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JUNE 2026

# Living

MAGAZINE

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**The Iowa Living Magazines Residents' Choice Awards** are now open for voting, and we would truly appreciate your support. If you feel we've made an impact, you can write in Ellis Law Offices for Favorite Warren County Law Firm (Question #60). Voting is open through July 3, 2026.

At Ellis Law Offices, we often reflect on our "why." Why do we choose to work in the legal field? Why do we dedicate ourselves to this firm? The answer is simple. We want to make a difference. We are driven by a genuine desire to serve others, to support our clients during important moments in their lives, and to work alongside a team that shares that same passion.

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**These are just a few of the ways we strive to serve both our clients and our community every day.**

**If you believe in what we do, we would be honored to have your vote for Favorite Warren County Law Firm.**



**Scan and follow the QR link** to access the Resident's Choice voting page for Warren County. Find us at #60 to cast your vote for **Ellis Law Firm!**

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**WELCOME**

**BULLHEADS and bruised egos**

I was introduced to fishing as a kid by my brother Steve along the riverbanks. At least we called it fishing. We eventually caught some fish — mostly bullheads — but I will get to those aquatic gremlins in a moment.



Our first fishing gear consisted of cane poles strapped to our bicycles as we bumped our way to the river. Later, we upgraded to some of Dad's old rods and reels. To my brother's everlasting frustration, I became remarkably skilled at snagging lines.

We spent hot summer days dreaming about perch, bluegills and sunfish. Instead, we hauled in bullheads. Most fish would not win beauty contests, but bullheads look like they already lost one.

If you have never encountered a bullhead, consider yourself fortunate. The black bullhead is a North American catfish with a square tail and the survival instincts of a cockroach. Also known as fiddleheads, yellowbellies, chuckleheads, mud cats or hornpouts, they will eat practically anything. They thrive in warm, muddy, low-oxygen water that would make other fish file for relocation.

Apparently, there are three types of bullheads — black, brown and yellow. I think we mostly caught black bullheads, the largest and most common species. They live everywhere from muddy rivers to weed-choked ponds.

What I remember most is getting stung repeatedly by their fins while trying to unhook them. Years later, while fishing with my brother Brian, I started using a leather glove to handle bullheads. He still mocks me for it.

For fans of quirky Iowa landmarks, the world's largest bullhead sits in Crystal Lake. The giant fish statue, built in 1958 by Carl Frick and Rush Gabrilson and restored in 2007, stretches 12 feet long atop a pile of rocks. It may be the only bullhead in history people intentionally travel to see.

Thankfully, fishing is about more than bullheads. It is about some great fish and is a fun activity, certainly, but it is also about slowing down, enjoying nature and spending time with family and friends — even if the fish are ugly and occasionally sting you. ■

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# Hook, line and **LEGACY**

Passion for fishing connects generations of residents.

By Rachel Harrington

A tug on the line, the splash of water and the anticipation of the unknown keep anglers coming back. But, for many local families, fishing means more than the catch, stories and memories. It has become a passion that spans generations.

Brayden Steenhoek is an avid fisherman.



Wilfred Ripperger has enjoyed fishing trips to Canada with friends over the last few decades.

### A lifetime of fishing memories

There is something special about fishing with friends. Add an annual return to a favorite fishing hole, and you have a setup for lasting memories. Wilfred Ripperger learned to fish from his dad, and, as a youngster, he enjoyed fishing with aunts, uncles and other family members. One of his favorite childhood memories is catching his first 16-pound northern pike.

“I was probably about 16 or 17 years old,” Ripperger recalls. “We were fishing at Bemidji State Park in Minnesota, where the Mississippi River starts. It is probably the biggest one I’ve ever caught. He was so big. He got tangled up in the weeds. When I finally got him netted, it felt like pulling a big horse out of the water.”

As an adult, Ripperger lived on a farm with several ponds stocked with fish. He says a local restaurant owner would give a free soda to kids who brought in the biggest fish.

“My son and other kids in town would go out to the ponds and fish all the time for the chance at a free pop,” he says.

When Ripperger retired from John Deere in 1990, he learned about a group of men heading to Trout River Resort in Canada.

“It’s about 200 miles north of International



Brayden Steenhoek started fishing with his dad and now competes in fishing competitions.

Falls, Minnesota. My brother was going with them, so I got to go, too,” he says. “I also had a friend from Milo who was going to the same lake with his dad.”

Since that first trip, Ripperger has made an annual 14-hour drive each June to the same destination — and largely with the same group of friends — for a week of fishing and camaraderie. They reserve four or five cabins, depending on the size of the group. One person from each cabin oversees cooking, while one or two others clean the day’s catch.

“We would have fish for dinner at night and for breakfast in the morning,” Ripperger says. “The resort treats us well. We always have a good time.”

Over the past 35 years, Ripperger and his friends have learned the best fishing spots at the resort. His favorite fish to catch is walleye, using live bait from the resort, noting it is also a good-tasting fish.

As he and his friends have grown older, some are no longer able to make the trip. When that began to happen, his wife occasionally joined him, along with other family members and friends. Now nearing 93 years old, Ripperger hopes to make one more trip to Canada. As a test, he traveled to Minnesota this spring with his son and grandson.

“It was a good trip, but it wasn’t like fishing in Canada,” he says.

Ripperger’s advice for fishing is simple.

“You’ve got to have patience. If the fish aren’t biting, try a different spot. Weather sometimes has something to do with it, too.”

### Starting young

Brayden Steenhoek, who has just completed sixth grade, is an avid fisherman. Like many anglers, he started young, going out with his dad when he was still a toddler.

One of his earliest memories is trolling on his dad’s walleye boat when he was 3 or 4 years old.

“My dad has taught me the most about fishing, and I have learned a lot from him,” he says. “When I was really little, we would go on a family fishing trip to northern Minnesota at Aspen Resort on Pelican Lake. I still like to go fishing there because there are lots of big bass and better areas for walleye and pike than in Iowa.”

That does not stop Steenhoek from fishing locally. He enjoys trips to Lake Okoboji and Spirit Lake, which he says have abundant bass.

Steenhoek’s mom, Debbie, says her son fishes nearly every week.

“I love the process of it,” he says. “I love

fishing different lakes and catching different varieties of fish. My favorite fish to catch is smallmouth bass. They are smaller, but they fight harder than largemouth bass.”

When practicing catch-and-release, Steenhoek targets bass. When fishing for food, he focuses on crappie and walleye, noting he enjoys the taste of walleye.

One of his biggest catches came on a trip to Key West.

“I was shark fishing with my dad when I was 9 years old, and we went to a far-out spot,” he says. “I was the first to catch one, and it was an 8-foot lemon shark. I remember half my rod bending over and barely pulling the shark into the boat. A lot of times I thought I’d have to let go because of how hard it was pulling.”

Steenhoek still enjoys fishing with his dad, but he has taken the sport to another level. He is a member of the Iowa Youth Fishing League and competes in tournaments across the state, region and nation. This is his fourth year competing, and he plans to participate in 11 tournaments this year.

He especially enjoys tournaments at Lake Okoboji.

“Two years ago, after the first day of a tournament, my co-angler and I were in fifth place, and we needed 20 pounds on day two to have a shot at first,” he says. “We got 21 pounds. Last year, my co-angler and I set the league record for the biggest five-fish bag at 26.85 pounds.”

He also caught a personal-best bass weighing 5.77 pounds but lost it before getting a photo.

“Two days later, though, I beat my own record with a 5.80-pound one,” he adds.

Steenhoek hopes to fish Florida’s Harris Chain of Lakes someday. He encourages others to research lakes in advance.

“If you’re going to fish a body of water, look it up and understand what the fish are biting on,” he says.

## Fishing with buddies

Greyson Todd began fishing at a young age alongside his dad at his grandfather’s pond. After getting his driver’s license last year, he has been able to fish more often.

He frequently fishes with a group of friends who share his enthusiasm.

“Between my friends and me, we know a lot of ponds to fish,” Todd says. “Some of my friends have done jobs like mowing lawns and have gotten permission to fish ponds on private property.”



Greyson Todd began fishing with his dad when he was young.

The group often fishes in groups of three to seven and can be found at a pond or lake nearly every day during the summer.

“I go whenever I’m free,” Todd says. “I enjoy the sun, being outside and spending time with my buddies.”

Before it was drained and refilled, Lake Ahquabi, south of Indianola, was one of his favorite spots.

“The fish there now aren’t as big as before it was drained,” he says. “Now I fish many other Iowa lakes. Lake Red Rock is a good one if you have a boat.”

Todd and his friends primarily fish for bass and release them afterward. His personal best is about 5 pounds, though he has seen larger catches by friends.

One memorable experience came during a trip with his dad.

“We went to Ohio and fished for walleye in Lake Erie,” he says. “I caught a 9-pound walleye. Our trip lasted five days, and, each day, we cleaned the fish. When it was over, we brought the meat home.”

Todd hopes to try deep-sea fishing someday, possibly in the Bahamas, and is also interested in spearfishing.

Although he has considered tournament fishing, he prefers to fish recreationally.

## INDIANOLA METRO FISHING HOT SPOTS

[www.iowadnr.gov/things-do/fishing/where-fish/fish-local](http://www.iowadnr.gov/things-do/fishing/where-fish/fish-local)

- **Banner Lake North** in Summerset State Park, 13084 Elk Horn St., Carlisle, 4.5 miles north of Indianola. Accessible fishing pier, picnic area, restrooms, paved trails and parking. Catch largemouth bass, bluegill, crappie and channel catfish.
- **Banner Lake South** in Summerset State Park, 13084 Elk Horn St., Carlisle, 4.5 miles north of Indianola. Accessible fishing pier, picnic area, restrooms, paved trails and parking. Catch largemouth bass, bluegill, crappie and channel catfish. Rainbow trout is stocked each spring and fall.
- **Pickard Pond** in the Pickard Recreation Area, east of the Indianola Pickard Sports Complex (2205 E. Second Ave). Catch largemouth bass, bluegill and channel catfish.
- **Lake Ahquabi State Park**, 16510 118th Ave. Catch largemouth bass, channel catfish or panfish.

## WARREN COUNTY FISHING HOT SPOTS

[www.warrencb.org/activities/](http://www.warrencb.org/activities/)

- **Lester Pond at Annett Nature Center and Park**, 15565 118th Ave., Indianola. Catch large mouth bass, panfish and catfish.
- **Bank Swallow Bend wetland**, 12565 168th Ave., Indianola. Catch bass, blue gill and catfish.
- **Grant Park**, 2439 Fenton St., Hartford. Catch bass, blue gill, catfish and more.
- **Hickory Hills**, 23752 Highway 69, New Virginia. Catch bass, blue gill and catfish.
- **Otter Creek**, 14400 Quebec St., Indianola. Catch bass, blue gill and catfish.
- **Rolling Thunder Prairie State Preserve**, 5565 118th Ave., Indianola. Catch bass, blue gill and catfish.

His advice to beginners?

“Don’t give up. There will be days when the fish aren’t biting. Do your research on lures, check if ponds are stocked and learn what fish are in the water so you know what bait to use.” ■

# RECIPE

By Jolene Goodman

## RHUBARB season just got crispy

As a kid, you could find me following my mother around the yard while she planted, weeded and tended to her flowers and plants. Our backyard wasn't overflowing with produce — just a small strawberry patch lined with rhubarb. Back then, I wasn't a fan. Rhubarb was a little too bold for my taste. But, over time, especially when paired with apples and a bit of sugar, it won me over. Now, I look forward to it every year.



Rhubarb is also one of the easiest and most rewarding plants to grow. Give it a sunny spot — ideally on the south side of your house or garage — and it will thrive with very little fuss.

This crisp is inspired by my mother's classic apple crisp. Sort of. Like my mother, I don't really measure ingredients for these kinds of treats, which has made sharing the recipe a bit tricky over the years. Sometimes I add nuts or oatmeal. Sometimes I mix in apples. But one thing never changes: a generous, crispy crumble topping. If it's not crisp, we're not doing it right.

So, for the sake of sharing (and finally having something more useful to say than "just eyeball it"), I actually paid attention while making it this time. What you will find here is my best attempt at a real recipe. That said... I probably added a little extra of something along the way. I encourage you to do the same. That's where the magic happens. ■

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

## Jolene's Rhubarb Crisp

### INGREDIENTS:

- 5 cups of rhubarb
- 1 cup flour
- 1 cup sugar
- 1/3 cup oatmeal
- 1/3 cup chopped pecans
- 1/2 cup butter, room temperature (if it gets too dry, add a little more butter)



### DIRECTIONS:

- Chop rhubarb in half inch pieces and place into an 8x8-inch dish. In a separate bowl, mix dry ingredients, then add butter. Cut butter into the dry ingredients until crumbly. Spread crumble mixture over rhubarb. Bake uncovered at 350 F for 45 minutes. Serve warm with vanilla ice cream. ■

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# THE BILL of Rights (part I)

We often hear about and discuss our “rights” under the law. Many of these rights are contained in the first 10 amendments to the United States Constitution. Our history shows that it has not been uncommon for these rights to come under attack. The following is a discussion of the Bill of Rights and how it applies to our lives. This article will discuss the first four amendments. Later articles will discuss the remaining amendments. It is anticipated that this will be a three-part series.



## Amendment I

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.”

**Comment:** This language has the dual purpose of prohibiting a national religion and allowing the people to worship as they please. Note that the freedom of speech relates only to governmental prohibitions. It does not apply to private constraints. Finally, it is apparent that the right of assembly and protest has been a protected right from the beginning.

## Amendment II

“A well-regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.”

**Comment:** At one time, there was a debate as to whether this was an individual right. The U.S. Supreme Court has now made it clear that it is.

## Amendment III

“No soldier shall, in the time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.”

**Comment:** This amendment rarely comes up in current times. However, it is notable that the founders made it clear that, in times of peace, a homeowner has an absolute right to refuse to accommodate soldiers, and, even in war, legal requirements exist.

## Amendment IV

“The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.”

**Comment:** The founders were very protective of one’s right to personal privacy against government intrusion. In this digital age, questions arise concerning whether data constitutes “persons, houses, papers, and effects.”

Warrants require probable cause, supported by oath and must be specific concerning location of searches and persons or things seized.

## Conclusion

These rights are valuable and often under assault. We should know them and cherish them. ■

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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## IN-HOME services

Living where you want to, with a little help

A few years ago, Jeanne Klock fell.

She had always had trouble with her knees, and she worried that a serious fall could force her to leave the home she loved. Like many older adults, Jeanne wanted to stay where she felt most comfortable, surrounded by her own belongings, routines and memories.



So, when she stumbled, her first thought was frightening: "Now I'll have to leave my home."

Jeanne's family knew how much staying home mattered to her, so they began looking for support that could help her remain independent without requiring a move. That search led them to in-home services, also known as non-medical assistance.

Today, Jeanne is living independently at 89 in her home near Des Moines. In-home services aides help keep her safe, assist with daily activities and provide companionship. "I like that they don't tell me what to do," Jeanne said. "They make suggestions, but they are very kind. They would do anything for me."

That balance matters. In-home support is not about taking over. It is about helping people continue living on their own terms, with the right level of assistance.

An in-home services aide may help someone get ready in the morning, prepare meals, provide light housekeeping or go along to appointments. Some days may include errands, shopping or social outings. Other days may be quieter, with conversation, a good meal and help around the home.

"I help her get ready in the mornings, and some days we are pretty active, going here and there," said Wendy, one of Jeanne's aides. "I go with her to doctors' appointments, we go shopping — really anywhere she needs or wants to go. Some days, we take it slower."

In-home services are different from medical home health care. In most cases, they are not covered by insurance and are paid for by the client or family. Services vary by provider, but they often include help with cooking, light housekeeping, laundry, errands, appointments, personal care, pet care, medication reminders and companionship.

When choosing an in-home services provider, families should ask how support is delivered, not just what tasks are offered. A good provider will take time to understand a person's routines, preferences, safety needs and goals before recommending a plan. Ask how aides are trained, supervised and matched with clients; whether schedules can change as needs change; and how the provider communicates with family members.

For Jeanne, the arrangement has helped her keep what matters most: Her home, her choices and her sense of independence.

"My things are here, and I'm comfortable here," she said. "I just need a little help. I think it should be up to a person where they choose to live." ■

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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See rules and vote at [www.iowalivingmagazines.com/residentspoll](http://www.iowalivingmagazines.com/residentspoll). One vote per resident, please.

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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)

# STOPPING power

Why routine brake service is non-negotiable.

When we think about vehicle performance, horsepower usually steals the spotlight. But there is one system in your car that is infinitely more important than how fast you can go: how reliably you can stop.



Your vehicle's braking system is its No. 1 safety feature. Because it relies entirely on intense friction and extreme heat, components naturally wear out over time. Brake pads are actually designed to sacrifice themselves to protect your vehicle. Regular maintenance isn't just about safety — it also protects your wallet.

### Three reasons routine brake service matters

1. Uncompromised safety: Worn pads or degraded brake fluid drastically increase your stopping distance. In a split-second highway emergency, a few extra feet can be the difference between a close call and a serious collision.
2. Preventing costly damage: Brake

maintenance operates on a slippery slope. Replacing worn brake pads is a simple, inexpensive fix. However, if you ignore them, the metal backing will grind directly into your rotors. This "metal-on-metal" contact ruins the rotors, turning a minor service into an expensive repair bill.

3. Hydraulic health: Brake fluid naturally absorbs moisture from the air over time. This moisture lowers the fluid's boiling point and causes internal corrosion. A "spongy" pedal or total brake fade during heavy braking is often the result of old, contaminated fluid.

### Warning signs you need a brake check

Your car is excellent at communicating when its brakes are suffering. Never ignore these red flags:

- Squealing or squeaking: A sharp metallic squeal means the built-in wear indicators on your pads are touching the rotor — your car's way of saying, "change me soon."
- Grinding sounds: A harsh, growling metal noise means your pads are completely gone, and you are actively damaging your rotors.

- A "spongy" pedal: If the pedal sinks easily to the floorboard or feels soft, you likely have air or moisture in your brake lines.

- Vibrations: If the steering wheel or brake pedal shakes when you slow down, your rotors may be warped from excessive heat.

Pro tip: Don't wait for the warning signs. Have a technician inspect your brake thickness and fluid quality during every routine oil change.

### Prioritize your peace of mind

Your brakes work tirelessly to keep you, your passengers and other drivers safe. If you are hearing an unfamiliar noise, or it's simply been a while since your last inspection, don't take your stopping power for granted. Schedule a brake inspection with your service professional as soon as possible. ■

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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# WHAT happened to the Harrison's sign?

Most old storefront signs end up in the “old sign graveyard” — better known as the city dump — but the Harrison's sign escaped that fate. The Warren County Historical Society Heritage Center swooped in and saved it, and now we're exploring how to restore it and, more importantly, where on earth we can display something that enormous.

Harrison's Variety stores were more than just another chain — they were the vision of Charles Harrison of Hampton, Iowa, a retailer who believed small towns deserved bigcity style. By the mid-1930s, he had already planted some of his earliest stores in Iowa communities, and Indianola was among the first four to open. Its original location sat in a room that would later become part of Peoples Trust & Savings Bank, but, at the time, it represented something fresh and modern for local shoppers.

Harrison's mission was ambitious for its era: to build a modern department store experience that offered quality merchandise at prices everyday families could afford. In a decade when variety stores were often cramped and

utilitarian, Harrison's aimed higher — brighter displays, broader selections and a shopping environment that felt forwardthinking rather than merely functional.

Harrison's Variety Store was a popular place to shop for many years. The store made a splash in May 1964, proudly unveiling its newly remodeled store and the muchanticipated east entrance. This upgrade wasn't just cosmetic. It marked a first for Indianola retail. Harrison's became the only business in town to offer two fully equipped entrances, each with its own checkout counters, a modern convenience that set it apart from every competitor.

The renovation signaled not just growth, but a bold step forward in how Indianola shopped.

It was like a smaller version of Walmart without the grocery store. Some of the memories include:

John Crouse recalled an incident while growing up at the restaurant.

“I bought my first slingshot in the toy aisle. Took it back to the restaurant and shot a rock toward the parking lot behind Harrison's. Broke



Linda's windows, the lady that sold me the slingshot. She knew who did it and where to find me. I washed a lot of dishes paying for it.”

Denis Fuller recalls buying candy by the piece. Others recalled the smell of roasting cashews. One person even recalls having a small “urinary” problem in the candy aisle.

Brandon Gavin and Tyler McAninch and many others recalled heading to Harrison's for needed P.E. shirts and athletic supplies.

The legend will rise again; we're just deciding where. ■

Information was gathered from the archives of Indianola Record and Tribune and from comments on Facebook.

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## THE REAL cost of assisted living and what you are actually paying for

When families begin exploring assisted living, one of the first questions is often, “How much does it cost?” It is an important question, but it is not always the most complete one.

A better question might be: “What does that cost actually include?” In many cases, assisted living can make more financial sense than the combined cost of home upkeep and in-home care.



Understanding the full picture can help families make more confident, informed decisions and avoid unexpected expenses down the road.

It's more than rent: At first glance, assisted living pricing can feel similar to rent. But, unlike traditional housing, assisted living typically includes much more than just a place to live. Monthly fees often cover: utilities and maintenance, meals and dining services, housekeeping and laundry, transportation, and social activities and programming. When compared to the combined cost of housing, groceries, home maintenance and entertainment, the value becomes clearer.

Care and support are built in: One of the most significant components of assisted living cost is access to care. This may include: assistance with daily tasks like bathing, dressing, or medication management; 24/7 staff availability for support and emergencies; and ongoing monitoring and adjustments as needs change. For many families, this built-in support provides peace of mind that is difficult to put a price on.

Fewer hidden costs than you might expect: Living at home can come with unpredictable expenses: home repairs, increasing utility bills or the need to hire outside help. These costs can add up quickly and often without much notice. In contrast, many assisted living communities offer more predictable monthly pricing, especially when multiple services are included under one roof. This can make budgeting easier and reduce financial surprises.

Convenience adds real value: Another often-overlooked benefit is convenience. When meals, activities, care and services are all available in one place, it eliminates the need to coordinate multiple providers or manage a complex schedule. This not only saves time but also reduces stress for both residents and their families.

Quality of life is part of the equation: While cost is important, it is equally important to consider what that investment supports. Assisted living can provide: opportunities for social connection; engaging activities and events; nutritious, enjoyable meals; and a safe, supportive environment. These elements contribute to overall well-being and can significantly enhance daily life.

The bottom line: When exploring assisted living, consider the true value. When you look beyond the monthly rate and consider everything that is included, it becomes clear that assisted living offers more than housing. It offers support, connection, convenience and peace of mind — things that truly matter at this stage of life. ■

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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[hollandfarmsliving.com](http://hollandfarmsliving.com)

2800 Sunset Drive, Norwalk, IA 50211



Check for cancellations

## Upcoming in Indianola Living magazine:

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



## Trivia at The Groggy Dog

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

Grab some friends and bring an appetite and your love for knowledge and beer. Enjoy \$5 draws, prizes, fun and good competition. The place to be on a Tuesday night.

## Kwik Star Free Community Pool Party

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

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



## When Headstones Talk

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

Help clean gravestones and uncover symbols and words. Supplies provided. Watch "The Cemetery Guy" and team restore broken markers. A picnic lunch will be provided. This is a free event, but donations are encouraged. No RSVP required and no rain date is scheduled.

## Free Community Meal

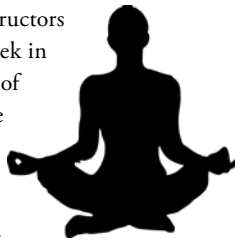
Tuesdays, 5:30-6:30 p.m.  
Lighthouse Community Center,  
109 W. Boston Ave., Indianola

Free home-cooked meal every Tuesday. Everyone is welcome. Come enjoy food and fellowship with individuals and organizations in the community.

## Yoga in the Park

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

Different instructors lead yoga each week in the serene beauty of Buxton Park. Free class for adults 18 and older, thanks to sponsor Drees Chiropractic.



Exception: Classes 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 on June 13, July 11 and Sept. 12. Sign up for text alerts at <https://www.tinyurl.com/IPRTexts>.

## 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 is led by Barbara Lounsberry, a retired University of Northern Iowa English professor and accomplished author and editor. This free speaker series is sponsored by Community 1st Credit Union and funded in part by Humanities Iowa.

## Indianola Public Library Events

207 N. B St., Indianola

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

- Library closed Friday, July 3, and Saturday, July 4

### KIDS

- Bingo for Kids: Mondays, June 15 and 29, 3:30-4:15 p.m. (grades 3-5)
- Creative Movement and Music: Wednesday, June 17, 10:30-11:30 a.m. (grades K-2)
- Summer Fun with Art: Wednesday, June 24, 10:30-11:30 a.m. (grades K-2)
- Chess Club: Thursdays, June 25 and July 9, 6-7 p.m.

### STORYTIME

- Storytime with Janis: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:30-11 a.m.
- Saturday Storytime: Saturdays except June 20, July 4 and July 18, 10:30-11:15 a.m.

### TEENS

- Teen Hangout: Wednesdays, 2:30-4:30 p.m.
- Teen Art Cart: Saturdays in June and July except July 4, all day
- Chess Club: Thursdays, June 25 and July 9, 6-7 p.m.

### FAMILIES

- Craft Explosion: Mondays in June, 10-11 a.m.
- Library Playdate: Saturdays except July 4, all day

### ADULTS

- Morning Book Club: Friday, June 12, 10-11 a.m.
- Evening Book Club: Tuesday, June 23, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

## Reading of the Declaration of Independence

Tuesday, June 19, 5 p.m.

Warren County Courthouse east steps, 115 N. Howard St., Indianola

Iowa Republican Women invite the public as they read the Declaration of Independence.

## Tunes & Treats

Thursday, June 29, 1 p.m.

Indianola Activity Center, 2204 W. Second Ave. (Highway 92)

David Watson delivers a high-energy show of country and classic rock hits from the 1950s to today. This free concert is open to the public. Sponsored by Edencrest at The Legacy. Refreshments provided by Indianola Hy-Vee. ■

# INDIANOLA farmers market celebrates 40 years

From eight vendors to dozens, the market continues to grow.

On a midsummer day, July 12, 1986, the Warren County Fruit and Vegetable Growers opened the first Indianola Farmers Market with funds provided by local businesses and individuals, as well as a federal grant from the Iowa Department of Agriculture. This year marks the market's 40th anniversary.

Kathy DeAngelo has been the market master for the Indianola Farmers Market at the Warren County Fairgrounds since 2010.

"When I moved here in 1993, I went to the market with my son and a friend of mine who had invited me," DeAngelo recalls. "There were just eight vendors at the time. They talked us into bringing our tomatoes and sweetcorn to sell at the market, and I have been here ever since. I took over as market master for Dennis Schrader, the fourth person to hold the position."

Since the market's inception, the vendor fee to set up at the market has been \$5 for a 10-foot frontage spot.

"We have kept it that way so that potential vendors can feel comfortable trying out our market to see if they like it," DeAngelo shares.

The market is also friendly to young, aspiring entrepreneurs. There is no charge for vendors younger than 18, though they must have a parent or adult with them while they are set up.

"We encourage young individuals to participate in the market," DeAngelo says. "My son sold sweetcorn, and that's how he learned to count change back to people. We want the young people to learn, so we welcome them."

DeAngelo says the Indianola Farmers Market is friendly, where it seems everyone is willing to help each other. It is also a certified market and has been since at least 2010. DeAngelo and all other market overseers take classes through the state of Iowa each February to ensure they are up to date on protocols, procedures and safety



measures.

"There are certain things we must follow so we can accept WIC and Senior Nutrition Program vouchers. Certain registered vendors can accept them," she explains.

The state is becoming increasingly strict on how produce is washed, ensuring no bacteria is present. Those who cook food on-site have inspectors drop by unexpectedly to ensure goods are labeled and washed properly, everything is up to standard, all required vendors are properly licensed, and no spoiled goods are being sold.

All produce sold at the fairgrounds market is locally grown.

"I have always followed the rule of keeping it local grown," she says. "Every vendor must grow their own produce except for those who sell peaches. Peaches don't grow well here, so they bring them in from Missouri."

Each year, there are about 25 vendors at the beginning of the season. By the end of June, there are typically around 50 vendors, and, by the end of September, the number decreases again as crops reach the end of the growing season. As of the end of May, there were 39 vendors attending the market, and that number is expected to grow.

DeAngelo still runs a stand where she sells produce and canned goods. She enjoys the pies from a neighboring vendor and values the friendships that form among vendors.

"My favorite part of the market is seeing people come and be excited about the fresh produce that we have," she says. ■



Kathy DeAngelo, market master for the Indianola Farmers Market, brings produce and canned goods to the market.



Tina Amos is known for her pies at the Indianola Farmers Market.



Gabby's Green Beans is a popular booth.

# BRAIN fitness and hearing loss

June's Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month is a great time to focus on the correlation between hearing loss and cognitive issues, as research has found that patients with hearing loss may be at a higher risk of developing dementia. A study to look at the effects of brain fitness software was conducted on participants with a wide range of hearing abilities, and the results were impressive.1



a total of eight weeks. Training covered six separate modules that studied the link between memory and perception in different situations, focusing primarily on the consonant-vowel transition, a notoriously vulnerable area of speech.

At the start of the program, transition times were extended, then gradually shortened as listener performance improved. Participants in the Brain Fitness group showed improvements in neural timing, short-term memory and processing speed, particularly in noisy situations. In contrast, the control group displayed no change in hearing or cognitive functioning.

The Brain Fitness participants were also enthusiastic about their overall experience and reported noticeable improvements in both their ability to hear and to focus on conversations. With such encouraging results, audiologists should consider auditory training techniques to help manage hearing loss in their patients.

## The role of brain exercises

Hearing devices provide an invaluable benefit to millions of Americans suffering from hearing loss, but even they have their limits. Since following conversations in noisy environments is an ongoing challenge for several reasons, including deficits in central auditory processing and cognitive function, participating in brain exercises is one way for patients with either of these issues to improve their listening experience.

Just 15 minutes of rigorous brain exercise a day is enough to keep the brain active and may help fend off or delay Alzheimer's and other types of dementia. ■

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 Szalavitz, M. (2013). Can You Hear Me Now? Training the Brain to Hear Better. BrainHQ. <https://www.brainhq.com/news/latest-news/brain-training-how-it-works/>



## Are You Giving Your Brain What It Needs to Stay Sharp?

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# ACUPUNCTURE for pelvic pain and dysfunction: A natural path to relief

Pelvic pain and dysfunction can be debilitating, affecting individuals physically, emotionally and socially. Conditions such as pelvic floor dysfunction, endometriosis, interstitial cystitis and chronic prostatitis can each contribute to pelvic pain and dysfunction.



Acupuncture has emerged as a complementary therapy that can provide significant relief. Research suggests that acupuncture influences the autonomic nervous system, helping to ease muscle tension and regulate pain signals. Pelvic pain is frequently associated with muscle tightness and dysfunction in the pelvic floor, leading to symptoms like urinary urgency, sexual discomfort and chronic aching.

Acupuncture addresses these concerns by releasing trigger points in affected muscles, promoting relaxation and restoring function. By

treating acupuncture points related to the pelvis, lower back and abdomen, practitioners can alleviate tension and enhance overall mobility. These points may be located on the hands and the feet.

Beyond its physical effects, acupuncture is known for its ability to regulate stress and anxiety, which are often increased with chronic pain. Individuals suffering from pelvic pain frequently experience increased emotional distress, as the condition can impact intimate relationships and daily activities.

Studies have shown that individuals who incorporate acupuncture into their treatment plans experience reductions in pain intensity, improved bladder function and enhanced quality of life. When combined with chiropractic, physical therapy, lifestyle modifications and dietary changes, acupuncture serves as a valuable tool in comprehensive pelvic pain management. Treatments are tailored to individual needs, taking into account specific symptoms and medical history.

Embracing acupuncture as part of a wellness strategy can empower individuals to reclaim comfort, mobility and emotional well-being. Several studies have explored the effectiveness of acupuncture for pelvic pain. A systematic review and meta-analysis found that acupuncture therapies significantly reduced pain intensity in patients with pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), both immediately after treatment and up to a month later. Another meta-analysis examined acupuncture for PID and found that it led to lower pain levels compared to control groups, even when used as a monotherapy.

Acupuncture has been recognized for its ability to reduce inflammation, alleviate anxiety and improve overall quality of life for individuals suffering from pelvic pain. If you're considering acupuncture as a treatment option, these findings suggest it could be a valuable complementary therapy. ■

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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# LIGHT and long days: A June reflection

June arrives like a blessing — the longest days of the year, when light lingers well into the evening as if reluctant to leave. For many faith communities, this abundance of light is more than meteorology. It is a reminder.

June 24 marks the Feast of St. John the Baptist, one of the oldest celebrations on the Christian calendar. John came, as the Gospels tells us, “as a witness to testify about the light.” It feels right, then, that his feast falls at the height of summer, when the sun is at its most generous.

But the season speaks to something deeper than any single tradition. Across faiths, June is a time of gratitude — for warmth returned, for gardens growing, for children released from school and back into the long golden afternoons of childhood.

There is an invitation here for all of us: to step outside, to notice the light, and to ask what it illuminates in our own lives. What has this year grown in you? What is ready to flower?

Summer is a season of abundance. May we receive it — and share it — with open hands. ■

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



The June 2018 Indianola Living magazine featured the story, “Father knows best: Indianola residents share what they learned from their dads.” Pictured on the cover were Pastor Jon Duey and his children. Other fathers included were Steve Pfeifer and Donn Modlin. ■

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3. Last year
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**RESULTS FROM MAY POLL: What have you done most since the price of gas has gone up?**

Driven less	40%
Cut back on “extras”	30%
Fallen behind on essentials	30%
Nothing, the prices haven't affected me	0%

**IOWA Living MAGAZINES**

# BUILDING a dream from the ground up

McCormicks create custom home and future produce farm.

Blake and Michelle McCormick have been Indianola residents for about a year and a half. Formerly of Chariton, they decided they wanted something different from the community they lived in, so they began searching for land. Every time they thought they had found something, it was snatched off the market before they could make an offer. In March 2021, they finally snagged a 28-acre property just south of town and got to work right away.

“The property was mostly a big cow pasture,” Blake says. “I am a contractor, and I have built many barndominiums in the past few years. That’s what we wanted to have for ourselves.”

The McCormicks did most of the work themselves, except for part of the concrete work and the electrical work.

“We didn’t create any blueprints,” Blake says. “Once we chose the spot for the house, we put drains and pipes where we thought there would be rooms, and we built around them. We got some paper and started taping things together to decide how we wanted it to look. It worked out great.”

Each room is spacious, and the house is one level to accommodate future accessibility needs, including having no floor transitions and a shower designed for those with disabilities.

The floor is laid with Califloor Longboard from San Diego, the walls are varnished pine, and the ceilings are black steel. The countertops throughout the house are made of Vietnamese walnut, and their walnut fireplace mantel was acquired in Chicago. Otherwise, most of their building materials were sourced locally, in large part from Circle B.

In 2024, they moved into their new home and sold their house in Chariton. Their new house has a large, open-concept living area. They wanted to be sure their eight children and nearly 22 grandchildren could visit and be comfortable. A lover of all things antique, Michelle has outfitted the home with various antique cabinets and furniture pieces, doing cosmetic updates as she sees fit. Blake built a long custom table out of Vietnamese walnut to accommodate a large group and placed their family name on top.

Outside, the McCormicks took what was essentially a large mudhole and created a beautiful, stocked pond.



Blake and Michelle McCormick custom built their own home and have planted a variety of crops.

“There was a pond there once about 80 years ago,” Blake says. “When we cleaned the space up to dig the pond, we found three cars buried there that had been there a long time. Anytime we have to do dirt work, we always find old, buried farm implements.”

Michelle began planting fruit and vegetable crops with the hope of creating a produce farm and selling her goods in an at-home shop and at the local farmers market once everything begins producing. Together, they have planted about 200 apple trees, 125 blueberry bushes, 200

blackberry bushes, 900 asparagus plants, 100 purple raspberry bushes, 200 black raspberry bushes and 400 red raspberry bushes. Some crops have grown well, while others have been lost, but, overall, they have a strong start toward realizing her dream. When she is not in the garden, she can be found baking, canning and making jams and jellies.

The couple appreciates that their new home is close enough to town to enjoy the amenities but far enough away to experience peace, quiet and nature. ■

# KEY financial takeaways from your tax return

Tax season may be behind you, but don't stash away your tax return quite yet. It is full of information that could help improve your finances or make a difference in next year's tax picture. Here are four things you could learn from reviewing your return.



**1. Are your retirement contributions on track?** The W-2 you received from your employer spells out pre-tax contributions you made during the tax year to your workplace retirement account such as a 401(k) or 403(b). If you were able to make deductible contributions to a traditional IRA, you can find that information on your tax return. If you contributed to an IRA, your financial advisor will also send you an informational Form 5498 that shows contributions you've made to a Traditional, Roth, SIMPLE, or SEP

IRA that you can use to track and review your contributions.

Use this information to decide if you can increase your retirement contributions going forward. Contributing more will not only help boost your retirement savings but could also help reduce next year's tax bill if you are making pre-tax contributions or your contributions will be tax deductible.

**2. Are you withholding the appropriate amount of tax from your paycheck?** Receiving a refund that is larger than expected or owing the IRS money are both signs that your withholding deserves a second look. While a big refund is great, it means that you're missing out on the chance to put that money to work for you throughout the year by regularly saving, investing more or using the funds to pay off high-interest debt. Adjusting your withholding now can also help you reduce the amount you have to pay the IRS next tax season.

**3. Could your money be working harder for you?** Reviewing how much you earned in

interest will reveal if you need to explore other options. If you're surprised by how little you earned, it might be time to move your money to a different type of account that offers more potential for growth and matches your financial goals and risk tolerance.

**4. Do you need to rethink your financial strategy?** With so much information at your fingertips, it's a good time to focus on your finances in general. Your tax return is more than just a once-a-year task; use it as a valuable tool for planning ahead. ■

Our team at City State Bank is here to provide guidance tailored to support your financial goals. For more information, please contact Kourtne Klocko with City State Bank Trust & Investments at 515-981-1400. Not FDIC insured. Not deposits or other obligations of the bank and are not guaranteed by the bank. Are subject to investment risk, including possible loss of principal. City State Bank does not provide legal advice. Each taxpayer should seek independent advice from a tax and/or legal professional. These materials are based upon publicly available information that may change at any time without notice.

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# WHY ADVERTISING is essential for small business growth and success

Small businesses often operate with limited resources, tight margins and strong local competition. In that environment, advertising is not a luxury — it's a necessity for survival and growth. Without it, even the best products or services can remain invisible to potential customers.



One of the primary reasons small businesses should advertise is to build awareness. Unlike large, established brands, small businesses usually lack name recognition. Advertising helps introduce the business to new audiences and reminds existing customers that it exists. Consistent visibility keeps a business top of mind when customers are ready to buy.

Advertising also plays a critical role in establishing credibility. Consumers tend to trust businesses they see regularly. A well-crafted advertisement signals professionalism and stability, even for a newer company. When potential customers encounter a business multiple times, they are more likely to view it as legitimate and reliable.

Advertising also drives sales by creating urgency and highlighting value. Promotions, limited-time offers and clear messaging can motivate customers to take action. Without advertising, potential buyers may

never learn about special deals or unique selling points that differentiate a business from competitors. In crowded markets, staying silent often means losing customers to more visible competitors.

In addition, advertising supports long-term growth. It's not just about immediate sales; it's about building a brand. Over time, consistent messaging shapes how customers perceive a business — its personality, values and quality. This brand identity can become a powerful asset, helping small businesses compete with larger companies that may have more resources but less personal connection with customers.

Finally, advertising allows small businesses to adapt and learn. By tracking which campaigns perform best, business owners gain insights into customer preferences and behavior. This data can inform not only future marketing efforts but also product development, pricing strategies and customer service improvements.

In short, advertising gives small businesses a voice in a competitive marketplace. It increases visibility, builds trust, drives sales and supports long-term success. Without it, even the most promising small business risks being overlooked. ■

Information provided by Jolene Goodman, Advertising Sales Manager, Big Green Umbrella Media, 8101 Birchwood Court, Suite D, Johnston, Iowa 50131, 515-953-4822 x319, [jolene@iowalivingmagazines.com](mailto:jolene@iowalivingmagazines.com).

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# BUSINESS and Brews

The Indianola Chamber's June Business and Brews was held on May 14 at Indianola Golf Club.



Todd Kielkopf and Haley Swanson



Rachel Gocken and Mindy Nelson



Kelly Webster



Jake Trembly



Mimi Kelly-Meyer and Doug Meyer



Wyatt Kaldenberg and Gretchen Schrock



Gretchen Schrock and Amy Feser



Jake Meshke and Haley Swanson



Andrew Arthur, Haley Swanson and Abby Kinsey



Barb McMurry and Ryan Williams



Alex Steines and Andrew Arthur

# OUT & ABOUT

# CHAMBER Golf

The Indianola Chamber's golf outing was held on June 1 at the Indianola Country Club.



Russ and Jared Stokes



Lucas Klages and Nathaniel Banks



Dr. Juliana Ardila and Tasha Heinzer



Jeremy Johnson and Reed Hoskins



Dr. Caleb Holder and Dr. Samuel Gastineau



Jake Becker, Manny Toribio and Greg Vickroy



Rachel Gocken, Eric McDonald and Amy Feser

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# MEET Sarah Myres

A full-circle career at Irving Elementary

A passion for teaching is often inspired by the educators a person had as a student. For Sarah Myres, that inspiration began in fourth grade with teacher Melissa Green. Because of Green's example, Myres fell in love with learning and was inspired to pursue a career in education.

When Indianola's Irving Elementary School began a year-round schedule, Myres was in fifth grade. She came to love the schedule, and it appealed to her. In high school, she had an English teacher she admired, and learning under her confirmed that teaching was what she wanted to do with her life.

As a college student, Myres returned to Irving Elementary to student teach. She also worked as a long-term substitute before being hired as a third-grade teacher at the school where she first decided to become a teacher.

"The culture of the school and the staff are like no other," she says. "When I got my first job, I got to work alongside Melissa Green, and she was one of my third-grade colleagues. It was like a dream come true."

Now in her 17th year of teaching, Myres has only ever taught third grade at Irving—and it has even been in the same classroom.

Near the end of each day, Myres' class has a read-aloud time, which she says is probably her favorite part of the day.

"This is a time when we get to read books the kids are interested in together out loud," she says. "We've gotten through eight novels this year."

Myres' favorite memories involve when kids have breakthrough moments.

"In general, I love the end of the year memory books we make and to see how kids light up at the pictures we have to put in them," Myres says. "I also love the activity we do where the students describe their classmates. Then, my gift to each of them is a little frame with all the adjectives their classmates used to describe them in it."

Myres says the challenging part of her job is that every day may hold something different and that not everything is by the book. However, that is also part of the joy.

"Because kids are on various learning levels and emotional maturities, it is challenging to make sure that everyone's needs are met and that they are getting what they deserve out of a third-grade education," she shares.

When Myres looks back over the years, she can see with clarity the beauty in moments that once felt hard or hopeless. One such instance was the COVID-19 interruption, which altered education for a time. When in-person school resumed, students were still restricted in how each day could go.

"My class had to eat lunch in the classroom instead of going with others to the cafeteria," she says. "What started as a nightmare quickly became one of my favorite times because, while the kids ate their lunch in the classroom, I got to read aloud to them."

To anyone considering a teaching career, Myres advises first getting immersed in a classroom and working with students to determine whether it is a good fit.

"Teaching isn't for everyone," she says. "Get your foot inside a classroom and get involved to find out." ■



Sarah Myres says one of her favorite activities is read-aloud time.

# THE TRUTH we need to hear

I was trying to give someone some encouragement amid a great struggle, so I pointed out the positive signs I was seeing. There was some improvement in the situation happening, right? In an effort to give someone hope, we can so easily simply say things like, "It's all going to be OK."

"That's not what I want to hear. Please don't tell me those things, tell me what God says." The response was direct and adamant. Instead of looking to circumstances, this person wanted to hear from God. And she wasn't looking to hear God say, "You're going to be just fine." She was wiser than that. What she wanted instead was to hear how God views her situation, to even be reminded of some of the passages in Scripture that can be hard to swallow at first glance. (She even told me that a favorite of hers is "Consider it a great joy, my brothers, whenever you experience various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance." — James 1:2-3).

In the depths of those pits, where we all find ourselves at various seasons in our lives, it is a cry we all need to utter. "Tell me what God says." And, thankfully, mercifully, the One who has created us has also spoken to us.

The word pictures that Scripture uses to describe itself speak of our great need to hear it — a lamp for our feet, a light on our path, milk that nourishes, a mirror that reveals. And it is a sword that pierces to the deepest places within us. We need that as much as we need the surgeon's scalpel to bring healing. Even more so.

Each week in our community, at a number of local churches, people gather together to hear what God has to say to us from Scripture. The words there are a light in the darkness, wisdom for the confused, stability in the midst of chaos. Those words are always relevant to us and always the truth we need to hear. This coming Sunday, join in with such a church to hear what God would say to you.

"For all flesh is like grass, and all its glory like a flower of the grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord endures forever. And this is the word that was preached as the gospel to you." — 1 Peter 1:24-25 ■



Information provided by Kevin Mayer, New Heights Church, 200 E. First Ave., Indianola, 515-442-5111.

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