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# PATERNITY AND PARTITION ACTIONS: UNMARRIED COUPLES' LEGAL REMEDIES



By McKenzie Ellis & Wyatt Kaldenberg

In today's day and age, many couples own property and have children together before ever walking down the aisle for a formal marriage ceremony. Owning property and having children with your significant other can work well—until it doesn't. Disagreements often arise after a breakup involving both parenting plans and what to do with real property. Paternity and Partition actions serve very different purposes, but both arise when people cannot reach agreement on their own and need court intervention. Below is a simplified overview of how each works under Iowa law, when they commonly arise, and why early legal guidance can matter.

## **Paternity:**

A paternity action is a legal proceeding used to establish the legal father of a child when the parents are not married (or when paternity is otherwise disputed). Establishing paternity affects far more than just a name on a birth certificate—it creates enforceable legal rights and responsibilities. Without a paternity determination, an unmarried father generally has no enforceable parental rights, even if he is biologically related to the child. These rights and responsibilities include: child support, legal custody, physical custody and visitation, health insurance, and inheritance rights. These actions can be brought by the mother, father, or the State of Iowa in some cases.

## **Partitions:**

When coowners reach an impasse, Iowa law provides a legal remedy known as a **partition action**. These cases typically allow a property co-owner to force a division or sale of jointly owned property. Often people associate partition actions with inherited real estate, but it is also effective for unmarried couples who separate. There are two main forms of partitions, a partition by sale and partition in kind. A partition by sale occurs when the Court orders that the property be sold. This typically occurs when the land cannot be divided equally among the owners. A partition in kind is when the Court orders the property to be divided into separate parcels, so each owner can own a distinct, equal, portion of the land.

Partition actions and paternity actions serve very different purposes, but both exist because relationships and agreements can break down. Whether the issue involves a family home or the future of a child, there are powerful tools under Iowa Law to resolve disputes—but the process can be stressful and unfamiliar.

If you are facing a potential partition action or paternity case, speaking with an experienced attorney early can help you understand your rights, obligations, and next steps before decisions are made for you. Our attorneys here at Ellis Law are happy to assist you with both types of cases to help you navigate the next steps following separation.

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WELCOME

# A FRESH take on farmers markets

For years, I dismissed farmers markets as little more than roadside produce stands — tables of fruits and vegetables, nothing more. I didn't cook. I didn't grocery shop. I didn't care.

Then, a few years ago, I wandered into a local farmers market — and my view changed. There was honey, still sweet from the hive. Bread, warm and crusty. Homemade jelly. Even wine. But the real surprise wasn't what was for sale. It was the atmosphere.

Farmers markets aren't just about food. They are about people. Music drifts through the aisles. Vendors chat with regulars. Shoppers linger instead of rushing. It is part market, part gathering — and entirely its own experience.

At its heart, a farmers market is a place where producers sell directly to consumers. But "farmer" is a broad label, and that is the point. Alongside fresh produce, you will find plants, baked goods, prepared foods and more.

Some markets are small and unassuming. Others take over entire city blocks. They are not permanent. They don't last all year. And that's exactly why they matter. Much like the Shamrock Shake I seem to seek out each spring, their short season makes them something to look forward to.

Farmers markets have been around for centuries, long before modern grocery stores reshaped how we shop. But, in recent decades, demand for fresh, local food has brought them back.

And for the grammar-minded: It is "farmers market," not farmer's or farmers'. The Associated Press keeps it clean — no possessive — so we do, too.

In this month's cover story, we take you inside your local farmers market and introduce you to the people who make them worth the trip. ■



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# Fresh FINDS

Local vendors bring flavor, passion and community to farmers markets

By Rachel Harrington

Longer days and warmer nights can only mean one thing — farmers market season is back. With fresh-picked produce, handcrafted goods and sweet treats, the market is a weekly gathering place for both vendors and visitors.

Heidi Blanchard enjoys participating in farmers markets. Her booth features freshly baked goods as well as other items.

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Fresh produce and baked goods are popular at Heidi Blanchard's booth.

## INDIANOLA FARMERS MARKET

Come enjoy fresh produce, baked goods, handmade items and more.

**WHEN:** Saturdays from May through October, 8 a.m. to noon

**WHERE:** Warren County Fairgrounds, 1400 W. Second Ave., Indianola

### From produce to pastries

For more than 20 years, Heidi and Brett Blanchard have participated in the Indianola Farmers Market.

"I was a stay-at-home mom, and we were a one-income family," she recalls. "I tried to figure out how to keep doing that. I gave one thing a try at the farmers market. It succeeded, so I tried a second thing, and it was also successful."

She decided the farmers market might be what she needed to do.

Heidi's first products were fresh produce. As the years and market seasons passed, she added more products and expanded the business.

"The year I decided to do baking, it was really dry," she says. "I'd come home almost empty-handed every week. Now, I do mostly baked goods with a little bit of fresh produce."

She calls that part of the business "The Good Stuff." The Blanchards also bring birdhouses, bouquets of flowers and various-sized loomed rugs she makes from recycled denim jeans — her "fun thing" to do in the winter. They also offer fresh eggs and started a mercantile called Blanchard Mercantile. Their daughter began crocheting items several years ago, and they offer her goods as well.

One item Heidi has made and sold in recent years is beef tallow lotion.

"We had some heifers butchered that we had raised, so I decided to look into what it took to make beef tallow lotion," she says. "That was just before the craze of beef tallow skin products becoming popular."

She also began making bread and baked goods, both savory and sweet, using freshly milled grain, which she says has made a significant difference.

Originally, the Blanchards worked from May through September or October on farmers market ventures and tried to reserve January through March for family time. Now that their



Jeannine Roland's farmers market booth features a variety of products created from wool and fibers.

children are older and demand has grown, they limit that downtime to January.

"Besides working the farmers market, I also do special events like the Indianola Christmas Market, and I run a roadside stand," she says.

Brett plays an important role in the business.

"He's my support, my loader and unloader," Heidi says. "Some of the crates we carry weigh 70 to 80 pounds, so it's very helpful to have him with me."

"I'm required to know how to run the stand, know the prices of everything and reach out to potential customers who pass by," Brett adds. "That allows Heidi to visit other stands at the market."

Heidi says baked goods are one of her two favorite offerings.

"I truly enjoy baking. A large percentage of the things I offer have received blue ribbons at the Iowa State Fair, and it's nice to get great feedback," she says. "The other favorite is what I call my happy place — growing produce."



Jeannine Roland has alpacas and other animals that produce wool and fiber for a variety of products.

Examples of produce they bring include asparagus, rhubarb, sugar snap peas, tomatoes, peppers, green beans, squash and melons.

The Blanchards keep their setup simple, foregoing elaborate signage and displays in favor of basic tables and checkered tablecloths.

"The market is the reward after all the hard work in the kitchen," Brett says.



Breann Hooper bakes her bread last minute so it is fresh for the farmers market.

### Farm fibers and family roots

Eight years ago, Jeannine Roland and her late husband, Jerry, began working the Indianola and Norwalk farmers markets, though the animals that provide the wool and fibers she uses have been part of her life much longer.

“Long story short, I met my husband in 2001 at a rabbit show in Oskaloosa that he had driven all the way from Texas to attend,” she says. “I was divorced at the time, and my kids and I were running our farm ourselves.”

For the first five years of their relationship, they lived 700 miles apart. Roland eventually moved to Texas but kept her Iowa farm. When her parents needed help, the couple returned.

“We started doing the markets,” she says. “He made it all possible and worked hard to get it where it is today.”

In her first year, she had nine sheep sheared for wool to make yarn. Today, her flock numbers more than 100, including a variety of breeds and crossbreeds, along with alpacas and Angora goats.

Roland sends fibers to mills in Perry and Maxwell.

“Maxwell processes fibers into yarn, rugs and insoles. Perry does most of our alpaca dryer balls,” she says.

The first shearing is used for yarn, the second for dryer balls, and any third shearing is offered for birds to use in nesting.

Her livestock produces about 2 to 3 pounds of fiber from alpacas and 5 to 10 pounds from sheep after cleaning. She uses the yarn to create hats, headbands and even crocheted alpacas.

Fibers not suitable for yarn are repurposed.

“The wool market sets the price at about 5 cents per pound, so I hope to have wool pellets



Breann Hooper offers organic artisan sourdough bread in classic loaves and sandwich slices.

made for fertilizer,” she says. “They’re good for nutrients, act as a weed barrier and benefit the soil.”

Her setup is simple and divided into sections.

“One side holds all-natural items from the farm, including crocheted goods, dryer balls, suet cages filled with alpaca fiber and bags of mulch wool,” she says. “The other side includes acrylic items like crocheted towels.”

She also offers farm-fresh eggs.

Roland begins preparations early each year, as caring for animals is a year-round responsibility. Since losing Jerry about 18 months ago, she finds comfort in continuing their work.

One example is a goat named Arley.

“His name is Arley, the same as Jerry’s father, and he showed up next to my house about eight months after I lost Jerry,” she says.

Arley attended every market with Roland last year and continues to bring smiles — a role Jerry once embraced. She hopes to expand into a small petting zoo at future markets, something her family previously enjoyed offering.

### Fresh loaves, local focus

Breann Hooper began her farmers market journey with a desire to serve her community by making bread. She is entering her third year as a vendor at the Indianola Farmers Market at the Warren County Fairgrounds.

“I started making sourdough in 2020 when it seemed like everyone else did,” she says. “I loved it. It’s fun to make bread where I know all the ingredients, compared to store-bought bread with long ingredient lists.”

After contacting market manager Kathy D’Angelo, she learned there was no sourdough vendor and seized the opportunity.

Hooper offers organic artisan sourdough bread in classic loaves and sandwich slices. She uses 100% organic grains and sugars and eggs from her own chickens when needed.

“I want my bread to be high quality and organically sourced,” she says. “If I don’t have something, I try to source it locally.”

She does not mill her own grain due to time constraints, producing about 200 loaves per week. She sources flour locally whenever possible.

Her weekly routine begins Wednesday with baking on Friday evenings to ensure freshness for Saturday markets.

“I have a bread oven in my licensed in-home bakery,” she says. “Many bakers operate under cottage food laws, but I went a step further.”

Her license is a Home Food Processing Establishment (HFPE), which required inspection, documentation and recipe approval.

“Everything is by the book,” she says.

Hooper keeps her setup simple, using one or two tables with shelving to maximize space.

“I bring a lot of variety, including seasonal items like pumpkin and oatmeal honey,” she says. “A complex setup would be too much.”

Her busiest months are June and July, and she relies on help to keep up.

“My mom helps me the most,” she says. “Everyone calls her Mama Bread Box.”

While many sourdough recipes share similarities, Hooper customizes her own.

“My favorites are classic sourdough bread and lemon blueberry cookies,” she says. “But I love everything I make.” ■

# SAUSAGE and cheese breakfast bake is easy, filling and practical

Mornings get busy, which is why I love having a breakfast recipe I can rely on. This one checks every box for me. It is incredibly easy to make — just mix, pour and bake — with simple ingredients I usually already have in the fridge. No complicated steps. No mess. No standing over the stove while trying to get ready for the day. I love the idea of cooking once and enjoying for days.



What I appreciate most is how protein-packed this recipe is. Between the eggs, sausage and cheeses, it is the kind of breakfast that actually keeps you full and focused all morning. I am not reaching for a snack an hour later, which makes a big difference on busy days.

It is also perfectly sized for real life. The recipe makes enough for two people to enjoy breakfast for a couple of days, which means less cooking and more convenience. Or, double the batch and freeze some for future quick meals. I can warm up a slice and have a hot, satisfying meal in minutes. Easy, filling and practical — exactly how breakfast should be. ■

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

## Savory sausage and cheese breakfast bake

**INGREDIENTS:**

- 8 large eggs
- 1/4 cup water
- 2/3 cup cottage cheese
- 1/2 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1/2 package of Jimmy Dean breakfast sausage cooked, crumbled
- 1 teaspoon Nature's Seasoning



**DIRECTIONS:**

- Preheat oven to 350 F. Lightly grease a small baking dish (8-inch by 8-inch works well).
- Blend eggs, water and cottage cheese for 10-15 seconds in a blender.
- Combine with mozzarella and sausage and pour into the prepared baking dish. Spread evenly.
- Bake for 30-35 minutes or until the center is set and the top is lightly golden. Rest for 5 minutes, then slice and serve.
- Vary this recipe by adding sauteed onions, peppers or mushrooms. Pictured is the original recipe plus a version with peppers and mushrooms. ■

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# MOTORCYCLISTS: Make sure you are covered

As the weather warms up this time of year, riding a motorcycle can be one of life's great pleasures. Riding a motorcycle can be an expression of the freedom we enjoy living in this country. Of course, motorcycle safety is always an important factor to keep in mind.



As motorcyclists know, it is crucial to protect oneself on the road from potentially dangerous drivers. Motorists can make mistakes, and when an accident involves a motorcyclist, severe injuries can result.

### Buy enough uninsured motorist/underinsured motorist coverage

We have seen cases where motorcyclists have been struck by uninsured drivers or drivers with minimal insurance. In Iowa, a person can operate a vehicle with as little as \$20,000 in liability insurance. This is an amount which has not changed in decades. If a motorcyclist suffers from a serious injury such as fractured bones or a head injury, the amount of available funds from an underinsured driver will be exhausted quickly.

It is extremely important that a motorcyclist purchase ample uninsured and underinsured motorist coverage. This coverage will provide amounts for the damages incurred by the motorcyclist and/or passenger. As with liability policies, uninsured/underinsured policies can have limits as low as \$20,000 per person. It is our opinion that no one should purchase (or sell) such a low-limit policy because of the potential severity of injuries if an accident occurs.

An example from a few years back comes to mind. A motorcyclist was struck by a young driver, causing the motorcyclist to lose a leg. The vehicle driver had minimum limits of \$20,000, and the motorcyclist had purchased a policy on the internet with minimum underinsured motorist limits of \$20,000. After medical bills, there was very little available for a life changing loss.

### Exclusions in uninsured motorist/underinsured motorist car policies

Most car policies with uninsured and underinsured motorist provisions cover damages to policyholders regardless of whether they are in the vehicle when the injury occurs. For example, a pedestrian who is injured by an uninsured driver may be able to recover from his or her car policy if such coverage exists.

We have seen, however, that many such policies have exclusions directed at persons operating a motorcycle. Often, the exclusion will provide that there is no coverage if the insured is operating a motorized vehicle with fewer than four wheels. The obvious intent is to reduce the risk to the insurance company for injuries that the insured did not pay a premium for.

Conclusion: One should enjoy the fun, thrill and freedom of the motorcycle ride. However, make sure you have protected yourself (and your passengers) from those who are less than responsible. Failure to do so may be life changing. ■

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

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## HOME HEALTH

By Stacey Miller

# HOME HOSPICE: Comfort, familiarity and support

In a recent national survey, seven in 10 Americans said, if they were diagnosed with a life-limiting illness, they would prefer to spend their time in familiar surroundings with the routines and comforts they count on. In other words, they'd want to be home.



For families facing end-of-life decisions, that preference has helped drive growing interest in hospice care delivered at home. While inpatient hospice centers remain an important option, home-based hospice offers a different kind of experience — one centered on comfort, familiarity and personalized support.

### Understanding hospice at home

Hospice is not limited to a specific location. It's a philosophy of care focused on comfort and quality of life, typically for individuals with a serious illness who no longer are pursuing curative treatment. When provided at home, hospice services are brought directly to wherever a person lives, whether that is a private residence, apartment or community setting.

Care at home generally includes pain and symptom management, emotional and spiritual support, and assistance with daily needs that may become difficult over time. The goal is to help individuals remain as comfortable and engaged as possible and to support those close to them.

### A team approach to care

One of the defining aspects of hospice is its team-based model. Families typically work with a group of professionals who collaborate to meet medical, emotional and practical needs. This may include registered nurses who oversee care plans and medications, nursing assistants who provide direct support, and social workers who help navigate resources and decisions. Many programs also offer volunteers, spiritual care providers and specialized services such as music therapy or pet visits. Together, this team adapts as needs change, aligning with the individual's condition and preferences.

### When hospice is not the right fit

Not every situation calls for hospice. For individuals managing serious illness while still pursuing treatment, palliative care can provide similar layers of support without the same eligibility requirements.

Palliative care focuses on symptom management, emotional support and planning for future care needs. In some cases, it can serve as a bridge, helping families transition if hospice becomes appropriate later.

### Practical considerations

Deciding on hospice at home involves both emotional and logistical factors. Families often weigh a loved one's wishes alongside the realities of caregiving, the suitability of the home environment, and the availability of support. Financial questions are also common. Medicare and many private insurers typically cover a wide range of hospice services, though details can vary.

Ultimately, there is no single "right" choice. What matters most is finding an approach that honors the individual's preferences while providing the level of care and support the family needs. ■

Stacey Miller is executive director of WesleyLife at Home, which offers a broad network of services, including medical and non-medical at-home care. Visit [wesleylife.org](http://wesleylife.org) or call 515- 978-2777.

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## FOOD AND DRINK

- Restaurant
- Restaurant for Breakfast
- Restaurant for Lunch
- Restaurant for Dinner
- Restaurant for Dessert
- Place for Ice Cream
- Pizza Establishment
- Bar
- Coffee Shop
- Brewery/Distillery/Winery
- Bakery
- Catering Company
- Server/Bartender (First and last name)

## AUTO BODY

- Auto Service
- Auto Body Shop
- Car Dealership
- Auto Parts Store

## COMMUNITY

- Preschool/Daycare
- School (name of building)
- Park
- Community Festival or Event
- Church
- Pastor
- Chamber of Commerce

## SHOPPING

- Grocery Store
- Boutique
- Retail Store
- Florist
- Home Improvement Retail Store
- Appliance Store
- Liquor Store
- Nursery or Garden Center
- Place to Purchase a Gift for a Man
- Place to Purchase a Gift for a Woman
- Thrift Store

## ENTERTAINMENT

- Dad/Child Date Spot
- Mom/Child Date Spot
- Place to Take Your Mom and Dad
- Place to Take Your Kids or Grandkids
- Place for Children's Birthday Parties
- Event Venue
- Golf Course

## HEALTH/BEAUTY

- Hair Salon
- Health Clinic
- Dental Office
- Orthodontist Office
- Mental Health Services
- Chiropractic Office
- Vision Care
- Health Club or Gym

- Pharmacy
- Hearing Center
- Cosmetic Services
- Physical Therapy
- Dance Studio
- Gymnastics Studio
- Tumbling Studio
- CBD Store

## OTHER PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

- Financial Planner
- Law Firm
- Accounting Firm
- Veterinarian
- Dog Groomer
- Pet Care
- Lawn Care Business
- Landscaping Company
- Heating and Cooling Business
- Electrician
- Plumber
- Senior Living Facility
- Insurance Agency
- Realtor
- Bank/Credit Union
- Photographer
- Place for Guests to Stay
- Pest Control
- Tree Service
- Home Builder
- Home General Contractor
- Exterior Contractor (siding, roofing, windows, doors)

# THE HIGH-OCTANE heartbreak

A guide to import fuel usage

If you drive a high-performance import (like a BMW, Audi, a supercharged Jaguar or a turbocharged Honda), your car has the palate of a Michelin-star critic. You can't just use "regular" gas; doing so treats a legendary engine like a disposal unit, leading to a "carbon catastrophe."



Here is how to navigate fuel grades, maintenance and the unique options available to Iowa drivers.

**Premium gas (91+ octane) is not optional**

High-performance imports use turbocharged or high-compression engines that squeeze air and fuel into a high-pressure environment.

**The problem:** Lower-grade fuel (87 octane) cannot handle that pressure and explodes too early. This is called "knocking." **The warning:**

It sounds like a frantic squirrel with a hammer inside your engine. **The result:** To prevent a total meltdown, your car's computer will "pull timing," making your 300-horsepower beast feel like a tired moped.

**The E85 "corn juice" conundrum**

In Iowa, we are in the heart of ethanol country. As of 2026, wholesale E85 prices often save you per gallon, making it a tempting "forbidden nectar." **The pro:** With an octane rating over 100, E85 allows for massive power. **The danger:** Ethanol is corrosive. Unless your car is specifically modified (or a "flex fuel" model), it will eat through rubber seals and fuel pumps. You also lose about 30% of your fuel economy, meaning more frequent stops at the pump.

**The secret to longevity: maintenance**

Modern imports, especially those with gasoline direct injection (GDI), are prone to carbon buildup. To keep your engine healthy, follow these two professional steps:

- **Air/fuel induction service:** Every 30,000 miles, a professional induction service cleans the "breathing" side of your engine. It removes baked-on carbon from intake valves, restoring fuel economy and smoothing out your idle.

- **BG 44K fuel treatment:** Adding a bottle of BG 44K Platinum to your tank every 15,000 miles provides a deep clean of the injectors and combustion chambers. It is the gold standard for removing stubborn deposits that cause engine hesitation and power loss.

**The Golden Rule**

If your gas cap says "premium fuel only," it is a requirement, not a suggestion. Treating your import to high-quality fuel and regular BG maintenance is the "membership fee" for owning a car that actually makes you look back at it when you walk away in the parking lot. ■

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



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# INDIANOLA Public Library events

Visit the website to register for events:  
<https://indianola.librarycalendar.com/events/month/2026/01>.

Library closed Monday, May 25, all day

**KIDS**

- Bingo for Kids: Monday, June 1, 3:30-4:15 p.m. Grades 3-5
- Creative Movement & Music: Wednesday, June 3, 10:30-11:30 a.m. Grades K-2
- Summer Fun with Art: Wednesday, June 10, 10:30-11:30 a.m. Grades K-2
- Chess Club: Thursday, June 11, 6-7 p.m.

**STORYTIME**

- Storytime with Janis: Tuesdays and Thursdays in June, 10:30-11 a.m.
- Saturday Storytime: Saturdays in June except June 20, 10:30-11:15 a.m.

**TEENS**

- Teen Hangout: Wednesdays in June, 2:30-4:30 p.m.



- Teen Art Cart: Saturdays in June, all day.
- Chess Club: Thursday, June 11, 6-7 p.m.

**FAMILIES**

- Craft Explosion: Mondays in June, 10-11 a.m.
- Stuffed Animal Village: Friday, June 5, 10 a.m. to noon
- Library Playdate: Saturdays in June, all day.

**ADULTS**

- Evening Book Club: Tuesday, May 26, 6:30-7:30 p.m.
- Bingo: Tuesday, June 2, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

**Indianola Public Library**

[www.indianolaiowa.gov/Library](http://www.indianolaiowa.gov/Library)

207 N. B St., Indianola

515-961-9418

Monday – Thursday, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Friday – Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Sunday – 1–5 p.m.

- Puzzle Competition: Thursday, June 4, 6-8 p.m. Registration required.

**EVERYONE**

- Summer Bash: Thursday, May 28, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
- Family DIY - Painted Welcome Mat: Tuesday, June 2, 4-7 p.m.
- Family DIY - Painted Welcome Mat RAIN DATE: Wednesday, June 3, 4-7 p.m.
- Family DIY - Tie-Dye: Tuesday, June 9, 4-7 p.m.
- Family DIY - Tie-Dye RAIN DATE: Wednesday, June 10, 4-7 p.m. ■



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# INDIANOLA

SUMMER SPORTS SCHEDULE 2026

# INDIANS

## VARSITY BASEBALL

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
May 12	6:00 PM	SE Polk	SE Polk
May 15	6:00 PM	Ames	Ames
May 18	7:00 PM	Catholic	Indianola
May 20	5:00 PM	Ottumwa	Indianola
May 20	7:00 PM	Ottumwa	Indianola
May 22	5:00 PM	Johnston	Indianola
May 22	7:00 PM	Johnston	Indianola
May 25	5:00 PM	Fort Dodge	Dodger Stadium
May 27	5:00 PM	Pella	Indianola
May 27	7:00 PM	Pella	Indianola
May 29	7:00 PM	Oskaloosa	Oskaloosa
Jun 3	7:00 PM	DCG	Indianola
Jun 5	5:00 PM	Newton	H.A. Lynn
Jun 5	7:00 PM	Newton	H.A. Lynn
Jun 6	10:30 AM	Simpson	Simpson College
Jun 6	11:00 AM	Ankeny	Indianola
Jun 6	1:30 PM	West Delaware	Indianola
Jun 8	7:00 PM	Norwalk	Norwalk
Jun 10	5:00 PM	Pella	Indianola
Jun 10	7:00 PM	Pella	Indianola
Jun 12	7:00 PM	Pella	Pella
Jun 15	5:00 PM	Oskaloosa	Indianola
Jun 15	7:00 PM	Oskaloosa	Indianola
Jun 16	7:00 PM	Valley	Indianola
Jun 19	5:00 PM	DCG	Burnett DCG
Jun 19	7:00 PM	DCG	Burnett DCG
Jun 22	7:00 PM	Newton	Indianola
Jun 24	5:00 PM	Norwalk	Indianola
Jun 24	7:00 PM	Norwalk	Indianola
Jun 26	7:00 PM	Pella	Pella
Jun 27	10:00 AM	Prange Classic	Indianola
Jun 27	10:00 AM	Ballard	Indianola
Jun 27	2:30 PM	Bettendorf	Indianola
Jun 29	7:00 PM	DM Lincoln	Indianola
Jun 30	5:00 PM	Urbandale	Urbandale
Jun 30	7:00 PM	Urbandale	Urbandale
Jul 3	12:00 PM	SE Polk	Indianola
Jul 3	2:00 PM	SE Polk	Indianola
Jul 6	7:00 PM	DM East	Indianola
Jul 7	7:00 PM	Knoxville	Knoxville

## JV BASEBALL

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
May 18	7:00 PM	Dowling	Dowling
May 19	5:00 PM	Ottumwa	Indianola
May 19	7:00 PM	Ottumwa	Indianola
May 22	5:00 PM	Johnston	Johnston
May 22	7:00 PM	Johnston	Johnston
May 26	5:00 PM	SE Polk	SE Polk
May 26	6:30 PM	SE Polk	SE Polk
May 27	5:00 PM	Ames	Ames
May 27	7:00 PM	Ames	Ames
May 29	5:00 PM	Ankeny	Ankeny
May 29	6:45 PM	Ankeny	Ankeny
Jun 2	5:00 PM	Dowling	Indianola
Jun 2	7:00 PM	Dowling	Indianola
Jun 4	10:00 AM	DCG	Indianola
Jun 4	12:00 PM	DCG	Indianola
Jun 5	5:00 PM	Waukee NW	Indianola
Jun 5	7:00 PM	Waukee NW	Indianola
Jun 9	10:00 AM	Ballard Lv. 2	Nite Hawk
Jun 9	12:00 PM	Ballard Lv. 2	Nite Hawk
Jun 11	10:00 AM	North Polk	North Polk
Jun 11	12:00 PM	North Polk	North Polk
Jun 12	5:00 PM	SE Polk	Indianola
Jun 12	7:00 PM	SE Polk	Indianola
Jun 15	5:00 PM	Johnston	Johnston
Jun 15	7:00 PM	Johnston	Johnston
Jun 17	10:00 AM	Bondurant	Bondurant
Jun 17	12:00 PM	Bondurant	Bondurant
Jun 19	10:00 AM	DCG	Hy-Vee
Jun 19	12:00 PM	DCG	Hy-Vee
Jun 23	10:00 AM	Ames	Indianola
Jun 23	12:00 PM	Ames	Indianola
Jun 24	10:00 AM	Norwalk	Indianola
Jun 24	11:30 AM	Norwalk	Indianola
Jun 26	10:00 AM	Roosevelt	Roosevelt
Jun 26	12:00 PM	Roosevelt	Roosevelt
Jun 30	5:00 PM	North Polk	Indianola
Jun 30	7:00 PM	North Polk	Indianola
Jul 2	10:00 AM	Bondurant	Bondurant
Jul 2	12:00 PM	Bondurant	Bondurant

## V/JV SOFTBALL

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
May 18	JV 7:15 PM/ V 5:30 PM	Catholic	Indianola
May 27	JV 4:00 PM/ V 5:30 PM	Pella	Indianola
May 27	V 7:30 PM	Pella	Indianola
May 28	JV 5:30 PM/ V 7:15 PM	Carlisle	Indianola
May 29	JV 5:00 PM/ V 7:00 PM	SE Polk	SE Polk
Jun 2	JV 5:00 PM/ V 7:00 PM	Ballard	Ballard
Jun 3	JV 5:30 PM/ V 7:30 PM	DCG	Indianola
Jun 5	V 5:30 PM	Newton	H.A. Lynn
Jun 5	V 7:30 PM	Newton	H.A. Lynn
Jun 6	V 9:00 AM	Winterset	G. Davis Field
Jun 6	V 9:00 AM	Bakey Classic	G. Davis
Jun 6	V 1:00 PM	C. Rapids	G. Davis
Jun 8	JV 5:30 PM/ V 7:15 PM	Norwalk	Norwalk
Jun 9	JV 3:00 PM/ V 5:00 PM	Waukee NW	NW Complex
Jun 10	JV 4:00 PM/ V 5:30 PM	Pella	Indianola
Jun 13	V 9:00 AM	X. Classic	Xavier
Jun 15	JV 5:30 PM/ V 7:30 PM	Oskaloosa	Indianola
Jun 18	JV 5:30 PM/ V 7:15 PM	Boone	Indianola
Jun 19	JV 4:00 PM/ V 5:30 PM	DCG	G. Davis
Jun 22	JV 5:30 PM/ V 7:15 PM	Newton	Indianola
Jun 24	JV 4:00 PM/ V 5:30 PM	Norwalk	Indianola
Jun 26	JV 5:30 PM/ V 7:15 PM	Pella	Pella
Jun 27	V 10:00 AM	Indianola	Indianola
Jun 30	JV 5:30 PM/ V 7:30 PM	Oskaloosa	Oskaloosa
Jul 3	V 11:00 AM	Schlafke Classic	Burnett
Jul 7	JV 5:00 PM/ V 7:00 PM	DM East	DM East



FOR ALL  
SPORTS >>  
SCHEDULES



Schedules are subject to change. Scan for most up-to-date schedules.



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## Upcoming in Indianola Living magazine:

**Fishing:** Share your fishing stories. Perhaps you fished with your father as a child, fished in an interesting place, participated in fishing competitions. If it is related to fishing, drop us a note! Email [tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com](mailto:tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com).

## Kwik Star Night at the Movies

Friday, June 5  
Pickard Park, 2205 E. Second Ave., Indianola

Enjoy drive-in double feature movies that you can watch from your vehicle or bring chairs and blankets. Off the Griddle food truck will be selling food and drink. "Lilo & Stitch" begins at 7 p.m. followed at 8:58 p.m. by "Jurassic Park."

## Kwik Star Free Community Pool Party

Saturday, June 13, 5-7 p.m.  
Veterans Memorial Aquatic Center, 714 W. Detroit, Indianola

Bring the family and enjoy a free pool party and dinner at Veterans Memorial Aquatic Center. Dinner provided by American Legion Post 165, Indianola Hy-Vee and Indianola Fareway.

## Tunes & Treats: David Watson

Thursday, June 29, 1 p.m.  
Indianola Activity Center, 2204 W. Second Ave. (Highway 92)

David Watson has been passionate about music since he began singing and playing guitar at age 16, teaching himself by listening to records and the radio. His career has taken him around the world, including cruise ship performances, and stages across Las Vegas nightclubs and casinos. Today he delivers a high-energy show of country and classic rock hits from the 1950s to today. This free concert is open to the public and sponsored by Edencrest at the Legacy. Refreshments provided by Indianola Hy-Vee.

## Free Community Meal

Tuesdays, 5:30-6:30 p.m.  
Lighthouse Community Center,  
109 W. Boston Ave., Indianola  
Free home-cooked meal every Tuesday. Everyone is welcome. Come and enjoy food and fellowship with individuals and organizations in our community.

## Yoga in the Park

Saturdays, 9-10 a.m.  
Buxton Park, 705 N. Buxton,  
Indianola

Different instructors lead yoga each week in the serene beauty of Buxton Park. This is a free class for adults 18 and older, thanks to the sponsor, Drees Chiropractic. **EXCEPTION:** The group will meet at the Memorial Balloon Field at 7 a.m. during the National Balloon Classic on Aug. 1 and Aug. 8. Baby goats from Swanskis Farm will join the yoga class on June 13, July 11 and Sept. 12. Be sure to sign up for the text group in case of weather cancellations at [www.tinyurl.com/IPRTxts](http://www.tinyurl.com/IPRTxts).

## When Headstones Talk

Saturday, June 20, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
West side of I.O.O.F. Cemetery,  
.6 mile south of Highway 92 on  
Jefferson Way

Help clean old gravestones and uncover symbols and words. Supplies provided. Watch The Cemetery Guy and team resurrect the broken and fallen and learn about some of the people buried at the cemetery. Picnic lunch provided. Free event, donations encouraged, no R.S.V.P, no rain date.

## Indianola Parks and Recreation and Hy-Vee Special Friends Luau Dance

Friday, June 5, 6-7:30 p.m.  
Indianola Activity Center, 2204 W. Second Ave.

Individuals with disabilities of all ages and their families, chaperones, respite providers and SCL workers are invited to attend this free drop-in event with dancing, fun and pizza provided by Indianola Hy-Vee.

## Trivia at The Groggy Dog

Tuesdays, 7-9 p.m.  
The Groggy Dog,  
116 W. Ashland  
Ave., Indianola



Grab some friends, and bring an appetite and your love for knowledge and beer. Five dollar draws, prizes, fun and good competition. The place to be on a Tuesday night.



## Mayor's Youth Council Bike Fest: Healing & Wheeling

Saturday, June 6, 10 a.m. to noon  
Simpson College Parking Lot, Corner of  
C Street and Clinton Avenue, Indianola

Indianola Mayor's Youth Council hosts this free, family-friendly community event to promote bicycle safety. Donations will be raised for Heal House. Visit the Bike Fest event page: <https://indianolaiowa.gov/1348/2026-Bike-Fest>. Bring your bikes and enjoy an obstacle course, bike tune-up station and helmet giveaway (special thanks to Blank Children's Hospital), Giant Trike Races, Giant Yard Games and more.

## Afternoon Adventures: Nancy Drew, Iowa Heroine to the World

Monday, June 15, 1 p.m.  
Indianola Activity Center, 2204 W.  
Second Ave. (Highway 92)

Nancy Drew is the world's most popular teen detective, with more than 200 million books sold and translations in at least 45 languages. Few realize she is an Iowa heroine, shaped by Iowa writer Mildred Augustine, who wrote 23 of the first 30 mysteries, including The Secret of the Old Clock, though her authorship remained secret for more than 50 years. The program "Nancy Drew: Iowa Heroine to the World" is led by Barbara Lounsberry, a retired University of Northern Iowa English professor and accomplished author and editor, who brings Iowa literary history to life for audiences of all ages. This free speaker series is sponsored by Community 1st Credit Union. This event was also funded by Humanities Iowa, a private, non-profit state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. ■

# WELLS restores a barn-find classic

Oldsmobile turns heads and brings family together.

Evan Wells is a car enthusiast and collector who can often be found working on one vehicle or another, whether for work or for pleasure. One car — a pink 1963 Oldsmobile Super 88 Holiday — stands out as his nicest and most photogenic project.

“I do a lot of custom vehicles — anything that tickles my fancy,” Wells says. “I had a lowered, rat rod-style F-150 truck. It was rusty, loud and obnoxious, and the rest of my family didn’t like riding in it. I had built it myself, but I hardly ever drove it, so I listed it on Facebook Marketplace. A guy in eastern Iowa offered to trade the Oldsmobile for my truck.”

Wells took the deal and became the owner of the car two winters ago.

He has spent the past year fixing up the Oldsmobile. The car was in pieces when he got it and had originally been a “barn find” in Arizona before making its way to Minnesota and eventually to the previous owner.

“It is 90% original, minus some custom fixes I have made,” Wells says.

“I wanted the car because it works for the women in my house. It is pink, four-door, has air ride and isn’t loud. I got it fixed up in time to take it to a car show in Milo last year. My wife and girls aren’t into cars and car shows much, so this car was a nice way for us to do things together.”

In contrast to his loud truck, Wells drove the Oldsmobile daily last summer. Now, he is preparing to enjoy it again this season and hopes to take it to more car shows.

Outwardly, the Oldsmobile looks much the same as when Wells acquired it. Most of the updates he made were mechanical or focused on smaller details.

“I did spend some time cleaning up the paint job,” he says. “Nothing was a major overhaul. I cleaned things up and brought them back to stock, rebuilt the transmission and braking system, installed a high-amp alternator, rebuilt the carburetor and added an aluminum radiator. I wanted it to be in good shape so, if my wife needed to drive it, it would be reliable instead of finicky.”

The car features an Oldsmobile 394 high-compression engine, full air conditioning and many of the original factory options.

Owning a pink car does not bother Wells.

“I like the overall look of it and have embraced the color,” he says. “It turns a lot of heads and gets lots of compliments. It is comfortable, and my family enjoys riding in it much more than the truck. It seats five comfortably.”



Evan Wells has restored a pink 1963 Oldsmobile Super 88 Holiday for his family to enjoy.

Wells says one benefit of his position at Al’s Transmission is that he is no longer turning wrenches every day. Though he began as a mechanic, his current role in the office allows him time to work on personal projects, typically during nights and weekends.

The Oldsmobile is one of the few projects Wells has not documented on YouTube, unlike many of his other builds.

“I’ve mostly focused on the process and getting a lot done in a short amount of time,” he says.

Now, he is looking forward to enjoying the car with his family. ■

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# NAVIGATING hearing care as a critical consumer (55+)

Older adults in the U.S. can get the best hearing care by acting like informed consumers — asking questions and advocating for themselves. Begin with these key strategies.



**Get a professional hearing evaluation** — Don't rely on self-tests or delay seeking treatment. A licensed audiologist or ENT can identify treatable causes (like earwax or infections) and confirm if hearing aids are necessary. They should explain your evaluation results clearly. You are free to seek a second opinion; your choice matters.<sup>1</sup>

**Understand insurance and costs** — Original Medicare generally does not cover hearing aids, though Part B covers diagnostic exams if ordered by a doctor. Some Medicare Advantage plans include hearing benefits, so

check your policy. Paying out of pocket offers flexibility, and you can seek reimbursement later. Ask if pricing is bundled (device plus services) or unbundled, and clarify what is included — fittings, follow-ups, adjustments. Inquire about extra fees and financing options to avoid surprises.

**Choose hearing aids wisely** — Experts recommend an in-person exam before buying any aids, including one to rule out issues like earwax and more serious underlying medical conditions. For any device, review return policies and trial periods (which are, at minimum, 30 days). Share your priorities, such as battery life, Bluetooth or ease of use, so that providers can match devices to your lifestyle. The best hearing aid is one you will use consistently, not necessarily the priciest.

**Advocate for yourself** — Prepare questions: “What does the price include?” “What’s the warranty?” “How long is the return period?”

Bring a friend for support and note-taking.

**Know your rights** — Under HIPAA, you can access your audiogram and hearing-aid programming history, which are helpful if you need a second opinion.<sup>2</sup> Speak up about comfort or performance issues; providers can adjust settings or suggest alternatives. Your feedback should guide care decisions.

In a complex system, informed patients get the best results, so advocate for your hearing health. ■

Information provided by Dr. Kelly Cook, Audiologist, Iowa Hearing Center, 1228 Sunset Drive, Suite B, Norwalk, 515-416-5990, [www.IowaHearingCenter.com](http://www.IowaHearingCenter.com). 1. National Council on Aging. (2025). Hearing aid buyers guide: how to choose the right one. <https://www.ncoa.org/article/hearing-aid-buyers-guide/>. 2. National Academies. (2016). Hearing health care for adults: Priorities for improving access and affordability. <https://www.nationalacademies.org/read/23446/chapter/2>

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## ACUPUNCTURE and chiropractic care for supporting a healthy microbiome

The human microbiome, specifically the gut microbiome, plays a central role in our immunity, metabolism, inflammation and even our brain function. Disruptions in this microbiome, known as dysbiosis, are linked to conditions ranging from irritable bowel syndrome to metabolic disease and mood disorders. The gut microbiome is trillions of microorganisms, bacteria, viruses and fungi that live on our skin and in the gut. These organisms regulate many processes in the body. Research using acupuncture and chiropractic care are demonstrating potential influence on the gut-brain-immune axis. The research suggests that both therapies may help regulate the microbiome by improving nervous system balance, reducing inflammation and supporting digestive function.

• **Acupuncture: Modulating the gut-brain axis and microbial balance.** A 2024 systematic review and meta-analysis in “The American Journal of Chinese Medicine” found that



acupuncture and moxibustion can shift specific microbial populations, including increasing beneficial bacteria such as lactobacillus and ruminococcus, and alters the firmicutes-to-bacteroidetes ratio, an important marker of metabolic and inflammatory health. This newer evidence suggests acupuncture can influence the diversity and composition of the gut microbiome.

• **Chiropractic care: Nervous system regulation and gut function.** While research directly linking chiropractic adjustments to microbiome changes is still emerging, the connection between spinal health, autonomic regulation and digestive function is well established. The gut is heavily innervated by the vagus nerve and sympathetic chain; spinal dysfunction can contribute to altered motility, inflammation and stress response, all of which influence the microbiome balance.

By improving spinal alignment and reducing mechanical stress on the nervous system, chiropractic care may indirectly support a healthier microbiome through:

- Enhanced vagal tone
- Improved gut motility

- Reduced sympathetic overdrive
- Lower systemic inflammation

These physiological shifts create a more favorable environment for microbial stability and diversity.

• **A synergistic integrative approach.** When combined, acupuncture and chiropractic care offer an integrative strategy for supporting the microbiome by balancing the nervous system, the immune system and the digestive systems — three pillars that are essential for the health of the microbiome.

Although more research is needed, current evidence suggests acupuncture can directly influence gut microbial composition, while chiropractic care supports the neurological and structural foundations that allow the microbiome to thrive. As part of an integrative wellness plan, these therapies offer a promising, low-risk approach to cultivating a healthier internal ecosystem. ■

Information provided by Dr. Renee Dalrymple, LAc, SEED Meditation Instructor, Soaring Crane Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine, 14849 130th Ave., Indianola, 515-962-9093, call or text.

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Uses MyoVision Technology to detect where the nerve irritation is located and to what degree the nerve is irritated.

# SOMEONE who knows the way

May has a way of making the world feel alive again. The gray gives way to green, the air warms, and something in us lifts with it. It is hard not to feel, in the middle of all that renewal, that we were made for something more than winter.

There is a figure from history worth thinking about this month — Jesus of Nazareth. Not the stained-glass version, but the real one. A man who walked dusty roads, shared meals with ordinary people, and said things that nobody had ever said before. Things like: “I am the way, the truth, and the life.”

That’s either the most audacious claim ever made — or it is the most important.

What is striking is that He didn’t say He knew the way or could point you toward it. He said He was it. The destination and the guide, all at once.

May is a season of new beginnings — graduations, fresh starts, open roads. A lot of people this time of year are asking some version of the same question: “Which way do I go from here?”

It turns out that question is older than any of us. And someone already answered it.

He’s worth looking into. ■

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



The May 2018 Indianola Living magazine featured the story, “Special delivery: Indianola parents and siblings reflect on multiple births.” The cover photo featured twins Alli and Nikki Collins. Also interviewed were Jeff and Jami Daniel about their twins, Cory and Laura Drees about having triplets, and Jeanette Garner and Joan Bown about growing up as twins. ■



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4. Nothing, the prices haven’t affected me.

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Better relationships.....	0%

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MAGAZINES

# TRANSFORMING a midcentury gem

Chapman and Kaufman bring new life to a once-neglected home.

Melissa Chapman was working as a state government representative for U.S. Cellular and living in Council Bluffs when she decided to move to the Des Moines area without living in the city proper.

“I had been watching the house we live in now for several months,” she says. “Curt (Kaufman) is a contractor, and we wanted a project house. We wanted to be close to Simpson College, and we loved Indianola. I’m a swimmer, and having the wellness center nearby was a bonus. When the price dropped to within our budget in July 2023, we bought the house.”

Chapman moved into the home first, and Kaufman joined about a year later after getting his college-aged children launched.

“I loved the neighborhood,” she says. “It was in a good location, and the layout and size were great. I moved from a historic house that was 2,100 square feet, so this smaller size was better for the two of us. I liked the clear view to the backyard and the hallway just inside the entryway. There’s a den, a smaller kitchen and a formal dining room where we like to host 10 to 15 people. It also already had a cat door in the basement, which was a bonus because we are both cat people.”

Their midcentury colonial-style home featured several interesting renovations but hadn’t been well maintained.

“It was avocado green with red trim, and, according to the neighbors, it had been those colors for years,” she says.

Slowly but surely, Chapman and Kaufman have transformed the home from top to bottom.

“We came in with a lot of ideas for what we could do with the house,” she says. “I was able to find photos from when the house was listed 10 years ago and see the landscaping that had been done in the backyard. I felt we could do that again, but we started with painting the house. Curt



Melissa Chapman at the water feature included in the landscaping.



The bathroom was one of the most challenging rooms to renovate, but now it has a modern and bright feel as well as walk-in shower.



Melissa Chapman and Curt Kaufman enjoy their new deck, which was one of many projects they took on in their home.

is a professional painter, so I chose the colors, and he did the painting himself.”

They then painted the kitchen cabinets green, replacing a 1980s-era golden finish.

“That was probably one of the more radical things we did,” Chapman says, noting the choice has earned frequent compliments.

Kaufman and Chapman say their two favorite renovations are the upstairs bathroom and the deck area.

“The bathroom was the hardest mentally, and the deck was the most labor-intensive,” Kaufman says.

They transformed the bathroom from a cramped layout — complete with a standard tub, laundry chute and three doorways — into a more open space featuring a walk-in, curbless shower and heated floors. They also updated the paint and fixtures.

Outside, a cement patio that sloped toward the house was replaced with a multi-level terrace and wooden deck.

Other projects include replacing old windows, repairing a collapsed driveway, repainting nearly every room, redirecting the sump pump away from the house, and replacing burned-out outlets and appliances.

“There will always be another project we can come up with,” Chapman says. “Right now, we’re planning to replace the kitchen counters and fix the basement windows, but we love our house and the space we’re creating.” ■

# BACK to basics

## Diversification and asset allocation

When investing, particularly for long-term goals, there are two concepts you will likely hear about over and over again: diversification and asset allocation. Diversification helps limit exposure to loss in any one investment or



one type of investment, while asset allocation provides a blueprint to help guide your investment decisions. Understanding how the two work can help you put together a portfolio that targets your specific needs.

• **Diversification: Spreading out risk.**

Diversification refers to the process of investing in a number of different securities to help manage risk. The theory is that, if some investments in your portfolio decline in value, others may rise or hold steady.

For example, say you wanted to invest in stocks. Rather than investing in just domestic stocks, you could diversify your portfolio by investing in foreign stocks as well. Or you could choose

to include the stocks of different size companies (small-cap, mid-cap, and/or large-cap stocks). If your primary objective is to invest in bonds for income, you could choose both government and corporate bonds to potentially take advantage of their different risk/return profiles. You might also choose bonds of different maturities because long-term bonds tend to react more dramatically to changes in interest rates than short-term bonds. As interest rates rise, bond prices typically fall.

• **Asset allocation: Investing strategically.**

Asset allocation is a strategic approach to diversifying your portfolio among different asset classes that seeks to pursue the highest potential return within a certain level of risk. After carefully considering your investment goals, time horizon, and risk tolerance, you would then invest different percentages of your portfolio in targeted asset classes to pursue your goals. A careful analysis of these three personal factors can help you make strategic choices that are suitable for your needs.

• **Rebalance to stay on target.** Over time, an asset allocation can shift simply

due to changing market performance. For example, in years when the stock market performs particularly well, a portfolio may become overweighted in stocks. In years when bonds outperform, they may end up comprising a larger-than-desired percentage of the portfolio. In these situations, a little rebalancing may be in order by selling securities in the overweighted asset class and directing the proceeds into the underweighted ones, or by directing new investments into the underweighted asset class until the desired allocation is achieved. ■

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## WHAT PEOPLE often overlook when choosing assisted living

Choosing an assisted living community is a big decision that often comes with a long checklist of questions about cost, care and availability. In the search process, families sometimes get caught up in amenities and real estate, overlooking the factors that truly matter most: daily quality of life and long-term satisfaction.



### Look beyond amenities: Focus on daily life

It's easy to compare floor plans or amenities, but what truly shapes quality of life is how each day feels. When touring, check for these factors: Are residents engaged and active? Is there a sense of routine, purpose and connection? A strong calendar of activities and opportunities for social interaction can make a meaningful difference in both mental and physical well-being.

### Don't underestimate the importance of food

Meals are more than just nutrition; they're a central part of the day and often a key social experience. Ask questions like: Is there variety in the menu? Are meals prepared fresh? Do residents have choices including a variety of meal options and what time of day they can eat? Dining quality can reveal a lot about a community's overall approach to care and hospitality.

### Personalized care matters more than you think

Care needs can change over time, so flexibility is essential. Look for communities that: Offer customized care plans, tailored to the individual. Take time to understand individual preferences and routines. Can provide additional support as needs evolve. This kind of individualized approach helps residents maintain independence while receiving the right level of care.

### Understand what's included (and what's not)

Pricing structures can vary widely. Taking a closer look at what is included can prevent unexpected costs later. Communities that offer multiple services under one roof can: simplify coordination, reduce reliance on outside providers and create a more seamless experience for residents and families.

### Pay attention to the atmosphere

Sometimes, the most telling factor is how a community feels. Consider: Do staff and residents interact naturally? Does it feel welcoming and comfortable? Is there a sense of community? Smaller or more close-knit environments often foster stronger relationships and a greater sense of belonging.

### The bottom line

Choosing assisted living isn't just about finding a place to live. It's about finding a community where someone can truly feel at home. Looking beyond the basics and focusing on daily experience, connection and flexibility can make all the difference. ■

Information provided by Holland Farms, 2800 Sunset Drive, Norwalk, IA 50211, [www.hollandfarmsliving.com](http://www.hollandfarmsliving.com), 515-608-0364.



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Evan Baker and Makayla Baker at the grand opening of Casual Rags Embroidery & Apparel on April 24.



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## MEET Jen Piffer

A passion for teaching the youngest learners

Jen Piffer enjoys connecting with and teaching the youngest students. She is a kindergarten teacher at Emerson Elementary School and has taught kindergarten for 21 years. She grew up in Indianola and attended Whittier as a student, so she tends to think of herself as a “townie.” She has taught at Emerson for most of her career.

As a child, Piffer enjoyed “playing teacher,” often setting up a makeshift classroom in her parents’ laundry room. During her college placements, she gravitated most toward working with younger students.

“Kindergarten students come into school ‘fresh,’” she says. “In my classroom, we talk about stretching our brains, and I love to see them soak everything up like a sponge. I enjoy seeing the light in their eyes when they get excited and talk about what we are learning.”

Piffer finds joy in her students’ daily excitement to see her.

“When I’m having a bad day, a hug from one of them totally changes my mood,” she says.

Days in her classroom are busy.

“The students are needy in the best ways, such as help with their clothing or jackets and with daily activities,” she says. “Kindergartners need routine, and I try to give that to them. If our day is off, we call it a little ‘wonky donkey,’ based on the book by the same name.”

Her favorite part of the school year is near the end, when she sees what she calls the “magic of kindergarten” — how students have blossomed and can do tasks like reading or simple math that they could not at the beginning of the year.

“I’m sure the other grade levels have it, too, but kindergartners are so fresh, and, for some, I’m their first teacher,” she adds. “So it is fun to see how it all comes together.”

Teaching young students is not without challenges. Piffer says some things she must teach are not always age appropriate. She hopes current legislation will pass to allow 45 minutes of play for kindergartners.

“That 45 minutes will help students learn to problem-solve and develop teamwork through play,” she says. “As a culture, we took that away from kindergarten, and they need it back.”

Piffer likes watching her students grow and mature.

“It is both sad and exciting to see them move around the ‘square’ hallway of Emerson.”

She did not teach her own children when they attended the school, but she says it was fun to see them across the hall learning. Job Day is Piffer’s favorite day of each school year. Students dress up, and guests are invited to share about their work.

“We’ve had a police officer come in, and parents also participate by sharing about their jobs,” Piffer says. “Then we have a parade. Our Emerson staff is so supportive of our youngest students. I always try to come up with a different outfit and tie it in with reading and math throughout the day.”

Piffer invites anyone considering teaching young students to visit her classroom to observe or volunteer.

“Some days can be exhausting, so volunteering would give you an idea of whether it is something you’d enjoy. I love my job, and I don’t ever see myself doing anything else.” ■



Jen Piffer enjoys seeing how far her students progress through their kindergarten year.

## ARE YOU still asleep?

So, this isn’t about physical sleep, though it is inspired by some real sleep issues. Due to my own struggles with getting proper sleep, I tend to notice internet news headlines regarding the topic. I once read that a third of all Americans are sleep deprived. They somehow manage to plod along each day on far less energy and mental capacity than is optimum.

Yet there is a far worse problem for a far greater number of people, I think. Many people are spiritually asleep all the time. What do I mean by that? Most everyone I know will talk as if there is something deeper to our lives and existence, something beyond the mundane that we see and touch and experience daily. They’ll use words like “purpose” or “meaning,” or ask for “answers to what life is all about.” Even people who will ascribe our existence to mere chance interactions between particles or chemicals or whatever still speak in those terms. Why? Because as Ecclesiastes 3:11 tells us, “God has put eternity in [our] hearts.” Thus we “know” there’s more than we see.

But, we can just roll over and keep sleeping. We live our lives. We grow, get educated, work jobs, marry and raise children, pursue hobbies and leisure. Decades go by, and we sleep through the whole thing. The worst kinds of dreams that I’ve had are when I dream I’m waking up and need to get ready to go to work. And, then, after going through the motions, I discover that the whole process was actually a dream. I was asleep the whole time.

The same God who put eternity in your heart hasn’t planned that you sleep through your whole life. God calls you to wake up, to “be sober.” 1 Thessalonians 5:6-8 : “So then we must not sleep, like the rest, but we must stay awake and be serious. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, we must be serious and put the armor of faith and love on our chests, and put on a helmet of the hope of salvation.”

This coming Sunday, join together with a group of people looking to what God has said in scripture, even if that means waking up physically so you can go be awakened spiritually. It is worth it. ■



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