement University's Planning for the Future: Coverage and Support at Home**. On Thursday, March 12 at 1 p.m., staff from WesleyLife will share information on programs and coverage options for seniors living at home. Registration is required.

Barbie is ready to make her runway debut at the library. Young fashion designers in grades 3-5 who would like to make their own outfit for Barbie can attend **Barbie Boutique** on Saturday, March 14 from 2-3 p.m. Dolls and materials will be provided, and designers will be able to take their decked-out dolls home with them.

Bring your young musicians in pre-K through fifth grade to the **Instrument Petting Zoo**. On Monday, March 16, the Des Moines Symphony Academy will present an interactive program that's all about music. Everyone in the audience will have the opportunity to explore and play a string instrument. Please register for one of two sessions beginning at either 10 a.m. or 11 a.m.

Drop in on Tuesday, March 17, anytime between 10 a.m. and noon for **Art Lab: Kids Art Explorers Workshop**. At this messy event, kids will learn about famous artists and styles and then make a masterpiece of their own.

Do you have teens with mad Nerf skills? Then register them for the **Teen After-Hours Nerf Battle: Spring Break Edition** on Friday, March 13 from 6:30-8 p.m. Participants will battle it out in the stacks in this action-packed evening that includes refueling breaks with activities and snacks.

If you have teens who think "A Minecraft Movie" was crazy good or crazy bad, sign them up for **A Minecraft Movie: Absolute Peak Cinema?!?!? MuVChat Edition**. From 1-2:30 p.m. on Monday, March 16, young movie critics can watch the movie, munch on some snacks, and use MuVChat to post commentary on the screen.

Pizza, junk journals and a movie sequel equals a wickedly epic evening for teens. On Tuesday, March 16, from 4:30-7 p.m., JPL will host **Teen Night: Dinner, Craft and a Movie**. Kids in sixth grade and up can grab some pizza, craft a junk journal, and sing along with "Wicked: For Good."

More information about all events and resources at Johnston Public Library can be found online at www.johnstonlibrary.com or by calling the library at 515-278-5233. ■

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CITY COUNCIL

Bryan Burkhardt
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bburkhardt@cityofjohnston.com

Tom Cope
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Jim Evans
jim4johnston@gmail.com

Rhonda Martin
(515) 326-2675
rhondamartiniowanative@gmail.com

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Volunteer for Kites on the Green on May 2

Have you ever wanted to be part of the Kites on the Green event? Join us as a volunteer for the upcoming annual festival on Saturday, May 2.

Volunteering is a great way to get involved and help make the event a success. Plus, you get to spend time outdoors and enjoy the fun firsthand! Whether you have attended the event for many years and want to get involved, or this is your first time, we would love to have you as a volunteer.

Sign up today and join the kite festival volunteer team at www.cityofjohnston.com/KOTGVolunteer.

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Become a Vendor at the Farmers Market on Tuesdays

The Johnston Farmers Market vendor applications are now open. The market will take place on Tuesdays, June 2 through September 29, from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. The market is located at the Johnston Town Center, between City Hall and the Grandstay Hotel, 6221 Merle Hay Road

Enjoy fresh produce, handmade goods, and ready-to-eat favorites. Our vendors make the market a weekly highlight for the community.

How to apply:

- Apply through RecDesk by April 30 at 11:59 p.m., at www.cityofjohnston.com/RecDesk
- A \$5 non-refundable application fee applies



For more information about the city, please visit www.cityofjohnston.com



CITY NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2026

Electronics Recycling Event is April 18

Mark your calendar for Saturday, April 18, as it is Electronic Recycling Day! From 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., you can drive through the east parking lot and drop off your unwanted electronics. Most electronics can be recycled for free; however, there is a fee for CRTs, TVs, printers, cartridges, and certain batteries. For more information and a complete list of prices, please visit www.cityofjohnston.com/1444.



Spring Cleanup is April 20-23 and Tree Branch and Tire Drop-off is April 23-25

The Spring Cleanup Event allows residents to dispose of large household items on their regular trash collection day at no extra cost. Smaller items must be placed in bags or boxes for collection. The average Johnston household pays about \$6 per year for this Spring Cleanup Event, which is included in your monthly utility bill, so take advantage of it!

If you live in an apartment, condo, or townhome with private trash collection, you may not be able to participate in the Spring Cleanup Event. Please check with your association or management to confirm. To see what items are accepted and what items are not, visit www.cityofjohnston.com/spring.

Johnston residents can also drop off branches, limbs, and passenger vehicle tires at the Public Works Facility, located at 6400 NW Beaver Drive, free of charge from April 23 to April 25. Operating hours vary by day. For more information on the days and times, visit www.cityofjohnston.com/1264.



Have Your Say: Johnston Community Satisfaction Survey

Some randomly selected residents of Johnston will soon receive a community survey in the mail from ETC Institute. The City of Johnston has commissioned ETC to assess residents satisfaction with various aspects of life in the community. This is an opportunity for residents to provide input on essential issues such as roads, public safety, parks, trails, and overall city services. Your feedback is crucial in helping the city identify areas for improvement and guide future investments.

The survey covers a wide range of topics, and your participation ensures that your voice is heard in decisions that impact our quality of life. We encourage all residents to take a few moments to share their thoughts and experiences. Together, we can help make Johnston an even better place to live, work, and play.

Apply to Serve on a Board or Commission

The City of Johnston is accepting applications for several boards and commissions. These volunteer opportunities allow residents to share their perspectives and help shape our community.

Learn about each of these boards and commissions and how you could make a difference by serving. The openings include:

- Board of Adjustment – Two openings, five-year term
- Park Advisory Board - One opening, three-year term
- Planning & Zoning Commission - Two openings, five-year term
- Library Board – Two openings, six-year term

If you are interested in serving, visit www.cityofjohnston.com/boardsandcommissions to apply online, or download the online application today. For questions, please contact City Hall at 515-278-2344.

For more information about the city, please call 515.278.2344

THE MADNESS in March for 310,000 Americans

Each day, more than 10,000 Americans become eligible for Medicare — totaling more than 310,000 new beneficiaries every month. This milestone marks an important transition into retirement and a new phase of financial and healthcare decision-making. While this season of life can be exciting, it often arrives with complexity: unfamiliar coverage options, shifting income strategies, and an influx of marketing calls and mail. The choices can feel overwhelming, but, with preparation, they are manageable.



For many, retirement follows four decades of work, family responsibilities and diligent saving. It represents both freedom and uncertainty. Two of the most common concerns are the fear of running out of money and the uncertainty surrounding taxes in retirement. These are legitimate concerns, but they can be overcome.

1. Pause and prepare: Retirement is a life transition, not a financial emergency. Take time to assess your income sources, projected expenses, healthcare coverage and tax exposure. Medicare alone presents multiple pathways: original Medicare, Advantage plans, supplemental coverage and prescription drug plans — each with long-term implications. Thoughtful evaluation with balance to your emotional and logical brain can prevent costly adjustments later.

2. Seek qualified guidance: Professional insight matters. Just as you rely on a dentist for oral health or an attorney for legal counsel, retirement planning benefits from experienced specialists. Financial advisors, tax professionals and Medicare experts work within these systems daily. Their continuing education and field experience can help clarify options, identify risks and align strategies with your goals.

3. Build flexible income strategies: Many retirees aim to replicate a “salary-like” income from their savings. However, markets fluctuate. Those drawing income directly from volatile accounts faced added pressure with market losses. A diversified distribution plan — combining guaranteed income sources, conservative reserves and growth investments — can help reduce vulnerability during any downturn. In retirement, having a Plan A, B and C is not excessive; it is prudent. Like my father used to say, “Sometimes it is not on the right; it’s on your other right.”

4. Learn, adapt and adjust: Financial habits formed when working do not always translate seamlessly into retirement. Flexibility is essential. The familiar illustration of Charlie Brown repeatedly attempting to kick the football out of Lucy’s hands reminds us that routines without reflection can lead to further disappointment. Retirement planning requires adaptability, continuous learning, and the willingness to refine strategies when circumstances change.

I continue to value the “aha” moment: the moment when clarity replaces confusion and clients feel empowered about their future. Retirement is not a single decision; it is a coordinated strategy involving healthcare, income, taxation and legacy planning.

Education is the first step toward confidence. The questions to focus on are the Why and How questions — as much as the What and When. March’s madness for retirees should feel purposeful — not perplexing. ■

Information provided by Daniel Rundahl, Financial Advisor, Rundahl Financial Consultants, 8230 Hickman Road, Suite 300, Clive, IA 515-727-1701, drundahl@rundahlfinancial.com, www.rundahlfinancialconsultants.com.

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PROTECTING long-term financial security of disabled children

Nearly 30% of families have a member with special needs. Many special needs children will be dependent on others their entire lives. It is crucial to have a plan in place that protects their long-term financial security.



Leaving an inheritance directly to a special needs dependent may put the individual at risk of losing eligibility for government benefits. The creation of a special needs trust can provide for dependents as long as they live, rather than leaving money directly to the dependent or another family member. The trust is an entity in which a family can set aside funds specifically for the care of the special needs dependent.

Trusts set up specifically for special needs dependents can help ensure that their inheritance doesn't jeopardize eligibility for those payments. Special needs trusts limit how the money in them can be used and keeps the beneficiary eligible for SSI and Medicaid.

Trusts created with the dependent's assets are designed for special needs dependents that come into money through inheritance or a lawsuit. They are designed to ensure that money doesn't jeopardize eligibility for government benefits. However, under the terms of these

types of trusts, when the dependent dies, the state Medicaid agency receives any money left in the trust for any support the state provided to the dependent.

Trusts created with assets from parents or grandparents solve the problem of people who want to leave money for a special needs dependent but don't want that person to lose out on government benefits. The trust can be established by a Will or created during the benefactor's lifetime. The trustee cannot give money directly to the dependent, but can pay for certain items and services not covered by monthly SSI income. Upon the death of the dependent, whatever assets are left in the trust can be distributed according to the creator's wishes as specified in the terms of the trust.

A sound, up-to-date estate plan is important for every adult, but it is absolutely essential for people who have dependents with special needs. All estate plans need to evolve over time to keep pace with changes in people's lives and financial situations. Update your plan periodically with an attorney who specializes in estate planning and special-needs clients. ■

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

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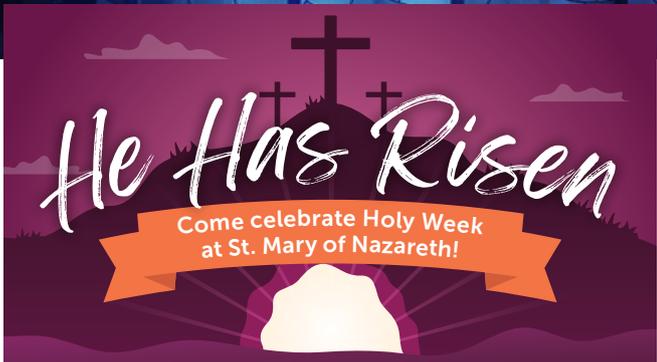
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Thursday, April 2
7pm: Holy Thursday Mass

Friday, April 3
7pm: Good Friday Service

Saturday, April 4
9:30am: Easter Egg Hunt (Parish Hall)
8pm: Easter Vigil

Sunday, April 5
9am & 11am: Easter Mass

St. Mary of Nazareth Knights of Columbus Friday Fish Frys
March 6, 13, 27 • Serving from 5-6:30pm in the Parish Hall
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Weekend Masses: Sat 5pm • Sun 9am & 11am

FAITH By Deacon Dan Maxcy

FOLLOWING Christ's light in the plight of immigrants

During this current Lenten season, we look forward to celebrating Easter on April 5. We are tasked to reflect on the Resurrection and to contemplate not just Christ's victory over death, but also His life — marked by compassion, sacrifice and solidarity with the marginalized. In the Gospels, Jesus calls us to love one another as He has loved us. His words urge us to see all people as our brothers and sisters, especially those most vulnerable — today, this includes immigrants and refugees.



The story of immigration is deeply rooted in our faith history. The Hebrews, God's chosen people, endured slavery in Egypt and wandered as foreigners in search of the Promised Land. Their journey, filled with hardship and hope, is echoed in the experiences of immigrants worldwide who flee violence, poverty and persecution, seeking safety and dignity for their families. The Holy Family, Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, themselves became refugees. This reality transforms the plight of immigrants from a distant issue to a profoundly Christian concern.

Easter's promise is love triumphs over fear and hatred. Jesus' teachings challenge us to welcome the stranger, to protect the vulnerable, and to recognize in every immigrant the face of Christ. ■

Information provided by Deacon Dan Maxcy, Saint Mary of Nazareth Catholic Church, 4600 Meredith Drive, Des Moines, 515-276-7589, Deacondan@stmarysdsm.org.

PLAN AHEAD By Sarah Masteller

WITH SPRING and summer approaching...

Are you planning for that special trip? Will you be traveling to spend time with family? Perhaps you will be traveling outside of the country.



Have you ever thought about what would happen if something unfortunate happened during the time 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.

You might be surprised how affordable these plans are, and they can provide a great deal of peace of mind for those traveling.

Visit with your funeral home of choice and ask 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 Sarah Masteller, Advanced Planning Counselor, Hamilton's Southtown Funeral Home, 5400 S.W. Ninth St., Des Moines, 515-697-3679.

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HEALTH insurance supports healthier lifestyle

March is widely recognized as a month dedicated to health and wellness awareness. As the seasons begin to change and Iowans look ahead to spring, it is a timely reminder to check in on both physical and mental well-being. What many people do not realize is that their health insurance plan may already include valuable benefits and programs designed to support a healthier lifestyle, often at little to no additional cost.



For individuals enrolled in Medicare Advantage plans, programs like Silver Sneakers can be a meaningful benefit. Silver Sneakers is a fitness program that provides eligible members with access to participating gyms and community fitness centers. In many cases, the program covers the cost of membership entirely. Beyond equipment access, members may also participate in group exercise classes, helping to improve strength, flexibility and social connection.

Some employer-sponsored and individual plans may offer similar wellness incentives. For example, Wellmark 365 is a program that may reimburse a portion of gym membership fees for eligible members who meet participation requirements. Programs like this are designed to encourage consistent physical activity, which can reduce the risk of chronic conditions.

Medicare Supplement plans, while structured differently from Medicare Advantage plans, also help manage healthcare costs. Supplements are designed to work alongside Original Medicare and typically help cover out-of-pocket expenses such as deductibles, coinsurance and certain copayments. Depending on the specific plan selected, members may have minimal or no copays for many Medicare-approved services.

For individuals and families enrolled in Affordable Care Act (ACA) marketplace plans, comprehensive benefits are built into every policy. All ACA-compliant plans cover the 10 Essential Health Benefits, three of which are especially relevant during health and wellness month.

Mental Health & Substance Use Disorder Services: Behavioral health visits with a primary care provider are often covered at the standard primary care copay. Visits with specialty providers, such as psychiatrists, are typically covered at the specialist copay level. Additionally, many common behavioral health medications are included as Tier 1 prescriptions, making them more affordable.

Rehabilitative & Habilitative Services and Devices: These services help individuals recover skills lost due to injury or illness or develop skills that may not have formed properly. This can include physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy and necessary medical equipment.

Preventive and Wellness Services: ACA plans cover many preventive services at no additional cost when received in-network. This includes routine screenings, immunizations, annual wellness visits and chronic disease management support.

Understanding your health insurance benefits can open the door to valuable services that support both body and mind. March serves as a helpful reminder to review your plan details, explore available wellness programs, and take full advantage of the resources designed to help you live a healthier life. ■

Information provided by Ciri Quirk, Health Insurance Advisor LLC, 5870 Merle Hay Road, Suite A, Johnston, 515-225-9994, cquirk@health-insadvisor.com.

Does Your Health Insurance Benefits Have Wellness Incentives or Services?



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LOOKING back at Garlock Corner

John Bauman and Anna Barbara Claus immigrated from Germany in 1847 and established a farm in Iowa in 1854 in what is now Johnston. Their son, John Henry Bauman, was born in 1855 and later built the Simpson House on the family's land in 1902. Their youngest daughter, Laura, married E. J. Garlock and inherited the Bauman home place. The couple planted a large apple orchard there known as Garlock's Orchard. Iowa Highway 64 ran east from Grimes to Des Moines, turning sharply south near the orchard at a bend locally known as Garlock Corner.

In the 1950s, few highways around Des Moines were as dangerous and deadly as Garlock Corner. A member of the Garlock family we spoke with recalled a serious accident in which a child perished. Another longtime Johnston resident remembered crosses erected at the site.

The Johnston Lions Club, a civic-minded service organization, took action in 1952 to improve safety at Garlock Corner. At an Oct. 8, 1952, meeting, Charles Harding raised concerns about the ever-increasing number of accidents at the curve. The club formed a committee, gathered facts and later presented its findings to the Iowa Highway Commission with a request for action.

The Iowa Department of Transportation responded quickly. Club minutes from Oct. 27, 1952, record a resolution of appreciation, drafted by Ben Dewey, thanking the department for improvements. The Northern Polk County News covered on Jan. 30, 1975, the Lions Club's 30th anniversary. The newspaper stated that, due to the club's efforts, Iowa DOT in six days installed 4-foot-square, reflector-taped signs marking the curve. The newspaper further reported that brush obscuring visibility was cut. Future plans were made to widen the outside shoulder to 12 feet, fill the 20-foot ditch along the outer edge of the curve, and reduce the speed limit.

Historically, Iowa Highway 64 began in western Iowa at Interstate Highway 75 (today Interstate Highway 29) and ran east through Harlan and Grimes before sweeping south at Garlock Corner and ending in Des Moines. In December 1958, Iowa 64 was truncated at Iowa Highway 141, with the remaining eastern segment transferred to Polk County as a paved county road. In early 1969, Iowa 64 was redesignated as Iowa Highway 44. Today, the location of Garlock Corner is the intersection of N.W. 86th Street and N.W. 70th Avenue in Johnston. ■

Johnston Historical Society is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to discovering, preserving and presenting the history of the Johnston, Iowa area. Founded in 1994, JHS maintains the 1902 Simpson House Museum at 6161 Northglenn Drive in Johnston. That museum is open for selected community events and by appointment. Please consider supporting the Society by becoming a supporter, a volunteer, a benefactor or making a donation of historical items.

TALKING with a loved one about care at home

Starting a conversation with a family member about at-home support can feel uncomfortable. Many people worry about saying the wrong thing, creating tension, or being perceived as overstepping.

Yet when approached thoughtfully, these discussions can become productive, collaborative moments that help everyone feel more prepared for the future. Recent national surveys tell us 93% of older adults want to remain in their homes as they age, making conversations about at-home services and care increasingly relevant for families planning ahead.

A successful conversation often begins with the right conditions. Choosing a calm, familiar setting allows both people to feel at ease and focused. While moments of frustration or struggle might feel like natural openings, those situations can heighten emotions and defensiveness. A planned, unhurried conversation is more likely to lead to understanding.

Framing also matters. Rather than positioning at-home care as a response to decline, it can be helpful to focus on what it makes possible. Many people are more receptive when the discussion centers on quality of life, independence, and support rather than on decline and loss.

As you prepare for the conversation, consider these practical tips:

- Focus on benefits, not problems. Highlight how receiving supportive services at home — such as help with grocery shopping, cleaning, cooking, organizing, and/or pet care — can support daily routines, provide companionship, and help your loved one remain safely at home.
- Research options. Gathering information ahead of time can help address concerns, while researching together can empower your loved one and keep them involved in decisions.
- Address cost and logistics openly. To decrease uncertainty, discuss pricing, financial resources, scheduling, and how care would fit into existing routines.
- Offer reassurance and patience. Aging-related decisions often carry emotional weight. Let your loved one know you are there to support them, regardless of the timeline.
- Keep the door open. One conversation does not need to resolve everything. If your loved one is hesitant, suggest revisiting the topic later after they have had time to think.
- Providing reassurance is especially important. Life transitions can bring fear, grief, or resistance, even when support is needed. Consistent encouragement and listening can help build trust and reduce anxiety over time.
- Follow-up is just as critical as the first discussion. Checking in later reinforces that the conversation was about partnership, not pressure. If at-home care eventually is introduced, ongoing communication can help ensure the care plan continues to meet your loved one's needs. ■



Aaron Wheeler is Vice President of Home and Community-Based Services for WesleyLife, which provides health and well-being services, including WellAhead — A WesleyLife Well-Being Experience, a CC@H offering. To learn more, visit wesleylife.org/wellahead.



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Upcoming in Johnston Living magazine

Celebrating heritage: What have you learned about your family or community's heritage? How do you celebrate or honor your heritage? Let us know by emailing tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com.

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Teen Night: Dinner, Craft, and a Movie

Tuesday, March 17, 4:30-7 p.m.

Johnston Public Library,
6700 Merle Hay Road

www.johnstonlibrary.com/teens-events

Pizza + Junk Journals + A Movie Sequel = A Wickedly Epic Evening. Grab some pizza, spread out some craft supplies, and sing along with "Wicked: For Good." We'll have everything you need to start or enhance your own junk journal. If crafting or singing isn't your thing, you can just come for the movie and pizza. Registration required.

Art Lab: Kids Art Explorers Workshop

Tuesday, March 17,

from 10 a.m. to noon

Johnston Public Library,
6700 Merle Hay Road

www.johnstonlibrary.com/kids-events

During this drop-in workshop, you'll learn about famous artists and then create art in their styles. This messy event is recommended for artists in grades K-5. Registration appreciated.

Johnston Partnership welcomes donations

The Johnston Partnership provides food and personal hygiene products to those in need, as well as children's seasonal clothing. Donations can be dropped off at 5870 Merle Hay Road, Suite C, Johnston, during open hours. For more information, visit <https://johnstonpartnership.org/donate/>.

Spring Cleanup

April 20-23

Spring is just around the corner, and, as we look ahead, it's important to note that the spring cleanup in Johnston will take place from April 20-23. Residents living west of N.W. 86th Street are scheduled for cleanup on April 20 and 21, while those living east of N.W. 86th Street will have their cleanup on April 22 and 23. As winter comes to a close, it's a great time to think about your own spring cleaning tasks. Learn more through the QR code.



Gold Star Military Museum events

Camp Dodge, 7105 N.W. 70th Ave., Johnston

• Free Museum Tours: Saturdays, 11:30 a.m. the museum offers free docent-led tours.

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• Rooted in Care Social Workers

Luncheon: Tuesday, March 10, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Local social workers are invited to join this special appreciation lunch to connect, collaborate, and honor the vital role you play in the community. Enjoy a delicious meal, network with peers, and learn more about the support and services offered at our community.



Johnston Lions Club annual Pancake Breakfast

Saturday, April 18, 7-11 a.m.

Johnston Middle School cafeteria, 6501 N.W. 62nd Ave., Johnston

The Johnston Lions Club is hosting its annual Pancake Breakfast. The breakfast features delicious pancakes including gluten-free pancakes, sausage, scrambled eggs, juice and coffee. Tickets are \$10 at the door and kids 5 and younger are free. Proceeds will benefit the Lions Club Service Projects.



Friendly Sons of St. Patrick Pre-Party and Parade

March 14 and March 17

The Friendly Sons of St. Patrick is back with its St. Patrick's Day celebrations. Join them on Saturday, March 14, from 2-6 p.m. at The Shop DSM, 901 Cherry St., Des Moines, for a Pre-Paddy Party, featuring live music from Fat Tuesday, a live auction, food trucks and cash bar for an at-will donation. The parade is on Tuesday, March 17, and begins at noon. Participants will proceed from E. First Street, west on Grand Avenue to Eighth Street, with the parade officially ending at Eighth and Grand Avenue. The after party will be in the Des Moines Marriott Downtown Hotel. Visit www.friendlysonsiowa.com for more information.

Wine, Food, and Beer Showcase

Friday, March 6, 6-9 p.m.

Des Moines Marriott Downtown, 700 Grand Ave., Des Moines

Sample the night away. The Wine, Food & Beer Showcase is one of the oldest food and beverage events in the area and has become a yearly favorite for foodies, wine lovers and beer enthusiasts alike. Featuring 30-40 of the finest restaurants, caterers, wineries, breweries and distilleries in the area, the event is the Des Moines Metro Opera's signature fundraiser. Learn more at desmoinesmetroopera.org/showcase/. ■

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OUT & ABOUT



Elizabeth VanGundy and Annie Mielke at the Johnston Chamber B.Y.O.B. (Bring Your Own Business) event Feb. 4 at Amigo Mexican Restaurant.



Mistine Nugent, Jose Cano and Joe Parrish at the Johnston Chamber B.Y.O.B. (Bring Your Own Business) event Feb. 4 at Amigo Mexican Restaurant.



Ryan Anderson and Kris Howard at the Johnston Chamber B.Y.O.B. (Bring Your Own Business) event Feb. 4 at Amigo Mexican Restaurant.



Leann Culver and Blake Campbell at the Johnston Chamber B.Y.O.B. (Bring Your Own Business) event Feb. 4 at Amigo Mexican Restaurant.



Dale DeJong and Tony Junk at the Johnston Chamber B.Y.O.B. (Bring Your Own Business) event Feb. 4 at Amigo Mexican Restaurant.



JHS Wrestling Cheerleaders - Madison Kinsey, Autumnlee Prindle, Madison Combs and Gabby Simpson



JHS Boys Bowling competed in Ottumwa for state qualifying on Feb. 16. Congratulations to JMS ninth-grader Caiden Brustkern for finishing fifth, qualifying him for the individual state tournament on Monday, Feb. 23. The Johnston team finished fourth in the team competition. Front: Coach Dennis Schuessler; back: Jacob Rowland, Logan Lacour, Caiden Brustkern, Evan Friesen, Ryan Titus, Landon Lacour, Joel Sorensen and Kam Fuller.



District boys swim meet on Feb. 7 was held at Summit Middle School, Johnston. Congratulations to 10 members of the Johnston Boys Swim team who qualified for the state swim meet, Feb. 13-14 at the Campus Recreation & Wellness Center in Iowa City. State qualifiers are: Donny Holms, Pax Marchese, Preston Molis, Will Drendel, Kyler Winner, Fisher Thorson, Gabe Frantum, Jackson Iwig, Benjamin Devlic and Ryan McFarland.



JHS wrestler, Wes Weiford, 175-pound district champion



Congratulations to 11 members of the Johnston varsity boys wrestling team who punched their ticket to state at the district meet in Marshalltown on Feb. 14. JHS wrestler, Parker Casey, 157 pounds, district champion

OUT & ABOUT



Samantha Howell and Leann Culver at the Johnston Chamber Luncheon Jan. 27 at Stoney Creek.



John Mortimer and Derek Trobaugh at the Johnston Chamber Luncheon Jan. 27 at Stoney Creek.



Dave Coslin and Elliott Frey at the Johnston Chamber Luncheon Jan. 27 at Stoney Creek.



Dani Smid and Anne Elliott at the Johnston Chamber Luncheon Jan. 27 at Stoney Creek.



Paula Bierle and Annie Mielke at the Johnston Chamber Luncheon Jan. 27 at Stoney Creek.



Julia Bradshaw, Elizabeth VanGundy and Jenni Buchanan at the Johnston Chamber Luncheon Jan. 27 at Stoney Creek.



Johnston Varsity Dance Team competed at the NDA Nationals in Orlando, Florida, Feb. 14-16. The team placed ninth in Small Varsity Hip Hop and 14th in Small Varsity Jazz. Front row: Gracee Smith, Addison Joynes, Holly Meltesen, Katie Poche, Claire Ziegler; and, back row: Everlyn Wilson, Taylor Heiring, Carly Fritz, Marina Ceron-Petek, Elizabeth Lammers and Avery Hunt.



Jake Covarrubias and Dan Fitzgerald at the Johnston Chamber Luncheon Jan. 27 at Stoney Creek.



Kevin McGuire and Leif Gustafson at the Johnston Chamber Luncheon Jan. 27 at Stoney Creek.



Johnston - Grimes 100+ Women That Care presented a check for \$8,116.90 to Patty Snedding Kisting from Urbandale Food Pantry, Q4 winner at its Q1 meeting at Hyperion Field Club.



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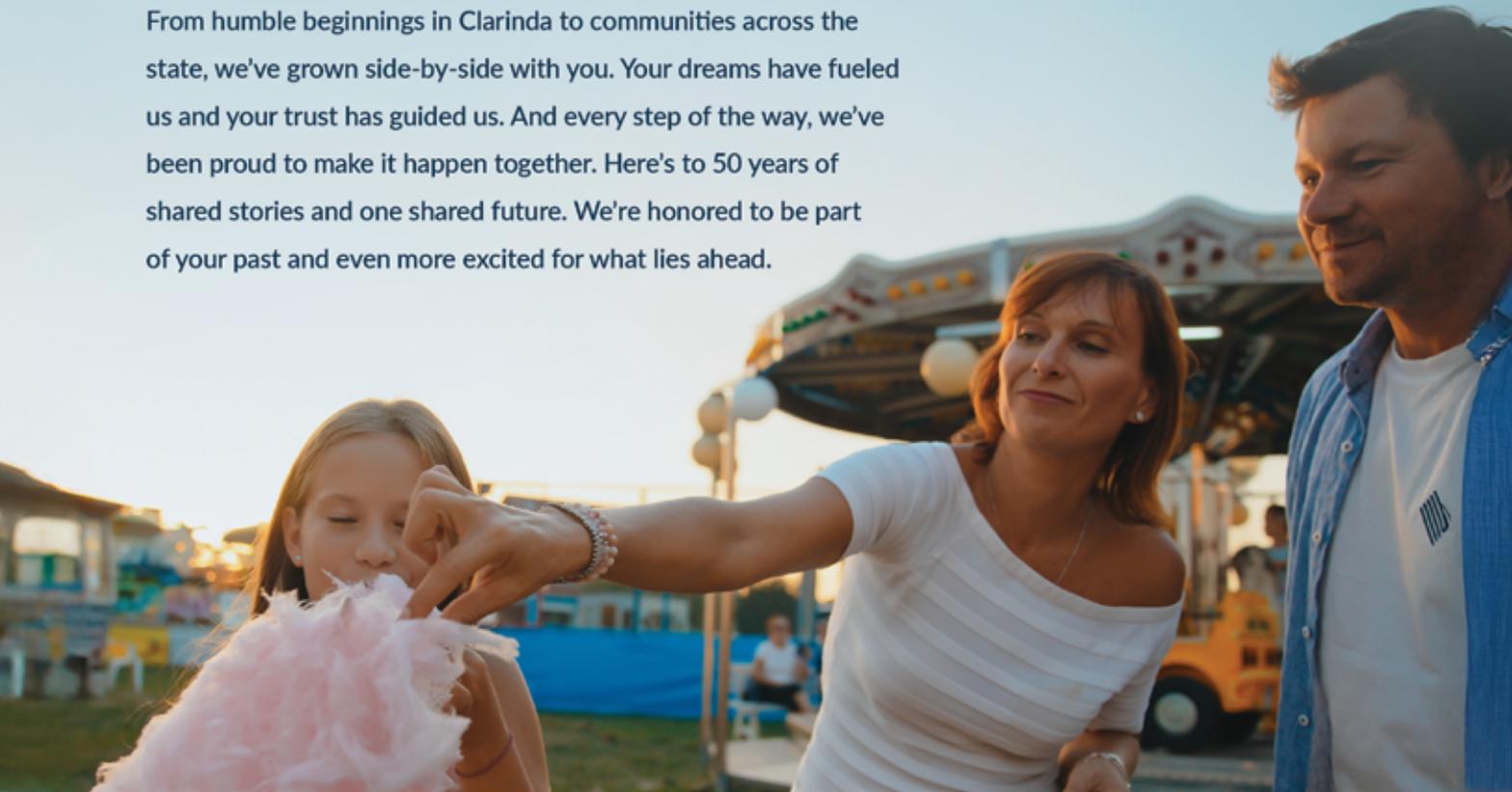
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