

GRIMES/DALLAS CENTER

APRIL 2023

Living

MAGAZINE

OVERCOMING the FEAR

Residents share how they faced their fears and doubts to reach their goals

Meet Kristina Bavas

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WELCOME

ARE YOU chicken?

Whenever my childhood friends and I wanted to talk our buddy Tommy into doing something, we would simply call him chicken. He would yell back, "I'm not chicken!" and would then proceed to do whatever it was we were trying to talk him into. I wish managing adults was that simple.

Meanwhile, we are all seemingly chicken, at least to some degree.

Musician Jim Stafford sang "I don't like spiders and snakes" in 1974. Who does?

Green Day vocalist and guitarist Billie Joe Armstrong said he wrote the song "Basket Case" in 1994 to cope with his feelings of anxiety and panic.

And heavy metal rockers Metallica made us fear falling asleep with their 1991 hit, "Enter Sandman."

But phobias aren't just fodder for songs. Most all of us, if we are being honest, have something that makes us shiver in our boots.

As a child, I didn't like going into old, unfinished basements by myself. I was especially fearful of my grandparents' "root cellar." There was no way I was going down there alone, at least not until my brother discovered this fear and pushed me down the steps.

My aunt and uncle had a painting of a clown in their house that gave me the creeps. This was long before the movie "It" ever hit the screen. I still don't like clowns, other than Bozo. He is all right.

I don't mind spiders and snakes, but I could do without mice. The phrase "shivering in your boots" reminds me of working on farms as a teenager and having mice run up my legs when I would put my rubber boots on.

Like many of you, I would get the jitters before a sporting competition. "Butterflies in your stomach," they were often called. The more I competed, the less those butterflies fluttered, but they were always there. Still are.

To this day, I don't especially like heights. It is not so much a fear as it is a stomach ache. Either way, it's not pleasant. I love roller coasters, but a Ferris wheel ride makes me nauseous. I don't get it.

In this issue of your Living magazine, we share the stories of local residents, their fears and how they are dealing with them. Some may seem far-fetched while others might strike a chord with you.

Give it a read... unless you are chicken.

Thanks for reading. ■



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A full-page photograph of a woman and a young girl hiking on a rocky trail. The woman, Heather Helm, is in the foreground, wearing a black tank top, green shorts, a baseball cap, sunglasses, and a climbing harness. She is holding a silver water bottle. The girl is standing behind her, wearing a maroon tank top and a climbing harness. They are both smiling. The background is a dense forest of tall evergreen trees on a hillside.

FEATURE

OVERCOMING the FEAR

Residents share how they faced their fears and doubts to reach their goals

By Ashley Rullestad

Reaching a goal often requires planning, hard work and determination. Sometimes it also requires courage. When faced with a daunting task, we may find that fear and doubts crop up. For some, those can be difficult — even impossible — to overcome. Others face them head on and meet the challenge. Residents who have accomplished what they thought they couldn't share their stories of perseverance.

Heather Helm has been an avid hiker for a long time, but it wasn't until after her divorce that she had to face her fears to hike alone along challenging trails.

FEATURE

The hike of her life

Heather Helm has been hiking most of her adult life and has covered much of the southwest in her adventures. Some of her favorites spots are Arizona, New Mexico and Utah, but she's also hiked in Rocky Mountain National Park a couple times and many other scenic places the Midwest has to offer.

"It has always been a way for me to be physically active, connect with nature and God," she says. "It took a more significant role in my life when I started a healing journey from divorce. This is really when I discovered how empowering and amazing it can be to go on a hiking adventure alone."

Hiking with a partner can be reassuring. Knowing someone is with you in case of a fall or some other mishap provides a level of comfort. Going alone can be daunting, as well as frightening. However, Helm's passion for hiking pushed her out of her comfort zone, especially when she chooses places that aren't frequently hiked, such as the Wilson mountain trail near Sedona. Helm had to learn to rely on her own sense of direction and spend time properly planning and preparing.

Last February, she took a solo trip to Sedona and hiked one of the most challenging trails she has ever experienced. While the trek was only 8 miles, the elevation was steep, and the trail was narrow and rocky with a lot of exposure.

"There was even ice on the trail at the top and more than a couple times where, if I slipped, I would have fallen to my death. To me, the view and peace at the top of the trail is amazing, but even better than that is the personal satisfaction in doing something hard."

When she's getting ready to plan her next adventure, Helm uses the app AllTrails to read reviews and find trails that fit her fitness level. She prefers moderate to challenging trails but not extreme ones that require a lot of scrambling, which is when you have to use your hands and backside to maneuver. Depending on the time of year, she also has to make sure to pack the right clothes — always lots of layers — and anything else she might need, like yak tracks for ice or sunscreen.

YouTube is also a great resource. Hikers can check for videos of a trail to see if they might need additional equipment or hiking poles. They usually talk about other things to watch



Heather Helm no longer worries about heading out on a solo hike.

out for, like lack of shade on the trail or ice.

Though it can be hard, her advice to others is to experience all the great outdoors has to offer.

"Spend ample time training and preparing so you feel confident, and do your research so you know what to expect for the trail you are trekking. Enjoy the process, and there are some amazing memories to be had. It always takes my breath away, getting to the top."

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Andrei Murphy
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FEATURE

Skydiving fun

Justin Mistretta became interested in giving skydiving a try after seeing various movies featuring skydiving, like "Point Break" and "Drop Zone."

"I always said I would do it someday, and I always try to stay true to my word."

His spouse at the time knew that and gifted him a skydiving experience for his birthday through Des Moines Skydivers. As far as preparation, there wasn't much. Any new skydiver will do a tandem dive first, where you are strapped to a certified jumper. You have to have so many hours of training and tandem jumps before you're allowed to jump solo. For new jumpers, there is a safety video and demonstration the day of, as well as harness fittings and pairing with a certified jumper based on height and weight.



Although Justin Mistretta is active in many adrenal-rush activities, skydiving for the first time meant confronting some butterflies.

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FEATURE

Though he was excited to jump, Mistretta admits he became increasingly nervous as they neared altitude.

"I've done risky stuff before, so I played it cool. Once you're up there and they're ready for the jumps to start, they move pretty fast giving directions and shuffling into position that you're already out and in free fall before you've had the chance to process what's happening."

Once that happens, there's absolutely nothing like it, he reports. They jumped at 14,000 feet, and, even though he knew he was in free fall, the ground was so far away that it barely looked like it was moving, so he didn't even feel like he was falling. Everything is just open and vast (and windy), and it takes a bit more effort to inhale air, he says.

"It's also more challenging to control your legs and arms. If you've ever stuck an arm out the window on the Interstate, you know what I mean. The adrenaline rush overshadowed anything negative I was feeling. The most vivid thing I can remember is the sudden temperature changes. It was about 80 degrees

the day we jumped, but at peak altitude it was about 50 degrees. I expected it to gradually warm up as I got closer to the ground, but that was not the case. The temperature changes were sudden and apparent, like 10 degree jumps in a matter of a second."

Aside from that, if you've ever descended in a plane and felt pressure in your ears, it's quite a bit more intense when falling to the earth from a plane.

"I think my hearing was messed up for about a day and half afterwards. It was totally worth it."

Mistretta is no stranger to dare devil activities. He's driven NASCAR, done some climbing, and loves anything that has speed or height involved — but skydiving has been the peak so far, he says, adding he would do it again in a heartbeat.

"I haven't been able to replicate the same feeling I got from that since. Maybe I'd like to try SCUBA diving, but that's a whole different kind of experience. But, if consumer or leisure space travel ever becomes a thing, sign me up."

Public speaking pro

For many people, the idea of speaking in front of a big crowd isn't appealing — in fact, it's terrifying. But there are organizations that focus on building those skills and helping people be less afraid of speaking in public.

Nick Mongar, who lives in Grimes and works at Corteva in Johnston, joined the local Toastmasters group because he was interested in improving his presentation skills. The nonprofit organization focuses on the development of public speaking and leadership skills. It is organized in a club format where members provide each other immediate feedback based on presentations and projects they work on to become a Distinguished Toastmaster, which is like obtaining a black belt in public speaking.

The Johnston club conducts hybrid meetings every Wednesday at noon at Corteva Agriscience and via Teams. For more information, the best way to reach the Johnston Toastmasters is by email (johnston.toastmasters@gmail.com) or via their Facebook page.



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Nick Mongar, second from the left, joined a Toastmasters group because he was interested in improving his presentation skills.

“My presentation skills were not very good, and I felt this was hindering my ability to connect with my audience during project updates,” he says. “Also, I wanted to improve my ability to convey my ideas clearly and concisely. This is especially important in technical fields such as biotechnology where the audience may lack a basic understanding of the material being discussed.”

Mongar says his experiences have definitely improved his public speaking skills. His speeches are better organized, and he’s able to think on his feet when people have questions during a meeting. He has also learned to incorporate non-verbal communication and vocal variety while also reducing the use of filler words like “ah,” “um,” “so,” and “you know.”

Toastmasters has also given Mongar an opportunity to network with colleagues and others whom he would not have had an opportunity to meet otherwise.

Mongar says many people join Toastmasters because of a fear of public speaking. Despite the common belief, trying to imagine the audience in their underwear is not the most effective way to overcome the fear of public speaking. Practicing in front of an audience to obtain the confidence to speak is the most effective strategy.

“In our club, we create an environment that is supportive and non-judgmental. We are all working to become better speakers together. This process takes time, and each member is given the opportunity to develop their speaking skills as they become more comfortable.” ■

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LEGAL

By Cynthia P. Letsch, J.D.

LEGISLATORS pose ending common law marriage

Tabitha snorted herself awake with a slight jerk of her head and hoped the teacher had not noticed that she had fallen asleep in government class. Ms. Jorgenson had just ended her sentence with, “and that is what a common law marriage is.”

What Tabitha missed is knowing that Iowa is one of nine states that currently recognizes common law marriage. Some legislators have recently offered bills that would end common law marriage in Iowa. But, what is it and how do you know if you are married under common law?

Statutes are laws made by the legislators. Decisions made by the Court of Appeals or the Supreme Court become case law. The accumulation of case law is called common law. Iowa recognizes common law marriage if the following criteria are met:

- a present intent of both parties freely given to become married (this is the hardest element to prove, especially if one party has died or one of them disagrees that they are now common-law married);
- a public declaration by the parties or a holding out to the public that they are married (examples are: referring to the other person as your spouse, wearing wedding rings, signing an insurance form or any other document on the line for a spouse to sign, etc.);
- continuous cohabitation (however no minimum time limit is imposed); and
- mentally competent and of legal age to consent to marriage.

Many laws reference rights a spouse has, such as divorce, inheritance, insurance coverage and social security and Medicaid benefits for elders; therefore, knowing whether or not you are legally married is important. In some cases, persons who thought they were married were sorely disappointed to learn they were not entitled to spousal rights. In other cases, persons who did not consider themselves married found out that they actually were. By the way, there is no such thing as a common law divorce. So, if you are common law married, even for a day, then you are married.

Ending common law marriage will settle the potential for confusion or conflict over whether a person is married or not. However, do we really want the legislature involved in our personal lives at an even deeper level? Opening this can of worms will likely also re-open the discussion of same sex marriage in a political climate that is hostile to many civil rights. Perhaps now is not a good time to fix what is not broken. ■

Information provided by Cynthia P. Letsch, J.D., Letsch Law Firm, 112 N.E. Ewing St., Suite D, Grimes, 515-986-2810, www.LetschLawFirm.com.



GRIMES Farmers Market implements changes

New organizers build upon previous success.

Last year, Matt Bennett and Karena Cruse got the creative itch and launched an upcycled clothing business online. However, they also wanted a place to sell directly to the customer, but investing in a storefront property was too much of a risk.

When the couple stumbled on the idea of selling at the Grimes Farmers Market, it seemed like the perfect solution. They could meet new customers as well as invite existing customers to see the clothing in person.

When Lindsey Kurtz, who had previously been running the market, posted that she was ready to hand it over, Bennett and Cruse talked about it. It seemed like a dream opportunity for the two of them because of their passion for helping people develop businesses any way they could. They wanted to support vendors, both new and seasoned.

While the couple has been working on implementing a few changes for this year's Grimes Farmers Markets, they acknowledge all the groundwork Kurtz did in getting the market off the ground.

Some of the more noticeable changes people will experience this year include a move to Heritage Park, which will offer space for more vendors. In addition, the date and time has changed to Saturday mornings to allow for cooler temperatures and greater participation.

Moreover, vendors can now complete the application and payment process online. For anyone wanting to participate without the hassle, there is an option to rent tents and tables that will be set up.

Bennett and Cruse also hope to have at least one young entrepreneur set up at each market to sell their products/services, whether it's crafts, babysitting, lawn mowing or anything else.

The couple invites both seasoned market vendors and those who are new to vending to join them this year.

"We firmly believe that our community holds many hidden talents, and we encourage everyone who wants an opportunity to try something new to participate," they share.



Karena Cruse and Matt Bennett will be running the farmers market with some changes.

Bennett and Cruse add, the Grimes Farmers Market gives people an excuse to get outside and be active. In fact, there are more than 500 homes within a half mile of the market. This is a perfect opportunity for people to walk or bike over on Saturday mornings, they say.

"This is the Grimes Farmers and Community Market," the couple emphasizes. "From sponsoring the young entrepreneur to having games and events each weekend, we

want this to be as fun and engaging as possible. The best way we can grow and make it the best experience is with feedback. We welcome feedback, suggestions and ideas to improve the experience everyone has."

Folks are invited to like Grimes Farmers Market on Facebook for up-to-date information and to get in touch with Bennett and Cruse. Or visit www.thegrimesfarmersmarket.com for additional information and to sign up to be a vendor. ■

HOW 5 TYPES of retirement income are taxed

Not all retirement income is taxed the same by the federal government. Understanding retirement taxes can help you decide where to take income from first (or last) to maximize your retirement savings.

Traditional IRAs and 401(k)s are tax-deferred accounts, meaning you've never paid taxes on the money. When you start taking withdrawals from these accounts, you will pay federal income tax at ordinary income tax rates. There's a 10% penalty for payouts before age 59 ½, but you can't delay withdrawals forever. The IRS sets the required minimum distribution age (RMD) and tells you how much you must take (based on life expectancy). Currently, RMDs kick in at age 73. Unfortunately, distributions can come with a big tax bill.

A powerful, tax-free option is the Roth IRA and Roth 401(k). Qualified distributions are tax-free. You must have held the Roth IRA account for at least five years and be 59 ½ or older to withdraw gains without a 10% penalty. These tax-free withdrawals apply to money deposited into a Roth IRA or money converted from a traditional IRA to a Roth IRA. Roth 401(k) withdrawals are tax-free as long as five years have passed since your first contribution. Currently, RMDs do apply to the Roth 401(k). New legislation eliminates RMDs on Roth 401(k)s



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If you sell stocks, bonds, or mutual funds you've held for over a year, the proceeds are taxed at a long-term capital gains rate of 0%, 15%, or 20%. The higher your income, the more capital gains taxes you pay. For 2023, you may qualify for the 0% long-term capital gains rate with a taxable income of \$44,625 or less (\$89,250 for those married filing jointly). The 20% rate applies to single filers with a taxable income of \$492,301 or more (\$553,850 married filing jointly).

Provisional income determines how much tax you pay on your Social Security benefit. Some Social Security beneficiaries will pay nothing, while others may have to pay federal income tax on up to 85% of their benefit. Provisional income is determined by adding your adjusted gross income plus 50% of your Social Security benefit plus any tax-exempt income you received for the year.

Tax laws and retirement rules are constantly changing. It's important to work with a trusted CPA who can help you play by the rules and a retirement planner who can help you develop a long-term tax plan that lowers your tax bill so you can spend more money on all the fun things in retirement. ■

Information provided by Loren Merkle CFP®, RICP®, Certified Financial Fiduciary®, Merkle Retirement Planning, 1860 S.E. Princeton Drive, Grimes, 515-278-1006.

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CONSIDERATIONS when replacing equipment

The transitions between seasons can be the ideal time to replace your equipment that struggled the previous season. With that being said, the process can be a bit overwhelming. Which brand should I buy? Which model do I choose? These are just a few things to think about, but let's discuss the most common questions about the process.



- **Choosing a company:** Choosing the right company is the single most important factor as they are not only supplying the equipment but installing it. All of your faith goes into this company and trusting they provide the correct options for your family's home comfort and budget. A good contractor will be licensed, have referrals and evaluate your current system and, most importantly, listen to your needs.

- **Choosing the equipment size:** If you have an older home, it more than likely does not have the correct sized equipment — often oversized. Oversized equipment can cause numerous problems like cycling too frequently and causing uneven heating and cooling. On the other hand, undersized equipment has issues as well, such as running constantly, increased utility bills and also uneven temperatures. It's critical to have the correct sized equipment, and an HVAC professional will be able to calculate this for you.

- **Choosing high efficiency:** Your HVAC system is the most power-sucking equipment in your entire home. This is reason enough alone to pay attention to investing in high-efficient equipment when reducing your utility bills is important. A high-efficient system runs on less energy, provides better air quality, is less noisy and has fewer repair costs because it's running more efficiently and has less wear and tear on the equipment. It's a no-brainer.

- **Choosing a maintenance plan:** Do I really need a maintenance plan on a brand-new HVAC system? Yes! All manufacturers require that the equipment is properly maintained, which in turn provides the longest life, reliability and efficiency. Want a simple comparison? If you purchase a brand new car, do you stop buying windshield wipers, inflating the tires and getting oil changes?

You may be in a situation where only your furnace or air conditioner is failing and you don't necessarily need the entire system to be replaced. If this is the case, don't count out replacing the entire system just based on current failures. With the current rebates being offered on upgrading to more energy-efficient equipment, it could possibly be a better investment to take action on the full system now. ■

Information provided by Scott Bontrager, 72 Degrees Comfort Company, 811 S.W. Ordinance Road, Ankeny, 515-200-2728.

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EDUCATION

MEET Oak View educators

Students interview some of their educators

Editor's note: Students at Oak View completed an interviewing and writing project recently and share the stories they wrote with Grimes/Dallas Center Living magazine.

Meet Ms. Bavas

By Aaliyah Jacobo and Grace Procyk

Why did you decide to be an FCS teacher?

"Actually, I was not going to go to college in the beginning. I was actually the first person in my family to go. I was originally going to go to beauty school and do hair. And then, instead, well, I always took FCS classes in high school, I loved my FCS teacher, we had a really great relationship, and I was talking to her and was like, 'Yeah, I want to do hair.' I kind of wanted to do it because it was the easier way out, like instead of having to go to college because I was scared. Before I was going to sign the contract to go to beauty school, I decided, 'You know what? I think I'm going to go to DMACC and try this whole college thing out.'

"I went to DMACC and was like, 'You know what? This is easy. I got it. I don't know why I was nervous.'"

Bavas says she talked to her FCS teacher who mentioned she could go to school for FCS.

"And I was just like, 'You're lying. What? I love that stuff.' I get to be a nerd about it. That's awesome.

"So, I ended up doing my two-year degree at DMACC, and then, my best friend and I transferred to Iowa State together, lived together and went to Iowa State for three years. It was funny because my FCS teacher in high school ended up getting her doctorate, and she was the professor of the FCS program in Iowa State, so I had her all four years of high school and all three years at Iowa State, so we've known each other for a long time. We still work together to this day. I actually have a picture in my classroom — it's a puzzle piece picture she made for me my sophomore year for my birthday.

"When she made it, she was like, 'It's all over the place, and I love it. It's like you!' and then I was, 'Ouch, but thank you?' She had me hang it in my classroom, and, at one point, it was hanging in her class.



Ms. Bavas

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"I love FCS, I love cooking, and I like getting kids excited about those things. I think it's a fun time. Also, seeing kids just being able to use their creative side, even if they're into math, they can apply math concepts here, or if they're into art, they can apply art concepts here."

How long have you been an FCS teacher?

"Actually, this is my first year. I graduated college last May, and I student-taught last winter."

Who would you say has influenced you to achieve your goals?

"I have talked a lot about how my FCS teacher and I had a really good relationship, and she told me that I could go to school for FCS, but I think my mom has played a huge part in that. She would tell me, when I was younger, she always wanted to go to school, but then she ended up meeting my dad and having a family — and I think she always wanted more... When I was younger, my little brother and sister, they're eight years younger than me, they didn't end up going to preschool, but I decided to teach them. I was around 12 or 13 years old, and I was teaching them preschool. But it was my mom, I think, that was always pushing me to do the things that I wanted to do."

How do you think your life would've been different if you weren't an FCS teacher?

"Well, this is an interesting answer, but I don't think that I would've had the confidence that I do now. I think this because I was kind of lost and didn't know what to do. But you go through that in life... But I think taking a risk, going to school, even if I knew I wasn't going to succeed, I was trying it. And I ended up doing really well. I ended up being on the dean's list throughout college. I worked with some really cool people for realty and design, worked with some professional chefs, and I feel like that just boosted my confidence... Also, I get to work with people I love every day, which I think that would've changed a lot. If I would've stayed on the beauty school route, it's a very cut-throat industry of keeping clients and making sure that everyone is coming to you for your business, whereas here, we are all involved because we just want to educate people and continue to build our community."

Meet Mrs. Prince

By Ally Anderson and Ashley Wong

Mrs. Prince participated in FFA (Future Farmers of America) during all four years of high school and was a reporter for two of those years. While in FFA, she participated in agriculture sales, conducted meetings and job interviews, and helped put together the scrapbook for her chapter. She also showed livestock such as horses and



Mrs. Prince

beef cattle. She is very passionate about teaching the agriculture industry to others. She went to school at Iowa State University where she studied Animal Science, but she ended up switching to Agriculture Education her junior year. While at Iowa State, she worked at the beef teaching farm where she had hands-on experience managing Iowa State's beef cattle farm. She has been teaching for three years. If she wasn't teaching, she would want to find a career where she could still educate people about the agriculture industry. Or, she'd love to own her own coffee shop. Some fun facts about her include her favorite animal, horses, and her favorite color, yellow.

Meet Mrs. Knudtson

By Ally Anderson and Ashley Wong

Mrs. Knudtson's favorite teacher was an eighth-grade math teacher from New York. She had a cool accent and was really into math; she made her love math even more. Mrs. Knudtson didn't know what she wanted to do as a career, and she changed her major five times in college. She didn't want to be a math teacher at first, but she was tutoring others



Mrs. Knudtson

and liked that. So then she decided to become a math teacher. A quote she lives by is, "Live the life you love, love the life you live." She's been teaching for 18 years. Some fun facts are that she loves the color blue, her favorite animal is horses, and her favorite branch of math is algebra. ■

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FITNESS

By Kammi Abrahamzon

Q: Can knees go over toes?

A: Following last week about controversial topics, let's talk about the myth, "Knees should never go over toes when squatting or lunging. That is truly a myth, and it is completely safe and effective for your knees to go over your toes. It does not mean you have bad form or that your joints are subject to injury if your knees go over. When lifting, your goal is to keep the body in a natural movement pattern as much as you can. That allows the joints to get the proper range of motion and as much power output as you can. I once had a conversation about this topic with a man who had a master's in kinesiology, and he simply gave me the task of walking up the stairs without letting my knee go over my toes. It was impossible. I could not even take one step. Go ahead and try it. So, if it is a natural movement pattern for your knee to go over your toes, why would they recommend you not do it when you are squatting or lunging? If you were to squat the way the myth tells you to, you will notice that it is mainly your hips and low back taking the load of that lift and your range of motion is small. It does not feel right. When doing an exercise, you want to follow the natural movement pattern for that joint in order to get a greater result from that exercise. ■



Information provided by Kammi Abrahamzon, Anytime Fitness,
255 S.W. Brookside Drive, 515-300-9262, GrimesIA@anytimefitness.com.

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FINANCE

By Wade Lawrence, CFP®

THE INFLATION experience is painful and personal

Inflation is a sustained increase in prices that reduces the purchasing power of your money over time. According to the Consumer Price Index (CPI), inflation peaked at an annual rate of 9.1% in June 2022, the fastest pace since 1981, before ticking down to 7.7% in October.¹



The CPI tracks changes in the cost of a market basket of goods and services purchased by consumers. Items are sorted into more than 200 categories and weighted according to their "relative importance," a ratio that represents how consumers divide up their spending, on average. Basic needs such as shelter (33%), food (14%), energy (8%), transportation (8%), and medical care (7%) account for about two-thirds of consumer expenditures.

Wide variations in spending patterns help explain why some consumers feel the sting of inflation more than others. This means that the extent to which you experience inflation depends a lot on where you live, as well as your age, health, income, family size and lifestyle. In effect, your personal inflation rate could be significantly higher or lower than the average headline inflation rate captured in the CPI.

- In October 2022, the 12-month increase in the cost of shelter was 6.9%.² Shelter carries the most weight of any category in the CPI, which made fast-rising home prices and rents a top driver of inflation over the previous year. A first-time homebuyer, or a renter who signs a new lease, is likely to feel the full impact of these hefty price increases. However, a homeowner with a fixed-rate mortgage is generally insulated from these rising costs and might even benefit financially from home-equity gains.

- Gasoline surged 17.5% during the 12 months ended in October 2022.³ Individuals who rarely drive, possibly because they are retired or work remotely, might have been able to shrug off the price spike. But for drivers with long commutes, filling up the gas tank regularly might have put a sizable dent in their households' finances, in some cases forcing them to cut back on other purchases.

- Food and beverage prices rose 10.9% over the same 12-month period, a trend that clearly affects everyone.⁴ But rising food costs tend to put more pressure on the budgets of lower-income households because they spend a greater share of their income on necessities and typically have smaller financial cushions. Plus, shoppers can't easily switch to lower-cost options if they are already relying on them.⁵ ■

For more information, please contact Wade Lawrence or Bryce Block with City State Bank Trust & Investments at 515-986-2265. 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 tax or legal advice. Each taxpayer should seek independent advice from a tax professional. These materials are based upon publicly available information that may change at any time without notice. 1-4) U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022. 5) Federal Reserve, 2022.



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NEWS BRIEFS

DALLAS CENTER pool project receives \$250,000

The Iowa Economic Development Authority Board voted to award Dallas Center \$250,000 of the requested \$300,000 from the Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT) funds. These funds will go toward adding features to the new pool. Dallas Center must provide \$50,000 toward the amenities to attain the CAT grant.

Recently, the Friends of the Pool Committee received notice from the Dallas County Foundation that the project was awarded \$16,001 to match the \$16,001 the community donated last fall. This grant will allow them to contribute \$32,002 toward adding one of the slides to the pool. That leaves \$17,998 that must be raised.

These two grants provide funds to install two slides, multiple shade structures, a pool heater, and begin the work to create a small park between the pool and the bike trail that will eventually contain an open shelter, a water fountain, signage welcoming visitors to Dallas Center, and a sidewalk from the Trail to the south side of the pool. ■

ATHLETE Achievement Awards presented

Five Iowa high school seniors received a 2023 Iowa Bankers Association Student Athlete Achievement Award during the Iowa High School Girls Basketball State Tournament on March 3-4 in Des Moines. One student from each class was awarded a \$1,000 scholarship from the IBA to the college of her choice. The award for Class 4A went to Kileigh Lachacz, Dallas Center-Grimes High School, Grimes. Scholarship recipients are selected each year based on their academic performance, athletic participation, leadership skills and community involvement. ■



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EVENTS IN THE AREA

Be sure to check for cancellations.

To submit calendar items for consideration, send to tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com.



City-Wide Garage Sales

Friday and Saturday,
May 5-6
Grimes

Those who have been eagerly awaiting the garage sale season, prepare to find treasures throughout the community.

Spring Cleanup

Monday and Tuesday, May 8-9
Grimes

It's time to do your spring cleaning. Clean out the garage, basement and kids' toys. Place your items on the curb by 6 a.m. on your regular collection date for pick up. For more information on what items can go on the curb, visit whereitshouldgo.com/springcleanup or call Metro Waste Authority at 515-244-0021.

Tire Drop Off

May 15-21, Monday-Friday, 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.; Saturday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday, 1-5 p.m.

1700 S.E. Destination Drive, Grimes

Spinning your wheels trying to get rid of an old tire or two? Grimes has partnered with Metro Waste Authority for a tire drop-off event May 15-21. During this event, residents can drop off up to five tires free of charge. Tires from tractors and bicycles, or solid tires from lawnmowers or golf carts, are not accepted. Learn more at www.WhereItShouldGo.com/TireDropOff.

Gather flags for retirement

Spring clean-up
Johnston/Grimes Fire
Department on Merle Hay Road

When doing your spring cleaning, gather any old flags you have and take them to the drop box behind the Johnston/Grimes Fire Department on Merle Hay Road. Boy Scout Troop 44 takes care of the retired flags and will burn them appropriately at a ceremony near Flag Day in June.

Gary's Ride

Waukee Raccoon River Valley
Trailhead
Saturday, May 20

Gary's Ride is a fundraiser for MercyOne Richard Deming Cancer Center for terminal brain cancer patients. Riders and non-riders are invited to the celebration at The Handlebar Restaurant in Dallas Center. It will feature great food and entertainment for the whole family. For more information and to register, visit garysrideiowa.org.



Live Music at Covered Bridges Winery

April 29, 6:30-9:30 p.m.
Covered Bridges Winery,
2207 170th Trail, Winterset

See RetroSpect play live music.
\$5 cover charge per person.

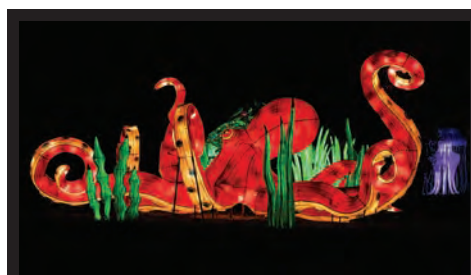


Food and Fun

Various dates
Middlebrook Mercantile,
4125 Cumming Ave.,
Cumming

Register for events at Cumming, IA Middlebrook Mercantile Events | Eventbrite

- April 21: Mule Performs, Two 'Ol Chefs Food Truck, 5-8 p.m.
- April 24: Dried Floral Workshop, 6-7:30 p.m.
- April 28: Emmett Sheehan Performs, Pho Wheels Food Truck, 5-8 p.m.



Wild Lights Festival

Wednesday to Sunday evenings
Blank Park Zoo, 7401 S.W. Ninth St.,
Des Moines

The Wild Lights Festival returns to Blank Park Zoo with 50 handcrafted, larger-than-life, illuminated animal-shaped Asian lanterns. Presented in partnership with Tianyu Arts & Culture, this year's festival will include a 75-foot-long sunflower tunnel, giant 33-foot-wide octopus, and more animals and mythical creatures. The festival runs 7:30-10 p.m. on Wednesday to Sunday evenings, plus Memorial Day, through May 29. Tickets are \$19-\$25 and may be purchased at www.blankparkzoo.com/wildlights.

'The Poppet Show' Featuring Barbershop Chorus

April 29, 3 p.m.
First Baptist Church, 8250 N.W. 62nd Ave.,
Johnston

The Harmony Delegation Barbershop chorus will be holding its 76th anniversary spring performance. This year's spring show is a parody of "The Muppet Show" they call "The Poppet Show." Skits and music will be a zany spectacle of actors and choir members for a fun-filled afternoon of Barbershop music. Tickets are \$20/adult, \$15/student (through college), 5 and younger free. They can be purchased online at harmonydelegation.com or at the door.

EVENTS IN THE AREA

Be sure to check for cancellations.

Spring Fashion Gala

Friday, April 21, 7 p.m.; Saturday, April 22, 4 p.m. matinee and evening show at 7 p.m.

Black Box Theatre, Building 5 Student Center, DMACC Ankeny Campus

The DMACC Fashion Institute (DFI) announced its 9th Annual Spring Fashion Gala: FUNHAUS, which will feature a mysterious journey into the dark and moody depths of the human psyche as created, planned and produced by DMACC Fashion students.

The theme of this year's Gala – FUNHAUS – explores the concept of a strange, haunted circus runway, where models emerge for an eerie, once-in-a-lifetime performance to showcase student designs. The runway show will consist of four unique scenes: Avant Garde, Cut & Sewn, Upcycled and Styled.

General admission tickets are \$15 each, and student admission tickets are available for \$10. Tickets can be purchased online now at fashiongala.dmacc.edu.

Appetizers and drinks will be available before each show, along with a silent auction. Proceeds from the silent auction will help fund resources for DMACC Fashion students.

For more information about the DMACC Fashion Program, visit fashion.dmacc.edu. You can also follow the DMACC Fashion Program on Instagram at @dmaccfashion and on Facebook at facebook.com/DMACCFashion.

To submit calendar items for consideration, send to tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com.

WDM Elks Spring Style Show

Saturday, April 29

West Des Moines Elks Lodge No. 2752, 2060 N.W. 94th St., Clive

Funds raised will benefit Clive Community Services (Food Pantry and Clothes Closet). Attendees are asked to bring one or more non-perishable items. Tickets are \$12 each or reserve a table for 8 for \$110. Doors open at 10 a.m. with a soup and salad lunch at noon and the style show at 1 p.m. featuring Cindy's Boutique. Enjoy visiting vendors. Door prizes will be available. For more information about the show or being a vendor, contact Roxanne Ludwig, 515-778-7711.

Shine Reception and Dinner

Wednesday, May 10, 6-8:30 p.m.

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With your help Planned Parenthood has stood with our community, working to provide compassionate care and inclusive education to Iowans no matter their age, race, income, or location. Your support funds essential sexual and reproductive health care, medically accurate and inclusive sex education, and fierce advocacy in Iowa. Register by Wednesday, May 3, at www.plannedparenthood.org/planned-parenthood-north-central-states/ways-to-give/shine. ■



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12 REVIEWS including one of the year's first great movies

I'm happy to tell you that the movies are getting better almost every week, and I have now seen the year's first great movie.

"Operation Fortune" (now on Prime Video)



Guy Ritchie writes/directs a little seen film about a group of soldiers on an undercover mission. I had no idea going in what this was, and I walked out completely amused by what I just saw. Jason Statham does his usual good work as one of these operatives, but the movie really comes alive with the introduction of a character played by Hugh Grant. If you are an action fan, this is a must-see. **Grade: B+**

"Champions" (in theaters)



Woody Harrelson is perfectly cast as an NBA minor league coach who is demoted to coach a team of special education kids in Des Moines, Iowa! Of course, nothing was shot in Des Moines, nor will you see anything more than a glance of a skyline in the film. That being said, the movie is absolutely hilarious and charming at the same time. Harrelson is perfectly cast, and these kids are really special and super funny. This movie didn't get its chance to grab the large audience that it was due. **Grade: B+**

"65" (in theaters)



Adam Driver and a team of explorers are brought down by an asteroid storm. Everyone but Driver and a young woman have died. Without giving anything away, they are on

Earth 65 million years ago, and let me tell you, it is a nasty place to be. This is truly great sci-fi and a really good action/adventure film written and directed by two guys from Des Moines.

Grade: A-

"Shazam 2: The Fury of the Gods" (in theaters)



I'm certain that we didn't need a sequel to the first film, but this one grew on me. It's a fun and funny story about the ancient gods returning to take the planet back. One for the whole family. **Grade: B+**

"The Boston Strangler" (on Hulu)



Keira Knightly is excellent as a newspaper investigative reporter in Boston during the early 1960s covering the infamous attacks by who was eventually called The Boston Strangler. The movie does a great job showing the journalistic hard work that went into solving (or not) this horrific string of crimes. **Grade: A-**

"John Wick: Chapter 4" (in theaters)



Keanu Reeves is back as the man on the run from a group of evil bad asses looking to kill him. I enjoyed the first film, but the sequels

went downhill from there. This is an action-filled, nearly-three-hour bloodbath. The sequences are brilliantly choreographed, but the plot is mind-numbing and even the action, toward the end, is too over the top. The ending is a relief, but I was less than thrilled with JW 4. **Grade: D**

"A Good Person" (in theaters and probably streaming soon)



Writer/director Zach Braff gives us a look at a young woman whose life is thrown into chaos after a fatal car accident. Florence Pugh plays the young woman who spirals into substance abuse and depression. Morgan Freeman (always good) plays a man who tries to help. Difficult to watch at times but still very well done, and the acting is top-notch. **Grade: B-**

"The Lost King" (in theaters and probably streaming soon)



This might be the find of the month. Sally Hawkins plays a woman in a dead-end relationship who, after seeing Shakespeare's "Richard III," is inspired to learn more about him. She is amazed at how little is known about the former King of England, and she takes it upon herself to help right this wrong. Based on a true story, this is a wonderful film. **Grade: B+**

"Spinning Gold" (in theaters, if you hurry)

Any movie that opens with the song "Oh Happy Day" immediately has my attention. This is the story of Casablanca Records and the people behind it. They introduced us to Gladys

FILM REVIEWS



Knight, The Isley Brothers, Donna Summer and KISS. A great story, but very poorly told and even more poorly acted. **Grade: C+**

"Dungeons and Dragons" (in theaters)



My only experience with the game Dungeons and Dragons was walking through the Iowa Union on my way to classes and seeing all these students playing the game. I was excited to see

Chris Pine heading the cast. I've always enjoyed him, but the movie is a mess of special effects and a horrible story. Don't waste your time.

Grade: D

"Air" (in theaters)



I've now seen the year's first great movie. Anytime Ben Affleck and Matt Damon team up, it is an event. "Air" tells the story of Michael Jordan and NIKE and the magic they made with a little tennis shoe called Air Jordan. Viola Davis, as Jordan's mom, steals the show. **Grade: Very solid A**

"Nefarious" (in theaters)

If you remember Steve Deace from The Jock, KXTK, KXnO and WHO Radio fame,



there's a new movie coming out soon called "Nefarious" that was based on a book he wrote. Steve shared a copy with me last month, and even sitting at home, I found it to be super creepy — in a good way. It's an intense look at what happens when you tangle with pure evil.

Grade: B+

See you at the movies. ■

Michael C. Woody has been reviewing movies on radio and television since 1986 and can be heard talking movies every Wednesday afternoon at 2:30 p.m. on KXnO 106.3 with Keith Murphy and Andy Fales. You can also follow him on Twitter @MrMovieDSM.



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PREVENTING accidental poisonings in kids

Poison Prevention Week was just last month, so this topic is fresh on my mind. In 2021, Poison Help responded to more than 2 million human exposure cases; on average, receiving an exposure case every 15 seconds. Some of the leading exposure substance categories included cleaning supplies and cosmetic/personal care products — all of which are common household items.



The usual culprits for medications are commonly thought of as opioids, benzos (i.e., Xanax) or iron. But problems with other medications are on the rise. For instance, accidental ingestion of cannabis edibles by young kids is skyrocketing, often leading to hospital visits. And melatonin overdoses in kids are up by more than 500% during the last decade. It's not surprising, as these medications can often look like candy or food, and use of these products has spiked since the pandemic.

If you have young children living in your house or frequenting your home, remember to store medications and other substances such as cleaning products up and away and out of sight. The best locations are a high shelf or a locked cabinet. Even small amounts of some of these products can cause serious harm. Also, be mindful of where you store prescription medications. Do not rely on safety caps as they may

slow children down but they are not childproof.

Also be sure to dose appropriately and follow doctor or pharmacist recommendations. Ensure that liquid measuring devices are used. Household spoons aren't an accurate way to measure a teaspoon of medication. More than 10% of poisonings in children are from kids receiving an incorrect dose. Keep this number handy, 1-800-222-1222, or download the webPOISONCONTROL app. There is a poison control line for our furry friends as well. If you suspect your pet got into meds, call your vet or Animal Poison Control at 888-426-4435.

Another tip is to dispose of unused and expired medications. National drug take back day is April 22 and a good reminder to go through your medicine cabinet. But remember, don't just throw old medications out or flush them down the toilet. Bring them to a pharmacy like ours that has a receptacle bin for disposing of such medications. Our medication disposal bin accepts prescription and over-the-counter medications, including controlled substances, as well as liquids in 4-ounce containers or smaller.

Let's work together to keep our kids safe this year. ■

Information provided by Jane Clausen, Adel HealthMart, 113 N. Ninth St., Adel, 515-993-3644.

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RENEW and refresh your winter skin

As you make this transition from cold and dry weather to warm, more humid conditions, don't forget how it may affect your skin. Here are some skin care tips for the upcoming season.

Exfoliate the winter away

Help your skin recover from the winter by exfoliating to remove any buildup of dry, dead skin cells that linger on the surface of your skin. Use a gentle exfoliating product that's free of harsh ingredients that can end up drying out the skin. A chemical peel is also a great springtime treatment option. It rejuvenates the skin, reduces blemishes and dullness, and triggers collagen production, giving the skin a long-lasting glow.

Lighten up

Heavy creams are great for dry, winter skin, but using them on sticky, sweaty skin is a different story. When the temperature and humidity start to increase, it's a good time to switch to a lighter moisturizer or serum

with hyaluronic acid. This ingredient attracts water and coats the skin, providing hydration without making the skin too oily. Be sure to look for moisturizers that are oil-free and non-comedogenic to avoid issues like clogged pores and acne breakouts.

Control allergies and breakouts

With flowers, plants and trees starting to bloom, allergy sufferers may have itchy, swollen eyes and a watery nose, which can make you touch your face more frequently. This may cause dirt and bacteria to transfer from your hands to your face, leading to clogged pores, breakouts and fine lines from rubbing your face often. Keep your hands and face clean to help prevent these skin issues.

Protect from increased exposure to UV Rays

Use a water-resistant and broad spectrum (protects against both UVA and UVB rays) sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher. Be sure to reapply every two hours or right after

swimming or excessive exercise.

Whenever possible, wear protective clothing, wide-brimmed hats and UVB-blocking sunglasses.

Out with the old, in with the new

Spring is a good time to review all your skin care and makeup. Be sure to dispose of any expired products to make sure everything you're using is clean, effective and safe. You don't want a product that's potentially adding bacteria to your skin or has lost the effectiveness of its active ingredients.

Even if a product hasn't reached its expiration date, changes in color, odor or texture can also mean it's time to throw it away. And don't forget to wash and/or replace your makeup brushes. ■

Information provided by Harlan Dermatology & Dermatologic Surgery Center, 8131 University Blvd., Clive, 515-225-8180.

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MEET Kristina Bavas

First-year teacher making family consumer sciences fun.

Kristina Bavas graduated from Iowa State University in May 2022 with her bachelor's degree in Family Consumer Sciences Education and currently teaches that subject at DCG. This is her first year teaching, and she says she is fortunate her first teaching experience is at Oak View Middle School.

Bavas says she wanted to go into education after her own experiences in school. In fact, she cherishes a gift from her FCS teacher, Laura VanWaardhuizen, given to her during her sophomore year of high school.

"When I decided to go to Iowa State, she was my FCS program coordinator and professor. We have known each other for nearly a decade, and I cannot imagine what my adventure would have looked like without her. She is creative, thoughtful and compassionate — all things a great FCS teacher should be. Now, I have this picture up in my own classroom to remind me of how far I have come and how I can be there for my students, the same way Laura was there for me."

Though some teachers don't prefer the middle school vibe, Bavas says they're her favorite. They are ready for more than elementary school, and they are the perfect age to get interested and excited about FCS classes.

"The biggest reward in my job is building relationships with my students and seeing them gain independence. My favorite thing is when they come to me and tell me how they cooked and enjoyed a meal with their family for the first time in forever or tell me stories of how they babysat for the first time this past weekend. That is what FCS is all about, students learning about real life skills and building strong relationships with the people in their lives."

Of course there are challenges, too, like feeling like there's never enough time in the day to accomplish everything you want to. Bavas meets so many students who have not yet had the opportunity to learn to cook and make the connection to nutrition, food science or personal finance. When teaching a class with such a variety of topics, students could spend a whole day trying new recipes, designing a home or sewing a new masterpiece, but they only have a short period of time to do it.

One of her favorite class projects is the class Cookie Championship. Students work hard creating their very own cookie recipe to compete in the Quarterly Cookie Competition. Staff signs up to be judges and declare the best cookie.

"The excitement from the students and staff is contagious."

When she's not at school, you'll find Bavas crafting, baking and spending time with family and friends. In the summer, she looks forward to playing in a sand volleyball league and traveling to new places.



Kristina Bavas holds a gift from her high school FCS teacher, Laura VanWaardhuizen.



Students wait in anticipation for the winner of the cookie-baking contest to be announced.

Ultimately, she's glad her first teaching experience has been at Oak View.

"I love working at Oak View because of the amazing people. Oak View is filled with people who truly care and support each other, which I believe speaks for the district as a whole." ■

LAWN CARE By Kevin Johnson

SPRING lawn care tips

As spring arrives, there are some simple things you can do that will make a difference in your lawn in 2023. Many people will start off with a heavy raking to clean up the yard. This is time consuming and labor intensive. A simpler and more effective approach is to lower your mower deck to a 2-inch cutting height to remove the dead brown tissue of last year's leaf blade. Heavy raking is only necessary if you have a heavy mat of leaf material that is smothering your grass.



Mowing with a sharp mower blade should always be your goal. Mow frequently enough so you never remove more than one third of the leaf blade at one time. I normally recommend a cutting height of 3 inches after the initial mowing for the remainder of the year. Set your mower to this height and leave it there. This promotes the healthiest growing environment for your lawn.

Crabgrass control should be applied before emergence of crabgrass seed. If you plan to seed bare spots this spring, be careful. The normal pre-emergence products you or your lawn care company apply will affect spring seeding results.

Professional lawn companies and/or nursery specialists can, and will, provide good advice to you. Utilize these resources to obtain the best results and to learn the proper timing of pre-emergent products. ■

Information provided by Kevin Johnson, All American Turf Beauty, 311 DeSoto Road, Van Meter, 515-996-2261.

HEALTH By Sheryl Frye

GROUNDING techniques

Sometimes in our busy lives, we have trouble being present in the moment. We are thinking about things we need to get done, remembering the past or just experiencing anxious thoughts. Grounding techniques can help us create some distance from our distressing thoughts to help us become more present in the moment. These techniques use our five senses to help us regain our perspective. Grounding techniques — such as breathing deeply or listening to your surroundings — are often simple and can be utilized in any situation. Other physical grounding techniques include taking a walk, holding a piece of ice or savoring a scent like tea. Grounding techniques can also include mental tasks to help us with distraction. Thinking about silly jokes, reciting a poem or song and counting backward from 100 are examples of grounding mental techniques. Sometimes, soothing techniques can help in times of high distress. We can use our imagination to ground us by picturing someone we love or visualizing our favorite places. Playing with our pets and engaging in favorite activities like crafts can also help us create feelings of wellbeing during periods of high stress. Identifying techniques to stop us from getting lost in our distressing thoughts can give us the tools to create more joy in our daily lives. ■



Reference: www.healthline.com. Information provided by Sheryl Frye, LISW, SS Therapy and Consulting, Ltd, 2675 N. Ankeny Blvd., Suite 105, Ankeny, frye@sstherapyandconsulting.com, www.sstherapyandconsulting.com.

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PRODUCE shopping on a budget

4 strategies to save on fresh fruits and veggies

(Family Features) Cooking meals that bring your loved ones joy is often objective No. 1, but creating those flavorful favorites on an appropriate budget is an important aspect of well-rounded, family-friendly recipes. A few simple steps, like developing good grocery shopping habits, can put smiles on hungry faces without leaving a dent in your finances.

Consider these tips from the experts at Healthy Family Project along with its produce partners, which are on their 2023 Mission for Nutrition to improve access to fresh produce that's essential in alleviating many public health and personal wellness challenges. This year's partners are striving to be part of the improvement efforts by donating funds to increase the accessibility to fruits and vegetables in schools through the Foundation for Fresh Produce.

1. Make a list (and stick to it)

When buying fresh produce, remember some items have a shorter shelf life. Limiting purchases to items on your list can help lower grocery spending while alleviating food waste.

2. Buy local

Transportation cost is one of the biggest factors in the price of produce, meaning buying local, when possible, can help reduce your total at checkout.

3. Stock up on seasonal produce

Although you can generally find any produce item at any time of year, this isn't always an affordable practice. Knowing when your favorite fruits and veggies are in-season can save you money and allow you to use the freshest ingredients in family breakfasts like protein-packed sausage breakfast muffins and savory english muffins.

4. Know your produce department

The front or feature table of the produce department often offers the best deals. Don't forget to look at the end caps on each produce aisle, which sometimes display seasonal items.

Find more grocery savings strategies and family-friendly recipes at HealthyFamilyProject.com. ■

Savory English muffins

Recipe courtesy of Healthy Family Project

- English muffins
- guacamole
- cherry tomatoes
- 1 tablespoon cilantro, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon light cream cheese
- 1 tablespoon crumbled turkey sausage, sauteed
- 1 egg
- 1 tablespoon basil, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon balsamic glaze
- Toast English muffins and top with desired combinations of toppings, such as: guacamole, tomatoes and cilantro; cream cheese, tomatoes and turkey sausage; or egg, tomatoes, basil and balsamic glaze.



Protein packed sausage breakfast muffins

Recipe courtesy of Healthy Family Project

- Nonstick cooking spray
- 1 sweet onion, diced
- 1 pound turkey sausage
- 4 eggs
- 1/2 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- 1 cup protein pancake mix
- Preheat oven to 350 F. Spray 12-cup muffin pan with nonstick cooking spray. Set aside.
- In skillet over medium heat, cook sweet onion until translucent. Add turkey sausage and cook until no longer pink. Remove from heat.
- In large mixing bowl, lightly beat eggs. Add shredded cheese, pancake mix and cooked sausage; mix well.
- Fill prepared muffin cups about 3/4 full with mixture. Bake 18-20 minutes, or until golden brown on top.





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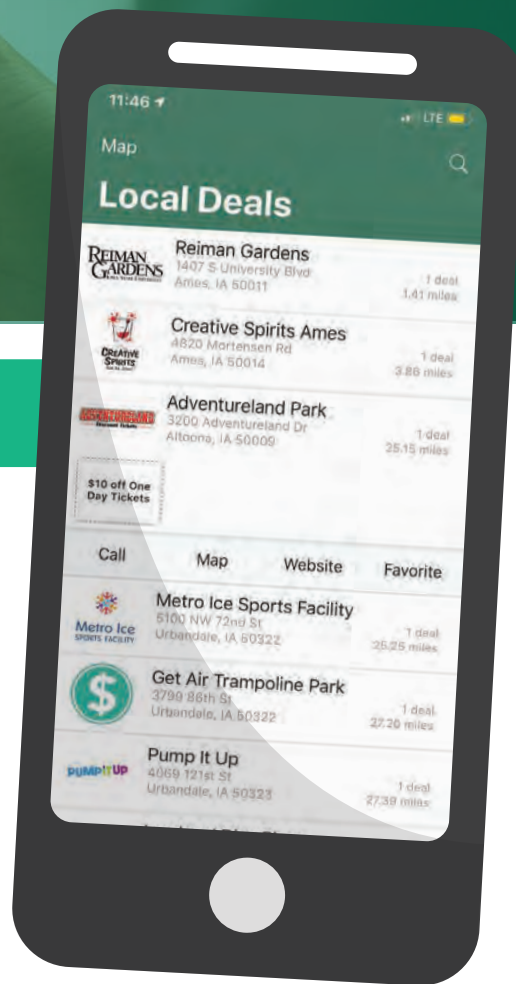
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LOYAL GVSS volunteer

Schmidt enjoys driving clients.

Chris Schmidt and her husband have lived in the Grimes area for 35 years, and both of their daughters graduated from the Dallas Center-Grimes School District.

As an extension of her loyalty to the community, Schmidt takes time to volunteer both her time and talents.

"Most of my volunteer activities are with my church and Grimes Volunteer Support Services (GVSS)," she explains. "I love the goal of GVSS to help people stay in their homes. So many people, especially seniors, just need a helping hand."

While most of Schmidt's time is spent driving clients where they need to go, like doctor's appointments, social events and the grocery store, GVSS has a lot of other services folks can benefit from.

The organization's motto is "neighbors helping neighbors," and that's exactly what its volunteers do. While the priority is transportation, GVSS also provides minor home repair and maintenance services, yard work and snow removal, durable medical equipment loans and much more — all without charge.

In total, GVSS has more than 200 clients assisted by more than 70 volunteers, including Schmidt. It is estimated that the organization, which started in 2011, has provided nearly



25,000 trips and driven more than 305,000 miles.

GVSS is continually looking for volunteers, and Schmidt highly recommends high schoolers look into the option if they are trying to earn Silver Cord hours.

For Schmidt, who is retired from teaching, the decision to get involved with GVSS was made because she wanted to volunteer in the community and have a purpose. She also enjoys meeting new people, and GVSS has enabled her to do just that.

"There's not a specific memory that tops the rest," she says of her service thus far. "I just enjoy interacting with the people I am driving, and everyone is always very gracious."

Schmidt also feels it's nice to know that someone is benefitting from her time with them.

"It's rewarding and very necessary in our society today, where a lot of people don't live close to their family members," she shares.



Chris Schmidt enjoys helping people with transportation so they are more likely to be able to stay in their homes.

If you're interested in volunteering and assisting others in the Grimes community, contact the GVSS office at 515-986-5355. ■

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'BIRD is the word'

I recall sitting on the front porch of my grandparents' home in Tobias, Nebraska, as a young man, staring intently at a mature apple tree they had growing in their front yard. My grandma loved birds, and, for as long as I knew her, she had bird feeders around her yard. The feeder in the apple tree was filled with sugar water, so we would sometimes get to see hummingbirds, which was a rare thing in southeast Nebraska.

Early in the year, we would watch for the first robins to appear, not only because they meant spring was right around the corner, but because we felt they also represented good luck, happiness, rebirth, etc. The robin best exemplifies what happens in Grimes every spring. Of course, this time of year, we all look forward to shedding the winter blues and hopefully getting more than a few days of remarkably temperate, non-windy days. When this happens, the community comes alive. We see patios start to fill up at local restaurants, sports fields populated with young athletes, and, before too long, there will be the hum of mowers in the air.

While we live in a community where development occurs all year, it ramps up dramatically when the frost leaves the ground and the days get longer. Businesses begin to offer more visible products. A great example of this is the color that begins to pop around Canoyer Garden Center, Bomgaars, Fareway, Walmart and Hy-Vee as the flowers are put on display. Like the robin, these activities can't help but promote happiness. The growth is a type of rebirth that occurs annually in Grimes.

With better weather comes the start of community events. They start in the backyards with neighbors interacting with one another at barbecues and around fire pits. This interaction hits full stride when Grimes Governors Days takes place. This year, that event occurs June 8-10, and the details can be followed at www.GovernorsDays.com. At that point, we're more like the hummingbirds than the robins as things are moving fast. One might even say the community is "in full bloom," which just happens to be the theme of this year's Governors Days Celebration.

For the time being, "Bird is the word" in Grimes. We could draw the analogy out further and talk about eagles in relation to the Home Base Grimes Fourth of July Fireworks Show or perhaps even vultures as they might pertain to Grimes Cleanup Day. But, for now, we're happy to stick to robins and hummingbirds. We don't know what bird reference will encourage you to be kind to one another and do what you can to shop local, but we hope you do that as well. Here at Grimes Chamber & Economic Development, there is a lot of work to get done, so I must fly. #LoveGrimes. ■

Information provided by Brian Buethe, president and CEO, Grimes Chamber & Economic Development.



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