

# Living

MAGAZINE

# RESIDENTS' CHOICE AWARDS

**Ankeny/Northern Polk County residents share their favorites.**



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# VOTING made easy

Voting for elected officials, bond issues or related items can be a lot of work. Voters should research the candidates or issues in advance and make selections that match their views. They often need to take time off from work or home activities to be available in person to cast their ballots. And, sometimes, they need to stand in line for lengthy periods of time to even get inside the polling places.

Nobody said voting was easy — unless you are voting in the Residents' Choice polls in our Living magazines. We keep it simple, and you can vote in the comfort of your own home on your personal computer, tablet or phone. Easy peasy.

A few decades ago, when we were first conducting reader polls in CITYVIEW magazine, all the votes were submitted on the paper ballots we published. Choices were written in by hand, and the votes were counted by hand, too. It was a tedious process, and, as a result, very few votes were cast compared to today.

Now, we subscribe to an online polling service so readers can cast their votes digitally. Voters still have to fill in the blanks, as we don't load the ballot with predetermined choices like some other polls do. It certainly would be easier to count the results if we loaded your options, but we think it is important to keep the choices for our readers' favorite people, businesses, places and events wide open. And, since our Living magazines are mailed to every household in the communities we serve, everyone is eligible to vote. You don't have to register. You don't have to be a certain age. You don't even have to vote in more than one category if you so choose.

There have always been, and always will be, cheaters in this world, including in this poll. Cheating doesn't work, though, as we easily identify those and throw them out. What does work is being a great person, being involved in a great organization or running a great business — and that is what the winners in this year's readers' poll are.

I thank all of you who took the time to vote in this year's Residents' Choice poll. And, if you didn't vote, well, there is always next year.

Thanks for reading. ■



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# RESIDENTS' CHOICE AWARDS

**Ankeny/Northern Polk County residents share their favorites.**

**By Tammy Pearson**

Once again, residents in the Ankeny/North Polk area have given kudos to the people, places, events and businesses that help make living in the area a pleasure and a breeze. Quality services, products, amenities and more are close to home, and those who live in the area tipped their hats to them by choosing their favorites in our annual Residents' Choice Poll.

With sometimes only a handful of votes between the winner and the runners up, we consider all three to be winners. If you are unfamiliar with any of them, pay them a visit and give them a chance to become one of your favorites, too. They come highly recommended by the voters in our poll, who also happen to be your neighbors.

**Kevin Harrington of Leaning Tower of Pizza, which was voted favorite pizza establishment.**



# Ankeny/Northern Polk County Residents' Choice for favorite...

(Runners-up in alphabetical order. \*Denotes repeat winners from last year.)

**Restaurant**

\* **Rising Sun Café**

**Runners up:** Portofino's Italian Restaurant & Pizza; Sports Page Grill

**Restaurant for breakfast**

\* **Rising Sun Café**

**Runners up:** Early Bird; It's My Jam Café

**Restaurant for lunch**

\* **Main Street Café & Bakery**

**Runners up:** Rising Sun Café; Sports Page Grill

**Restaurant for dinner**

**Portofino's Italian Restaurant & Pizza**

**Runners up:** Arcadia; District 36 Wine Bar & Grille

**Restaurant for dessert**

\* **Main Street Café & Bakery**

**Runners up:** Rising Sun Café; The Outside Scoop

**Place for ice cream**

\* **The Creamery**

**Runners up:** The Outside Scoop; Uptown Dairy

**Pizza establishment**

**Leaning Tower of Pizza**

**Runners up:** Nonna's Pizza & Pasta; Papa's Pizzeria

**Bar**

**Cabaret Sports Bar & Grille**

**Runners up:** Polk City Pub; Uptown Garage Brewing Co.

**Coffee shop**

\* **Porch Light Coffeehouse**

**Runners up:** Café Diem; Rising Sun Café

**Server/bartender**

\* **Erika Sedgwick - Cabaret Sports Bar & Grille**

**Runners up:** Alex Fahey - Rising Sun Café; Cortney Burchett - Yankee Clipper

**Auto Service**

**Christian Brothers Automotive**

**Runners up:** Aim High Automotive; Heartland Tire & Auto

**Auto Body Shop**

\* **Karl Chevrolet, Inc.**

**Runners up:** Caliber Collision; Gerber Collision & Glass

**Car dealership**

\* **Karl Chevrolet, Inc.**

**Runners up:** Bob Brown Buick GMC; Dewey Ford

**Preschool/Daycare**

\* **Our Lady's Little Learners**

**Runners up:** Lakes Early Learning Center; Yellow Brick Road Early Childhood Development Center

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# FEATURE

## Nonprofit

### St. Vincent de Paul

**Runners up:** On With Life; The Ankeny Klothing Exchange (TAKE)

## School

### Ankeny Centennial High School

**Runners up:** North Polk High School; St. Luke the Evangelist Catholic School

## Park

### Jester Park

**Runners up:** Ankeny Miracle Park; Big Creek State Park

## Community festival or event

### \* Ankeny Chamber SummerFest

**Runners up:** Ankeny Farmer's Market; Polk City Four Seasons Festival

## Church

### Our Lady's Immaculate Heart Catholic Church

**Runners up:** Lakeside Fellowship; Lutheran Church of Hope Ankeny

## Pastor

### Father James Ahenkora

**Runners up:** Scott Rains; Wendy Musgrave

## Chamber of commerce

### \* Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce

**Runners up:** Polk City Chamber of Commerce; Uptown Ankeny

## Library

### \* Ankeny Kirkendall Public Library

**Runners up:** Faith Baptist Bible College & Theological Seminary Library; Polk City Community Library

## Camping spot

### Cherry Glen Campground

**Runners up:** Jester Park; Prairie Flower Campground

## Coach

### \* Tim TeBrink, North Polk Football

**Runners up:** Alayna Clark, Centennial Dance; Jerry Pezzetti, Ankeny Football

## Teacher

### Ryan Halterman, North Polk High School

**Runners up:** Katie Jones, North Polk West Elementary; Katie Molstad, Parkview Middle School

## Grocery store

### \* Fareway Meat & Grocery

**Runners up:** Aldi; Hy-Vee

## Boutique

### \* Real Deals

**Runners up:** Purple Poppy Boutique; The Funky Zebras Boutique;

## Retail Store

### \* Real Deals

**Runners up:** Hawgeyes BBQ; Mainstream Boutique Ankeny

## Thrift store

### St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Store

**Runners up:** Goodwill; Stuff Etc.



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# FEATURE

## Home improvement retail store

\* **Menards**

**Runners up:** Polk City Ace Hardware; The Home Depot

## Nursery or garden center

\* **Earl May Garden Center**

**Runners up:** Canoyer Garden Center; TNT Landscaping & Nursery

## Place to purchase a gift for a man

**Menards**

**Runners up:** Kohl's; Tweedle Dee's

## Place to purchase a gift for a woman

\* **Real Deals**

**Runners up:** Purple Poppy Boutique; Tweedle Dee's

## Florist

\* **Carmen's Flowers**

**Runners up:** Flowerama; Hy-Vee Floral

## Dad/child date spot

**The Playground for Kids**

**Runners up:** B&B Theatres Ankeny; Rising Sun Café

## Mom/child date spot

**The Playground for Kids**

**Runners up:** B&B Theatres Ankeny; Rising Sun Café

## Place to take your mom and dad

\* **Rising Sun Café**

**Runners up:** B&B Theatres Ankeny; Papa's Pizzeria

## Place to take your kids or grandkids

\* **The Playground for Kids**

**Runners up:** B&B Theatres Ankeny; Jester Park

## Children's birthday party spot

\* **The Playground for Kids**

**Runners up:** B&B Theatres Ankeny; Urban Air Adventure Park



Fr. James Ahrenkora of Our Lady's Immaculate Heart Catholic Church was chosen as favorite pastor.

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# FEATURE

## Golf course

\* **Otter Creek Golf Course**

**Runners up:** Briarwood Golf Club; Tournament Club of Iowa

## Hair salon

**Lux Salon Studio**

**Runners up:** Great Clips; Shear Style Hair Salon

## Physicians clinic

\* **The Iowa Clinic**

**Runners up:** MercyOne; UnityPoint

## Dental office

**Advanced Family Dentistry**

**Runners up:** Ankeny Dental Associates; Summit Family Dental

## Orthodontist office

\* **Ankeny Orthodontics**

**Runners up:** Central Iowa Orthodontics; Iowa Orthodontic Solutions



Lori Smith, Dustie Daughenbaugh, Latoya Goodwin and Brietta Anderson at St. Vincent de Paul, which was voted favorite nonprofit and favorite thrift store. Photo by Todd Rullestad

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# FEATURE

## Chiropractic office

\* **Polk City Chiropractic**

**Runners up:** Bloyer Chiropractic and Wellness; Sands Clinic of Chiropractic

## Vision care

\* **Ankeny Family Vision Center**

**Runners up:** Elite Eye Care; Polk City EyeCare

## Health club or gym

**Trail Point Aquatics & Wellness**

**Runners up:** Anytime Fitness; Legacy Fitness

## Pharmacy

**Hy-Vee Pharmacy**

**Runners up:** CVS; Medicap Pharmacy

## Cosmetic services

\* **RenuYou Aesthetics & MedSpa**

**Runners up:** Nova MedSpa; Ultra Beauty

## Physical therapy

\* **Rock Valley Physical Therapy**

**Runners up:** Ankeny Physical Therapy Partners; Athleticco

## Alternative health care

**Natural Health Family Medicine Clinic**

**Runners up:** New Day Health & Hormones; RenuYou Aesthetics & MedSpa

## Weight loss clinic

\* **RenuYou Aesthetics & MedSpa**

**Runners up:** New Day Health & Hormones; Weight Watchers

## Medical spa

\* **RenuYou Aesthetics & MedSpa**

**Runners up:** Lush Lifestyle Medicine; Spavia Ankeny

## Dance studio

\* **Michelle's School of Dance**

**Runners up:** Ashlee's Creative Arts Academy; Nicole's School of Dance



Jenessa Amundson is owner of Painting by Jen, which was voted favorite painting company. Photo by Parker Davis

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# FEATURE

## Gymnastics and/or tumbling studio

### Triad Gymnastics

Runners up: Encore Dance Academy; Koach AllStars

## CBD Store

### Sunned Your CBD Store

Runners up: CIV Plus; Fit Pharm Nutrition

## Financial planner

### Justin M. Bjerke, Edward Jones

Runners up: Brian D. Herbel, Edward Jones; Curt Brooks, Edward Jones

## Law firm

### Mark Gray Law, PLC

Runners up: Lamberti, Murphy & Strong; Sarah E. Wilson Law Firm, PLC

## Veterinarian

### \* Ankeny Animal & Avian Clinic

Runners up: Creature Comforts Veterinary Hospital; Polk City Veterinary Hospital

## Lawn care business

### \* Sutter Lawns

Runners up: Rasmussen Lawn Care; Total Quality Inc.

## Landscaping company

### \* TNT Landscaping & Nursery

Runners up: Beeler Lawn & Landscape; Total Quality Inc.

## Heating and cooling business

### \* Polk County Heating and Cooling

Runners up: Bryant Iowa Heating & Cooling; Trade Allies Heating and Cooling

## Plumbing company

### \* Premier Plumbing

Runners up: Polk County Heating and Cooling; Todd's Plumbing, Heating & Cooling

## Senior living establishment

### \* Mill Pond

Runners up: Attivo Trail Ankeny; Suites of Ankeny

## Insurance Agency

### \* Cupp Insurance

Runners up: Cullen & Associates; Doubleday Insurance Agency

## Realtor

### \* Susie Sheldahl

Runners up: Alex Schwieta; Jacquelyn Duke

## Bank/credit union

### \* Veridian Credit Union

Runners up: Luana Savings Bank; Wells Fargo

## Place for guests to stay

### Courtyard by Marriott

Runners up: Best Western Premier; Hampton Inn & Suites Ankeny

## Contractor/construction services/remodeling

### Renomads

Runners up: A & Co. Design LLC; Black Birch Homes and Design

## Cleaning company

### Tiffany Ferneding

Runners up: Molly Maid; phClean

## Painting company

### Painting By Jen

Runners up: Five Star Painting; Nick's Painting Plus LLC

## Home builder

### Black Birch Homes and Design

Runners up: Redwood Builders; Strahan Construction Inc. ■



A photograph of a small white dog sitting on a grooming table. A person's hands are visible, one holding a blue comb and the other a blue brush. The background shows a pet grooming shop with shelves of supplies. A yellow bone-shaped sign reads "BONE-A-PATREAT ANKENY". Text overlay on the photo says "BAKERY SELF WASH GROOMING PET SUPPLIES". Below the photo is a white coupon with a red border. The coupon text reads: "SAVE \$10 OFF A FIRST TIME GROOM", "PROMO CODE: ANKGROOM", "Valid in-store at Bone-A-Patreat Ankeny only. Expires June 30, 2026. One coupon per customer." At the bottom of the coupon, it says "1630 S. ANKENY BLVD (515) 515-6130" and "BONEAPATREAT.COM".

# OUT & ABOUT RESIDENTS' Choice

Businesses receive their Ankeny/Northern Polk County Residents' Choice certificates.



Ben, Kevin Harrington, Cara, Erin Woodward and Jessica at Leaning Tower of Pizza



Kathy Bovee, Krista Clark, Cheryl Newhouse, Sheila Cason, Linda Sash and Stacey Sporrer of Our Lady's Little Learners Preschool



Dr. Nicholas Smith and Dr. Samuel Christensen of Ankeny Orthodontics



Sharlyn Estrem, Jamie Anderson, Tony PeterSmith, Diane Weber and Mackenzie Cowden of Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce



The staff and pastors at Our Lady's Immaculate Heart Church

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# ANKENY Lions Club

Part 1: Serving the community since 1941



Charter members of the Ankeny Lions Club were recently at the Ankeny Historical Society Museum where they are displaying their charter.

The Ankeny Lions Club was started by a group of businessmen with an International Lions Club Charter dating April 30, 1941, seven months and seven days before the United States entered World War II.

Can you imagine the changes forth coming with war needing the service of many young Ankeny men and the changes that the war effort required. Several local farmers were required to relinquish their farms to accommodate the building of the ordinance plant, and small-town Ankeny saw a boom with the needed workers at the ordinance plant and infrastructure and services to accommodate this influx of people in Ankeny and the greater Des Moines area.

Current Lion Bob Scott, an industrial arts teacher for the Ankeny schools, became a member in 1957. When asked recently how he became a Lion member, he stated that, one day, his school principal came to him and suggested that he join a service club like the Lions. When asked why he heeded that suggestion, he replied, "As a young teacher, I wanted to keep my job." He is still an active member 69 years later.

In 1957, the club met at the Rebecca Lodge on Cherry Street. The Rebecca Lodge's women

served family-style meals before their meetings. The club then moved to their own building across from Parkview School on First Street just east of where today's bandshell stands. The building was destroyed by the F4 tornado in June 1974. The club also maintained a large message board sign along the north side of First Street at the location of today's bandshell. The Lions would stand on raised wooden planks to change the letters on the community message board.

The Lions Club was known for its giant chicken barbecue on Labor Day for the town's celebration. They created a large barbecue pit made of cement blocks, Re-rod and chicken wire were used to make the grill. The Lions sold tickets to the community and beyond before the event, resulting in crowds almost double the population of Ankeny at that time.

The Lions had new club officers annually with the exception of the treasurer (an Ankeny banker) who was a long-term treasurer for the club, and the secretary, a position held by Jim Jensen for 13-14 years. Today, Jim is the oldest dues-paying member at 102 years of age.

While the chicken barbecue was one of the club's largest fundraisers, they also sold

light bulbs door to door in the 1960s and 1970s. They would go out in teams and canvas the whole city at night, returning for chili or oyster stew. Members who participated enjoyed this project because it promoted unity while working toward a common goal, resulting in camaraderie and friendship.

The club strived to spend their money locally. The Lions built the press box for the football stadium by Parkview and contributed money for the new scoreboard at the current football stadium near Northview. The Lions also contributed and helped build baseball diamonds for the Ankeny Little League south of Fisk Drive on Ankeny's east side.

At one time, the Lions Club had more than 70 members and considered limiting their members. In contrast, today, the group has 23 active members in a community nearing a population of 80,000. They are continuously looking for good people, men and women, to join the Ankeny Lions Club. The group has had a limited number of women in the past and welcomed its newest woman member, Susan Kunzman, in 2024.

Next month, read part II: How the Ankeny Lions Club contributes to the community. ■

# EVENTS IN THE AREA

To submit calendar items for consideration, send to [tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com](mailto:tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com).

Check for cancellations



## Upcoming in Ankeny Living magazine:

### Play sets, play houses and tree houses:

Share the stories of your memorable play sets, play houses and tree houses. Perhaps your family has play structures that entertain your kids for hours. Or maybe you have memories of the play house you enjoyed as a child. Big or small, if it creates happy times, let us know. Email [tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com](mailto:tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com).

## Adult Art Classes and Workshops

Ankeny Art Center, 1520 S.W. Ordinance Road

Adult summer classes are now scheduled at the Ankeny Art Center. Classes for adult beginners include: Gesture Drawing (with a live model), Linoleum Printmaking, Monoprinting on Clay, Mixed Media Collage and Pet Portraits in Acrylic. Adult intermediate/advanced classes include: Composition for the Watercolorist, Watercolor Birds and Pottery Wheel. Register online at [www.ankenyardcenter.org](http://www.ankenyardcenter.org).

## Youth Summer Art Camps

Ankeny Art Center, 1520 S.W. Ordinance Road

Summer art camps for kids will be offered June 9-12, June 16-19, July 7-10 and July 14-17. Camps will run Tuesday through Friday for one week. Each week will have different projects so campers can sign up for multiple sessions. Themes are incorporated into all classes except for Pottery Wheel. Financial assistance is available. Email Education Director Claire Hays at [claire@ankenyardcenter.com](mailto:claire@ankenyardcenter.com) for information as well as to make donations to the camp fund. Ankeny Art Center members get 20% off at registration. For more information and registration, visit [www.ankenyardcenter.org](http://www.ankenyardcenter.org).

## DNA For Family History Research

Saturday, June 27, 1 p.m.

Ankeny Kirkendall Public Library, 1250 S.W. District Drive

This class will explore how DNA can be used for genealogy research. It will cover some basic science behind DNA, the types of tests available and what each test reveals about ancestry and family connections. The program will provide an overview of major testing companies and discuss the advantages of each platform, such as large databases and specialized analysis tools. You will learn how DNA results can help break through genealogical brick walls, confirm family relationships and trace ethnic origins, making it a valuable resource for anyone interested in building a more complete family tree. The science won't be scary, and the results can be exciting. Presented by the Ankeny Genealogical Chapter.

## Celebrate Spring in the Park

Monday, June 15, 6 p.m.

Water Works Park, 2201 George Flagg Parkway, Des Moines

The Kerry and Linda Killinger Foundation Community Series features live performances on the Killinger Family Stage throughout the summer. The Des Moines Performing Arts takes the stage in June, featuring a national touring act in the park. Learn more at [www.waterworkspark.org/events-in-the-park/community-series](http://www.waterworkspark.org/events-in-the-park/community-series).



## Biking for Babies Central Iowa Ride

June 27

Starting at St. Luke the Evangelist Catholic Church, 1102 N.W. Weigel Drive, Ankeny

The annual Biking for Babies Central Iowa Ride is being held in Ankeny. Leaving from St. Luke the Evangelist Catholic Church and riding on the High Trestle Trail, riders will enjoy biking a distance comfortable for their level. This is a family-friendly ride that raises money and awareness for pregnancy resource centers in the area. Registration and information can be found by scanning this QR code.



# EVENTS IN THE AREA

To submit calendar items for consideration, send to [tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com](mailto:tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com).

Check for cancellations

## Des Moines Art Center Museum Highlights Tour

Saturdays, 1-2 p.m.  
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.



## Free Intro Sessions

Friday, June 12 and Friday, June 26 at 6:30 p.m.  
Passion Studios, 114 N.W Fifth St., Suite 203, Ankeny

"I've always wanted to play that instrument..." Does this sound like you? Students at Passion Studios learn in two to three months what takes traditional lessons two years to learn. Attend this 45-minute session to learn more about what sets their method apart, see a sample lesson in action and get answers for any questions you may have. You can also tour the studio, meet the staff, and hear their personal story.



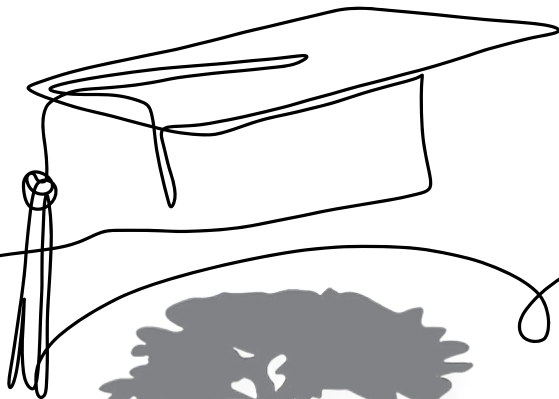
## CITYVIEW Midday Mixer

Saturday, May 30, 1-4 p.m.  
The District at Prairie Trail, S.W. District Drive, Ankeny

Enjoy summer cocktails to kick off the season. Check in is at El Presidente. Cost is \$25 for advance tickets, \$35 at the door. For more information, or to buy tickets, scan the QR code.



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## Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden Spring Programs

Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden,  
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## Des Moines Downtown Farmers Market

Saturdays through Oct. 31, 7 a.m. to noon, 8 a.m. to noon in October

Historic Court District, Downtown Des Moines

The 2026 season will feature 305 vendors, including 43 new participants, with 75 produce and agriculture vendors highlighting the region's strong farming community. Vendors represent 74 cities across 42 Iowa counties, spanning 12 city blocks from Water Street to Fifth Street. For more information, visit [www.dsmpartnership.com/desmoinesfarmersmarket](http://www.dsmpartnership.com/desmoinesfarmersmarket).



## Hoover on the Road Exhibit

Through May 31

Living History Farms, 11121 Hickman Road, Urbandale

Designed to introduce audiences across Iowa to the life and legacy of President Herbert Hoover, the exhibit highlights Hoover's remarkable journey from his humble beginnings in Iowa to the presidency, along with his lasting humanitarian impact around the world.

## 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 Iowa Craft Brew 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 Brewed in Iowa campaign, which raises awareness about the economic and community impact of local breweries across the state. Tickets available at [www.iowacraftbrewfestival.com](http://www.iowacraftbrewfestival.com). ■



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# WHAT TO expect as a first-time homebuyer

If you plan to purchase a home for the first time, you may feel overwhelmed about not knowing where to start. We have summarized the key steps so you can approach the homebuying process with confidence.

**Set up a prequalification meeting:** The first step is to meet with your mortgage lender to get pre-qualified for a loan. This meeting should give you a better idea about what you can afford, which is important to keep in mind as you search for a home.

**Find the right home:** Work with a Realtor to compare the homes on the market to identify the options that fit your interests, needs and budget. Once you narrow your choices, take a closer look.

**Obtain a sale agreement:** After you find the right home, your Realtor will help you negotiate the terms of the sale. Your Realtor will then present your offer to the sellers. If the seller signs the offer, you have a binding contract.

**Submit your loan application:** Your lender will recommend the mortgage loans that best fit your financial situation and help you finish your application. Common types of documentation required to verify the source of funds being used to purchase the home are: pay stubs, two years



Mindy Selix



Yvonne Silvers

of tax returns, account statements.

**Complete a property inspection:** Not long after your offer is accepted, you should hire a licensed home inspector to check the structural safety of the property. If the inspection shows major problems, you have a few options on how to proceed:

- Cancel the sale and your deposit will be returned to you.
- Continue with the sale and ask the seller to make repairs or give you a credit for the amount it would cost to make the repairs.

**Receive final loan approval:** First, a loan processor will package all relevant information to be sent to the underwriter. The underwriter will then review the information and make the final decision whether the loan is approved.

**Purchase homeowner's insurance:** You should obtain a homeowner's insurance policy to protect your home against liability. If your down payment is less than 20% of the home's sale price, you may be required by your lender to carry Private Mortgage Insurance (PMI).

**Close on your home:** The closing date is when your down payment and closing costs are due and the title of the property is transferred to your name. Generally, this is the day the seller turns the keys over to you and the home is yours. ■

Information provided by Mindy Selix, 515-222-2017, mselix@bankerstrust.com, NMLS ID#: 571223 and Yvonne Silvers, 515-222-2005, ysilvers@bankerstrust.com, NMLS ID#: 571224, 1925 N. Ankeny Blvd. Ankeny.

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# ANKENY announces new assistant city manager

Ankeny city officials announced Brent Hinson as the new assistant city manager beginning June 22.

As assistant city manager, Hinson will support day-to-day operations and help advance priorities set by the city manager and city council. He will work with departments on major projects and initiatives, guide policy development and implementation, evaluate operations and recommend improvements, and serve as acting city manager as needed.

“Brent will be a strong addition to our team as Ankeny continues to grow and we take on new priorities. His experience, ability to work through complex challenges and track record of success made him a clear choice for this role,” said City Manager Mike Schrock.

Hinson is currently the deputy city

administrator in Mason City, where he has served in this role since 2021. He has more than 23 years of experience in senior management roles in four Iowa cities. Hinson is an ICMA credentialed manager and past Iowa League of Cities board member. He holds a Master of Public Administration degree from Drake University.

“Ankeny is one of the premier communities in Iowa, and I look forward to working in this important role. I am pleased to join the Ankeny team and to be a part of the community’s vision and future success,” Hinson said.

The city conducted a nationwide search for the assistant city manager. Hinson will succeed Schrock, who became the city manager in December. ■



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## HVAC

By Alex Messamer

# STAY comfortable year-round

Your home's heating and cooling system works hard through Iowa's freezing winters and humid summers. Keeping your HVAC system maintained not only improves comfort, but can also lower energy costs, improve indoor air quality and extend the life of your equipment.



One of the easiest ways to improve efficiency is by changing your air filters regularly. Dirty filters restrict airflow and force your system to work harder. Most homes should replace filters every 1–3 months, especially households with pets or allergies.

Scheduling professional tune-ups in the spring and fall helps identify small issues before they become expensive repairs.

Homeowners should also seal air leaks around windows, doors and ductwork to prevent energy loss. Proper insulation helps maintain consistent indoor temperatures and reduces strain on your HVAC system.

Upgrading to a programmable or smart thermostat can also help reduce utility bills by automatically adjusting temperatures when you are away or asleep. Some utility companies even offer rebates on smart thermostats.

Keep vents and registers clear of furniture or rugs, and make sure outdoor units stay free of leaves, dirt and debris for proper airflow.

Finally, pay attention to warning signs like unusual noises, uneven temperatures or rising energy bills. Addressing problems early can help avoid costly repairs and keep your home comfortable year-round. ■

Information provided by Alex Messamer, owner, Trade Allies Heating & Cooling, [www.tradeallieshc.com](http://www.tradeallieshc.com), 515-669-4481.

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## SENIOR

By Kim Lawrence

# GARDENING for health and happiness

There is something truly special about spending time in the garden: feeling the warmth of the sun, tending to freshly planted flowers, or simply watching something grow. For many older adults, gardening is more than just a hobby. It is a meaningful way to stay active, connect with nature and support overall well-being.



Gardening provides a gentle form of exercise that helps maintain strength, flexibility and mobility without putting too much strain on the body. Simple activities like planting, watering and light weeding keep you moving in an enjoyable way. Beyond the physical benefits, gardening is also great for mental health. Time spent outdoors and around greenery can reduce stress, improve mood and bring a sense of calm and accomplishment.

One of the best things about gardening is how easily it can be adapted to fit your needs. Raised garden beds can reduce bending and make planting more comfortable, while container gardening is perfect for patios, balconies or smaller spaces. Herbs, flowers, and even vegetables like tomatoes, thrive in pots, making it easy to create a space that works for you.

Gardening also brings people together. Sharing tips, swapping plants or offering fresh produce can create meaningful connections. No matter your experience level, it is never too late to plant something new. ■

Information provided by Kim Lawrence, Leasing Counselor, Attivo Trail Ankeny, 1010 S.W. Magazine Road, Ankeny, [www.attivotrail.com](http://www.attivotrail.com).

# MANAGING risk at different stages of life

As an investor, you will always need to deal with risk of some kind. How can you manage the risk that accompanies the volatility of the financial markets? The answer depends somewhat on where you are in life.



**When you're starting out ...** If you're early in your career, with perhaps four or five decades until you retire, you can likely afford to invest primarily for growth, which also means you will be taking on a higher level of risk — because risk and reward are positively correlated. But, given your age, you will have time to overcome the market downturns that are both inevitable and a normal part of investing. Still, even at this stage, being over-aggressive can be costly.

**When you're in the "middle stages" ...** At this time of your life, you are possibly well along in your career and working on at least a couple of financial goals, such as saving for retirement and your children's college education. You will want to begin adjusting the balance in your portfolio between assets with higher growth and those with lower growth since there will be progressively less time to rebuild losses. You will need to decide on the balance between risk and growth that's right for you.

**When you're a few years from retirement ...** You may have already achieved some key goals. Perhaps your children have finished college and you've paid off your mortgage. As a result, you may have more money available to put away for retirement. Growth still matters because your retirement could be 25 or 30 years long, and you will need investments that can keep up with inflation. But you will also need investments designed to help provide for your income needs in retirement and provide more stability. Also consider reducing your exposure to higher-risk investments and instead consider investing more in stable dividend-paying stocks, government and investment-grade bonds, and cash.

**When you are retired ...** Once you are retired, you might think you should take no risks at all with substantial assets held in cash. However, you could spend two or three decades in retirement, so you may need some growth potential in your portfolio to stay ahead of inflation. A more balanced mix between equities and fixed income is generally appropriate. Establishing a withdrawal rate that is appropriate for your lifestyle and projected longevity can help reduce the risk of outliving your money. Of course, if there is an extended market downturn during any time of your retirement, you may want to temporarily lower your withdrawal rate.

Managing investment risk is a lifelong process that evolves with your goals, responsibilities and time horizon. While you will look for balance among your investments based on your life stage, having a balanced and diversified portfolio doesn't fully protect against a loss. Still, aligning your strategy with your stage of life can help navigate market volatility and stay on track toward long-term success while avoiding emotional investment decisions. The key is staying informed and making intelligent choices that reflect your current income needs and future aspirations. ■

Information provided by Graciela Van Wyk, Financial Advisor, 1255 N. Ankeny Blvd., Suite 102, Ankeny, IA 50023, 515-964-4404. This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Edward Jones, Member SIPC.

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# 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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## FROM GERMANY to Ankeny

The Gebben family finds its place.

When Matthias Gebben's employer, John Deere, asked him to choose between Ottumwa and Ankeny for a project, he thought back to his time in Johnston in 2008 — a memory that made the decision easier for his family.

"I kind of knew what the environment was like," Gebben says. "Upfront research (about Ankeny) also revealed that child care and schools seemed to be great. The proximity to Des Moines, with its cultural opportunities, was also a plus."

Today, the family rents a home in Ankeny's Prairie Trail neighborhood, close to their children's school, with enough indoor and outdoor space to enjoy. One of Gebben's favorite features is a shared green space that connects the homes, creating a natural gathering place for neighbors and a safe area for children to play.

Gebben also appreciates how bike-friendly the area is. Because the family has only one car, they rely heavily on their bikes, including a cargo bike with a front box large enough to hold their three children. They use it for appointments, grocery shopping and trips to Des Moines or along local trails.

Originally from Germany, the Gebbens say the people in Ankeny made their transition especially smooth. They met neighbors on playgrounds and were quickly invited to activities, helping them feel connected right away.

"Neighbors are really important for daily interactions for adults and kids," Gebben says. "This created a strong network right from the beginning. That network, of course, expands and changes over time, but it remains the foundation of our social life."

Gebben says many people in Ankeny seem to share a common experience — moving from somewhere else — which makes it easier to strike up conversations.

"People are very interested in our story, moving from Germany to Ankeny," he says. "The cargo bike is something a lot of people have not seen before. It sparks small conversations at intersections or wherever we go."

While cargo bikes are common in Germany, they are still rare in Ankeny, and the family has become somewhat recognizable around town — especially Gebben's wife, Ina, riding with the children in the front.

Ina, a teacher in Germany, has also enjoyed getting involved at their child's school by volunteering regularly. It has helped the family better understand the school system and build relationships with teachers and staff.

As a family, they enjoy many of Ankeny's amenities, including the library, Trail Point Aquatics Center, parks and playgrounds, The District for outdoor dining, and Uptown Ankeny.

For the Gebben family, what began as a work decision has become a community they are proud to call home. ■



Matthias and Ina Gebben, who moved to Ankeny from Germany, and their children often bike around the community, with their children passengers in their cargo bike.



# MEET Erryn O’Conner

Teaching AELP students at Parkview Middle School



Erryn O’Conner teaches Extended Learning students at Parkview Middle School.

Erryn O’Conner knew from an early age she wanted to pursue a career in gifted education.

“I currently teach Ankeny Extended Learning Program students at Parkview Middle School,” she says. “I chose this field because I have a passion for it. I was in a gifted education program growing up, and I had a teacher who was extremely impactful in my life. Her classroom was an outlet for me to be creative and to experience authentic learning outside of my regular classes, and I always wanted to lead that kind of classroom for my own students.”

O’Conner has been in Ankeny for 12 years, all at Parkview. Prior to that, she taught K-12 talented and gifted students at West Marshall Community School District.

One of the things O’Conner enjoys most about teaching, aside from her students, is collaborating with fellow educators.

“I work with incredible educators who show up every day for kids, and my students push my thinking just as much as I try to push theirs. I love the creativity and innovation that I get to share with kids and teachers in our classrooms.”

She also values hearing from students that ELP has made a difference for them at school. Students with the highest abilities are sometimes the most overlooked, yet they have distinct academic and social-emotional needs that are not always met in a traditional classroom. For O’Conner, it is rewarding to provide what those students need.

The biggest challenge, she says, is also tied to meeting those needs. Teachers often must think creatively to ensure students receive the support they need, which can be difficult within a structured environment.

“I think that’s why I’m so grateful to work with teachers who put kids’ needs first and look for creative solutions for all of our students. For many students in our program, ELP is where they feel most at home, and it’s important to me to make sure they feel that way every day they come to school.”

There are many memorable moments each year in ELP. This year, sixth-grade ELP literacy students scored high enough on the WordMasters Challenge — an analogy-based vocabulary contest — to rank among the top 10 schools in the country.

When she’s not at school, O’Conner stays busy with her own children.

“I love teaching, but my free time is always with my family. I have two busy kids who keep my husband and me running, but we wouldn’t have it any other way.” ■

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# SIGN UP for the Summer Library Program



The Ankeny Public Library will kick off its annual Summer Library Program on May 28 with an all-ages celebration designed to promote reading, learning and community engagement throughout the summer months.

Registration begins May 15, both online and in person at the library. The official kickoff event, scheduled for May 28 from 5:30-7:30 p.m., will feature free family-friendly attractions including a petting zoo, mini golf, games and Tropical Sno. A special kickoff just for teens will be held from 8-9 p.m. that same day with glow in the dark mini-golf and Tropical Sno.

Open to participants of all ages — from infants to adults — the Summer Library Program encourages continued literacy development, community and life-long learning during the summer months. Grow your love of reading and participate in free, fun and educational programs.

Participants can earn rewards throughout the program by completing activity logs that track reading or other educational activities. Weekly prize drawings will include gift cards, and all participants will receive a free book during a giveaway scheduled for June 23–28. Those who complete the program will also receive free admission to a finale pool and splash party on July 29.

And don't forget the biggest prize of the year: bragging rights and a trophy to the local elementary school with the highest participation rate.

Stay engaged by attending events and making use of the Ankeny Kirkendall Public Library all summer. Learn more at [ankneyiowa.gov/slp](http://ankneyiowa.gov/slp).

The Summer Library Program is generously funded by the Friends of the Ankeny Library, a nonprofit group that supports library programs and services. Check out the group's Ankeny Kirkendall Public Library merchandise and learn more about how to support the library at [friendsoftheankenylibrary.com](http://friendsoftheankenylibrary.com). ■

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[www.ankneyiowa.gov/library](http://www.ankneyiowa.gov/library)  
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# 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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# INDOOR cats get bored, too

This past winter, my daughter and I unlocked a new favorite activity for our 9-month-old kitten: clicker training. To our surprise, she not only learned many of the same skills our dogs know — sit, fist-bump and target training — but she genuinely loved having something to do.



Which got me thinking. While it is well known that dogs do their best when they have jobs, activities and enrichment, we tend to think of cats as self-sufficient loners who don't need much more than food, water and a place to sleep 18 hours a day.

The reality? That couldn't be further from the truth.

In the wild, cats spend much of their day hunting, climbing, exploring and problem-solving. Indoor life is safer and longer, but it can lack the variety that naturally keeps cats engaged. Without those outlets, boredom can

creep in — and it doesn't always look the way we expect.

Enrichment — simple additions that encourage cats to explore and interact with their environment — can be a complete game-changer. It can improve overall happiness while helping prevent weight gain, anxiety and unwanted behaviors like scratching or biting. The key is to keep it simple and start small. Mentally engaging options include puzzle feeders, treat hunts, and interactive wand toys that tap into natural hunting instincts. But don't overlook things you already have at home — cardboard boxes, paper bags and crinkled packing paper are often instant hits.

Adding vertical space can also make a big impact. Cat trees, shelves and window perches help cats feel secure while giving them a chance to observe the world from above. A bird feeder can quickly turn a quiet window into hours of "cat TV." In our house, this often looks like a tiny, chirping predator glued to the glass, convinced she's just one step away from catching a sparrow.

For more adventurous cats, screened porches, catios, or even leash walks can safely add even more stimulation.

And don't forget social interaction. As I discovered this winter, clicker training can be a fun bonding activity for the whole family. Our kitten now frequently initiates sessions by holding out her paw for a fist bump, just in case we forgot. Just five to 10 minutes a day can go a long way.

If you're ready to try enrichment at home, start small and build from there. Rotating toys and activities can help keep things interesting without overwhelming your cat.

As we head into the warmer months and spend more time outside with our dogs, it is worth thinking about how we can refresh our cats' environments as well. Even small changes can make a big difference in their overall wellbeing. ■

Information provided by Dr. Amanda Gigler, Ankeny Animal & Avian Clinic, 742 S. Ankeny Blvd., Ankeny, 515-964-7387, amandagigler@ankenyanimal.com.

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**Katie Reynolds,**  
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**After 20 years in the clinic, what's one thing that still makes you smile every day?** The staff. After all this time, I still genuinely love the group of people I get to work with. That never gets old.

**If you weren't running a veterinary clinic, what do you think you'd be doing instead?** Honestly, probably something not too different at its core. I have a background in social work, so I'd likely be in a role focused on empowering and elevating women in some way. The setting would look different, but the heart behind it would be the same.

**Having grown up around the clinic and now helping lead it, what's one memory or lesson from your family that still influences how you run things today?** Growing up here, I watched our family make smart, thoughtful business decisions, and what stood out most was that taking care of your people was always part of that equation. That lesson has never left me. If the business is going to thrive, the people who show up every day have to feel that too.

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# LOOKING BACK

The May 2011 **Ankeny Living** magazine featured the story, “Love thy neighbor: Local churches serve the community.” The cover photo featured Rose Rice and Heather Brewer, members of the Holy Trinity Lutheran Pink Ribbon Ministry, making comfort pillows for cancer patients. Ankeny First United Methodist volunteers Margo Lierman and



Nancy Carr were also pictured serving at the Children and Family Urban Ministries Supper Club. St. Paul Lutheran volunteers were pictured at the church’s Big Rake event in November. ■

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# GRADUATION season

It's graduation season. All around the community, we are celebrating work completed in educational programs. From preschool accomplishments to doctoral achievements, graduations are significant events. I've even seen pictures on social media from our community of "puppy-training" graduations — complete with caps, gowns and dog-safe graduation cake.



As I remember my own graduation(s), I remember the work which went into the achievement. There were long nights of study, stressful days of testing, hours and hours of lectures, papers completed and speeches prepared. Graduating can be a lot of work. So, to all of the graduates in our community: Congratulations and well done. We are proud of you and look forward to seeing you continue to become.

You know, my college diploma is somewhere in my basement. When I stumble upon it every seven to nine years, I marvel at how small that piece of paper is compared to all the work I did to "earn" it. When I apply this same style of thinking to "faith," I marvel at how little I have done in comparison to all that I have gained.

One of my core beliefs is that God does the largest share of the work so I might be the one to spiritually "gain." God created all that we can see and understand, and even that which is beyond our sight and our understanding. God offers each of us life and, in God's divine expression of love, allows us to make of this life what we will. We get to live and love and become, not because of our own creative power but because of God. Nothing I do could ever compare to what God has already done.

If I consider what would be similar to "graduation" in faith, I think of "events" like baptism, first communion, confirmation or catechism, and maybe even membership classes or consequential professions of faith. But, in each instance, what is actually being celebrated is the completion of work that God has done. God offers God's spirit to complete us and accompany us in baptism. God offers sacrificial love that we can receive in communion. God bestows wisdom and belonging in confirmation. And, it is God's forgiveness and grace that we are celebrating when we "graduate" from death to life and profess our faith. In fact, each of those "milestones and achievements" magnify our inability to become all we can be WITHOUT God offering "graduation" to us.

So, in the spirit of the season, I pray that we give God all thanks and praise for any accomplishment and for every short journey completed. More than this, I celebrate the work God has done in you which has allowed you to not only graduate "academically" but also to experience LIFE by the gift of God's generosity. I celebrate that, through Jesus Christ, you can graduate from this life into an eternity which begins again today. By the presence of God's Spirit, we can "graduate" from blindness to sight for whatever journey God grants us ahead.

So, save a piece of grad cake this year for God... I think God deserves it. ■

Information provided by John Wagner, campus pastor, Christian Life Center, Ankeny First United Methodist Church, john.wagner@ankenyfirst.org.



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# WHAT IS a herniated disc?

Many patients with back pain, leg pain or weakness of the lower extremity muscles are diagnosed with a herniated disc. When a disc herniation occurs, the cushion that sits between the spinal vertebrae is pushed outside its normal position.

**What is the spinal disc?** The spinal disc is a soft cushion that sits between each vertebrae of the spine. In a young individual, the disc is soft and elastic. However, the disc gradually loses its elasticity and is more vulnerable to injury with aging.

**What happens when a disc herniates?** As the spinal disc becomes less elastic, it can rupture. When the disc ruptures, a portion of it pushes outside its normal boundary. This is called a herniated disc. When a herniated disc bulges out from between the vertebrae, the spinal nerves and spinal cord can become pinched. There is normally a little extra space around the spinal cord and spinal nerves. However, if enough of the herniated disc is pushed out of place, these structures may be compressed.

**What causes a herniated disc?** A herniated disc may occur suddenly in an event such as a fall or an accident or may occur gradually with repetitive straining of the spine. Often people who experience a herniated disc already have spinal stenosis, a problem that causes narrowing of the space around the spinal cord and spinal nerves.

**What are the symptoms of a herniated disc?** When the spinal cord or spinal nerves become compressed, they don't work properly. This means that abnormal signals may get passed from the compressed nerves or that signals may not get passed at all. Common symptoms of a herniated disc include the following:

- **Electrical-shock-like pain:** Pressure on the nerves can cause pain to travel down the arms or legs, depending on the location of the herniated disc. This pain feels like an electrical shock.
- **Tingling and numbness:** Patients often have abnormal sensations such as tingling, numbness or "pins and needles." These symptoms may be experienced in the same region as painful electric-shock sensations.
- **Muscle weakness:** Because of the nerve irritation, signals from the brain may be interrupted, causing muscle weakness. Nerve irritation can also be tested by examining reflexes.
- **Bowel or bladder problems:** Bowel and bladder problems are important because they may be a signs of a more serious condition that should be evaluated immediately.

Chiropractic care focuses on the conservative treatment of herniated discs. Specialized equipment and procedures can be used to safely and painlessly treat herniated discs. If you or someone you know is suffering from a herniated disc and have not found the relief for which you are looking, consider chiropractic. They may be able to help. ■

Information provided by Christopher M. Renze, D.C., D.I.B.C.N., of Renze Chiropractic Clinic, P.C. For more information, visit [www.renzechiro.com](http://www.renzechiro.com) or call the office at 965-3844.



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## SUNSCREEN does more than prevent skin cancer

Every May, Skin Cancer Awareness Month serves as a timely reminder that protecting your skin is not just about aesthetics, it is about health. Skin cancer remains the most common cancer in the United States, yet it is also one of the most preventable. One simple, powerful habit makes a difference: daily sunscreen use.

Sunscreen has come a long way over the years. Older formulas were often heavy, greasy and filled with chemical filters that could irritate sensitive skin or leave users questioning long-term safety. Today, the industry has evolved toward more refined, skin-friendly options — particularly medical-grade, mineral-based sunscreens. These newer formulations use ingredients like zinc oxide and titanium dioxide to physically block and reflect harmful UV rays, rather than absorbing them like traditional chemical sunscreens.

Modern mineral sunscreens are also more cosmetically elegant than their predecessors. Advances in formulation mean they blend seamlessly into the skin without the chalky residue once associated with mineral protection. Many now include added skincare benefits such as antioxidants, hydration and even tinting to even out skin tone.

Sunscreen also plays a critical role in preserving youthful skin. Up to 90% of visible aging — fine lines, wrinkles and sunspots — is caused by UV exposure.

This May, consider sunscreen not just a seasonal product, but a year-round investment in your skin's health and longevity. ■

Provided by Dr. Stephanie Koos, RenuYou MedSpa, 1705 N. Ankeny Blvd., Suite B, Ankeny, www.renuyouaestheticsandbotox.com, 515-330-8900.



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## PLAN AHEAD

By Scott Eriksen

## ADVANCE planning offers peace of mind

Planning ahead is one of the kindest gifts you can give the people you love. Many families tell us that the greatest benefit of advance planning is the sense of calm it brings during an otherwise overwhelming time. When important decisions have already been made, your family is free to focus on what truly matters: being together, supporting one another and honoring a life well-lived without added stress or uncertainty.

There can also be meaningful financial benefits to planning and paying in advance. Designed to give families confidence and clarity about future expenses, you can have your selected services and merchandise guaranteed — protecting your family from the impact of rising costs over time.

Whether you are just beginning to think about your wishes or you are ready to put a full plan in place, starting the conversation can be simple and should be completely pressure-free. Advanced planning counselors are here to listen, answer questions, and help you explore your options at your own pace. They will meet you where you are and make sure your preferences are thoughtfully recorded.

Every family deserves compassionate care and affordable options, regardless of budget or preferences. Advance planning is simply about creating peace of mind — for yourself and for those who mean the most to you. ■

Information provided by Scott Eriksen, Director of Hamilton's Advanced Planning, Hamilton's Funeral Home, 605 Lyon St., Des Moines, 515-697-3670, www.HamiltonsFuneralHome.com.



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# GUARDIANSHIP allows for advocacy

Parents of adult children with a disability can help them navigate care.

If you are a parent of a child with a disability and your child is about to turn 18, this can be a scary time. You may be aware that, once a child turns 18, they are a legal adult and are presumed to be capable of making decisions and exercising rights on their own. This means that you, as the parent, will no longer be able to make decisions for your child regarding their finances, healthcare or education.



In order to remain an active advocate for your child and to be included in conversations regarding their finances, healthcare and education, you should file for a guardianship over your child. A guardianship is a legal proceeding where a person, typically a family member, asks the court to find that the adult child is unable to effectively manage their affairs due to their disability.

To obtain a guardianship, you must petition the court. The petition must include all basic facts, including the petitioner's relationship to the person who will be under the guardianship as well as a brief description of the ward's disability. The description should include how the disability affects the person's ability to make

decisions. Following the petition, there will be a hearing before a judge. At this hearing, you must present sufficient evidence of the need for a guardianship.

A guardianship doesn't completely eliminate your child's ability to make decisions for themselves; rather, it provides you the opportunity to continue to support their self-sufficiency.

Having a guardianship over your adult child allows you to continue to support them and assist them in their everyday lives. You will, with a guardianship, be able to assist them in maximizing their independence. Without a guardianship over your 18-year-old, you lose the ability to speak with their doctors and care providers, communicate with insurance companies on their behalf, coordinate benefits, and assist in managing their finances and assets.

In order to ensure that your petition is done correctly and that you are maximizing your chances of continuing to be an advocate for your child, you should speak to a reputable attorney with experience in guardianships. Your attorney will be able to assist you in the petition and in any court hearings that follow. ■

Information provided by Gail Barnett, Abendroth Russell Barnett Law Firm, 2560 73rd St., Urbandale, 515-278-0623, [www.ARPCLaw.com](http://www.ARPCLaw.com).

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# BUILDING skills, building Ankeny

The growing demand for skilled workers in the trades, technology, health care and construction industries is something we see clearly here in Ankeny, and our high schools and expanding programming are poised to meet this challenge head-on.



It's exactly why the Ankeny Innovation Hub matters so much right now. This project represents more than a new facility. It reflects an investment in our high school programming, particularly in how we prepare students for life after high school. For many students, success doesn't follow a single path, and our comprehensive high schools and the new Innovation Hub are designed to meet them where they are with hands-on, real-world learning experiences that connect directly to high-demand careers.

Through programs, which will include construction, manufacturing and skilled trades, students will have opportunities to learn by doing. They will work with industry-standard tools, engage in project-based learning and build technical skills that translate immediately into the workforce. Just as important, they will develop the professional habits, communication, problem-solving and teamwork that employers consistently tell us they need.

What makes the Innovation Hub especially powerful is its connection to our local business community. By partnering with area contractors, trade professionals and industry leaders, we are creating a two-way relationship. Students gain exposure to real career pathways, mentorship, and even work-based learning opportunities. At the same time, local employers have a direct role in shaping the future workforce, helping ensure students graduate with the relevant, in-demand skills they need.

This is how we close the gap between education and industry. It's not about choosing between college and career; it's about expanding opportunities so every student can find a path that leads to purpose and stability. For some, that may mean entering the workforce right after graduation with certifications and experience already in hand. For others, it may be a steppingstone to apprenticeships, technical programs or further education.

The long-term impact on our community is significant. A strong local workforce supports economic growth, attracts new businesses and helps existing companies thrive. When students can see a future for themselves right here in Ankeny, they are more likely to stay, invest and contribute to the community that helped shape them.

The Innovation Hub is an investment in people, in our students, our businesses and our shared future. By creating meaningful, accessible pathways into the trades, we are not only responding to today's workforce needs but also building a stronger, more connected Ankeny for years to come. ■

Information provided by Dr. Erick Pruitt, Superintendent of Ankeny Community School District. [www.ankenyschools.org](http://www.ankenyschools.org)





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# OUT & ABOUT



Baxter Heating & Air, 6864 N.E. 14th St., held a ribbon cutting ceremony on April 1 with the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce.



Jamie Gibson, Heather Phillips and Jamie Anderson at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting April 1 for Baxter Heating & Air.



Jeremy Sisk and Josh Williams at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting April 1 for Baxter Heating & Air.



Charles Reed and Tracy Gibson at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting April 1 for Baxter Heating & Air.



Michele Hurley, Andy Robinson and Andrew Martin at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting April 1 for Baxter Heating & Air.



Samantha Aukes and Tara Owen at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce Mentoring for Women event on April 14.



Dylan DeJong and Craig Hein at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting April 1 for Baxter Heating & Air.



The Baxter Heating & Air team, pictured with Dewey, their loyal office dog and daily source of smiles.



Ariane Binder, Emma Cox and Brook Culbertson at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce Mentoring for Women event, presented by Roof Iowa at The District Venue on April 14.



Shelly Feldmann and Ohara Leshar at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce Mentoring for Women event, presented by Roof Iowa at The District Venue on April 14.



Stephanie Warner, Sierra McGinnis and Abbie Cross at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce Mentoring for Women event, presented by Roof Iowa at The District Venue on April 14.

# OUT & ABOUT



Chocolaterie Stam, 2405 S.W. White Birch Drive, Suite 107, held a ribbon cutting on April 30 with the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce.



Dina, Mark and Nicolas Hamouche at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for Chocolaterie Stam on April 30.



Tate Van Houten and Rob Stevenson at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for Chocolaterie Stam on April 30.



Ton Stam and Nicolas Hamouche at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for Chocolaterie Stam on April 30.



Nicole Andersen and Sue Hudson at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for Chocolaterie Stam on April 30.



Dina Hamouche and David Stam at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for Chocolaterie Stam on April 30.



Anna Bereshhev, Jane Shepard and Maria Tringides at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for Chocolaterie Stam on April 30.



Amanda Gigler, Shanie Dasrath, Michele Hurley and Beth Barclay at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce Mentoring for Women event, presented by Roof Iowa at The District Venue on April 14



Terrilee Jackel, Alyssa Chapman and Catherine Schut at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce Mentoring for Women event, presented by Roof Iowa at The District Venue on April 14.



The 2026 mentors at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce Mentoring for Women event, presented by Roof Iowa at The District Venue on April 14, were Shelly Feldmann, Karee Vernon, Michelle Orosco, Emma Culbertson, Juli Accola, Kim Johnson-Smith, Shevaughn Moore and Teresa Davis.

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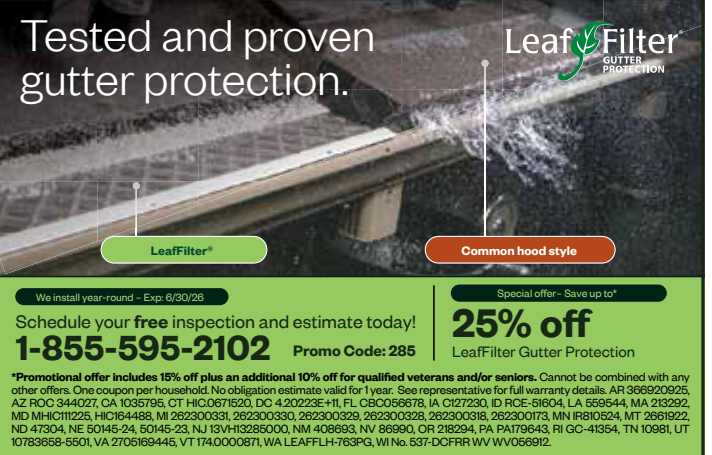
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