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Residents share stories about the animals they rescued.

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WELCOME

TO THE rescue

Some of you have spent a great deal of money on your cat or dog, and you have a wonderful pet. Some of you spent the same or more, and you have a lousy pet. I am convinced that getting a good pet is often the luck of the draw. Much like with children, genetics and upbringing are important, but they don't help explain how one from the same litter can be so drastically different from the next one.



Jolene and I have had six pets during our time together — two cats and four dogs. We reluctantly inherited the first cat, D.C., from Jolene's parents who went south for the winter. The other cat, Reggie, was adopted from the Animal Rescue League. Both were good cats, as far as cats go.

Our first dog, Roxy, was from a rescue league specific to the breed. It was delivered to us from Missouri, and the dog that showed up didn't look anything like the one on the website. But, that was OK, as we loved that little, chubby, tail-less dog anyway.

We adopted the next dog, Max, from a neighbor's friend who was moving out of the country. It was a purebred that he wrote a big check for. Our third and fourth dogs, Kobie and Layla, came from rescue leagues again.

These were all adult dogs when we got them, and all but one have since died. Jolene called them "short-term investments." Her words, not mine. The lone survivor is not fond of babies, so it was shipped off to Jolene's brother in Washington state for a simpler life once our grandson was born.

We didn't pay more than \$40 for any pet we had, including adoption fees. We may have paid more for the right pet, but we simply didn't see the need to do so, and we were happy to adopt rescue animals that needed a home. They certainly all had their quirks. In my experience, every pet does. For that matter, every human does, too.

Meanwhile, rescue animals have warmed the hearts of many pet-owners, and they continue to do so. We share a few of their stories in this issue in hopes that you may be inspired to open your home to a rescue pet as well.

Have a great month and thanks for reading. ■

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A 'fur-ever'

HOME

Residents share stories about the animals they rescued.



Nancy Sbrocco and her pets, Mickey, Bear and Misty.

By Darren Tromblay

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.



Stephen Palmer and his pet cat, Posey.



Another member of the family

On Black Friday, Kristin Palmer and her husband, Stephen, were doing what many others were on that day: shopping.

One stop was a pet store to get some supplies for their two Australian Shepherds, Meredith and Penelope. A full house. But, there was one thing missing — at least according to Stephen.

“He’s a huge cat person, and we had just had a couple of cats that were in their 20s that had passed away before we moved here,” Kristin says. “I wasn’t really on board with it, but as we were walking in the store, he said, ‘Oh my gosh, look at those kittens, Kristin.’”

By the time she had turned, one kitten had literally jumped into her husband’s arms. It was a sign.

As it was, a family of kittens were being fostered at the store after having been rescued out of a drug house. The kittens’ mother had been pregnant but in a horrible living situation. She gave birth and, fortunately, was rescued soon thereafter. The Palmers talked to the people who had been caring for them for about an hour, Stephen gently holding one of the kittens the entire time.

After some initial hesitation and back and forth, Posey was theirs.

“We just treated her like she was family, and so did our dogs,” Kristin says. “They love, love, love her. We call them the Three Amigos. They go everywhere together.”

Kristin, who works from home, at first kept

Posey in her home office with her, wanting to keep an eye out for this, the newest member of the family. Slowly, Posey was integrated into the living room via a pet playpen. Slowly, but surely, they went.

A kitty fence was put up to prevent Posey from going into the basement, but it wasn’t too long before she was able to traverse it. With ease.

“At that point, we just said, ‘Forget it. Let’s just let her roam,’” Kristin says.

Posey loves her home. She’s an explorer. “I think sometimes she thinks she’s a dog,” Kristin laughs. “She likes to climb up on their water fountain and drinks and tries to kind of get into the dog food a bit. I’m not sure she really knows she’s a cat.”

She is playful, too. She loves to have the dogs chase her, Kristin says. Posey isn’t without spirit. There’s plenty to go around as far as spunk goes.

And she’s spoiled. Posey sleeps in the bedroom each night with Kristin and Stephen. Every night, without fail.

“Unique is a good way to describe her,” Kristin says. “We love her.”

A human rescue

It was a tough time around the Sbrocco household.

The owner of two Rag Doll cats, Nancy Sbrocco, was well versed on her precious pets’ temperaments.

But, one day, she noticed something strange

with Maggie, the older of the two. Maggie’s eyes had begun dilating. A couple of trips to the veterinarian yielded nothing. But, Maggie continued her downhill slide. The vet then said Maggie had a brain tumor, based on the way she was walking sideways and losing a lot of weight.

Things turned from bad to worse. And quickly. Soon there was no choice: They had to put her down.

“That was one of the hardest things I’ve ever done in my life,” Nancy says. “Every morning I would come down the stairs and cry for a half an hour while I was eating my breakfast before I went to work. It was such a sad thing, and I just missed her so much. Every single day, I was reminded that she wasn’t there, and it took me a long time to get rid of her bowl. I was just so sad.”

Maggie’s cat brother, Mickey, was distraught as well.

“He went into a depressive state, which I didn’t know cats could do,” Nancy says. “He was very clingy and would meow all the time. The vet told us he was depressed. He was used to having his sister around.”

Nancy went to the local Animal Rescue League. Mickey needed a new friend. And they were going to get him one.

Workers took her and her son to the back of the building. Once there, the entire duration was filled with the sound of one cat meowing. While an ARL worker showed Nancy some kittens, she told her son to go find out where the meowing was coming from.

FEATURE

"He couldn't find him at first, because he was a little black cat on a little black mat, but he finally found him, and I said, 'This little guy wants to get out. We're going to take him.'"

And Bear was adopted.

Bear, who had been a rescue off the streets of Altoona, fit in perfectly.

Mickey's depressive state began to lessen. Eventually, the family returned to the ARL and adopted yet another cat, Misty.

They are the best of friends, Nancy says.

It's also had a profound effect on her, she admits.

"It had to happen," she says. "It took me out of that state. I still feel sad when I think about Maggie, but these cats have brought so much joy into my life, it's incredible. It was the best thing I could have done. I have to stop myself from going back to adopt more.

"I don't want to be the crazy cat lady," she adds.

Three is a good balance for now. The household is good. For now. Mickey is 18 years old, though, and slowly starting to fade. Nancy says she doesn't know how much longer she'll have him, but is thankful she does.

When it's time, it's time.

But for now, once again, all is well.

A kind hand

Lisa Negus is no stranger to fostering pets.

She has been helping rescue shelters since 2010, both in Colorado and in Iowa. And "help" is a bit of an understatement.

Negus took pause recently to tabulate just how many animals she has fostered over the years. The total? More than 200.



Lisa Negus has been involved in more than 200 pet adoptions since 2010.

And while she has helped so many, every once in awhile, one will come along that causes her to stop.

"It's usually something about it that makes me wonder if we're going to be able to find it the perfect home," she says. "There's just something,

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FEATURE

and one of the things is that some have some unique needs.”

While others might shy away from these specific animals, Negus goes in the other direction. She steps up.

“They come with me,” she says.

One of her current house pets, Goofy, came from a hoarding situation. Another, Sammy, was so reactive that he was deemed “unadoptable” by the shelter. And then there’s Buster. He’s deaf. He came to the family with severe ear infections that had gone untreated long enough that it caused him to go deaf. He had lived in a crate with a breeder for five years before being rescued by Negus.

The needs of the dogs vary greatly, Negus says.

“Over the past couple of years, the needs of the dogs have become so much more intense,” she says. “It’s much more severe in Iowa than when I lived in Colorado or the suburb of Minneapolis. It’s our culture and our laws. It’s sad; it’s scary.”

In the Negus household, however, things are as harmonious as can be. All of the dogs — unique traits and all — get along marvelously with each other and the many other foster dogs in and out of their lives. They are good teachers, Negus says.

“The other dogs, just by watching them and seeing the trust, they learn how to use the doggy door or learn that humans can indeed be trusted,” she says. “So much of what they learn they learn from Goofy, Sammy and Buster.”

Negus encourages people to take a look at nonprofit rescues and shelters, particularly those that have fostering programs.

“That will enable the potential adopter, the person who wants to add



One of Lisa Negus’ pets, Sammy, has a good view of the living room from his perch.

a pet to their home, to get a lot more information on what the animal is really like, to get the best fit for the home,” she says. “There are a lot of animals that are returned after they are adopted. So, if you can work with a place that has a foster department, you can find out a lot more as to what their total needs are.”

And remember one thing: No animal is perfect, she stresses.

“No human is perfect, and no animal is either,” Negus says. “It’s a process of figuring things out. Give the animals some grace sometimes. Yourself, too.” ■

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DMU president and CEO named 2026 Trailblazer in Higher Education

Angela L. Walker Franklin, PhD, president and CEO of Des Moines University Medicine and Health Sciences, has been named a recipient of Insight Into Academia Magazine's 2026 Trailblazer in Higher Education Award.

This national honor recognizes higher education leaders whose bold, strategic innovation advances institutional excellence, strengthens community and belonging and delivers measurable impact for students, employees and the broader academic ecosystem.

Franklin will be featured alongside 17 other distinguished honorees in the March 2026 issue of Insight Into Academia Magazine.

"Dr. Franklin is the definition of a trailblazer," says Sally K. Mason, PhD, chair of DMU's board of trustees, who nominated Franklin for the award. "She leads with vision, courage and accountability, and she has transformed DMU in ways that will benefit students, educators and communities for generations. Her leadership shows what's possible when innovation, belonging and academic rigor are inseparable."

Insight Into Academia selected Franklin for the award for her bold redefinition of what a modern medical and health sciences university can be. Since joining DMU in 2011, she has led the institution through its largest expansion in history, including the development and opening of a new, state-of-the-art 88-acre campus in West Des Moines. Built during the global pandemic and completed on time and on budget, the campus is designed to foster interprofessional education, wellness and community connection.

Beyond physical growth, Franklin has embedded cultural competency across curriculum, clinical training and employee development. Under her leadership, the university has also expanded academic offerings, including the addition of a Doctor of Occupational Therapy degree and a PhD in Interdisciplinary Biomedical Sciences. In addition, DMU has established the Des Moines University Regional Simulation Center as a hub for immersive, workforce-focused education.

Franklin's leadership has produced significant measurable outcomes, including the expansion of the research infrastructure and a philanthropic campaign that raised more than \$51 million to support scholarships, faculty development and institutional growth. DMU also has earned repeated national recognition as a top producer of primary care physicians and as a Great College to Work For.

"We believe the future of higher education depends on leaders who are willing to challenge convention and embrace bold, impactful innovation," says Lenore Pearlstein, owner and publisher of the magazine. "The 2026 Trailblazer honorees represent the highest levels of strategic leadership in the field, and we are proud to celebrate their accomplishments."

For more information about the Trailblazer in Higher Education Award, visit insightintoacademia.com. ■



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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MEET Melanie Hauptert

Kindergarteners are excited to learn.

Teaching kindergarten is all about “firsts.” Kids attending school for the first time are full of curiosity, and Melanie Hauptert is there to guide them.

Hauptert teaches kindergarten at Western Hills in West Des Moines and is in her second year of teaching.

In the fall of 2025, she was honored with a “Pawsitive Impact” award, which recognizes WDM teachers who make a positive impact on students. She was nominated by a student’s parent.

“They said their son felt like I was just the teacher he wanted. It was a great surprise when I found out about the award,” she says.

Hauptert’s love of teaching began when she attended WDM schools as a child.

“My first grade teacher at Jordan Creek Elementary made me feel safe, comfortable and important. I wanted to be just like her,” she recalls.

As a child, Hauptert liked to “play school” and wanted school supplies for her birthday and Christmas gifts.

During college, she completed a practicum with a kindergarten teacher and found a passion for the age group.

“They are so cute and love their teachers. They say the funniest things without trying and are sweet to each other,” she says.

Hauptert was eager to return to the WDM Community School District, this time as a teacher. She frequently runs into former teachers at district events.

“It’s crazy to think how they taught me and now I’m a teacher, too. I feel lucky to be teaching in West Des Moines,” she says.

Hauptert says teaching is difficult yet rewarding.

“Some kids’ lives are hard, and (it is difficult) knowing that we don’t have control of that once they leave the classroom,” she reflects.

The best advice she received from one of her teachers was to keep in mind that students are still little.

“I remember my mentor telling me that, when it snows for the first time, my students will probably all run to the windows to watch. It might be one of the first snow falls the kids remember, since they’ve only experienced a handful in their lifetime,” she explains. “Sure enough, when it snowed for the first time, all my students ran to the window to watch. When I saw their excitement about something I usually take for granted, I remembered what my mentor told me and to appreciate their outlook on life.”

Her favorite part about teaching kindergarten is showing children how fun learning can be.

“The great thing about my students being new to school is that they usually come in excited to experience school,” she reflects. “They still love their teachers, which is just a bonus.” ■



Melanie Hauptert teaches kindergarten at Western Hills in West Des Moines.



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RECIPE

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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‘Queen of Faces’

Books with layers are always going to draw me in. This delightfully dark and gritty fantasy explores identity, power, resilience and the madness of survival all packaged in a riveting, magical story.

Set in a politically charged world where appearance and perception can be as dangerous as any weapon, we follow Ana, a girl on the brink of some terrible choices. She is stuck in a dying body with no real way out. Desperate, she lies her way into an even more perilous situation where she must navigate court intrigue, shifting loyalties and threats from every side.

Ana’s journey is as much internal as it is external, grappling with who she is and what authenticity means in a world where people shift bodies as easily as outfits. She has to maneuver through complex political dynamics, learn how to find allies, build relationships and survive the unsurvivable.

This is a gritty, morally gray story with perfect pacing. Lord’s prose is accessible and vivid — sometimes so sharp I felt torn to shreds by the end. I can’t wait for the next one. ■ — Review by Julie Goodrich



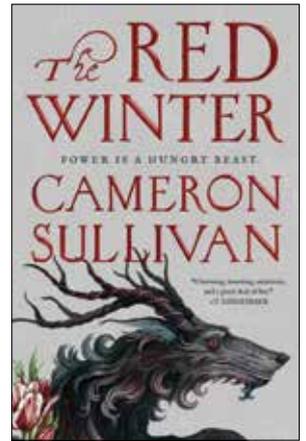
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‘The Red Winter’

Perhaps I am a bit jaded, but I wasn’t sure I could take another werewolf story. I am delighted to say that I was very wrong in judging it so harshly. I know it is winter in Iowa, and we are all sick of it, but Sullivan plunges us into a frost-bitten landscape full of mysteries that is far more enchanting than any snow-bound story ought to be. This is a story within a story, within a story. It even has a fourth story in the footnotes, one of my very favorite tropes.

We open in the modern world with the immortal wizard Sebastian being reminded of an adventure from long ago. Ably abetted by his pet succubus, Livia, we learn of his sweet romance with a nobleman, their terrifying adventure in the French countryside, and how Joan of Arc really happened. Despite the gore and humorous asides peppered throughout, this really is an epic fantasy tale with enough romance to make all the BookTok people swoon.

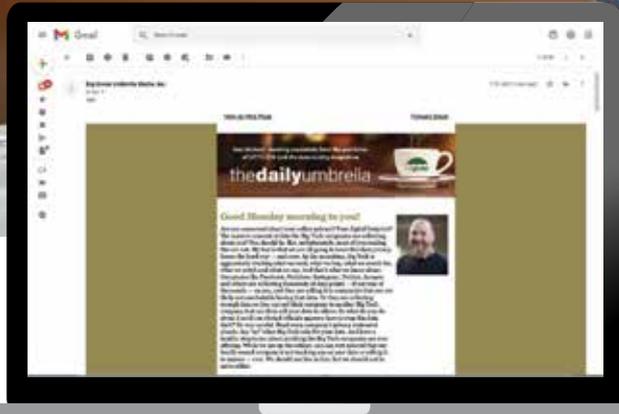
Fast-paced, well-written and awash with magic, this book absolutely swept me away. If you are the audiobook type, I can’t recommend the narrators highly enough. They were perfect. ■ — Review by Julie Goodrich



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ANNUAL tax planning reminders

There is no getting around the fact we must pay taxes throughout our lives. Implementing strategies to help manage those taxes is a critical component of your overall financial plan. By taking advantage of opportunities to reduce your taxable income and potentially maximize tax deductions, you can redirect money to other financial goals. Annual tax planning strategies help manage and reduce taxes as part of an overall financial plan.



As we approach the tax season, consider this list of tax planning strategies. While not all of them may be appropriate for your situation right now, it's worth discussing with your financial advisor how they might fit within your financial plan now and in the years ahead. Here are some key points to help guide your discussion:

Retirement saving strategies

- Maximize retirement plan contributions to capture employer matches and reduce taxable income.
- Spousal IRA contributions are possible if

one spouse is working, subject to rules.

- Consider Roth savings for tax-free withdrawals during retirement.
- Non-qualified investment portfolios offer lower tax rates on long-term capital gains and qualified dividends.
- Convert traditional pre-tax retirement accounts to Roth accounts during lower-income years for tax-deferred growth and tax-free withdrawals.
- Contribute to FSAs or HSAs for tax advantages on medical expenses.

Additional tax-saving strategies

- Offset gains with losses in taxable investment accounts and carry forward remaining losses.
- Hold investments for over a year for lower long-term capital gains tax rates.
- “Bunch” charitable contributions to exceed the standard deduction threshold.
- Use Donor Advised Funds (DAFs) for tax-deductible charitable giving.
- Donate appreciated stock to avoid capital gains taxes and claim deductions.
- Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs) from IRAs can satisfy RMDs and reduce taxable

income for individuals aged 70½ or older.

- Make extra mortgage payments or other deductible payments to increase deductions.
- Establish 529 accounts for tax-free growth on qualified education expenses and potential financial aid benefits.
- Consider asset location strategies for tax-efficient investing, such as municipal bonds in taxable accounts and high-turnover stock mutual funds in tax-deferred accounts.
- Evaluate residency changes to states with low- or no-income taxes, considering other tax implications.

Additional notes

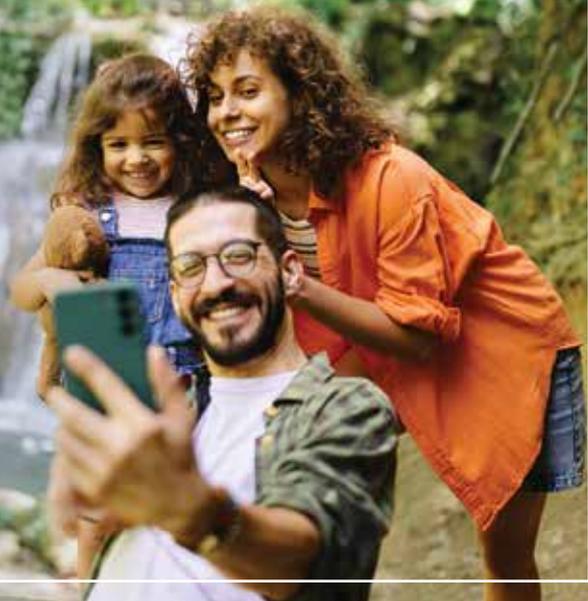
- Consult tax professionals and financial advisors for personalized advice.
- Consider state-specific benefits for 529 plans and tax implications.
- Be aware of risks associated with mutual fund investments and asset allocation. ■

This material is for educational purposes and not intended as specific tax, legal or investment advice. Information provided by Travis Gaule, founding partner/financial advisor, Trust Bridge Wealth Advisors, 4090 Westown Parkway, Suite 108, West Des Moines, IA 50266, 515-207-4346.

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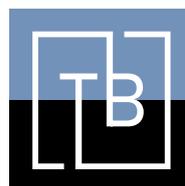
Travis Gaule

Founding Partner/Wealth Advisor
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HEATING & COOLING

By Dale Adams

HVAC preventative maintenance is essential

And the top 5 reasons why

For a small investment, you could save money, breathe cleaner air, enjoy increased safety and comfort in your home, and help the environment, all while boosting your overall peace of mind. That's just a quick overview of the benefits of getting regular HVAC maintenance. Now, let us take a closer look at why HVAC preventative maintenance is such a wise and worthwhile investment.



1. Save money: Here are ways preventive maintenance benefits your bottom line. Prevent costly breakdowns. Reduce energy bills. Extend the life of your system. Stay protected under warranty. Regular HVAC maintenance is said to reduce the risk of costly breakdowns by as much as 95%, and it can mean savings of up to 30% on your energy bill, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. It's also important to be aware that most HVAC manufacturers require proof of annual maintenance when a repair claim is submitted under warranty.

2. Improve your air quality: The EPA reports that indoor levels of airborne pollutants may be two to five times higher (in extreme cases more than 100 times higher) than outdoor levels. This is particularly significant if you or any family members suffer from respiratory issues such as asthma. There has been a lot of hype around duct cleaning in recent months. It's important to remember that it is your systems that clean, filter, and redistribute the air. Preventive maintenance helps ensure that the warm or cold air pumping through your vents is as clean and well-filtered as possible.

3. Improve your comfort: You depend on your HVAC system to keep you comfortable year-round. Regular maintenance helps your system produce and distribute the warm or cool air more evenly and steadily. It also reduces the odds that you will come home one steamy sweltering summer day to find that your system is blowing warm air or, worse yet, not blowing at all.

4. Keep your home safer: The most common cause of carbon monoxide leaks is a cracked or failed heat exchanger. An HVAC maintenance checkup typically includes a carbon monoxide test that would detect any potential hazard.

5. Help the environment: For those concerned about their green footprint, keep in mind that a well-maintained HVAC system consumes considerably less fuel — and that's good for the planet.

It is easy to see that investing in a preventive maintenance plan gives you the comfort of knowing that, if something goes wrong, you've already taken steps to make the situation as painless as possible. An extra perk important to note is that some companies extend priority service and special pricing for their clients that have a preventative maintenance plan in place. ■

Do you still have questions? Visit www.tripleahomeservices.com for additional information. Dale and Natasha love to answer questions. Give them a call at 515-868-2779.

BENEFITS of optimal testosterone

Understanding optimal levels involves recognizing the distinction between “normal” and “optimal” ranges. While a “normal” testosterone level is often defined by a broad range, the optimal level is what allows a man to feel his best and achieve peak health and vitality.



Most medical professionals consider a testosterone level between 300-1,000 as “normal” for adult men. However, this range doesn’t necessarily equate to optimal health. The optimal level for any man may be far higher than the level that is considered normal. Men with testosterone levels below 600 have a greater risk of death from all causes.

Several factors influence optimal testosterone levels, including age, overall health and individual goals. Maintaining optimal levels can lead to increased vitality, improved mental clarity, enhanced physical performance and a revitalized sense of well-being.

For men experiencing symptoms of low testosterone, such as a decreased libido, reduced muscle mass, fatigue and mood changes, testosterone replacement therapy (TRT) may be considered. The decision to start TRT depends on the outcome of an assessment, including blood tests, with a medical professional.

TRT isn’t a one-size-fits-all solution, and ongoing monitoring is crucial. Blood tests are essential to ensure treatment is optimized to keep you as free as possible for symptoms and side effects of “Low T.” ■

Information provided by Viktor Vail-Owner, 1180 S.E. University Ave., Waukee, 515-304-2324, www.4everyyoungantiaging.com.

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BOUNDARIES

I have recently started a podcast called “Therapist Talk.” Here we discuss anything and everything related to mental health. I have started to go through a book called the “ABC’s of Self Love” by Melody Godfred and pose one letter a week to listeners. My favorite so far has been the letter B, for boundaries. Melody writes “Boundaries aren’t about what you say no to. They’re about what you make space for.” That really resonated with me as the stereotype is that, if you set boundaries, that means you have to say no to more things, when, in reality, that isn’t always the solution. In this season of love, if you want to find love, you have to make space for this and take the steps. If you want a new job, this means finding what you do want and what matches those desires. Setting boundaries can also mean saying no, if that is the space you need to make. Maybe you need to say no to a friendship because it is no longer serving you. You are making space for yourself to be who you are, not necessarily just saying no to the friend. As we get a tease of spring here in the Midwest, I challenge you to define a boundary you need to set in the following categories of your life: friends, family, love, work and play. You can define what these mean to you, then define what boundary you need in place. Then stick to that. If it was not as realistic as you thought, then it can change as you need. However, sticking with the boundary allows you to make space for yourself — and whatever else is needed in your life. ■



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

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A LIFE in music

Giving back strikes a chord for Deeds.

Longtime West Des Moines resident Cristina Deeds keeps busy in a number of ways. She is currently involved with the Central Iowa Wind Ensemble, the Fortnightly Musical Club and the Luther College Parents and Family Council.



The Central Iowa Wind Ensemble presents concerts to the public free of charge, organizes outreach through community partnerships and offers educational opportunities for students, including a solo competition for high school students and honor bands for middle school students.

Deeds has been playing with the ensemble on French horn since its inception in 2003.

“What I love about CIWE, I’ll admit, is mostly personal,” she shares. “I get to play high caliber music throughout the year, and that fills my soul. But to share that love of the music and perform it to a degree that inspires someone else is pretty special. I love that our audience members walk away from our concerts feeling happy and good.”

The Fortnightly Musical Club is a group of women musicians — teachers and performers — in the Des Moines area. Deeds has been a

member since 2014. Each year, the group presents a recital at Wesley on Grand and selects a musical organization for charitable giving.

“What I love about this group is connecting with others in my profession that may have a different musical perspective, or a new way of teaching an old concept, and collaborating with the members,” Deeds says. “Presenting our annual recital is a treat because I see how the staff and residents react to the music. There is something magical about listening to live music.”

Through the club, Deeds adds, members have been able to make charitable contributions to several music organizations throughout the Des Moines area.

With the Luther College Parents and Family Council, Deeds helps provide support and advice to current and prospective Luther parents and families. Deeds graduated from Luther in 1997, she and her husband met there, and their son is currently a sophomore at the college.

“I love giving back to the institution that gave me so much, and I know how overwhelming it can be to send your child off to college,” Deeds says.

In the past, Deeds also made time to parent-volunteer at the schools her children attended within the West Des Moines Community Schools. Her involvement ranged from helping children learn to read, to sewing costumes for school plays, to driving a truckload of band equipment to Florida for the Valley Marchmasters. Her most involved years were when her children attended Valley High School, primarily through the band program.

“Our youngest child graduated from Valley in 2024, and I miss seeing and working with the other parent volunteers,” Deeds says.

She says making time to volunteer comes down to supporting causes she is passionate about. She began her career as a band director, and although she is no longer in the classroom, she maintains a private lesson studio, continues to perform and serves as a clinician.

“Music education and working with kids has always been my focus,” she says. “As a mom, I wanted to give my kids and their classmates the best possible experience, so when their teachers would put out a request for help, I did my best to accommodate.”

Deeds encourages others to volunteer in areas they care deeply about, noting that volunteering should not feel like a burden.

“Volunteering should feel like giving back and sharing your joys and talents with others,” she says. “The people you work with share in that passion and will become your friends. And the work you do is appreciated.” ■



Ryan Mehalovich, Edward Jones, presents the Neighbor Spotlight certificate to Cristina Deeds.

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WEST DES MOINES Public Library news



**West Des Moines
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www.wdmlibrary.org
515-222-3400
4000 Mills Civic Parkway,
West Des Moines
Monday - Thursday: 9
a.m. to 9 p.m.
Friday: 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Saturday: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Sunday: 2-5 p.m.

Need tech help? We're here for you.

Do you have specific computer, mobile device or other technology-related questions? We are here to help. Sign up for a 30-minute private session (walk-ins also welcome) on the first and third Saturdays of the month at 10 a.m., 10:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. Staff can help with specific issues like:

- Learning about a new device
- Setting up an email or social media account
- Filling out an online application
- Downloading eBooks or eAudio books
- Using the Library's online resources

Sessions are limited to 30 minutes per person. You are welcome to bring your own device; however, assistants are not able to diagnose issues with malfunctioning devices. Basic device and computer usage is assumed.

Contact the Library's Adult Services Desk, 515-222-3403, for more information. The program is sponsored by Youth Justice Initiative, The City of West Des Moines, United Way, Google Fiber and Microsoft. For more info on our Tech 1:1 program, follow the QR code.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Family Night at the Library: Interactive Movie Night!

Monday, March 2, 6:30-8 p.m. (ages 4 and older)

We'll pop some popcorn, watch a movie, and follow along with some fun actions of our own. Register each person attending (children and adults).

Learn to Play Mah Jong

Saturday, March 14, 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. (ages 16 and older)

Curious about Mah Jong? Join us for a hands-on introduction to this classic tile-based game of strategy, skill and a little bit of luck. Whether you're completely new or just need a refresher, this beginner-friendly program will walk you through the basics of American Mah Jong.

Registration required. ■

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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Upcoming in the West Des Moines / Jordan Creek 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.

Farmers market vendors: Do you enjoy selling your products at local farmers market. Tell us how you benefit from farmers markets and what tips you can share with others wanting to get involved. Email tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com.

Elks Annual St. Patrick's Day Celebration

Saturday, March 14, 5:30 p.m.
West Des Moines Elks #2752, 2060 N.W. 94th St., Clive

The Elks St. Patrick's Day Celebration will begin with the Foy School of Irish Dancers performing at 5:30 p.m. They will perform for about 20 minutes, followed by the Elks' famous St. Paddy's Day corn beef and cabbage with Irish potatoes, \$12 per serving.

Tori's Angels 2026

Thursday, April 26, 5:30-8:30 p.m.
Glen Oaks Country Club, 1401 Glen Oaks Drive, West Des Moines

Celebrate 15 years of hope and helping Iowa children with life-threatening illnesses by funding vital medical and travel expenses not covered by insurance, allowing them to pursue life-saving treatments and cures. For more information contact Patty Reeve at 515-238-3829 or patty@torisangels.org www.TorisAngels.org

Give Life 5K

Saturday, May 2, 8:30 a.m.
Raccoon River Park, West Des Moines

Iowa Donor Network honors those who have given the gift of life, celebrates the lives of organ and tissue recipients, and recognizes those who continue to wait for a life-saving transplant at the annual Give Life 5K. This is a family-friendly event so, no matter your skill level, the event is open to everyone. Join us to honor and support those who have been impacted by organ and tissue donation and celebrate the gift of life by registering for the Give Life 5K today. GiveLife5K.com

Gary's Ride

Saturday, May 16, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Starting at Waukee Raccoon River Valley Trailhead, Waukee

This ride is a fundraiser to increase awareness of glioblastoma and to support Richard Deming Cancer Center's terminal brain cancer patients through their Integrative Medicine program, Iowa Oncology Research Association for Glioblastoma Clinical Trials, MercyOne Des Moines Foundation for gift cards for terminal brain cancer patients and their families, and Gary's Compassion Fund for financial assistance for terminal brain cancer patients and their families. Help "pedal" forward in reaching the funding goal of \$65,000 and be the difference for these loved ones and their families afflicted by terminal brain cancer/glioblastoma. The ride starts at the Waukee Raccoon River Valley Trailhead, Waukee, and ends at Dallas Center downtown Main Street. Registration and information available at garysrideiowa.org.

Jordan House Tours

Fridays and Sundays, 11 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.
Jordan House Museum, 2001 Fuller Road, West Des Moines

Weekly guided tours are offered at the Jordan House. The cut off for purchasing tickets is noon Thursday for Friday tours and noon Friday for Sunday tours. If you have missed that cutoff, call 515-225-1286 to find out if walk-up tickets are available. To reserve a ticket, see the schedule and links at www.wdmhs.org/openhousevisit/. All tours will be guided by a docent. Arrive at the Jordan House Museum at least 10 minutes before the tour begins. The tour will involve taking stairs to the basement and the second floor, as well as walking and standing for at least one hour. If you have a group of eight or more, call to schedule a private tour.

St. Paddy's Marathon, Half Marathon, and 5K

Saturday, March 14
Iowa State Capitol, East Locust Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, Des Moines

Celebrate 10 years of the Des Moines St. Paddy's Race. A new 2026 finisher pint glass will be waiting at the finish line. Finisher medal provided for all marathon and half marathon runners. More information: <https://iowaruns.com/desmoinesstpaddys5k#acc-rqya205-0>.

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.



Des Moines Community Orchestra 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.

Check for cancellations

Bright Nights and Green Sights

Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden, 909 Robert D. Ray Drive, Des Moines

Explore ways to “find your true nature” at the Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden. For tickets visit <https://dmbotanicalgarden.com>.

- **Dome After Dark:** Friday evenings through March 27, 6-10 p.m. Extra evenings Saturday, March 14, and Tuesday through Thursday, March 17-19. Experience the Botanical Garden in a whole new light. Explore the warm tropical conservatory and renovated Gardeners Show House, illuminated for a magical after-hours escape.

- **NEW to Dome After Dark: Igloo Experience:** Cozy up with up to five guests for an enchanting igloo experience, complete with admission to the event and Flora concessions. Perfect for friends, family or date night. Visit <https://dmbotanicalgarden.com> to reserve an igloo.

- **Friday Dinner at Flora:** Fridays, 6-7:30 p.m. Reserve your spot now for a delicious three-course dinner at Flora, including admission to Dome After Dark. Each week a new, enticing menu showcases a variety of cuisines. Reserve a table online, <https://dmbotanicalgarden.com>.

- **Botanical Blues:** Sundays through March 29, noon to 4 p.m. Performances begin at 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. Your favorite Sunday Blues in Des Moines is here to keep away your winter blues every week. Each set lasts one hour, with a one-hour intermission in between. Settle in, grab a drink, and soak up the sound in Iowa’s only tropical music venue. Flora serves Sunday brunch beginning at 10 a.m. — perfect before the music starts. Concerts are held live in the conservatory, and guests are welcome to wander the indoor gardens during the show. Ticket info and lineups available at <https://dmbotanicalgarden.com>.



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.

Iowa Home Expo

Friday, March 13 to Sunday, March 15
Iowa State Fairgrounds Jacobson Center,
3000 E. Grand Ave., Des Moines

Whether you’re planning on upgrading your home or need a reliable contractor to fix your leaking roof, the Iowa Home Expo is the spot to find all local remodeling experts. The Iowa Home Expo hosts local and national exhibitors offering exclusive deals and discounts. Hours are: Friday, March 13, noon to 6 p.m.; Saturday, March 14, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and Sunday, March 15, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. More information available at <https://iowahomeexpo.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

The Iowa Files, an educational history lecture series, returns for its seventh year in 2025/2026. 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.

- **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.

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The Ingersoll Shows

3711 Ingersoll Ave., Des Moines
www.theingersoll.com

- **Church Basement Ladies:** March 26–29, April 2–5 and April 9–12. Matinee performances will have dining at 11 a.m., and the show beginning at 1 p.m. Evening performances will have dining at 5:30 p.m., and the show beginning at 7:30 p.m.

- **The Classic Stones Live:** Wednesday, April 15, and Thursday, April 16. Widely recognized as the most premier Rolling Stones tribute in the world, this eight-piece band recreates the raw energy, swagger and sound of The Stones in their legendary prime. From iconic saxophone lines to unforgettable backing vocals, every detail is meticulously performed in original tunings. Dining begins at 5:30 p.m. with the show at 7:30 p.m. both nights.

- **“Isn’t She Lovely,” a Mother’s Day Music Show starring Patricia Holly:** May 8 and May 10, offering both an evening and matinee option for families celebrating together. On May 8, dining will be at 5:30 p.m. and show at 7:30 p.m. On May 10, Dining is at 11 a.m. and show is at 1 p.m.

- **Shaun Johnson Big Band Experience - 90’s Country:** Two performances June 6. Matinee: Dining at 11 a.m. Show at 1 p.m. Evening: Dining at 5:30 p.m., Show at 7:30 p.m.

Tickets are available at www.theingersoll.com/events or at Ticketmaster.com/TheIngersoll.



Unmasking the Singer

Saturday, March 28

Val Air Ballroom, 301 Ashworth Road, West Des Moines

The Salvation Army’s Unmasking the Singer, sponsored by KDSM FOX 17 and Prairie Meadows, is already ramping up the excitement for 2026. This year, the event will be held on March 28, and there will be several audience-friendly changes to its format. The event is moving to the iconic Val Air Ballroom and will feature round-table seating for the main area — offering a more sociable atmosphere for the audience. Val Air also has a main stage as well as the old side stage, allowing for a set-up more similar to that of The Masked Singer on FOX.

Tables of eight start at \$250 and up. Individual table seats are \$50 and general admission is \$35. Light snacks will be provided, and beverages will be available for purchase. For more information or to buy tickets, visit www.bit.ly/UMTS2026.

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

- 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.”

Des Moines Community Playhouse

831 42nd St., Des Moines, www.dmpayhouse.com

- March 6-22: “The Lightning Thief”

DMACC Ankeny Campus Theatre

2006 S. Ankeny Boulevard., Ankeny
www.dmacc.edu/theatre/ankeny/Pages/welcome.aspx

- March 26-29: “Macbeth”

Iowa Stage Theatre Company

Stoner Theatre, 221 Walnut St., Des Moines, www.iowastage.org

- March 13-22: “The Seagull”

LIVE MUSIC

Des Moines Symphony

Des Moines Civic Center, 221 Walnut St., Des Moines
www.dmsymphony.org

- March 14-15: “Reflection – Smetana & Beethoven”

Hoyt Sherman Place

1501 Woodland Ave., Des Moines, www.hoytsherman.org

- March 13: Trisha Yearwood: The Mirror Tour at 7:30 p.m.
- March 27: Jake Owen at 7:30 p.m.

Casey’s Center

223 Center St., Des Moines, www.iowaeventscenter.com

- March 15: Winter Jam ’26 ■

Capital City Card Convention

Friday, March 27 to Sunday, March 29
 Iowa Events Center, 730 Third St., Des Moines

Iowa’s largest sports card show features 240-plus tables of action. More information available at www.iowaeventscenter.com/events/detail/capital-city-card-convention-8.

Iowa Craft Brew Festival

Saturday, June 6, noon to 4 p.m.
 Water Works Park, 2201 George Flagg Parkway, Des Moines

The Iowa Brewers Guild is excited to announce the return of the Iowa Craft Brew Festival. The event is more than great drinks. It’s a chance to slow down and enjoy the moment. Built for catching up with friends, meeting new people, and stepping away from the constant scroll, the festival encourages attendees to log off, raise a glass, and enjoy an afternoon together in a relaxed outdoor setting. Each festival ticket includes unlimited samples, a commemorative tasting glass, and access to the festival grounds featuring shade tents, vendors, yard games, and a variety of Iowa-based food trucks. The festival highlights the best in Iowa craft beer while also featuring Iowa craft cideries, wineries, distilleries and a growing selection of Iowa-produced non-alcoholic beverages. One hundred percent of festival revenue supports Iowa’s craft beverage industry and the Iowa Brewers Guild’s Brewed in Iowa campaign, which raises awareness about the economic and community impact of local breweries across the state. Ticket information and purchasing: www.iowacraftbrewfestival.com.



CHANGES to Iowa ABLE

Exciting new changes to the Iowa ABLE account program help individuals with a disability make self-directed investments and purchases.

The Achieving a Better Life Experience Act (ABLE) is a way to save money for expenses related to a disability. It is similar to (and is part of the federal statute for) 529 college-savings plans. An ABLE account allows individuals with disabilities to fund accounts with their own resources. Others, such as family members, can also contribute to the account. The minimum contribution limit to an ABLE account was recently reduced to \$1, effective immediately, making it easier for eligible individuals to start saving.

The account can be used to supplement, but not supplant, benefits received through other government programs like Medicaid and SSI. Money from an ABLE account can be used to pay for education, transportation, health services, and employment-related expenses. Additionally, unlike some Medicaid trusts, funds from an ABLE account can be used for housing and basic living expenses. The beneficiary is allowed to have direct access to the money.

Other Medicaid trusts, such as a Special Needs Trust, do not allow funds to pay for funeral or burial expenses after an individual dies. Money in an ABLE account can be used to pay for funeral and burial



expenses.

Account owners and members of their support system now have the opportunity to transfer funds from a Medicaid SNT into an ABLE account. This allows more flexibility when it comes to how assets are used.

Another advantage of an ABLE account is that most Medicaid trusts contain mandatory provisions subjecting any money remaining in an the account after death to Medicaid recapture by the State. In Iowa, the Department of Health and Human Services is not permitted to recover money in an ABLE account and remaining funds can pass to a named beneficiary.

Currently, to be eligible for an ABLE account, an individual must be disabled, and the disability occurred before the age of 26. However, recent changes to the law will raise the age limit to individuals found disabled up to 46 years old. The new law went into effect January 1, 2026.

If you have questions about how an ABLE account can complement your estate planning, contact an attorney who specializes in estate planning for individuals with disabilities. ■

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

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'THE GARDEN In Me'

Book uses nature to help kids identify emotions.

After teaching toddlers and young children for 30 years, Nalina Thandayuthapany was ready to apply her knowledge in a children's book.

When she retired, she wrote her first book, "The Garden In Me: The Nature of Emotions & The Beauty of Feelings," written under the pen name Nalina Siva.

The picture book targets children from birth to age 8. She chose the age group as she typically worked with 3- to 4-year-olds at the Drake Headstart program.

The book incorporates her passion for gardening in teaching kids to embrace their social-emotional wellbeing.

"I combined my love of gardening along with my love of teaching," she explains.

In the book, a boy experiences different emotions, similar to the same elements in nature. For example, when he's happy, his face is a bright shining sun. Or, when he is nervous, butterflies flutter in his stomach.

The overall theme is that it doesn't matter what emotions a child experiences — it's all OK, even if they face sad feelings.

"Feelings are like nature. You keep working on it and nurturing and loving all of your emotions. They can change, just like in a garden," she reflects.

Thandayuthapany is originally from Malaysia and moved to the U.S. 26 years ago. Her family settled in West Des Moines in 2010, and her two kids graduated from Valley High School. She has taught various preschool-age kids — her preferred age group.

"At about ages 3-4 is when you sow the seeds. I've always promoted the concept of social-emotional wellbeing. I'm a firm believer of that for adults, too," she explains. "When our emotions are happy, we become well-rounded people. If we have good problem-solving skills, we can better cope with life's challenges."

The book's illustrator is Rajane Ganth, an artist from Malaysia. He sketched the boy's character based on a photo of Thandayuthapany's son, Shuvey.

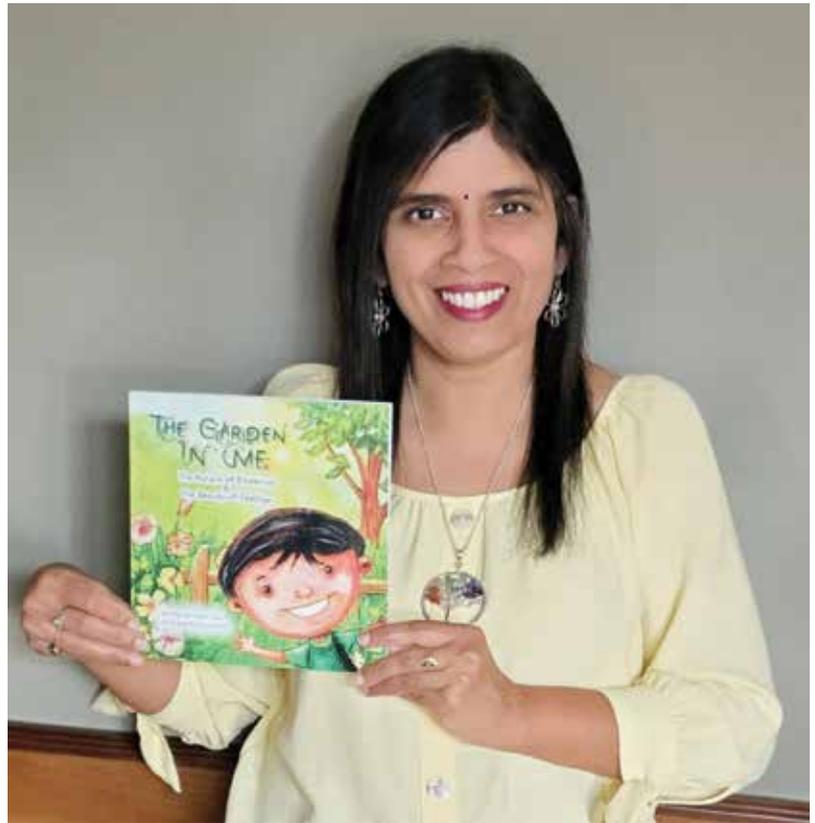
"I wanted the boy to be a protagonist. I didn't want to stereotype girls with emotions. Boys need to express feelings, too," she explains.

Writing the book is a way to give back to the learning community.

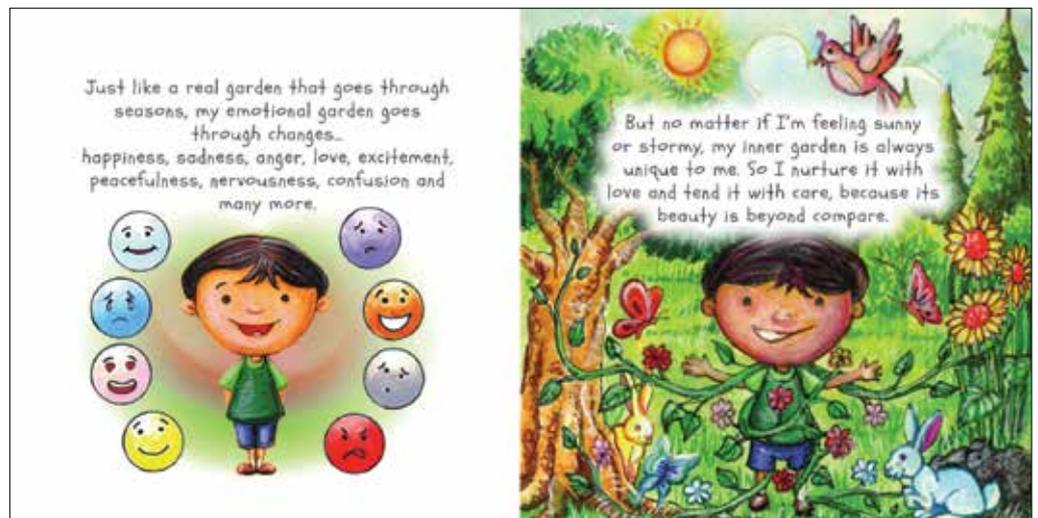
"I wanted to give back to the field of education and to leave a legacy for my kids and future grandkids," she says.

Helping kids use their imagination — and offering a physical reminder in a hardcover book — is important.

"Writing this book is close to my heart," she reflects. "I'm a firm believer of teaching kids and helping them learn vocabulary — such as



Nalina Thandayuthapany is the author of "The Garden In Me."



identifying feelings and coping strategies."

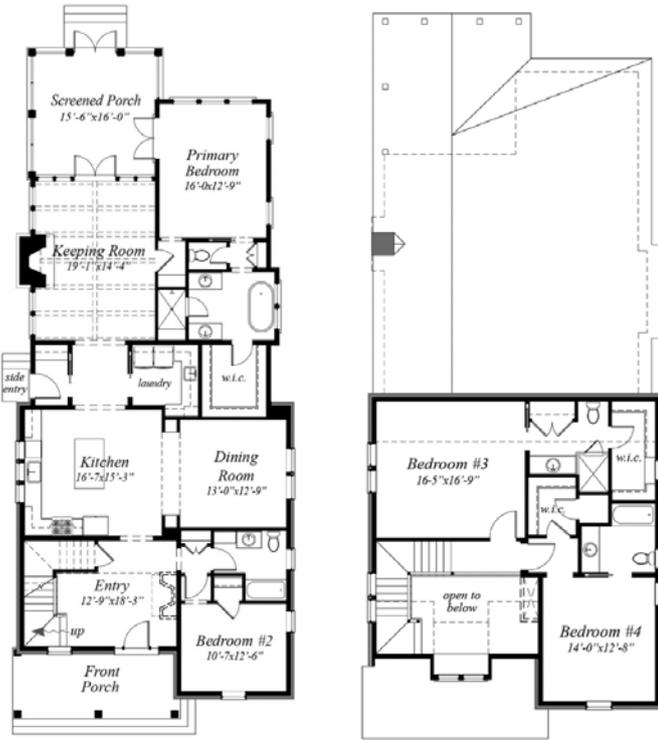
The book was published in November 2025. Siva provides various resources for teachers, such as downloadable coloring sheets and other social-emotional learning tools. The book is available at Raygun, Beaverdale Books, Amazon and others. To request a school reading session, or to access resources, visit <https://thegardeninme.com/>. ■

EDGEWOOD Court

Shed dormers, a gable roof, and jack arches above the windows create street-front beauty and interest.

Inside, the kitchen island is almost like a table and it can double as a workspace. Placing the sink and kitchen appliances on the perimeter makes the island an oasis of functional space. Step into this spacious living room with its a warm and welcoming beamed ceiling, generous fireplace, and shiplap walls that continue from the kitchen.

French doors open into the living room or out to the yard from this expansive screened porch. A vaulted ceiling with a louvered end gable makes this perfect for comfortable indoor-outdoor living. ■



DETAILS

2,746 Sq Ft
 Floors: 2
 Bedrooms: 4
 Bathrooms: 4
 Foundation: Slab

SQUARE FEET

Main Floor: 1,961
 Upper Floor: 785
 Total Conditioned: 2,746
 Front Porch: 164
 Rear Porch: 219

DIMENSIONS

Width: 32'-6"
 Depth: 80'-3"
 Height: 28'-0"

HOUSE LEVELS

Upper floor: Ceiling Heights 9'-0"
 Main floor: Ceiling Heights 9'-0"

CONSTRUCTION

Wall Construction: 2x6
 Exterior Finish: Brick, Lap Siding
 Roof Pitch: 8:12

FEATURES

Kitchen: Island, L-Shaped
 Primary Bedroom: Tub, Double Sink, Shower, Porch, Private Toilet, Walk-in Closet
 Additional: Fireplace, Porch, Screened Porch

ONE-YEAR Celebration

Trust Bridge Wealth Advisors held a one-year celebration Feb. 26.



Rob Grove, Maddie Starman and Travis Gaule



Dorene Rusk and Alvin Gaule



Amy Heinz and Deb Elings



Maddie Starman and Courtney Luna



Debbie Pirtle and Maddie Starman



Chris Coffin and Rob Grove



Travis Gaule and Greg Overton



Steve and Margaret Bramble



Tim Rietz



Wendy Beckerman

OUT & ABOUT

ANNUAL Dinner

West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce Annual Dinner was Feb. 26 at The Meridian.



Erika Macias, Marcia Treichel, Katherine Harrington



Jon Lewton and Chris Brown



Everett Mullican and Jill Molyneux



Todd Long, Drew Conway and John Wiechman



Allison Barnes and Anna Eichinger



Stacey Cale, Michelle Cole, Andrew Broesder and Kate Clafin



Sarah and Matt Staskal



Dominic Chiovaro, Taylor Rice and Liz Rice



Drew Strube and Kelsey White



Kristin Gredys Ihm and Tom Zimny



Lilly Berg and Jeriana Lipinski

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HOW TO CHOOSE GARAGE DOORS

Garage doors are often an afterthought to homeowners — but they shouldn't be. Garage doors are the first thing most notice about a home, so when it comes to choosing them for a new home or replacing them, significant thought and research should take place. If your garage faces the front of the house, a new door could dramatically improve your curb appeal and change the overall look of your home. If you're selling, worn, dated doors tend to say a lot about the condition of the rest of the home. A garage door is also an excellent security asset for your home, allowing you to secure your vehicle inside. If you're thinking about installing a new garage door, you may be surprised at just how many options are on the market — and how affordably they can be installed.

THE LOOK

Garage doors have seen an explosion in styles, materials and colors that are designed to match the architecture of any home, from rural barns to craftsman bungalows or sleek

urban getaways. So if you thought your choices were limited to simple sheet metal styles, think again. You should also pay close attention to the materials. Today's garage doors can be made from expensive hardwoods, textured vinyl, fiberglass or basic aluminum, all of which will have a big impact on the look and longevity of your doors. Pay close attention to the maintenance needs of whatever material you choose. Some will hold their color longer than others, and real wood doors can require regular staining and sealing every few years to keep them looking spectacular.

INSULATION

Depending on climate, the insulation of your garage door can be an important factor to help reduce your energy bills. This is especially important in heated garages. But even an insulated door on unheated garages can make a positive impact on your energy usage if it can keep the hot and cold weather away from the interior of your house. ■

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